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The Case of Ernst WORM

1. Herein is described the circumstances leading up to the chance discovery of a possible ~~Eastern Intelligence Service~~ ^{hostile} penetration of the BND and subsequent developments.

2. Events began in September 1952. The BND somewhat reluctantly accepted the principle that the lie detector machine ^{might have some merit as} represents an important operational tool and, less reluctantly, accepted the German Station's offer of lie detector training for selected BND personnel. At this time arrangements were being made between a ~~senior~~ ^{senior} CIA lie detector technician and Ernst WORM, BND/CE chief of Czech operations for interrogation of a suspect CSR agent. The interrogation proved ~~an entire~~ ^{ful} success and resulted in the confession of this agent that he had indeed been ~~originally~~ sent from the CSR with instructions to be recruited by a western intelligence service. This success was attributed mainly to WORM, who was viewed by participants as the only person capable of breaking this agent. In order to bring ~~this particular case to a~~ ^{the} ~~successful~~ ^{final} conclusion, WORM suggested that a second lie detector examination be held on this agent. (It was apparent that WORM was quite taken with the results of the test.) The German Station, with the hopes of impressing the BND even more on lie detector techniques, suggested that WORM again act as ~~interpreter in this~~ ^{interviewer} case, and that he (WORM), if agreeable, submit to a lie detector test as a routine procedure ~~for interrogators~~. WORM accepted.

3. Before proceeding ^{next phase of this narrative} into the ~~interrogation phase of WORM~~, ^{it} ~~might be well to say a few words about WORM and his background;~~ ^{a biographical outline follows:}

Ernst Ferdinand WORM was born on 25 April 1907 in Obergrund/CSR, near Warnsdorf. He was one of three sons. His father having died in 1915, WORM claims that his mother and two brothers were expelled from the Sudeten area in 1946, their present whereabouts ~~are~~ unknown. Little is known of his education but his employment as of 1939-1945 was Director of Elektrotechnische Fabriken, Schmidt and Co. GmbH, with plants in Tetschen and Bodenbach. This firm

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employed several thousand people, and its chief product was electrical insulators. WORM had no military service attributing this fact to a chronic affliction of both legs which he allegedly suffered ^{during the period} from 1937 to 1947. In addition his position as director of a war industry provided him with exemption. Political background: WORM joined the Sudetendeutsche Partei in 1934 and automatically became an NSDAP candidate in November 1938 when the ^PSP merged ^{with} into the NSDAP. (A Berlin Documents Center check shows that WORM became a party member on 1 November 1938.) ~~As far as is known, no one could join the party except by individual application.~~

On 3 October 1940 WORM joined the SS and became a second lieutenant, and was decorated by the RSHA on 3 January 1944. Since July 1942 he had been an Aussenstellenleiter (district director) of the SD. Languages: English, German, Czech, Slovakian, French, Russian, Polish, and other Eastern European tongues. Post 1945: WORM claims he was arrested in May 1945 by Czech police and turned over to the Russians. He offers no explanation of why he did not flee west with his family, which could easily have been accomplished during this hectic period. He remained in detention until October, when he was released because of heart symptoms which, he claims, he induced for the purpose. Because the interrogations produced nothing ~~damaging~~ (WORM claims to have gained the upper hand, psychologically, with his interrogator), and because he was in bad physical shape, he was released to the East Zone with a warning not to return. At this time WORM crossed into the West Zone illegally for the ^{purpose of} finding his family. After an unsuccessful attempt to establish a ^{business for livelihood} ~~working shop~~, he joined the BND in 1947 rising to the position of department chief concerned with Czech operations.

4. On 8 October 1952 WORM was met for the purpose of conducting a lie detector test. This test was to be merely a routine one with no "curves" thrown because ^{was} of the fact that it ~~consisted of~~ the first lie detector test of a BND staff member. The intention was to impress WORM (and the BND) on the ^{capabilities of the machine} ~~attitude of the test~~, and to ask only the routine questions on his background and the necessary security questions to comply with the regulations on prior testing of interpreters. There was no intention to "catch" WORM, but rather the expectation that he would run a clean test and be duly impressed.

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However, WORM's recorded reaction to the test was immediate, obvious, and startling in spite of the convincingly calm outward appearance which WORM was able to maintain. He indicated from the beginning a very excited state, and later all the manifestations of a state of shock.

5. Each of three tests showed a distinct peak of tension point at the critical question on association with an enemy intelligence service. On these questions each time WORM's reply of "no" was accompanied by distinct lie reaction typical of WORM on all three factors measured by the machine. Some ^{of} these questions were: Are you an espionage agent of STB, Russians, or other Communists?, Did you ever do secret work for STB, Russians, or other Communists?, Since 1945 have you committed murder, robbery, or other serious criminal crime?, Is there a lie in this life-history that you have written?.

6. The examiner then had a decision to make: If he were to begin pressure and cross-interrogation, WORM would presumably admit nothing of importance. He would then, however, be entirely aware that he had reacted in a suspicious way and might ~~seize~~ seize the first opportunity to escape, unless the examiner were to make an arrest (which he was not authorized to do), assuming that WORM is an active enemy agent and not merely worried about a very bad past history. The examiner, convinced that he would have to let WORM go anyway, decided to help him convince himself that he (WORM) is untestable, or, at any rate, that there are no serious suspicions against him. WORM was, therefore, ~~suspicious against him~~ simply let go, and the risk was taken that he might escape before more favorable conditions were established to proceed against him. However, on the following day he was promptly on hand and had obviously rested himself thoroughly. A couple of days later, however, WORM appeared at a meeting (called upon his ^{instance} ~~instance~~) somewhat haggard and quite tired and explained that he had had only a few hours sleep in the last several days. This suggested the possibility that WORM had begun to have second thoughts concerning his success with the machine, and was anxious for an early meeting in order to observe any possible change in attitude on the part of the Americans.

