Fascicolo Speciale 2021

Intelligence militare, guerra clandestina e Operazioni Speciali

a cura di
GÉRALD ARBOIT

German Intelligence Partnerships
in the Early Cold War[1]
The American Intelligence Godfathers

by Wolfgang Krieger

ABSTRACT. West German intelligence partnerships with the United States, France and Britain started in 1946 when the Americans began to use a small group of ex-Wehrmacht officers led by ex-General Reinhard Gehlen to keep tabs on the Soviet military. A few years later a fast growing operation served as a base for German rearmament and for influencing German politics. The French joined as early as 1947, while the British waited until 1954 to make use of the „Gehlen Organization" as it was called. In the end, it was the Germans who benefitted the most by getting access to Allied secrets and by smoothing their way into NATO.

KEYWORDS. WEST GERMANY, BRITAIN, FRANCE, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, SOVIET UNION, INTELLIGENCE, CIA.

After the defeat of Nazi Germany, the beginnings of West German intelligence partnerships with the United States, France and Britain preceded those at the political, military and economic level. They got started ahead of German participation in the Marshall Plan (1948), in the western political camp (1948/1950) and in NATO (1955). A large foreign and military intelligence service, staffed by several thousand Germans and led by American intelligence, existed long before West Germany was allowed to have its own military and its own foreign policy. How did this come about? And what is its historic significance?

Before we enter into the chronology of this remarkable story, we need to be

---

1   This study is based on research carried out by the author while he was a member of the Independent Historians' Commission for the History of the Bundesnachrichten-dienst (BND) which existed from 2011 to 2018. The author had special access to the BND Archive (abbreviated here as BNDA) which is not open to the general public. It is, however, possible to ask the BND for the declassification of specific documents by writing to the Historisches Büro, Bundesnachrichtendienst, 10115 Berlin, Germany.

clear about the difference between intelligence partnerships and other types of intelligence relations at the international level. To begin with, intelligence partnerships are difficult to fathom empirically because they are heavily protected from public view even by those services which declassify some of their records - usually after 50 years or more - or commission official histories. Indeed, it is by looking at some recent official histories that we can fathom the degree to which such partnerships are kept out of sight as far as the general public and, by extension, historical research is concerned.

Take for example one of the most recent British intelligence histories, "Behind the Enigma. The Authorised History of GCHQ. Britain's Secret Cyber-Intelligence Agency" by Canadian historian John Ferris (University of Calgary), published in 2020.[2] It starts with an overview of modern British SIGINT collection beginning in 1844, then moves on to the two world wars and eventually devotes about two thirds of its text to the postwar era for which the author was granted special access to classified material. But he was not allowed to see any files after 1992 and before that year his access to records concerning GCHQ cooperation among the "Five Eyes" (Britain, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) was tightly limited. All joint operations were excluded as well as most sources and methods on SIGINT generally. Also exempted were intelligence relations with other foreign partner services.[3]

To be sure, the "Five Eyes" have been described in many scholarly books and articles, but the source base of most accounts is fragmentary, often using circumstantial evidence rather than solid archival material. Even the founding agreement signed on 5 March 1946 has only been available to the public since 2010.

The reasons for keeping intelligence partnerships under wraps are all too obvious. Such partnerships are based on written agreements which specify that the joint activities are to be handled by all participating services under the so-called "third party rule". This means that no political authority, no service and certainly no one in the private sector may be informed of its content or, in some cases, even of its existence. A participating service is not even allowed to pass on information

---

2   John Ferris, *Behind the Enigma. The Authorised History of GCHQ. Britain's Secret Cyber-Intelligence Agency*, London 2020.

3   Mark Stout, «Interview with *G*CHQ Official Historian Dr. John Ferris (conducted on 10 January 2018)», in: *Newsletter - The North American Society for Intelligence History* 2/2018, 5-8.

gained under such an agreement to its own national parliament or to a sister intelligence service in its own country. It is therefore not up to a single participating country or service to make public any information about or relating to intelligence partnerships unless all partners were to commission a joint official history or agree to a joint opening of related archival materials. But this has not happened so far.

Typically, intelligence partnerships originate from one of three circumstances: military alliance, geography or ideological fraternity. No further explanation is needed to explain why states which collaborate militarily also seek to do so by linking their intelligence services though in historical terms one finds a surprising hesitation to do so. Until the era of the Great War it was by no means common to share intelligence with one's comrades in arms on the battlefield. There is, however, that remarkable incident of the "Zimmermann telegram" of early 1917, when the British used an intercepted German cable to help get the United States into the war.[4]

Geography was no doubt paramount in bringing Norway into a close relationship with the aforementioned British-American SIGINT alliance because of northern Norway's proximity to the Soviet Union's Murmansk naval base.[5] The same is true of Australia's Five Eyes membership because of the relative proximity to China.

---
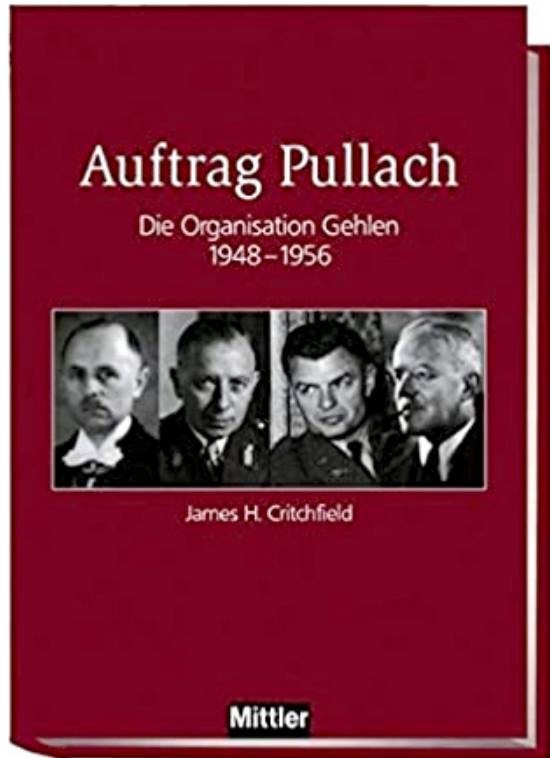
4   Thomas BOGHARDT, *The Zimmermann Telegram. Intelligence, diplomacy, and America's entry into World War I*, Annapolis 2012.

5   Olav RISTE, *The Norwegian Intelligence Service, 1945 –1970*, London 1999.

What is here called ideological fraternity should be seen in its wider historical context. For there are essentially two distinct models which came to dominate international intelligence relations in the 20th century: the Bolshevik model which accompanied the rise and fall of the Soviet empire, and the western model still in existence today.

As is well known, the Bolshevik revolution was originally intended to serve as a vast bushfire which would rapidly spread all around the capitalist world. For this purpose communist parties were founded throughout the developed world and joined together by the "Third" (or communist) International (also known as Comintern) which was to enforce common political objectives and provide an organisational structure for keeping party members in line with those objectives. Those principles were spelt out in 1920 in Lenin's "21 conditions" of membership which were formally adopted by the Third International at their second world congress. While the word secret intelligence appeared nowhere in that document it was quite clear that both the Comintern and the member parties established such practices in order to identify and combat not only external enemies of communism but also to spy on its own followers, delegates and party officials. To enforce strict compliance, "the Center", i.e., the communist headquarters in Moscow, implanted its confidants inside the leadership of the national CPs. Furthermore, during its existence, the Comintern acted as Moscow's foreign intelligence service with the license to kill dissidents such as Leon Trotsky and many more.

The practice of secret surveillance and punishment came to be amply documented, mostly by dissidents and exiles, since the early days of communism. It was more formally institutionalised after 1945 when the Soviets controlled eastern Europe and implanted communist regimes which had to follow Moscow's party line. Each of those countries established intelligence and security services which were "the sword and shield" of communist rule and were under tight control by Soviet intelligence. In this way a system of "fraternal services" functioned as intelligence partnerships of a kind, namely as hegemonic intelligence partnerships.

In contrast with Soviet-style partnerships, the British-American intelligence collaboration emerged from the wartime coalition, more precisely from the founding of the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) on 14 January 1942, only days after America's entry into World War II. After the war ended in 1945 there was considerable discussion before the CCS was eventually dissolved on 14 October

1949. The Americans hoped to establish a multinational military staff under the United Nations but without discontinuing their close intelligence partnership with Britain, which was formally based on the UKUSA Agreement signed on 5 March 1946, itself a continuation of the BRUSA Agreement of 17 May 1943 which linked up the respective technical intelligence services. Eventually this alliance came to include Australia, Canada and New Zealand in the inner circle of the "Five Eyes" as well as second-tier members like Denmark, West Germany, Norway and several others for reasons of their geography and specialised competency and, indeed, for their ideological closeness in NATO and in other military alliances (South Korea, Japan etc.). Not much is known about the inner workings of those relationships but two things are obvious: They are voluntary partnerships and they are not formalized under NATO or any other military alliance or international organisation but are governed strictly on the basis of bilateral treaties which in turn are essentially focussed on SIGINT collaboration.

