

In and out of the cold

In the continuing game of musical spies between the two Germanies, Gen. Marcus Wolf, head of East Germany's intelligence agency, the HVA, has won another round. Small wonder John Le Carre used him as the model for his fictitious spy-master, Karla.

West Germany's counter-intelligence agency has been disgraced and made to look comically inept by the defection to the East of its chief, Hans Tiedge. New spy scandals seem to occur almost daily. Worst of all, it now appears that much of West Germany's spy network in the East has been blown.

The "affaire Tiedge" painfully illustrates the oft-made point that the only thing as bad as an uncaught spy is a caught spy. In less than one week, HVA spies have been found in the counter-espionage agency, the office of West Germany's president, the army, and the economics ministry. What this all means, simply, is that West Germany is like an apple filled with burrowing worms, eating away at the foundations of the Federal Republic.

Nor is this the first time that the HVA has deeply penetrated the Federal Republic: For the past 20 years, virtually all sectors of West German government, the military and its intelligence or security agencies have been infiltrated by East German and Soviet agents. Bonn, we are painfully reminded, cannot keep its secrets.

Who, then, would risk his or her life spying behind the Iron Curtain for West Germany, knowing that HVA agents could well be feeding their names back to East Berlin? What NATO intelligence agency or military planning group would care to share its secrets with the Federal Republic? Which security agency within West Germany will trust the others, the army, or committees of the federal parliament? Or even, for that matter, the chancellor, recalling that the alter ego of a former one, Willy Brandt, turned out to be an HVA agent.

Wrecking of confidence

What we are seeing today in West Germany, the wholesale wrecking of national confidence and trust, occurred during the 1950s and '60s in Great Britain. At that time, deep-plant moles of Moscow Centre wreaked havoc on Britain's morale, its intelligence operations and on relations with its allies.

The names of Britain's communist traitors are a dark blot on the island's noble history. George Blake, Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt and others almost destroyed the very security services that were protecting Britain from massive Soviet infiltration and subversion. Philby, number two in foreign intelligence, wrecked the agency and caused the deaths of hundreds of western agents. And it seems that Sir Roger Hollis, head of the internal security agency, MI5, may also have been a Soviet agent. For a long time, Britain hushed up these outrages, knowing that their revelation would shatter national confidence and self-esteem.

In the end, Britain was left looking a laughing-stock and, to boot, unreliable, effete, and pitiful. It has taken 20 years to painfully repair the damage

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caused by its traitors; even today, there are fears that moles, planted by Hollis and others, still are burrowing away at Britain's foundations. In the process, Soviet agents managed to deeply — and permanently — infiltrate the labor unions, media and the government.

So now this very same process is going on in West Germany. East Germany's brilliant spymasters have accomplished what all the tanks of the Red Army have not been able to do: Shake West Germany to its very roots. What effect this jolting will have on German democracy, a young plant growing on thin soil, remains uncertain. No doubt, there will be calls in the nation for limiting some of the present democratic strictures against searches, checks and investigation. Shaking West Germany too much could stir up some very nasty phantoms from the past.

Razor-sharp example

We should all have a good long look at West Germany's present travail: It is a razor-sharp example of how destabilization, a communist specialty, works. Every democratic nation, even every non-democratic nation without a communist-style police state, is vulnerable.

How to prevent infiltration and still remain a democracy is a question that has not yet been answered. Perhaps the only way to limit enemy espionage is to reinstate the death penalty for traitors. It is worth recalling that few Americans betrayed their nation after the Rosenbergs were electrocuted. Notable also is the fact that the current crop of American traitors are from a generation that grew up listening to endless excuses by liberals for the Rosenberg's treachery. These new-wave traitors knew that, if caught, prison, and not the chair, awaited them. Being a democracy does not mean that fearsome deterrents cannot be used.

The communists, masters of the arts of subversion, know that a nation's morale is its most important defence. When Britain stood alone before Nazi might it was spirit, not arms, that saved that little island. As Napoleon said, in war the moral is to the physical as 10 is to one.

The HVA's latest triumph — and Moscow's as well, shows just how fragile are our western democracies in the face of patient, ruthless and massive subversion. Today, there are an estimated 20,000 active communist agents in West Germany alone.

Rooting out this massive fifth column simply defies the means or capabilities of the democratic Federal Republic. It is the job for a Gestapo. Before we laugh at the shamefaced Germans, we should think of this and, as well, look under our own beds.