

L601

244-27

DISPATCH NO.

100-0826A POUCH

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES/METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2I
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

DATE 2008

DATE:

13 Nov 53

TO : [REDACTED] AIR FORCE, NEW YORK

SUBJECT: GENERAL - SECURITY

SPECIFIC - Veterans Affairs

REF: CJA-6261

P. 17

1. Attached hereto is a copy of a recent report
on Japanese veteran organizations prepared by JICOU.

2. The attached document and the DIAATT tape were submitted to
FBI for fulfillment of their responsibility to analyze and evaluate
all pertinent situations. No specific recommendations were made for further
dissemination at this time.

3. We have recently learned that the Central Security Service
is preparing a full study of the veterans complex. We will
forward the report when received in view of your continued interest
in this subject.

2 - FOB (w/att)

13 Nov 53

Jan 20
Jan 21
Jan 22

CONFIDENTIAL COPY
EX-1
EX-2
EX-3
EX-4
EX-5

HICOG - BONN

70

July 6, 1953

6264

~~GERMAN WAR VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES~~

The following report reflects the opinion and the thinking of the several veterans' organizations and of various Federal Government officials interested in veterans' affairs. The factual data have been obtained from the organizations themselves, the Blank Office, and the Ministry of Interior, Office for the Protection of the Constitution. It is to be noted that exact membership numbers were in most cases unavailable since the organizations themselves are unsure of their exact number and are inclined to exaggerate it. The government has been unable to obtain correct figures and has made round estimates on the basis of information at hand.

TRADITIONAL SOCIAL FACTORS

In considering the veterans' associations in Germany, it is necessary to understand some of the social forces behind them in order to more properly estimate their growth and importance. Western Germany with a population of 50 million has 30 million of her people in cities and towns with populations of 50,000 and under. In this population majority are hundreds of smaller towns of varying size, and it is in the 'Ortschaften' of 10,000 and under where the 'Kriegerverbände' (veterans' associations) derive their greatest strength.

For generations before the last war in all those 'Ortschaften' of rural and suburban Germany, as well as in small cities, a man, if he were not entirely unacceptable socially, was a member of one of the traditionally social organizations: the 'Feuerwehr', (volunteer fire department); the 'Schutzenverein', (sports clubs); (or 'Turnverein', gym clubs, depending on the locality); or the 'Kriegerverband', (veterans' association). Of these organizations, the veterans' group was one of the most important and in some regions certainly the strongest. The 'Schutzenverein' and the 'Turnverein' distribution was influenced somewhat by religious denomination, and membership was also more expensive. The 'Feuerwehr' was, of course, specialized and thus restricted, whereas the veterans' organization enjoyed a greater overall membership and basked in the glory of a military state where, even in the complex and rigid German social structure, a 2nd Lieutenant was on a social par with the 'Oberbürgermeister'. Their membership growth during the 1920's and early 1930's was, however, restricted as a result of the abolition of conscription in the Weimar Republic.

At the present time there is an apparent lack of interest in veterans' associations on the part of the rank and file ex-soldier since, with the

PAZIA:David E. Wright/JMB

RESTRICTED

T-1 to EGQA-29427

dislocations of the last war and the proceeding 6 years of Adolf Hitler's national socialism which, through all its auxiliary organizations made so many demands on the average German's free time, that the basic family life, important to all peoples and particularly to the German, was largely neglected for a period of 12 years. This average German is now paramountly interested in putting his house in order, reestablishing his family and overcoming his present post-war economic problems. For this reason he is so busy that the old social order with its traditional soldiers' 'Vereine' does not have the attraction it once did. Most veterans are so fed to the tooth with military life, having served in World War II (and many in the Third Reich pro-war conscription and Reichsarbeitsdienst - Labor Duty - as well) that they want no part of the veteran soldiers' organizations to remind them of unpleasant memories, and wasted time and opportunity. (This, of course, does not hold true for the veterans' welfare groups organized to get full pensions or reimbursement for war cripples and war damages.) Thus, the majority of the members today in the existing organizations are ex-officers or that type of person whose war service appealed to him or benefitted him.