Outside of these two types of intelligence partnerships there are all sorts of other cooperative relationships and exchanges between intelligence services that are usually not based on ideological affinity but rather on regional expertise or on the existence of common adversaries. Even political adversaries such as the United States and Vladimir Putin's Russia cooperate from time to time, for example on international terrorism or on other issues of shared interest. But these ad-hoc relations need not concern us here as we focus on the emergence of intelligence partnerships between West Germany and three victor powers of World War II: the United States, France and Britain.

At the beginning, the Americans simply responded to a small group of ex-Wehrmacht officers led by ex-General Reinhard Gehlen who offered to do intelligence work for them. At that point, just after the collapse of Nazi Germany, many Germans were eager to work for the Allied powers, particularly for the Americans and the British, who employed them in all sorts of service and clerical jobs. But Gehlen's people were prisoners of war and, given their wartime intelligence work on the eastern front, were eagerly sought by Soviet intelligence commandos. Therefore, a certain degree of collusion between Gehlen's people and American military intelligence was needed to get the project started, let alone to make it work in the longer term.[6]

---

6 For further information, references and an extensive bibliography, see Wolfgang

Maj gen Edwin L. Sibert (1897-1977)

Gehlen offered not only a network of people but also a considerable amount of source materials and items captured from the Soviets which he had managed to transfer, during the last weeks of the war, from eastern Germany to the Bavarian alps. To be sure, the idea of colluding with ex-Wehrmacht personnel against the Soviet wartime allies was a hard sell even among US military intelligence, but the collection of war booty and the debriefing of higher German officers appeared to be a matter of routine. Eventually a decision was made by General Edwin L. Sibert, chief of US military intelligence in Europe, to transfer Gehlen and six of his associates to Fort Hunt (near Washington DC) where they would produce a number of studies based on their wartime experiences. Those studies were meant to feed into a massive history of the German-Russian war of 1941 to 1945 undertaken by Colonel John R. Lovell, chief of analysis of captured German documents at the War Department and former deputy military attaché in Germany. At the same time, their studies served to establish a German-staffed intelligence outfit which came to be established in the vicinity of Frankfurt/Main. After their return from Fort Hunt in July 1946, the Gehlen group and a growing additional staff were joined by another outfit, led by Hermann Baun, a former

---

Krieger, Partnerdienste. Die Beziehungen des BND zu den westlichen Geheimdiensten 1946-1968, Berlin 2021. The early German-American Intelligence relationship is amply documented in: Kevin C. Ruffner, (ed), *Forging an Intelligence Partnership. CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1945 – 49. A Documentary History*, 2 vols., Washington 1999; Kevin C. Ruffner (ed), *Forging an Intelligence Partnership. CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1949 – 56. A Documentary History*, 2 vols, Washington 2006. They are abbreviated below as Ruffner I and Ruffner II.

Wehrmacht Colonel, whose "Information Group" had already started in January 1946 to listen to Soviet military wireless traffic and was later authorised to spy on Soviet forces in central Europe, partly by reviving wartime agent networks.

This was still very far from an intelligence partnership. The Americans simply used the opportunity to benefit from the Wehrmacht's knowledge of the Soviet armed forces and armament industries about which they knew very little while the Germans had been military allies of the Soviets between 1922 and 1941 and had fought deep inside Soviet territory thereafter. In addition, they used the Gehlen-Baun units to engage in counterintelligence activities by identifying and observing a fast-growing number of Germans who were communists or communist-sympathisers or were simply suspected of such activities. While Gehlen hesitated at first, it was Baun who rapidly established an agent network to this effect, often engaging men who had formerly belonged to the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) under Heinrich Himmler with a record of deep involvement in Nazi war crimes. Both those anti-communist activities and the recruitment of

proven or suspected war criminals have by now been documented in great detail and need no further discussion here, except to confirm that the Americans were fully aware of their record and that neither Gehlen nor Baun had any objections to employing such people.[7]

By 1946, Operation Rusty, as it was called, counted several hundred members and 500 to 600 sources in Germany's Soviet zone of occupation. Those numbers are difficult to verify but it is clear that the Americans had a management problem. Due to the rapid demobilization of the American army, US military intelligence in Europe was obviously ill-equipped to deal with such a large network which was itself poorly organised, partly subverted by the Soviets and spread out over a large number of stations throughout Germany and Austria. A US report submitted in March 1947 by Samuel B. Bossard, a young professor of German studies turned intelligence officer with the wartime OSS, estimated the grand total of people working for "Rusty" at somewhere between 2.500 and 3.000 persons with a budget of 15 US dollars per head / per month.[8] Baun's part alone counted some 700 sources, drawn mostly from his wartime networks around eastern Europe and Georgia plus 800 recruited from anti-communist Russian emigrés all around western Germany.

Bossard recommended to dissolve the Russian network as well as some of the other circles and to discharge Rusty agents with a criminal Nazi background. But he did not only point out the bad side of Rusty. He also highlighted its usefulness to US military intelligence collection and pointed out the dangers of dissolving this "German underground movement" which might well turn itself into a clandestine guerrilla force if suddenly abandoned. In the end, General Robert L. Wash, the new head of G-2 EUCOM, decided in June 1947 to keep Rusty under his wings, albeit in a somewhat down-sized form. Its headquarters of about 300 staff were moved to Pullach, a suburb of Munich, in December 1947. A year later, Colonel James Critchfield took over "Pullach Operations Base", which was in charged of overseeing what came to be called the "Gehlen Organisation" (Org) and turned into the Bundesnachrichtendienst on April 1, 1956.

---

7   Wolfgang Krieger, Andreas Hilger, Holger M. Meding (eds), *Die Auslandsaufklärung des BND*, Berlin 2021; Sabrina Nowack, *Sicherheitsrisiko NS-Belastung. Personalüberprüfungen im Bundesnachrichtendienst in den 1960er Jahren*, Berlin 2016.

8   Krieger, Partnerdienste, pp. 66-71.

Critchfield was undoubtedly the American mastermind behind this evolution from a spying network of American POWs to the leading intelligence organisation of the nascent West German republic. Bringing the Org, in July 1949, under the control of the as yet budding CIA was his achievement as was the decision to turn it into a service for both military and foreign (civilian) intelligence which would eventually be handed over to the West German government under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. Critchfield had at his disposal a staff of about 30 officers plus supporting clerical staff who were located on the Pullach compound, right next to Gehlen' headquarters. After a brilliant army career during the campaigns in North Africa, Italy, France and Germany, he had transferred to US military intelligence in Austria before arriving at the Pullach base in late 1948.

At the same time one should not underestimate the persistence and cunning of Reinhard Gehlen who had a poorly organised "service" on his hands, who was exposed to severe criticism from his collaborators - especially from Hermann Baun, who sought to make separate deals with the Americans - and from his American superiors. Undoubtedly, the mounting conflicts between the western powers and the Soviets helped in keeping the Gehlen service afloat, particularly during the Berlin crisis of 1948/1949. This led to fast growing support from US Air Force which had been founded only recently (under the National Security Act of 1947). They had plenty of money and an intelligence arm still under construction. But Gehlen had no direct access to the decision makers in Washington, indeed he had next to no knowledge of their intentions with respect to US intelligence policy in Europe. This is where his new American overseer James Critchfield came to make a significant difference. Critchfield further developed the relations with the Air Force in Europe. Indeed he used them to fend off criticism from "higher headquarters" (in Washington).[9] And he took up Gehlen's argument that his "organisation" should be further integrated into US intelligence in order to have a base from which to promote US policy in Europe, especially vis-a-vis the British who would otherwise dominate the western camp after a four-power settlement and a US military withdrawal from Europe.[10]

---

9   Critchfield, Report of Investigation of the Intelligence Activities of the 7821 Composite Group, 17. 12. 1948, in: Ruffner I/2, S. 46 –123, see pp. 105 –106.

