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Articles on Gehlen by Jaergen Thorwald
in Die Welt

REF!
E649 7844

1. Attached, in translation, is Part V of subject series of articles. As stated in references, the translation was made at the request of Mr. Thomas C. Hughes, OIC and G-2 Liaison Officer to OCA; it is forwarded as being of possible interest and convenience.

2. This fifth article stresses Gehlen's wisdom in not trusting Otto John or P. W. Haack (son of Ant Black). The series appears to represent an elaborate public relations job in behalf of Gehlen.

3. Comments, especially by PDB, re briefing of Thorwald and on the origin of the series generally would be appreciated.

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19 December 1955

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to CIA 7851
DEC 30 1955
Translation

"Die Welt",
18 December 1955

Introduction: The Events of This Week

All of a sudden, a brochure with a very striking yellow cover has disappeared from the windows of the Soviet zone bookshops. Its title was "I Chose Germany", and a conspicuous black band bore the name of its author: Dr. Otto John. This brochure contained the statements the former President of the Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution made to the world press in East Berlin three weeks after his disappearance. This brochure is of great importance now. It contains material which is of definite significance for the solution of the mystery which surrounds Otto John.

It may be true that Dr. John was taken across the border between the sectors on 20 July 1954 while he was under the influence of drugs --

it may be true that he lay unconscious in a hospital in Karlshorst, for two days --

it may be true that he found himself a prisoner of the Red Army when he regained his senses, and that he was exposed to all the pressure which is usually brought to bear in such cases --

but, when Dr. John, on 11 August 1954, went up to the platform and stood before the microphone telling the international press, and the western world listening at the loudspeakers, of the reasons why he had changed frontlines, and when many journalists from the free world crossquestioned him afterwards, no one present had the impression of looking at a hypnotized man not master of his senses and making his statement under pressure.

Aside from many utterances which caused a sensation in the West, bringing discredit on the Federal Republic and on the Chancellor, and being a very heavy burden on the relations between the Federal Republic and other nations, he also declared that there were secret supplements to the EDC Treaty, while the Federal Chancellor had definitely denied their existence. It was also of grave political consequence, especially for the German-French relations, that John stated that the Organization Gehlen was running an espionage organization in France. This statement caused an extraordinary stir in France and was a very heavy strain on the relations between Germany and France.

John did what he could to bring discredit on the Organization Gehlen. He declared, for example, that Gehlen had among his large staff of co-workers former SD- and SS-leaders who had murdered German resistance fighters. He accused Gehlen, and Blank's Agency, too, of opening

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their doors to fascists waiting for their chance to resume power. By all this he tried to cement the propaganda theses directed against the policies of the Federal Government in general, as well as against the activities of Blank's Agency and against rearmament.

Upon the question of the representative of "Muenchener Abendzeitung", why he had not voiced his opinion in the Federal Republic, John replied; "Had I said in the Federal Republic what I have said here, I would not have been able to continue any political activities because of the position I held, since I would have been arrested on the charge of having abused state secrets."

In view of Dr. Otto John's return, the importance of the sixth part of our Factual Report by Juergen Thorwald is greater still. Thorwald throws light upon the thick underbrush of intelligence agencies in the Federal Republic, and on the relations between General Gehlen and Otto John.

T H E M A N I N T H E D A R K

Factual Report on the German Intelligence
Organizations

By Juergen Thorwald

V. Dr. John and General Gehlen

Shortly before this report came out, but at a time when its appearance had already been announced, I met on Rhein-Main Airfield, before I started on a flight to Canada, a person who had helped me with my first books on the collapse of Germany in the East by putting diaries at my disposal which they had kept during the war. This man asked me worriedly: "Are you sure you have thought it over carefully enough what it is you are writing now? It won't do to publish that, I think."