7. At this point discussions were held with certain high level members of the BND concerning this case. They appeared reluctant to do anything regarding WORM, having no faith in lie detector results. Herr SCHAAK (a former superior of WORM) stated that no further investigation ^{was} possible or feasible, and ^{that} he (SCHAAK) ^{would} ~~will~~ approach WORM on the basis of mutual confidence, and request clarification on an honor basis. ^{Vertrauen gegen Vertrauen!!} After further discussions between CIA, ~~Herr~~ GEHLEN (Chief, BND) and Herr SCHAAK, this proposal was dismissed as unrealistic, and a program of limitation and strict compartmentation of WORM's operations and knowledge of the BND was proposed. In addition, a careful investigation of WORM's past and present operations and of his personal movements was to be instigated.

8. However, ^{it was clear} that little was being accomplished: As late as August 1953 the following is quoted from Chief of Base, Pullach: "The BND is footdragging. It is perfectly clear that they want us to leave this case in their hands. . . . Conversations between POB and the top level of BND. . . have produced nothing. We are now at a definite impasse."

9. Headquarters reasoned in October 1953 the possibility that ~~Herr~~ GEHLEN may himself have strong suspicions about WORM but intends to play along with him as an excellent channel through which to pass perhaps really important deception material to the opposition at some later date. Herr GEHLEN could easily reason that whatever high-level personality or organizational information WORM possesses has already been passed, and if WORM is kept screened from sensitive material in the future, there is little more to be lost. WORM has not nor has he had (excluding one operation) any operations worthy of note, and his control agent (if he has one) would certainly allow the low level type operations that WORM now engages in to run unmolested to protect what he considers a high level, long range penetration of the German Intelligence Service.

10. In this vein the case drags on. In October 1955 it is reported that, eventually confronted by the BND with the test results, WORM, by an unexplained sickness which almost immediately seized him, effectively delayed interrogation efforts for months. During this time independent Pullach Base sources indicate WORM ^{was} ~~to be~~ increasingly active in questionable East/West trading activities, and ^{had} ~~has recently~~ been on ostensible business trips behind the Iron Curtain. It ^{could not} ~~cannot~~ be determined whether the BND ^{was} ~~is~~ aware of these trips.

11. It ^{was} ~~is~~ reported in October 1958 that WORM ^{was} ~~is now~~ connected with the BND complex in Munich.

12. In January 1962 a BND source reports that WORM is still working for the BND. This source ~~indicated that he had checked and~~ learned that at the time CIA had voiced earlier suspicions of WORM, BND made a serious security investigation, the results of which filled several Leitz notebooks. The results had been negative; it was clear that WORM had a number of weak spots in his background, that he had lied on occasion, and that he was not exactly a prince among men, but there had been nothing whatever turned up indicating the possibility of Eastern connections.

13. Then after a lapse of nearly three years a dispatch was received from Copenhagen which reported information [] the Danish Security Service who had been entertaining some BND officers who had come to Copenhagen in connection with a BND double-agent case run against the Czechs. One of these officers (not identified) became quite drunk and revealed to source details concerning this case. The case had been active for some time and involved a Czech citizen working for the CIS, who was frequently sent to the West on missions. This agent had at some time in the past been doubled by the BND and was now reporting to his BND case officer about his missions to the West on behalf of the CIS. The BND made an analysis of this case to determine whether to continue it (it had not been particularly worthwhile) or take some further action against the agent. Apparently this analysis made some senior BND officers conclude that most probably the double agent was not being run by his BND case officer but rather the Czech double agent was running the BND officer, i.e., the alleged missions

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to the West were only a cover for the CIS (or possibly RIS) to remain in contact with the BND officer, a recruited CIS agent. The drunken BND officer at this point explained that a number of years ago the AIS reported to the BND that the BND officer in question was a suspected CIS agent. However, in view of the lack of details in the AIS report the BND had dismissed the charges and not until the analysis of this case did the BND have any reason to suspect this BND officer. The BND now found itself in the embarrassing position where they had decided to disregard an AIS warning and now found that the AIS was probably correct. ~~This case had been going on for many years, and this was the 34th meeting between the BND officer and the CIS agent.~~ Source had the impression that the BND had not revealed their conclusions to the AIS and did not plan to do so until it had been established whether the BND officer was really under enemy control.

14. In subsequent correspondence between Headquarters, Munich and ~~it was relatively~~ ^{not likely} established that the BND officer in question was WORM. Further correspondence continued on ways and means of mounting an audio operation and surveillance of ~~the~~ ^a meeting between the CIS agent and his Czech Embassy contact in Copenhagen. ~~the~~

the BND, who are conducting their own operation. This next meeting is planned for 20 March 1965. The BND has been conducting an audio operation on this case with borrowed CIA equipment, which, ^{they explained} when borrowed, was to be used in a sensitive double agent case.

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