10   Reflections on the Further Development of this Project, 30.11.1948, BNDA, 4312, p. 4; cf. Memo Origin and Development of Our Organization, [November 1948], BNDA, 4312.
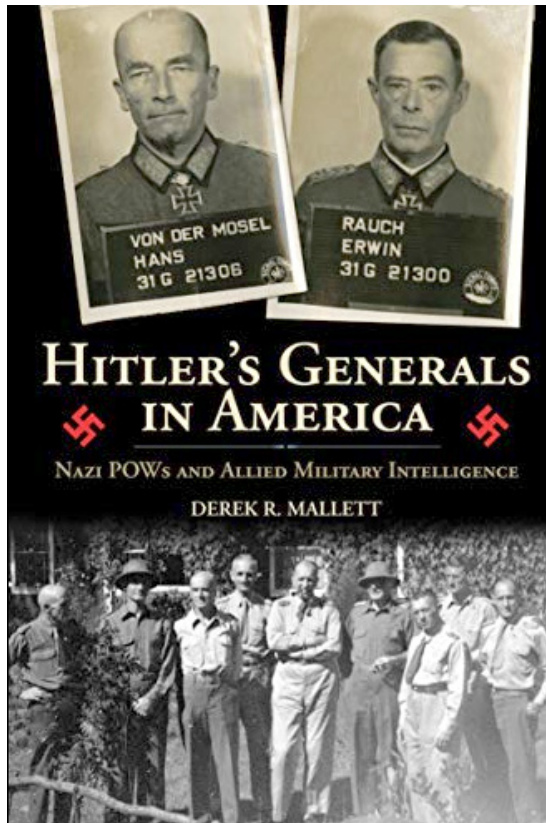
This is a highly significant example of what Norwegian historian Geir Lundestad once called a policy of "Empire by invitation". Though the Org was never melted into the US intelligence system, as Gehlen had proposed, the idea of using it for broadening American influence in European affairs became a winning argument which was eagerly taken up by Critchfield in his numerous reports to Washington. While Richard Helms, already a senior figure in CIA and later a CIA director, argued that Rusty should be reduced to watching the Soviet military and that Baun's network should be completely dismantled because it was a highly "nationalist organisation", Critchfield took a very different view.[11]

In his report of 17 December 1948 he admitted the manifold shortcomings of the Org and proposed a number of organisational changes. At the same time, he emphasised not only the keen interest of the Air Force but put the story in the wider perspective of a future German intelligence service and a future German army.[12] While either one was barely imaginable in late 1948, the development of a West German state was already well under way. The three western zones of occupation had been joined together in March 1948 (as a precondition for receiving American Marshall Plan aid) and the currency reform of 20 June 1948 as well as the drafting of a constitution, initiated by the three powers on 1 July

---

11 Helms to COS Karlsruhe, Rusty, 2. 11. 1948, in: Ruffner I/ 2, S. 27–28.

12 Memo Critchfield to Chief, Office of Special Operations (OSO), on Report of Investigation – Rusty, 17. 12. 1948, in: Ruffner I/2, p. 45.

1948, prepared the way for what soon became the Federal Republic of Germany. In fact, Critchfield not only tried to keep the Org in order to prepare for a German intelligence service under American influence. He also promoted the recruitment of former Wehrmacht officers, particularly of general staff officers, in order to "Americanise" a future German military elite and to keep the ablest of them away from the civilian labour market. 18 months later, at the outbreak of the Korean war, Gehlen's service became a planning hub for a military strategy and a West German army under NATO.[13]

In all fairness it needs to be pointed out that Critchfield was fully aware of the deficiencies of Org collection and reporting, of its weird counter intelligence activities which had gotten out of hand and turned into an anti-communist witch-hunt, as well as of the hiring and employment of numerous former SS and Gestapo men. While he eventually managed to make significant improvements, he failed to do a thorough house-cleaning. The legacy of the early Org years carried well into the 1960s.

For a long time CIA had refused to take over the Gehlen outfit, despite the cries for help from the Army which was no longer willing to carry the burden. Eventually, on 1 July 1949, the transfer became official, including Critchfield and his supervisory staff. At that point the Org, now renamed "Zipper", had a full-time staff of 687 and 2.402 registered human sources. Despite the fear of import-

---
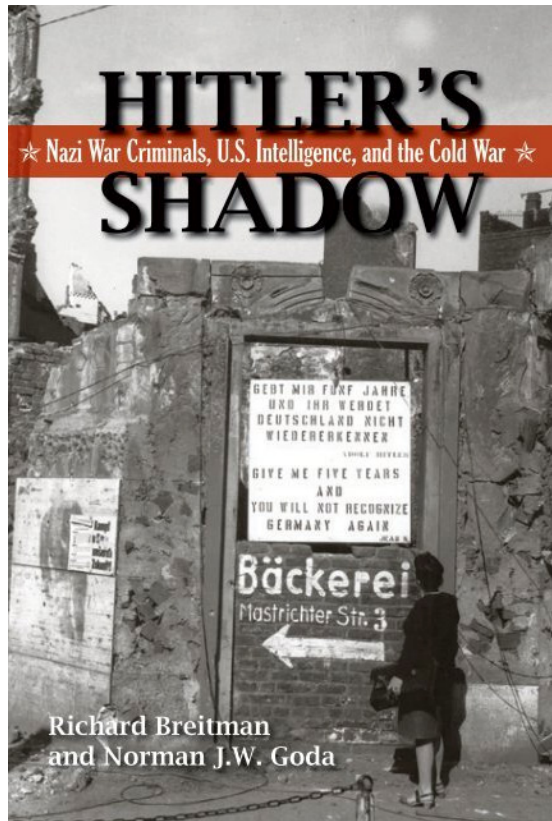
13 Agilolf KESSELRING, Die Organisation Gehlen und die Neuformierung des Militärs in der Bundesrepublik, Berlin 2017.

ing Soviet moles and notwithstanding the rather mixed record of intelligence collection, the CIA now jumped at the opportunity and acquired a large spying network in Europe. But intelligence operations against "the Soviet target" were only part of the story. The other part was "to establish a link with the German government as with other governments" around Europe, as Critchfield confided to Heinz Herre, his most trusted contact among the Org leadership. In other words, CIA planned to prioritise political intelligence as well as to seek political influence. This would make CIA a third American foreign policy actor, next to the US military and the State Department.

Encouraging Gehlen to seek contact with the new German government, established in September 1949 under chancellor Konrad Adenauer, was controversial. While Critchfield was encouraging, his superiors preferred to make US High Commissioner John McCloy the only interlocutor. But the dangers of fostering a conspiracy between Gehlen and Bonn, the seat of the German government, was minimal. CIA and State Department had plenty of trusted contacts there who were eager to report each and every Bonn gossip.[14] The issue was rather not to let Gehlen become a broker of influence and thus more than a useful manager, aptly code-named "Utility". Indeed, Gehlen had to wait until mid-November 1949 before he was allowed to meet briefly with Adenauer.

After the CIA took charge, the Org had to undergo a multitude of changes. Some of them were needed to overcome practices like black market dealings which partly served to finance its operations. But in the main their purpose was to make Org projects and management more compatible with CIA. While Gehlen's ambition was to make the Org into an all-round foreign and military intelligence service, perhaps even with a domestic intelligence branch, the Americans allowed few operations outside east Germany and its immediate vicinity. They chiefly wanted intelligence on the Soviet military because their own political intelligence, in coordination with the State Department, was much better than anything Gehlen could produce.

Among the most sensitive issues was signals intelligence and cryptology. While the US Air Force greatly benefitted from Germans listening to Soviet tactical radio traffic, German cryptology specialists were employed apart from the

---

14 Peter M. Sichel, The Secrets of My Life, New York 2016.

Org. By and large the Org was to remain a HUMINT service for years to come. Leo Hepp, Gehlen's chief of technical collection, was even afraid the Americans would take away the small number of agents under his control. He advised not to tell the Americans everything they were capable of doing because communications intelligence (COMINT) was the "instrument of weak" and had to be saved for a future transfer to the German government.[15]

In the summer of 1950, shortly after the outbreak of the Korean war, the Org's early warning intelligence was in urgent need to be made more efficient, particularly the speed of transmitting messages. Now the Army was ready to allow the use of their Two-Way-Exchange communication links, though exclusively between Pullach and Frankfurt/Main. The subject had already been raised in March when permission was given to use ex-Wehrmacht Enigma machines on condition that the Org submit all of its encryption codes for each separate message. The same applied to the use of a teletype line authorized in mid-July 1950. Since the Org's telephone lines had been under surveillance from the start, it was obvious that the Americans exerted complete control over their German intelligence network. They even made Gehlen sign a statement that the Enigma, to his knowledge, was the most secure encryption system available. Of course they never told him that Enigma had been broken years before.[16]

To demonstrate how important the Org had become, Allen Dulles visited Pullach in early 1951. As new deputy director for collection and special operations he intervened directly in the dispute between Critchfield and Helms, when the latter insisted on firing Gehlen for lack of conforming to CIA rules. Dulles, however, was highly impressed by Gehlen and his work. He invited him to the United States, a personal triumph for Gehlen whose first official visit in late September 1951 made it clear to everyone - in Washington as well as in Bonn - that he was the American candidate to lead a future German foreign intelligence service. During a preparatory meeting on 1 June 1951, Critchfield made it clear both to his American colleagues and to the Zipper leadership that two goals were to be pursued: transferring Zipper to the German government and using Zipper to

---

15 Vortragsnotiz, Funkaufklärung, 11. 2. 1953, BNDA, 1110/1 Bl.394–396; letter to Globke, 3. 9. 1953, BNDA, 1110/1, Bl. 445.