I replied that I thought it was high time to tell all I had learned in the course of the past years, either by chancing upon it, or by my own adroitness. In my opinion, it is necessary that the public should learn as much as possible about Intelligence in Germany, and that an end be put to the nonsense -- hairraising nonsense sometimes -- which was being broadcast out of sheer ignorance by parties and other organizations about the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, about Gahlen, about Blank's Counterintelligence, about the CIC, about the "Fighting Group Against Inhumanity", and about the numerous private intelligence peddlers.

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*could likely be
using D. Hervey's*

During the past six years Germany has become a front-line area where the intelligence organizations of the two political world powers in East and West collide. The example of Austria set at liberty and rank with secret intelligence organizations fighting each other in Austrian territory, shows that such conditions cannot be changed by simple reunification, or neutralization. The only remedy is the setting up of a strong official German intelligence service which deprives the enemies of a democratic German state of their basis on which to establish support points and from where to carry out their work, and which, on the other hand, gives friendly intelligence organizations no reason to use German territory as a basis for their activities to the extent they are still doing it now.

Soviet Agents

Up to 1948, the Soviet Intelligence Service was absolute master of the situation. The Soviet Intelligence Service, faithful to the principle: "It is the aim of the Soviet secret intelligence service abroad to incite the rebellion against the capitalists", had exploited the situation arisen chiefly because of the political illusions the Americans were nursing, but also because of the infiltration of left-radical intellectuals from the British Labour Party, and because the newly established French and Italian Intelligence Services were saturated with very many communist resistance fighters.

The huge double organization of the Soviet Intelligence Service, which consisted of the civilian Committee for State Security (KGB) and the military Main Intelligence Administration (GRU) of the Defense Ministry, and was supported by Kominform as the center of the party espionage activities in all countries throughout the world, had within a very short time placed its agents and friends everywhere, even inside western governments. The free transportation granted eastern refugees, and their settlement by means of IRO throughout the world, were already means in themselves to disperse Soviet agents, recognized as such means only very much later. In West Germany, Soviet agents moved into positions anyhow, either in occupation agencies or in the slowly developing German agencies, and they are still there.

The Intelligence Services of Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia were set up by the Soviets exactly like their own. They did the same in 1949 in the Soviet zone, when the State Security Service was established. There was nothing in the West at the time to resemble even remotely that massive, well-trained intelligence organization which missed nothing of what happened in West Germany.

Mistake Upon Mistake

That is the explanation for the disproportionate importance the Gehlen organization, small as it still was, gained when western policies were changed. For a long time it remained a small group, as compared with the feverish growth of the long neglected American In-

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telligence Service. Being merely tolerated as an outsider, and far too insignificant at first, it was not influential enough to bridle the energy with which many Americans started their work in Germany, with no experience as regards eastern problems. The result of such money-fed energy was the growth of numerous intelligence and sabotage organizations, many of which employed Soviet emigrants or refugees from the East in West Germany, and very soon proved to be unsound.

*Gehlen's
as a matter of
fact a failure*

Well-meaning and zealous Americans were doing exactly what Gehlen disapproved of on principle. They were themselves inexperienced, and they worked with inexperienced personnel; they lost men and material, and within the briefest space their agencies were infiltrated by Soviet agents. Wherever they failed, they left behind a proletariat of agents who sold themselves right and left, even to West German power groups who wanted material against persons they wished to get rid of. What British and French intelligence services did, was not much better in many instances, but their mistakes did not count so much.

Even organizations which had been established in Germany with definite aims and with American money ended up with entering the field of intelligence, where their dilettantism could not but meet with futile disasters which eclipsed the work they were actually supposed to do, namely, to unmask inhuman and illegal actions of the Soviet zone authorities, to publish them, and to help their victims.

No SS-Members

All these secret activities which were initial mistakes of the American Intelligence Service while it grew from non-existence to the world-wide organization of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) it is today, were the soil on which the jungle of intelligence agencies thrives, and the unscrupulous intelligence deal to which Germans fell victim.

