

GEHLEN DIES AT 77; BONN'S EX-SPY CHIEF

**General Served Hitler as an Expert
on the Soviet Front and Then
Cooperated With the U.S.**

MUNICH, West Germany, June 9 (Reuters) — Reinhard Gehlen, a longtime German intelligence officer and the first postwar chief of West Germany's espionage agency, died last night at his home at Lake Starnberg, relatives of the 77-year-old retired general said today.

General Gehlen headed Bonn's intelligence service from its foundation in 1955 until 1968, when he retired.

Earlier in the postwar year, he directed an operation set up in cooperation with the American occupation forces.

The general headed a German Army intelligence branch during World War II that focused on the Russian front. As the end of the war neared, he had copies made of all his files and hid them in 50 steel chests in the Bavarian mountains above Lake Schliersee. After surrendering to the Americans, he turned over the files for an intelligence operation on behalf of the Western allies.

Dug a Tunnel Into East Berlin

General Gehlen is thought to have employed from 4,000 to 20,000 operatives and agents in his network, some of them former Nazis. In the 1950's, his operatives dug a tunnel into East Berlin to tap a communications line used by the Soviet forces, one of the cold war's most successful espionage achievements.

The Americans poured money into General Gehlen's organization after the war and it was reported to have sent operatives to advise various African and Asian countries.

The influence and reputation of General Gehlen waned after his friend, former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, died in 1967. Critics attacked his anti-Soviet views as outdated. But his network remained active, and he accurately forecast the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the date of the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967.

Said Bormann Was Soviet Agent

In a book after his retirement, General Gehlen asserted that Martin Bormann, one of Hitler's closest aides, had been a Soviet agent and escaped to the Russians when Berlin fell in 1945. Moscow scoffed at the assertion. Later, a skeleton found in Berlin was said to be that of Bormann.

General Gehlen, son of an officer who fought in World War I, was born at Erfurt, now in East Germany, on April 3, 1902. He joined the German Army in 1921 and served as an artillery and cavalry officer and later joined the intelligence service.

The general married Herta von Seydlitz-Kurzbach and they had four children. Critics charged that he arranged to give posts in his service to at least 16 relatives.

In retirement, General Gehlen lived near Starnbergersee in Bavaria and devoted most of his time to the Evangelical Church.



Camera Press

**Gen. Reinhard Gehlen in uniform
during World War II.**