16 Memo to 30 from 25.0, Operation Jupiter – TW Teletype System, 7. 8. 1950, BNDA, 01326, Bl. 223; Memo to 30 from 25, Dustbin/Nikolaus Teletype line, 18. 7. 1950, BNDA, 4314.

select former Wehrmacht officers for eventual service in a German army - far beyond the needs of military intelligence.[17] In concrete terms this meant that Gehlen had to work with Germans of a higher military grade (in Wehrmacht terms) than his own and with people only marginally interested in intelligence work. Zipper now was an assembly point of future German military leaders selected by the Americans. This turned out to be a wise decision because in 1955, i.e. ten years after the war, when the new German army finally came to materialise, many of the highly desirable people had found well-paid jobs or lucrative entrepreneurial opportunities and were no longer interested in a military career.

Competition over sources is a common problem in intelligence cooperation. If the identity of a source is disclosed to a "fraternal service", there is always the risk of the other side trying to recruit that same source or at least to check if the source has information not shared by the partner. In 1949, when the CIA took charge of the Org, the demand for sharing the identity of its sources immediately became a contentious issue. While Gehlen claimed this would pose an unacceptable risk to his network of sources, the CIA argued this kind of disclosure was standard procedure even toward its own controlling officers. Several years later, when negotiation began for releasing the West German government from direct control by the allied powers, the Americans sought to find ways of preserving their intelligence operations on German soil. On the one hand there was the right to protect, by their own means, the US forces stationed in Germany. This was laid down in the NATO Statute of Forces Agreement of 19 June 1951. On the other hand there were intelligence operations underway in Germany which the Americans wished to exempt from German sovereignty.

In a draft secret agreement of February 1952 on "special interests" of the allied powers they demanded from the German authorities to inform them on all persons entering the country without valid passports, particularly all Soviet citizens or defectors, all members of Soviet bloc armed forces, all other refugees (except east Germans) and all German POWs returning from the east. Persons demanding political asylum would be handed to German authorities "after completing the necessary debriefings". Non-Soviet refugees and deserters would be made available for non-exclusive intelligence purposes. Those of Soviet nation-

---

17 Memo Critchfield to CIA Chief Karlsruhe (mit vielen Anhängen über Einzelprojekte), 31. 7. 1951, in: Ruffner II, pp. 1– 58.

ality would be handled exclusively by the western Allies.[18]

To understand the significance one needs to appreciate the importance of intelligence gained from debriefing refugees, deserters and POWs as well as captured scientists and technicians returning from the Soviet Union. Since there were few if any western sources, let alone networks of sources, inside the Soviet borders debriefing reports were often the only way to find out what went on there, both in the civilian economy and in defence-related production. Without access to this information a future German intelligence service would have been severely hampered, especially

JAMES H. CRITCHFIELD
His Life's Story 1917–2003

Lois M. Critchfield

given its minimal technical collection capabilities. Moreover, the Germans could not operate on their own in Berlin where Allied powers had exclusive sovereignty (until 1990). Their access to sources and technical collection in Berlin was fully controlled by the three western powers.

Gehlen realised the delicate nature of this issue with respect to his American patrons. In a letter to Adenauer's office he pleaded "to recognise the interests of the [allied] defence forces" but pointed out that a requirement to transfer automatically all refugees and deserters to allied authorities would hand a huge propaganda victory to the communist side. Bonn would be made to look like an allied puppet regime. Therefore a formula had to be found which could be defended in public if the secret clauses were to be disclosed.[19]

---
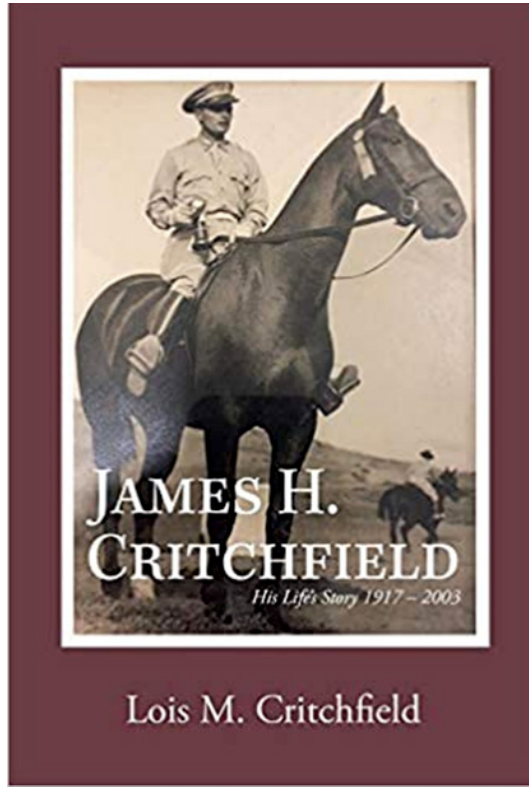
18 Vermerk an 30 von Reiner mit Wiedergabe des Entwurfs, undatiert [Ende Februar 1952], BNDA, 1110, Bd. 1, Bl. 278.
19 Brief Gehlen an Globke, 2. 3. 1952, BNDA, 1110/1.

By that time the competition for returning German scientist and technicians had already become not only an issue of intelligence collection but more importantly one of making sure that those talents would henceforth benefit the German economy. A special Zipper "project 117" for this purpose ran head-on into American and British efforts to recruit such people before the Germans could.[20] Eventually, this kind of brain drain became public knowledge, given the prominence of people like rocket scientist Wernher von Braun who came to work for the Americans.

By contrast, Soviet deserters were mostly a matter of Allied intelligence collection. Gehlen's people had observed the influx of Soviet soldiers as far back as April 1946 but were not in a position to exploit them. After the Americans had made an agreement with the Soviets to hand them back to the Soviet military, they soon realised how brutally those people were dealt with when returned to Soviet custody and began to exfiltrate them to other parts of the world.[21] Apparently the Org managed to find some potentially valuable "assets" but did not have the resources to care for them properly. Some were placed in camps for Displaced Persons (DP) to which Germans had no access. Their efforts to prepare such people for a return to their military units and to have them act as Org sources were unsuccessful. More likely the Americans were not prepared to launch such operations jointly with Org staff members. An Org study of April 1950 admitted that Soviet deserters were immediately isolated and interrogated by the Americans or British specialists and only came into contact with Org specialists after legalisation as DP.[22]

After a change of CIA policy in 1952, the Germans were encouraged to participate in a campaign of active recruitment of Soviet soldiers to persuade them to defect. A number of interview transcripts and related American studies were made available to Org. But the brutal efficiency of Soviet counter-intelligence made it well-nigh impossible to actively recruit significant military sources or to send deserters back to spy for the west in their former military units. The answer

---

20 Memo Critchfield to CIA Chief Karlsruhe (mit vielen Anhängen über Einzelprojekte), 31. 7. 1951, in: Ruffner II, 1– 58, p. 38.

21 Krieger, Partnerdienste pp. 182-183.

22 Studie von 31/I an Leiter 31, Das Problem der sowjetischen Deserteure, 30.4.1950, BNDA, DA 120100 – 0001– 0274, p. 8. (DA stands for records available on Microfiche.)

to the problem of access to Soviet secrets did not lie in grooming deserters but in dealing professionally with Soviet walk-ins like GRU Major Pjotr S. Popov who entered the Vienna CIA station in 1953 to offer his services and later worked for the Americans from his GRU posting in Berlin.

The competition over high-value sources was by no means over when the Org was transferred into West German custody in 1956. In 1958 the BND recorded several complaints concerning foreign intelligence agents, real or suspected, who were arrested, isolated and interrogated " in a manner which is inadmissible under German law".[23] All sorts of conflicts arose on this subject with the local and regional German police. It was left to the BND to calm things down and, in effect, to protect American intelligence from scrutiny by German authorities and law enforcement.[24]

The Surprising French Connection

Two French initiatives marked the beginning of the relationship between the Org (and later the BND) and French foreign intelligence. The first one occurred in late 1947 in Karlsruhe, where the Org had its major counter-intelligence post. The French were interested in tracking Soviet intelligence agents not only in their own zone of occupation (in south-western Germany) but also elsewhere. They hoped to get help from the Gehlen people. The second initiative came via Switzerland where several senior political figures from Bavaria, among them Bavarian Land Police Chief Michael von Godin, had been in exile during the Nazi years and had personal contacts to Swiss authorities in Berne. His contact person in Swiss intelligence was Max Ulrich from the Swiss Federal Police whom he visited in April 1948 in order to introduce Reinhard Gehlen and US intelligence officer Eric Waldman. They agreed to share information on various suspect persons, particularly on the clandestine circles of communist agents who had outlasted the war and were trying to rebuild their networks all around Europe.[25]

---

23 Vermerk, Tg-Buch Nr 1426/58, Aufzeichnung über die Tätigkeit der US-Nachrichtendienste in der BRD aufgrund der Besprechung am 5. 8. 1958, geh., 28. 11. 1958, BN-DA, 1200.
24 Krieger, Partnerdienste pp. 177-190.
25 Christian Rossé, Guerre secrète en Suisse 1939 – 1945, Paris 2015; Guillaume Bourgeois, La véritable histoire de l'Orchestre Rouge, Paris 2015.