It is a fact -- and on this point I was not satisfied with one-sided opinions ascertained in a conversation, for example with Gehlen -- that Gehlen and his organization kept away from the aforesaid institutions during all these years. On the other hand, the development of the Gehlen organization had the consequence that wherever an attempt was made to set up German auxiliary intelligence organizations, they were doomed to failure especially because the core of German experts gathered around Gehlen. In selecting his staff, Gehlen refrained from employing personnel which had had any connection with the SS, not for reasons of resentment against his war-time opponents in the Section "Foreign Armies East", but on principle; and he did so even if it meant losing a valuable worker who might perhaps go over to the East.

On one occasion Gehlen told me, during a conversation: "Intelligence work is necessary because no state desirous of maintaining itself and of acquiring an independent political position, can do so if its government is not kept objectively informed of what happens elsewhere. An American whom I know well once coined this word about intelligence work: 'Our business is so dirty that it can be handled only by

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gentleman !' Whoever forgets this principle when he sets up his own organization, cannot but drown in the mud which does well up in these days, at least around the edges of our work ...".

Gehlen did not mention the name of the American. I learned it accidentally a few weeks ago, during a conversation I had with an American journalist in California. If I have caught the name correctly, it was Sam Bossard, and I was told that he was one of the men who had reformed the American Intelligence Service.

Even now, "Organization Gehlen", Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, and Blank's Counterintelligence, are often confused. Gehlen's field of work, however, has from the beginning been the collecting of information from foreign countries, outside the Eastern borders. It was only for a brief interval that Gehlen was forced to use a few of his men for the type of work the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution is handling now; this was when no German authority could take up the fight against the growing activities of the Soviet agents. In other words, it was in defense against Soviet agents who had been sent to West Germany and West Berlin to work against Gehlen's agencies. But this was invariably kept within the limited scope of his organization.

Three Hundred Sources of Danger

Therefore, no one could have been more satisfied than Gehlen, when in 1950 the "Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution" was finally established with agencies in each Land. The Soviet agents -- on the one hand those who collected secret information, on the other hand those whose mission was to penetrate government agencies, parties, trade unions, youth, and economic organizations -- met with practically no hindrance at the time. The agents were supported by a host of organizations which, in the disguise of democratic institutions, pursued solely the aim either to undermine German economic life by provoking strikes, or to weaken public opinion by their so-called "peace propaganda". Under Minister of the Interior Lehr, no less than 300 of such organizations were known. About twohundred of them survive to this day.

No Exchange of Documents

When the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution was established on 27 September 1950, it had no critical contact with Gehlen's organization at all. There could be hardly anything as senseless as the assertions which were afterwards made about a rivalry between Gehlen and the first President of the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, Otto John. Not only was there no critical contact, there was hardly any contact at all between them. As I have said before, Gehlen could not but welcome it that the security of his own organization in West Germany should be safe-

Warrant had dealings with Gehlen in 1947

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guarded by West Germany's own authorities. That was, and is, the definite mission of the political Home Police, for which Gehlen has never displayed any talent. A parallel situation prevails in the United States with its huge CIA Intelligence Service under Allan Dulles which collects information from foreign countries, and with the internal security organization (protecting also the CIA in American territory) of the FBI under Edgar Hoover.

When Gehlen was asked -- as far as I know, because there was a shortage of specialists -- to put such men at the disposal of the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, he complied. The selected gentlemen separated entirely from Gehlen's organization. The Deputy Chief of the Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, (Lieutenant Colonel) Matke, who is still in office, came from Gehlen's organization. (d)

It was a quite different question on principle whether or not Gehlen considered the first President of the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, Otto John, reliable enough to trust his own organization unconditionally to him. When I met Gehlen on one occasion twenty-one months before John's flight to the Soviet zone, Gehlen made no reference to John. Also in Bonn, later on, he refrained from warning against John. He probably acted in this manner because he foresaw that those who, due to a misconceived feeling of solidarity, were going to any length to play the ex-resistance fighter off against the ex-General, would attribute rivalry feelings to him whatever might happen. On the other hand, it is true that Gehlen steered clear of trusting John with any material which might have bearing on his organization.

