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THE BOOK REPORT

Germany's Legendary Spy

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When **THE SERVICE** (World: \$10; illustrated), the memoirs of Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, was published in Germany, it created a sensation, for if there was any single man who had achieved legendary status, it was this one, Hitler's chief of military intelligence for the Soviet Union, who surfaced to become the head of a free-lance organization for the CIA, and then head of West Germany's intelligence service.

In the wake of that publication, a number of German writers wrote their own accounts of Gehlen and his work, mainly critical of the general's own book as a veiled apology or a whitewash. Two of these books, "Gehlen: Spy of the Century" and "The General was a Spy," preceded Gehlen's own memoir in American publication and were reviewed in this column last April. Now, in a translation by David Irving with an introduction by George Bailey, we have an opportunity to judge some of these matters for ourselves.

Ultimate Questions

I specify some of them because careful historical scholarship will have to resolve the ultimate questions: whether, for example, Gehlen is telling the whole truth here, or whether in fact Martin Bormann, Hitler's aide, was a Soviet agent throughout World War II. This last revelation made by Gehlen has been attacked as a charge more designed to spice up the book than to give an accurate secret history of the German wartime intelligence.

But, whatever the results of that inquiry and debate,



GEN. REINHARD GEHLEN
... his memoirs.

one thing is outside controversy. For better or worse, only Gehlen could have written this particular book. And from a psychological point of view, the work is endlessly engrossing. It does not matter whether this interest stems from Gen. Gehlen's expressed intent—to correct the "indiscretions and falsehoods" about his service published "in this age of 'absolute' freedom of the press" or to explain to the German people why intelligence operations must be carried out with "a measure of screening from public scrutiny if it is to do its job properly," or from Gehlen's perhaps unconscious revelations of character and belief.

In either case—and most probably a mixture of both—Gehlen has drawn a fascinating self-portrait. Behind the stern and stolid face is a professional who justifies his switch of allegiance and performance by what he considers the "uniqueness" of the intelligence task.

Such a position does not preclude belief in the long-

range rightness of a program. For many reasons, not all related to his own beliefs, it is difficult to imagine that Gehlen would have put his skills in the service of the Soviet Union if things had fallen out that way.

So this memoir is the portrait of a man as professional instrument. To be sure he expresses his distrust of the Nazis and some criticisms of Adolf Hitler.

Russian Front

"I still believe," he writes, "that we could have achieved our 1941 campaign objectives (in Russia) had it not been for the pernicious interventions of Adolf Hitler . . . The consequences of military victory would have been a matter for conjecture since Hitler's goal was the conquering of Lebensraum, and this implied the total destruction of the Russian state. We in the general staff on the other hand had come around to envisaging a more moderate and realistic political solution, in which a Russia would continue to exist.

"We had realized that this vast country, rich in manpower and raw material resources, could in the final analysis only be conquered—or, rather, liberated from communism—with the help of the Russian people themselves, and this is how, even after the setbacks of the winter campaign of 1942-43, we

could still have succeeded had the war been intelligently directed."

I think the passage, which is not particularly unique, indicates the point clearly, the intense focus on function, the narrow horizon (what would that conquered Russia have been like is not even considered), the syntactical changes (the meaning of "we," the shift from conquered to liberated). In the world inhabited by Gehlen and his staff, the task, the service, is all.

Even after he was taken by the Americans and the deal for his service was in the making, that professional caution was there: "My professional mistrust prompted me to comb the three huts for hidden mi-

crophones, as I did not want the Americans to profit from every word we spoke in private." To be sure he found a bug—which he says was installed "to keep an eye on Capt. Waldman," the American officer Gehlen was dealing with.

There is a hint throughout of a certain naivete which is not so much flaw as the evidence that even the strongest professional has his illusions.

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