Before Ulrich, on 11 December 1948, introduced Gehlen to Colonel Marcel-André Mercier, the Berne representative of the French foreign intelligence service SDECE, the French had contacted Gehlen's specialist in counter intelligence Dr. Kurt Kohler who in August 1948 met twice with a certain Capitaine Toussaint (probably not his real name) in Innsbruck. Toussaint introduced himself as French officer with more than 20 years of experience in intelligence and with instructions to establish formal links with the Org. He explained that French relations with American intelligence were "sterile" and that his boss hoped to get in direct contact with Gehlen.

Eventually, it was Colonel Mercier who was to play a key role on the French side. Born in Belfort, about 30 miles from the German border, he went to Saint-Cyr military academy, served in counter intelligence and joined the French resistance in 1940. In 1943 he was betrayed to the Germans and deported to Dachau concentration camp. This kind of biography was not unusual among the SDECE leadership. Most of them had a "Résistance" background, were fiercely anti-communist and had few kind words to say about the Americans.

The French desire to work with the Org without involving the Americans was a major obstacle since Gehlen could not possibly excluded his patrons from such a liaison. Again it was James Critchfield who played a key role in persuading his superiors that an intelligence liaison with France would help prepare the way to making the Gehlen Organisation into a future German intelligence service.

In October 1949, Mercier and Ulrich paid a visit to Gehlen's headquarter. They were accommodated in the elegant Org guest house in Munich. Among the topics of conversation was a future collaboration in radio monitoring. Critchfield and his staff gave permission to go ahead provided all documents were vetted by himself prior to being transmitted to the French.[26] But the final breakthrough in their relationship had to wait until Gehlen's first meeting with the SDECE director in November 1950, five months after the outbreak of the Korean war and two months after the three western Allied powers had decided to allow German rearmament. It was this series of events which cleared the way to negotiations of a Franco-German intelligence relationship.

SDECE director Henri Ribière received Gehlen in Paris for a tour d'horizon of

---

26 Bohlen Chronik 1949, Eintrag 20. 10. 1949, BNDA, 4313.

the Korean war's implications for Europe and beyond. While Gehlen expressed sympathy for the French and British efforts in the Far East to stem the tide of communism, particularly in Indochina, he thought it urgent to reinforce the west's defences in Europe in order to deter the Soviets from launching a military attack. Ribière added his concern for Europe's position in Africa but quickly turned to specific German issues like the militarisation of the East German police forces. It was questions like these which the French put on the agenda for future cooperation.

For the day-to-day liaison, the Org hired a man who was uniquely qualified. Harald Mors, born in Alexandria, Egypt, had spent much of his youth in Lausanne, Switzerland, with his French-speaking grandparents. Being perfectly bilingual, Gehlen took him along every time he met with French officials. Initially he had little background in intelligence. In his unpublished autobiography he writes that it was his French partner Mercier who taught him the craft of acting like an intelligence agent. However, as a pilot and parachutists in the Wehrmacht, he had participated in various special operations. Among them, in September 1943, was the liberation of Benito Mussolini who had been overthrown and imprisoned in an isolated mountain spot on the Gran Sasso.

From late 1950 Mors went to Switzerland about every six weeks with a suitcase full of documents for Ulrich and Mercier. Since he did not enjoy diplomatic immunity, as did Mercier as "commercial attaché" of the French embassy in Berne, it was a high-risk operation. This led them to meet alternatively on
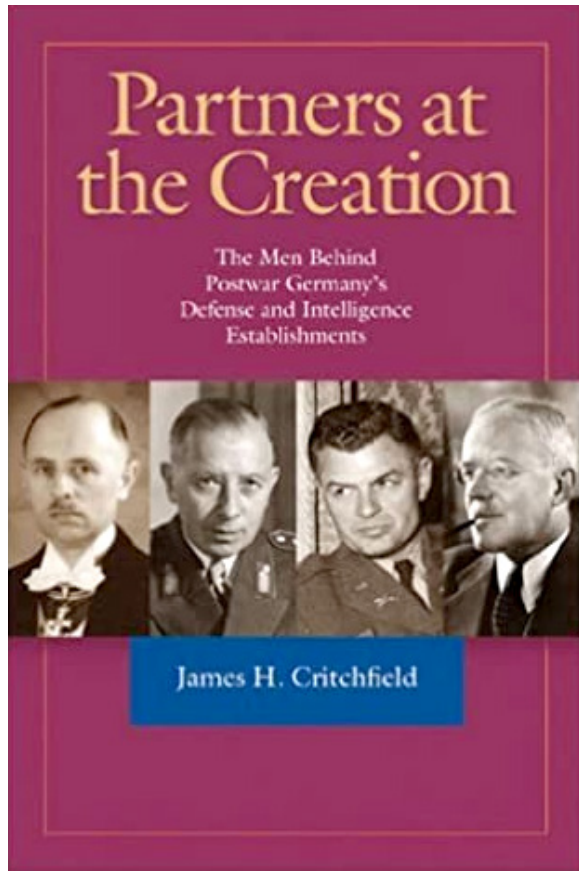
the German shore of Lake Constance. Soon a special telephone line and a wireless link were established, always under American supervision. While the French surged to find ways of excluding the Americans from those exchanges Gehlen and Mors hesitated. Too much was at stake for the Org. By the same token they turned down offers to use their communications channels for influence operations though the SDECE was well connected in government as well as in opposition circles. But the Americans did not wish for Gehlen to involve himself in Bonn or Paris politics, given the enormous influence the State Department, the military and CIA enjoyed already. There was only one exception, the plan to transform the Org into a German intelligence service. This would require the political consent from the French and British authorities. Therefore it provided the SDECE with considerable leverage with Gehlen.

In early 1952 the subject came to a head when preparing a visit of the new SDECE director Pierre Boursicot, a trusted former Résistance and trade union leader. Mercier demanded that the Americans had to be kept out of what he termed a strictly Franco-German exchange. After various complications Boursicot finally arrived at the Org headquarters in Pullach on 7 May 1952. He was accompanied by his chief of collection Capitaine Henri Trautmann, his chief of counter intelligence Roger Lafont and by Mercier. After complicated preparations Boursicot met with Critchfield and accepted a dinner invitation at the Munich CIA Station. His host was General Lucian Truscott, CIA chief for all of Germany. Boursicot now understood that Gehlen could not act without American consent and that this did not necessarily constrain Franco-German intelligence relations. He skilfully addressed Gehlen as chief of German foreign intelligence and thus as a partner of equal rank. This formula surely pleased both the Americans and Gehlen, albeit for different purposes. Boursicot used this formula to pressure the Org into sharing more of their knowledge than they would have volunteered. At one point Mors complained that he had been downgraded to an intelligence outpost under French orders. But Gehlen had little choice, given his yet weak position vis-a-vis the German government where several rivals sought to establish themselves as "future German intelligence chiefs".
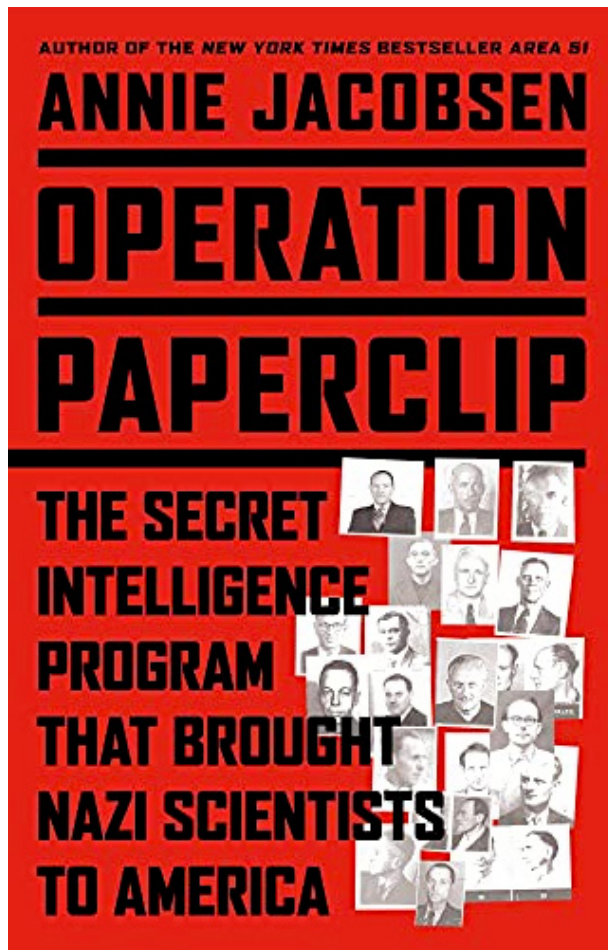
By clever diplomacy a semblance of partnership was eventually achieved even before the transfer of the Org to what became the BND in 1956. In late March 1953, at Gehlen's fifth meeting with the SDECE leaders in Paris, the French side of the conference table consisted of twelve heads of department while Gehlen had

only brought along Harald Mors who exhausted himself as both interpreter and note-taker. Meeting so soon after Stalin's death, when many hoped for improvements in east-west relations, the atmosphere had changed considerably on the French side. It was obvious that they wished to substantially broaden their cooperation. As a remarkable gesture of confidence they showed their German guests the archives. They even explained how their filing procedures were designed to minimise damage from potential double-agents working on the inside. It was a complicated system of coloured filing cards and coding numbers, meticulously recorded in Mors' report.