I can well imagine that he felt uneasy about this "also-one-of-the-resistance-fighters" who had always been suspected of having been a member of "Kote Kapelle"; who had joined the Intelligence Service in England; who had participated in the Nuernberg trials as an interrogator of German prisoners-of-war and assistant to the Prosecution; and who had then, at the pressure exerted by English friends of his, been appointed President of the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, although he had no qualification at all for that position.

The fact that John went over to the communists on 20 July 1954, justified Gehlen's personal prudence in regard to this man. In addition, John's return flight confirms what Gehlen thought at the time, namely, that John was no true communist agent. Gehlen had always thought of John as of one of those invertebrate intellectuals with no sense of reality who take refuge to political day-dreaming, and whose aimlessness induces them finally to believe that their dreams will come true in the East, until willy-nilly they make the personal acquaintance of the East. John was not allowed to return because of any particular feeling of sympathy with this human driftwood between the powers prevailing in our time; his return was made possible in order to be able to find out the truth, and to be able to return the blow which had been struck at West Germany by John's eastward migration.

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Blank's Counterintelligence Agency

Easier than in the "John case" comes the thought of rivalry in the case of Blank's counterintelligence agency. In this office, too, a West German intelligence agency was born in 1950 when Count Schwerin had been appointed Adenauer's first military advisor. Schwerin recommended the appointment of ex-Lt. Colonel Heinz to the position of chief of this military counterintelligence agency. In 1943, Heinz had been the Commanding Officer of the Regiment "Brandenburg" which the German Counterintelligence Service had established at the time for the specific purpose of carrying out sabotage missions in enemy country. When Schwerin was overthrown, Heinz stayed on in Theodor Blank's Counterintelligence organization.

Gehlen's field of activities included the reconnaissance of the military strength and the military plans in the Soviet area. Therefore, this task was apt to overlap with the activities of the intelligence agency which was supposed to be established in Blank's Agency under Heinz. As much as Heinz tried after his failure in 1954 to represent himself as being a victim of Gehlen's attacks, it does not correspond with the facts when carefully investigated. Of course, Gehlen could not help disapproving Lt. Colonel Heinz's strivings in Blank's Agency, if only for practical reasons. In other countries, the new organization had long ago asserted itself: the procurement of military information is the mission of a comprehensive organization collecting material in foreign countries, then forwarding such information to the Army, Navy, and the Air Forces, or the Ministry of Defense respectively. The latter has at its disposal, only for the protection of its own troops against enemy agents, not for the collecting of information, officers of the secret intelligence service, who in this case really deserve the name of "Abwehroffiziere".

It is logical that Gehlen could hardly be in favor of the endeavors made in Blank's Agency. Did he take them at all serious? Certainly not. Whatever was undertaken there without funds worth mentioning, without a staff of specialists, and under the leadership of an erratic person like Heinz -- who was soon found to be unreliable -- was speedily termed "kitchen-intelligence" by wagging tongues, an organization not at all capable of carrying out important missions. Here, too, developments proved that Gehlen was right; Heinz became entangled in rather sinister cases, the origin of which went back to his previous activities when he was the chief of a private intelligence agency. Heinz had not kept clear of the morass, and so he drowned, dragging his work down with him. Only one intelligence service of importance remained: The Organization Gehlen.

Next Issue:

SSD-Chief Ernst Wollweber's Great Campaign

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Picture of Frau Wohlgemuth escorted by two men.

Legend:

Marched Off; The Wife of Shady Dr. Wolfgang Wohlgemuth

At noon on 23 July 1954, two criminal police officers took Frau Wohlgemuth to the police for interrogation. Otto John had gone to East Berlin with her husband, a well-known Berlin physician.

Picture of Dr. Otto John

No legend.

Picture of Friedrich W. Heinz

No legend.

Picture of No.2 Ludwigstrasse

Legend:

The house 2, Ludwigstrasse in Cologne is popularly called

The House of Thousand Secrets;
the main office of the Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution is accommodated there, and John worked there before he fled.

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