As evidence of this lack of interest on the part of so many German veterans it is noted that out of the 10 million German veterans of World War I and II, it is estimated that less than 8 per cent are organised in the real veterans' soldiers' organizations whose traditional purpose is to foster soldierly comradeship and relive old memories of fight and glory. However, the German Federal Government, in observing the newly-organized groups, realizes that once this average German straightens out his economic and family problems, he will return to his 'Verein' and 'Stammtisch', and therefore the Government desires to foster the development of politically healthy organizations.

The reason behind this is that owing to the organizational nature of the veteran groups, they present one of the most effective methods the Government could use to place its policies before the broad strata of the German people from the large cities to the smallest hamlets, and cover a wide social range. It is only in these veterans' gatherings where the German Farmer or mason can sit and exchange views over a glass of beer with the property owner or the Landrat.

For this reason the Government does not want extreme leftist or rightist elements to gain control of the veterans and is urging the groups either to merge into one confederation, or support an overall roof organization so they may block any extremist organization which might flare up, and also that they may become an effective information and propaganda disseminating instrument more easily controlled from Bonn. The government desires to avoid another 1919 where the Stahlhelm rightists with their black, white and red banner fought in the streets against the Communists' Spartacus group, and the Republicans joined in the fight with their black-red-gold banded veterans.

GENERAL TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS

Veterans' organizations in Western Germany may be grouped into three categories, namely:

1. General, over-all veterans' organizations,
2. Traditional soldiers' organizations,
3. Special interest organizations and welfare groups.

General, over-all type

Under the general, over-all type of veterans' organizations are the following:

1. Verband Deutscher Soldaten (and Verbandsverband ehemaliger Wehrmachtsangehörige und ihrer Hinterbliebenen (VDS/BW)), League of German Soldiers/Association of former members of the army entitled to pensions and their surviving dependents.

Membership: 100,000 (VDS figures)

Chairman: Admiral E.D. Gottfried Hansen, Kiel, WIS, HQS Bonn

Periodical: "Die Deutsche Soldatenzeitung" (Edition A & B see below)

2. Reichskriegerbund Kyffhäuser, Berlin Veterans Organization Kyffhäuser

Membership: 50 - 60,000

Chairman: General a.D. F. Reinhardt, HQS Bonn

Periodical: Der Kyffhäuser (Presently out of print but to begin soon)

3. Stahlhelm, Berlin Veterans Organization (Stahlhelm) Organization of Front Soldiers

Membership: 42,000

Chairman: Professor Dr. Lehmann, HQS Bonn-Schloss postf. 1000, Rüdersdorf

Periodical: Der Stahlhelm (Presently out of print)

4. Deutscher Frontkämpferbund, German Front Soldiers Association

Membership: small - insignificant

Chairman: General Fritz Geyr von Schweppenburg, Munich

Capt. Carsten Ritter, Seegers, Hamburg-Blankenese

Aside from fostering comradeship and assisting each other, the above organizations have as their broad goals some or all of the following aims:

1. Release of German soldiers sentenced by War Crimes Courts excepting those which German courts would acknowledge as definite war criminals.

2. Payment by the Government of the professional soldier's pension.

RESTRICTED

(Only 20% - 30% of the full amount is now being paid and that only to those who are unable to work.)

3. Obtain positions in new German army contingent for former professional soldiers.
4. Eliminate the defamnation of the German soldier.
5. Promote SDC and campaign for army for defense against east.

Traditional Organizations

No exact membership data can be obtained on the traditional organizations, but the government estimates that the divisional groups number approximately 2 - 5,000 members each and the regimental groups number about 1,000 each. Nevertheless, all the traditional organizations together do not exceed the total membership of the VDS and the Kyffhaeuser Bund. There are also many dual memberships among the two categories. Some have been like veterans which flared into existence after the war and have become extinct just as quickly.