Thereafter the exchanges of documents grew exponentially. Mors even complained that they were receiving more than they could possible digest or enter into their indexing system. But the key interest on the French side was now radio intelligence and SIGINT more generally. In November 1953, Leo Hepp, the Org's chief of technical collection, together with Hans Maetschke, a counter intelligence specialists, was invited to Paris for talks with his opposite number Colonel Georges Black, successor to legendary cryptologist Gustave Bertrand. After a welcome from the SDECE director, Hepp was given the tour of the archives and the filing system. But his most important exchanges were with the French radio specialists. In his report to Gehlen he wrote: "The leading personalities of French intelligence showed toward us Germans a most remarkable confidence and openness in sharing their methods of operating and their collection results. The director, in our presence, gave orders to provide every information we requested."[27]

To be sure, Hepp was well aware that his French colleagues had fought fiercely against the Germans only a few years earlier. When entering the office of the chief of counter intelligence he noticed a portrait on the wall with the words "executé à Buchenwald" (executed at Buchenwald camp) written across it. While the subject was never raised, at least not in official conversation, the Org was careful not to send staff members to Franco-German meetings who had been involved in the Nazi occupation of France or in Nazi war crimes. At the same time Colonel Black readily admitted that his service employed a number of Wehrmacht cryptologists who, in 1946, volunteered to work for them. "We never forced them to work against Germany", he assured his German colleague.

---

27 Bericht über den Besuch vom 6. bis 11.11.1953, [by Hepp], 17. 11. 1953, BNDA, 3141, Bl. 146 –158, Bl. 148.

AUTHOR OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER AREA 51

ANNIE JACOBSEN

OPERATION

PAPERCLIP

THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM THAT BROUGHT NAZI SCIENTISTS TO AMERICA

Hepp's report listed a number of areas where the French had considerably more insight and better collection results. Among them were Soviet civilian aviation, including flights for political and party leaders, military logistics and shipping. From stations in Indochina they could record radio exchanges of the Chinese air force. Soviet diplomatic communication was monitored from Soviet embassies in western capitals. His French colleagues let it be known that some of their SIGINT catch could be shared. Even a joint use of radio stations in French north Africa was under consideration.

In summary, Hepp became aware of the global reach and ambition of French SIGINT while his own department in Org was nothing but "a beggarly torso". Only eight percent of the Org's budget was dedicated to technical collection.[28]

Franco-German intelligence relations could only improve after two major events in 1954: French defeat in Indochina in April and the defeat of the European Defence Community (EDC) treaty in the French National Assembly in August. Now the French side offered every possible political and diplomatic support for bringing Gehlen's service under the roof of the Federal Republic. Since NATO, to

---

28 Memo, Einige Gedanken für unsere Arbeit auf dem Gebiet der Funkaufklärung auf Grund des Besuches in Paris, Hepp, 17.11.1953, BNDA, 3141.

which the Federal republic was to be admitted as a full member (instead of indirect membership under the EDC scheme), had no intelligence service of its own, the French and the Germans would now officially contribute to NATO strategic planning. But, more importantly, they had already forged a close partnership years before it was formalized between their foreign intelligence services. At the working level, there was little need for change. Marcel Mercier and Harald Mors remained in place as principal liaison officers until 1964 when Mors was posted to Madrid as BND representative.

Finally, the British Connection

Official relations between the Gehlen Organisation and British intelligence began in April 1954 when the general staff requested from the prime minister permission to establish an official link. This is somewhat surprising, given the long years during which the British had observed the evolution of the Org and the fact that the Org was not yet officially a German service. Indeed, the Americans had for a long time passed Org reports to the British. The Org had operated inside the British zone of occupation, under American patronage and with British consent. And there had been various arrangements for Org agents to travel across the British zone with properly issued British permits. So why officialise their relations before the German government legally took charge of the Gehlen service?

The reasons are not entirely clear but one can make an educated guess. For a start, it had become clear by April 1954 that the European Defence Community treaty, signed in 1952 (and from which the British had abstained), was up against strong opposition in Italy and in France. If it succeeded German intelligence would come under French control. If it failed the Americans would remain in charge and dominate West German politics even more than they did already. In Europe as well as globally, British strategy was increasingly at loggerheads with American foreign policy objectives. London wished for more accommodating policies vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The Americans openly favoured de-colonisation in Africa and Asia, having abandoned the French in their struggle over Indochina and preferring Arab nationalism to British imperial rule. And the Americans worked incessantly to ridicule Britain's nuclear arsenal and to prevent France from going nuclear. In other word, dealing officially with German intelligence was a small but significant step to show that Britain could not be ignored

in German and indeed in European affairs. In addition, the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) needed every help it could get. It was stationed in the north and northwest of Germany where the territory was so flat that a massive Soviet conventional attack was calculated to get to the Rhine within a few weeks, if not a few days, and to the Channel coast soon thereafter.

From the German perspective the British initiative could only be welcomed. The Germans had supported the EDC for the simple reason that they had no alternative. There was massive opposition to the creation of German armed forces, all around western Europe and inside Germany itself. And without German rearmament there was no prospect for a German foreign intelligence service along the lines of the Org, i.e., as a combination of a military and a non-military intelligence organisation. In this way, entertaining partnerships with all three western allied nations the German government would have no choice but to accept the American proposal of transferring the Org, under Gehlen's leadership, to German stewardship.

Once again, it is no surprise to find battle-weathered former Wehrmacht officers in the position to guide the liaison work. Helmut Möhlmann, a former U-boat commandant who had fought the British in the battle of the Atlantic from 1940 to 1943 was selected in February 1958 to take the lead on relations with the British. Two years later he was replaced by Ludwig Wierss, a former army major with battlefield experience in various war theatres, who had spent four years in Soviet captivity and had thereafter been a successful shipping broker in Hamburg. He managed Anglo-German intelligence relations until 1966 when he became BND representative in Denmark.

On the British side there was no single "opposite number" comparable to France's Marcel Mercier. Indeed, the BND found it rather confusing to deal simultaneously with several British intelligence agencies, though the MI-6 (foreign intelligence) representative in Bonn acted as coordinator on the British side. While most of the interaction took place with intelligence officers working under the commander of the British Army on the Rhine and their equivalent from the Royal Air Force, there was the Joint Intelligence Bureau working directly under the Minister of Defence and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) - Britain's SIGINT service -- under the Foreign Secretary (along with MI-6). Different from the British institutional set-up, Germany did not have a

separate military intelligence service (though the Bundeswehr retained both an assessment capacity and mobile technical collection units) and the BND did most of the intelligence assessment while on the British side this was the function of the Joint Intelligence Committee which had a working staff but was not a service. It took years for the Germans to understand the British intelligence structure and to figure out how to make cooperation work.

Luckily, this did not much matter as the British were principally interested in sharing military and economic intelligence relating to the Soviet bloc rather than seeking to influence German politics along the American and French model. Among the first meetings of specialists from both sides we find in the BND archive a report on a British delegation visiting Pullach on 19 July 1956. Separate talks were held by specialists in transportation and defence industries. Experts on Soviet bloc agriculture discussed a draft report on cattle breeding, taken as an indicator for Soviet meat production capacity in wartime. Others exchanged their knowledge on coal storage. The Germans contributed a study on tank production which was, however, largely based on their pre-1945 data.

At one point in the discussions a heated argument broke out over rail transport capacity in eastern Europe, obviously a key factor in estimating the speed and transport volume available to Soviet forces before and during the outbreak of major warfare. While the Germans, based on their own logistics performance in 1944, put the maximum estimated number of trains at 3-400 per day, the British assumed a capacity of only 24 (or less on single track lines). Obviously those widely differing figures were impossible to reconcile, the discussion was adjourned. Eventually the Germans had to adjust to the British style of producing intelligence reports and estimates resulting from extensive consultation with experts from all corners of government agencies and from partner services abroad.

Another feature of British-German intelligence cooperation was to look for comparative advantages which could turn into intelligence bargains. If the Germans were particularly keen on getting British support in telephone monitoring the Germans were prepared to intervene with German governmental departments to facilitate British wiretapping.

Until the late 1960s, when Germany finally passed legislation for calling a state of emergency (and suspending civil rights for a limited duration), the three western powers reserved the right to monitor German mails and telephone con-

versation to ensure the security of their armed forces. Though postal and tele-phone services were still operated exclusively by a German federal ministry, many German officials and postal workers wished to limit their assistance to clear cases of national and military security while the allied intelligence services claimed the right to decide for themselves what was "necessary in the interest of public security" and what wasn't. This led the BND to ask for British wiretapping operations in cases of interest to them. The British agreed on condition that "appropriate reasons for legitimate suspicion" were clearly stated in each case.[29] In exchange, the BND supported the wiretapping of journalists and news agencies from communist countries. To get things done and to "let sleeping dogs lie", the BND drew on trusted officials who had been carefully implanted and groomed all across German bureaucracy.

Such assistance did not always come free of charge. In 1960 the BND asked the British to monitor the phones of the Soviet liaison office connected to the Kieler Howaldt AG, a major shipbuilding firm on the Baltic coast where the Soviets had ordered several large fishing trawlers and cargo ships. Moscow had been a welcomed customer there since 1953 and obviously used their Kiel office for espionage purposes. While it can be assumed that the British had tapped those phones early on, the BND's request offered them the opportunity to ask the Germans to share the financial burden to the tune of 1.500 Deutschmark per month.

Similar demands for a burden sharing were made around the same time with respect to intelligence on commercial shipping. Would the BND be prepared to take over the monitoring of Germany's Baltic ports and commercial shipping operating under German flag? And did they still have sources in the Black Sea region? Assistance in monitoring Egypt would also be welcome, the British gave their partners to understand. Gehlen hesitated at first, but soon realised that his partners knew about the former Wehrmacht officers who were employed by Syria and Egypt and the German aviation and rocket scientists working for Egypt as well. They may even have known about the assistance the BND gave by training and equipping Syrian and Egyptian intelligence in communications intelligence. Therefore it was difficult to refuse the British requests for help.

The BND got into real trouble when he found out the extent to which British

---

29 Aktennotiz über den Besuch bei GBR-Dienst in Bonn am 12. 5. 1960, Weigandt [Wierss], 18. 5. 1960, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0235.

intelligence collaborated with the Bundeswehr, sometimes even to the exclusion of the BND. Already in early 1958 a BND officer complained that in certain areas the intelligence units in the German armed forces were much better staffed than his own.[30] The Royal Navy even refused to deal with the BND because they considered their capacity for naval intelligence too insignificant. Neither did they supply the German navy because they had no distinct naval intelligence service.[31] Even with respect to information on the east German army and air force the BND was at a disadvantage because the British had their military mission in Potsdam ("Brixmis"), attached to the Soviet high command, which had permission to monitor the east German territory (excepting forbidden military areas) and routinely conducted photo excursions. They obtained high quality images of the latest in Soviet weaponry while the Germans could only observe what the Soviets wished to show the world on the occasion of their famous military parades in Moscow.

It was in response to those multiple deficits in their collection and analysis that the BND put all exchanges with the British in the hands of a single person, the aforementioned Helmut Möhlmann. Among his first assignments was the preparation of a German delegation scheduled to visit London in June 1958. Six Germans were facing no fewer than 19 British experts, of whom only three were military officers. At that time the British had a big turnover in personnel. Many of the older staff were leaving intelligence to work in journalism or in industry - at much higher salaries - or returning to university careers. They were replaced by young graduates who had recently completed their degrees and were still new on the job. While Möhlmann noted comparative advantages in certain areas he assumed that the British were now more eager than before to cooperate with the Germans in order to compensate weaknesses in other areas. At any rate, he was full of praise for the welcoming attitude in London and their readiness to put the Germans in direct contact with the Joint Intelligence Board.[32]

In late January 1959 Gehlen went to London on his first official visit. He was invited to the upper class Reform Club by Sir Dick White, the director of MI-6. He and Möhlmann were shown all sorts of spying paraphernalia from the ser-

---

30 Krieger, Partnerdienste, pp. 350-352.

31 Krieger, Partnerdienste pp. 358-359.

32 Besprechungsbericht GBR-Dienst – BND, Molnar [Möhlmann], 16. 6. 1958, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0076.

U.S. INTELLIGENCE AND THE NAZIS

RICHARD BREITMAN
NORMAN J.W. GODA
TIMOTHY NAFTALI
ROBERT WOLFE

vice's collection and met with the head of the technical department who had been a key person in the "Berlin tunnel" spying operation run jointly with the Americans. During their session on intelligence estimates concerning the eastern bloc, an acrimonious debate arose when the British side accused the Germans of "fabrication of sensations". Möhlmann's report does not specify what the exact objects of dissent were but it was certainly not the first occasion of such Anglo-German differences over Soviet communism. And not the last one either, as subsequent discussions at the expert level demonstrated time and again. Estimates of Chinese communism differed in that the BND was more convinced than their British partners that Beijing would play an increasingly independent role and distance itself from Moscow while London's experts insisted on China's economic weakness which would not allow such ambitious policies. As Möhlmann accurately summarized it, the Germans put much more emphasis on ideology while the British based their estimates on the assumption that Soviet and Chinese policies were largely pragmatic. From this he concluded that London had high hopes in finding diplomatic solutions to the division of Europe while Bonn was rather afraid of them.[33]

At any rate the British were about to scale back their operations against Soviet targets, leaving the BND with a choice of either taking over from the British or to pay them for carrying on as was done in the case of Soviet freight companies doing business in west Germany. Another example was the United Baltic Corporation, a British intelligence shop on the Kiel Canal (connecting the Baltic Sea with the North Sea) where passing Soviet ships' crews frequently purchased all sorts of provisions and supplies.[34] Since the firm's staff was already German, the BND could easily take over.

The long list of estimative differences did not impede the deepening of Anglo-German cooperation. Indeed, by their criticism of BND estimates they helped the Germans to improve them. Where the British saw a German superiority in

---

33 Vermerk von 234/I, Anlage zur Aktennotiz über politische Gespräche mit GBR-Dienst, 18. 6. 1959, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0143.

34 Aktennotiz über Besuch bei GBR-Dienst vom 27. bis 29. 1. 1959, Molnar [Möhlmann], 5. 2. 1959, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0116; Aktennotiz über Besuch GBR-Dienst in Nikolaus am 7. 4. 1959, Molnar [Möhlmann], 8. 4. 1959, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0134; Vermerk von 234/301/59 an 363/I, Betrifft Mr. Madge (GBR-Dienst), 1. 6. 1959, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0369.

their intelligence reports they were ready to learn or even to ask the Germans to expand their operations. The latter was the case with China where tiny German communities (in Shanghai and Hong Kong) as well as German shipping could be used to their mutual advantage. Later on, in April 1960, they suggested joint operations in Africa, specifically in the Congo, where a seasoned MI-6 agent came to instruct a BND agent and where Germany invested considerable amounts of money for the purpose of keeping the Congolese government in sync with western interests.[35]

In one particular case the British even encouraged their partners to enlarge their bilateral intelligence partnerships. In October 1959 when two BND counter intelligence agents held talks in London, they were suddenly confronted with a request to contact Israeli intelligence. One of their British colleagues, who had just returned from a visit to Israel, reported that "the chief of the service" (Mossad?) had said to him: "Tell General Gehlen, we are no barbarians and know our trade well." The MI-6 officer added that his colleagues had the highest respect for the Israeli's professionalism and considered them to be thoroughly anti-communist.[36]

A significant break-through in achieving closer cooperation happened in February 1960 when the British surprised a BND expert by handing him a report on Soviet nuclear, missile and Infrared development. It was nothing less than sensational because much of the information therein had been obtained from Anglo-American overhead reconnaissance, i.e., from sources never before shared with the Germans.[37] Some weeks later the British offered special training in nuclear intelligence and related technologies for BND specialists. Two of them eventually participated. They reported their distinct impression that their British colleagues were now under orders to seek a much closer cooperation with the BND.

---

35 KRIEGER, Partnerdienste, pp. 381-384; see also Torben GÜLSTORFF, Trade Follows Hallstein? Deutsche Aktivitäten im zentralafrikanischen Raum des Second Scramble, Dissertation Humboldt-Universität Berlin 2012, https:// edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/18280/guelstorff.pdf ?sequence=1&is Allowed=y (letzter Zugriff 5.4.2020), pp. 277–311.

36 Vermerk von Molnar [Möhlmann] an Gehlen, 30. 10. 1959, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0179; see also Shlomo J. SHPIRO, Friends in the Dark: The First Decade of German-Israeli Intelligence Cooperation, in: Milena Uhlmann (ed), Die deutsch-israelischen Sicherheitsbeziehungen, Berlin 2008, S.76–89.

37 Vermerk von Molnar [Möhlmann] für 363 [Gehlen], 10. 2. 1960, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0207.