The traditional soldiers' organizations which endeavor to unite veterans who served together or had common interests during the war are the following:

1. Grossdeutschland

Gen. a.D. H. Spindler, Berlin
Gen. a.D. v. Mantua, Nienburg/Weser
Membership: 3 - 5,000

2. Afrika Korps

Gen. a.D. Cruewell, Essen-Stettwald
Gen. a.D. v. Isenbeck, Iserlohn
Membership: 4 - 8,000
Periodical: "Die Gasse"

3. Verband der Fliegorkorpsangehörigen

Kahlenberg, Lübeck

4. Verband der Kraftfahrtruppen

Gen. Gutzeit, Hamburg-Othmarschen

5. Verband der technischen Truppen

Oberst a.D. Langhans, nad Reichenhall *miss/w LANGHANS, Hermann* GS
(Sree. con...)

6. Verband der Nebeltruppen

Gen. v. Blumenthal, Celle

REPRINT COPY
REPRINT COPY
REPRINT COPY
REPRINT COPY
REPRINT COPY

RESTRICTED

-5-

7. Kameradschaftsbund der Wehrmachtkskraftsfahrer

W. Jenke, Hamburg, Blankenesse

8. Notgemeinschaft ehemaliger Jagdflieger

G. P. Eder, Frankfurt/Main

9. Vereinigung ehemaliger Verwaltungsoffiziere, Association of former Administrative officers

R. Bobbe, Landau/Pfale

10. Zentralverband der Berufssubroffizier, Central Association of professional non-commissioned officers

Elsenschank, Niederaett

11. Gemeinschaft Deutscher Ritterkreuzträger - "Hilfswerk Ritterkreuz", Association of German Knights' Cross Bearers "Knight's Cross Relief Work"

Membership: 50 at its height - now defunct

12. Bund der Träger der Lufttechnik, Association of military technicians

13. Fallschirmjaeger

Oberstleutnant Jantzen, Wittenberg a.d. Lühe

Membership: 4 - 6,000

Periodical: "Die grünen Engel", Hamburg "Der Deutsche Fallschirmjaeger"

14. Kameradschaftsbund ehemaliger Flakabteilungen

Gen. Spiess, Düsseldorf, Spenge, C.P.

Feldwebel H. Wedel, Hamburg

15. 3 Panzer Division

Gen. Pers, Düsseldorf

16. 11 Panzer Division

Gen. v. Wieterheim, Berlin

- (A.M. 1. T.G.)
- 116
17. 23 Inf. Div.
Gen. Lt. Rauggener, Harlinrode/Nordharz
18. 26 Panzer Div.
Graf Bernstorff ✓
19. 116 Panzer Div. (Mardhund Div.),
K. Schuemann, Bochum
Gen. Graf Schwerin, Bonn
20. 7 Panzer Div.
Dr. E. Raen, Bochum
21. Pioniere
Gen. Thiemann, Bruchhausen-Vilsen
22. Reiter 14.
Gen. Kahler, Hamburg
23. Inf. Rgt. 69,
Oberstlt. von Werthern, Hamburg ✓ V-12858 pass id/w
24. Inf. Rgt. 90
Gen. v. Holzendorff, Hamburg-Langendorf
25. Kameradschaft der Kavallerie
Phil v. Boeselager, Kreuzberg ✓
26. Verband der Heeresgruppe Mitte
Phil v. Boeselager, Kreuzberg ✓
27. 1 Panzer Div.
Phillip
28. Inf. Rgt. 40,
Hermann Wulff, Burg-Ohsdorf

RESTRICTED

-12-

WAFFEN SS ORGANIZATIONS

WAFFEN SS

The Waaffen SS is in a much more favorable position now than it was right after the war when the Nuremberg War Criminals Tribunal declared it a criminal organization. In the first post-war years the former leaders and members of the SS, if not in allied internment camps, kept quietly in the background. After 1949 they cautiously started a rehabilitation campaign, directly and indirectly. Their policy and development advanced in the following stages:

- a. Campaign for the rehabilitation of their "honor" and against the alleged "war crimes". This was done by rightest papers as well as by the veterans' organizations, i.e., the VDG, whose organ, the "Deutsche Soldatenzeitung", is published by former SS General Steinor. Their arguments were largely identical with those used in the "release-the-war-criminals campaign":
 - a. the so-called "Korea argument", that certain phases of war make drastic measures against guerrillas necessary.
 - b. Allies vs. Bolshevism - The SS were the first to erect a bulwark against Bolshevism.
 - c. SS were first to practice unity of Europeans.
 - d. Difference between Waaffen SS and the "Allgemeine SS" stressed. Thousands were conscripted into the SS and had no choice as to service.

They have been trying to obtain the same treatment in respect to jobs, pensions, and status as civil servants as the other Wehrmacht veterans and professional soldiers who are accorded under Article 131 of the basic Law. The SS was exempted in the first legislative act on the settlement of claims under Article 131. An amendment to this exemption is now being sought.

The Blank Office estimates that during the war there were 950,000 Waaffen SS, of which approximately 300,000 full or are still prisoners of Russia which leaves about 600,000 scattered around Germany. They have organized the HAG, derived from Hilfsschmiede auf Gegenseitigkeit, (mutual benefit association). The HAG consists of various centers in larger cities where former Waaffen SS can come for assistance. The largest of these is in Munich and Hamburg. It is estimated by the government that of these remaining 600,000 only about 5,000 are organized in the HAG.

The Federal Government has already given them some recognition, as have other veterans associations, and is concerned particularly about the younger SS members, because exertions are constantly being made to them from the East Zone to become East Zone Volkspolizie, and some have gone over. The Waaffen SS has a periodical called the "Wiking-Ruf" published in Hannover and whose main purpose is reportedly

for supporting the missing persons search service and relief work. Recently meetings by Wallon SS showed new tactics of showing "loyalty" which seems to be their "Realpolitik". They do not want to be known as extreme rightists and hope to be considered for jobs in the future army. Charges that they were in contact with the Raumann group and his Nazi Fuehrungsring were denied by SS Generals Eillo and Hauser.

III. Fuehrungsring Ehemaliger Soldaten

The Communist efforts to infiltrate veterans' organizations and to win them for the "Ohne mich" movement started right after Korea. A Communist-front veteran organization was founded called the "Fuehrungsring ehemaliger Soldaten", (Leading Ring of former Soldiers). Their influence has not been any too great and is decreasing in the same proportion as the support of the Government by the veterans is increasing. At its height it had only a few hundred people who appeared publicly and no exact figure is known.

TO DEFENDS TO UNITE

At the present time the more important veteran organizations of all three groups have already formed a loose, working committee which meets regularly to discuss problems, mutual aims and working procedures. This loose confederation founded in 1953 is called "Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kriegsopfer und Kriegsinvalidenverbaende" (Working Association of War Invalid and War Veterans' Organizations). Member organizations of this "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" are the Afrika-Korps, VdK, BKKK, Kyffhaeuser, VDS/BW, RAD and the Jagdflieger groups. The Stahlhelm has applied for entrance into the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" but has been refused until it can prove its non-political character.

The "Arbeitsgemeinschaft" has issued public statements that it is not a preparatory step to an overall "roof" organization for veterans' societies, nor will it become one under an assumed name. At its last meeting the members set out as their mutual tasks the following:

1. Support the relief of war invalids, late returnees and professional soldiers through their respective organizations.
2. Use all means to bring about and hasten the return of war prisoners and unjustly sentenced war criminals.
3. Support the German Red Cross missing persons search service.
4. Support the grave care service.

In a previous meeting this organization also dropped from their aims the task of removing the so-called defamation from the German soldier.