Over lunch a senior British officer explained that the New Look strategy adopted by NATO required a much stronger focus on intelligence collection concerning Soviet nuclear weapons, including tactical ones.[38]

1960 also marked the beginning of enhanced efforts to gain insight into Soviet air defences, particularly missile-bases systems. After the usual British complaints about BND inefficiencies, this time concerning Soviet missile technologies, a series of meetings took place where the British side contributed valuable photographic materials from Brixmis excursions. In east Germany alone British specialists had identified 200 construction sites for missiles and radar stations. It was evident that the downing of the American U-2 spy plane over central Russia (near Sverdlovsk) on 1 May 1960 sent shockwaves through the western military communities. Although Soviet air defence missiles called S-75 Dwina were still highly inaccurate, the U-2 had been flying at 60.000 feet when it was hit. What was unknown in the west was that the Soviets had fired a total of 14 missiles and had lost one of their own fighters including its pilot on the attack. If Soviet air defences were about to make drastic improvements in terms of their air defence systems British-American war plans for retaliatory nuclear attacks with nuclear-equipped long-range bombers were becoming outdated. Indeed, the Soviets deployed the S-75 in Germany starting in 1960. By 1964 they had deployed more than 600 all around the world, most of them improved versions of the 1960 model.

Needless to add that the BND welcomed the increased British interest even though their criticism of BND reporting and analysis never ended. Neither did British initiatives to get German cooperation on new subjects. In 1962 they raised the issue of Soviet shipping in the Arctic. To get started one would have to intensify the observation of civilian shipping, particularly of timber which was a seasonal business during the summer months. For this purpose a German intelligence officers was posted in a British port, under the cover of shipping journalism but materially supported by the British (office, telephone, car, ID papers etc.). But it took until 1963 to get the necessary agreement from various British ministries and agencies. The purpose was not only to carry out covert interviews with Soviet sailors but also to recruit some of them and to conduct espionage op-

---

38 Vermerk von Molnar [Möhlmann] an Gehlen, 10. 3. 1960, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0223.

erations from there. The significant element in terms of their intelligence partnership was the presence of German operatives on British soil under British protection.[39] Another was the proposal to conduct joint operations against the Soviet embassy in Bonn and on various other official Soviet representatives in West Germany. This marked a change in atmosphere since British intelligence now indirectly recognised German sovereignty in intelligence matters. In practical terms the Germans had a wealth of useful information to contribute such as construction plans of the buildings, identity checks files on Soviet staff and access to native Germans employed by them.

Long-term Perspectives

In summary one could say that the Anglo-German intelligence partnership was in large part a professional training opportunity for the Germans. The British had a long tradition in foreign intelligence and a remarkable cadre of seasoned, well-trained officers while the BND was largely made up of ex-Wehrmacht soldiers with little or no intelligence proficiency who practised "learning by doing". Still, the British could not pressure and manipulate the BND as much as the Americans could (given the legacy of the Org) and they were not as much concerned with the painful World War II legacy as the French.

Each of those three relationships helped in shaping the BND and giving it a chance not only to improve but also to widen its professional horizons. By way of those three intelligence partnerships the BND eventually found its place in the international community, particularly in NATO. And it served to lay the foundations for today's close partnerships, some 70 years later.

---

39 Bericht über die Besprechung mit GBR-Dienst am 17.5.1962 in Nikolaus, Weigandt [Wierss], 18. 5. 1962, BNDA, DA 120295 – 0510.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOGHARDT Thomas, *The Zimmermann Telegram. Intelligence, diplomacy, and America's entry into World War* I, Annapolis 2012.

BOURGEOIS Guillaume, *La véritable histoire de l'Orchestre Rouge*, Paris 2015.

FERRIS John, *Behind the Enigma. The Authorised History of GCHQ. Britain's Secret Cyber-Intelligence Agency*, London 2020.

GÜLSTORFF Torben, *Trade Follows Hallstein? Deutsche Aktivitäten im zentralafrikanischen Raum des Second Scramble*, Dissertation Humboldt-Universität Berlin 2012, https:// edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/18280/ guelstorff.pdf ?sequence= 1&is Allowed=y (letzter Zugriff 5.4.2020), pp. 277–311.

KESSELRING Agilolf, *Die Organisation Gehlen und die Neuformierung des Militärs in der Bundesrepublik*, Berlin 2017.

KRIEGER Wolfgang, *Partnerdienste. Die Beziehungen des BND zu den westlichen Geheimdiensten 1946-1968*, Berlin 2021.

KRIEGER Wolfgang, HILGER Andreas, MEDING Holger M. (eds), *Die Auslandsaufklärung des BND*, Berlin 2021.

NOWACK Sabrina, *Sicherheitsrisiko NS-Belastung. Personalüberprüfungen im Bundesnachrichtendienst in den 1960er Jahren*, Berlin 2016.

ROSSÉ Christian, *Guerre secrète en Suisse 1939 –1945*, Paris 2015.

RISTE Olav, *The Norwegian Intelligence Service, 1945 –1970*, London 1999.

RUFFNER Kevin C., (ed), Forging an Intelligence Partnership. CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1945 – 49. A Documentary History, 2 vols., Washington 1999.

RUFFNER Kevin C. (ed), *Forging an Intelligence Partnership. CIA and the Origins of the BND, 1949-56. A Documentary History*, 2 vols, Washington 2006.

SICHEL Peter M., *The Secrets of My Life*, New York 2016.

SHPIRO Shlomo J., «Friends in the Dark: The First Decade of German-Israeli Intelligence Cooperation», in UHLMANN Milena (ed), *Die deutsch-israelischen Sicherheitsbeziehungen*, Berlin 2008, S.76–89.

Lieutenant A. FROMENT

L'ESPIONNAGE
Militaire

LES FONDS SECRETS DE LA GUERRE ET LE SERVICE
DES RENSEIGNEMENTS EN FRANCE ET A L'ÉTRANGER

Intelligence militare, guerra clandestina e Operazioni Speciali

Articles

• *Aux sources du renseignement humanitaire militaire : l'intervention française au Liban de 1860-1861*, par GÉRALD ARBOIT

• *An Unimportant Obstacle? The Prusso-German General Staff, the Belgian Army and the Schlieffen Plan*, by LUKAS GRAWE

• *Des traversées de frontières. Hernalsteens. Le grand réseau de renseignement français dans les territoires occupés, 1914-1915*, par EMMANUEL DEBRUYNE

• *Le Bureau interallié de renseignement (1915-1918). Un exemple de coopération européenne en temps de guerre*, par OLIVIER LAHAIE

• *Violatori di cifrari. I crittologi del Regio Esercito 1915-43*, di COSMO COLAVITO

• *Les services spéciaux français en Belgique, 1936-1940.* par ÉTIENNE VERHOEYN

• *S. I. E. P: Organización, funciones y contribución al sistema de inteligencia durante la Guerra Civil Española*, por JOSÉ RAMÓN SOLER FUENSANTA, DIEGO NAVARRO BONILLA, HÉCTOR SOLER BONET

• *Dalla Spagna all'Italia: Il Servizio d'Informazione Militare in Europa nelle pagine della Rivista dei Carabinieri Reali* di FLAVIO CARBONE

• *For Your Freedom and Ours. Polish refugees of war as soldiers and resistance fighters in Western Europe*, by BEATA HALICKA

• *Le "front-tiers" pyrénéen. Les voies du renseignement durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale*, par THOMAS FERRER

• *La chasse aux émetteurs clandestins en Suisse durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Neutralité, communauté du renseignement et affaire Rado*, par CHRISTIAN ROSSÉ di DENISE ARICÒ

• *Our Men in Berlin. The Netherlands Military Mission to the Allied Control Council for Germany, 1945-1949*, by DANNY PRONK

• *German Intelligence Partnerships in the Early Cold War. The American Intelligence Godfathers*, by WOLFGANG KRIEGER

• *L'intelligence militare russa Il GRU nel decennio 2010-2020*, di NICOLA CRISTADORO

Reviews

• *Military Intelligence negli Intelligence Studies* Introduzione alle recensioni [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• CHRISTOPHER ANDREW & DAVID DILLS (EDS), *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century* [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• RICHARD J. HEUER, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• PETER GILL, MARK PHYTHIAN, STEPHEN MARRIN (Eds.), *Intelligence Theory. Key Questions and debates,* [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• JAN GOLDMAN, *Words of Intelligence. A Dictionary,* [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• JAMES P. FINLEY (Ed.), *U. S. Army Military Intelligence History: A Sourcebook,* [GIANGIUSEPPE PILI]

• *Journal of Intelligence History*, [Francesco Biasi]

• FILIPPO CAPPELLANO e COSMO COLAVITO, *La Grande guerra segreta sul fronte italiano (1915-.1918),* [PAOLO FORMICONI]

• BEATA HALICKA, *Borderlands Biography: Z. Anthony Kruszewski in Wartime Europe and Postwar America,* [PAUL McNAMAR]

• TOMASO VIALARDI DI SANDIGLIANO, *Da Sarajevo alla cyberwar, appunti per una storia contemporanea,* [ANTHONY CISFARINO]

• PAOLO GASPARI, *Le avventure del Carabiniere Ugo Luca.* [FLAVIO CARBONE]

• VIRGILIO ILARI, *Il Terzo uomo del caso Dreyfus* [ANTHONY CISFARINO]

• GIANLUCA JODICE, *Il cattivo Poeta* [ANDREA VENTO]