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Bodo Hechelhammer

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Correspondence:
Bodo Hechelhammer: hechelhammer.geschichte@yahoo.de

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“Agent provocateur”: Heinz Felfe as British spy

Bodo Hechelhammer

Research and Working Group “History of BND”, Bundesnachrichtendienst, 12203 Berlin, Germany

Abstract

In 1961, the staffer Heinz Felfe (1918–2008) of the Federal Intelligence Service of Germany, the "Bundesnachrichtendienst" (BND), was arrested under the accusation of spying for the Soviet Union. Over a period of 10 years, the former chief inspector, National Socialist German Worker’s Party member, SS-Obersturmführer in the Sicherheitsdienst of the Reichsführer-SS and staffer at Reichssicherheitshauptamt worked for the BND and its predecessor organization “Organization Gehlen,” in his last capacity as a senior officer in the BND Branch in charge of counter intelligence/Soviet Union. But in fact, he spied for 10 years for the Soviet secret service “Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Besopasnosti” (KGB), against the foreign intelligence service of West Germany. Heinz Felfe later justified his double life. He explained that in the late 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, he passed a watershed, when his political understanding and judgement changed him from an anti-Communist to a Communist. He described precisely the period beginning with his release from British war captivity in the autumn of 1946 and his hiring as Soviet agent in the autumn of 1951. During this time, he was a student at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University in Bonn, where he founded a Marxist student society, became a member of the “Communist Party of Germany” (KPD) and traveled often to the Soviet Occupation Zone. Heinz Felfe did not change his global political beliefs and remained a staunch Communist, whose spying for Moscow was merely the logical consequence of that developmental process. In fact, however, Heinz Felfe also worked for almost three years for the British secret service as well; his mission was to spy on Communist activities at Bonn University and the KPD in the British Occupation Zone, as well as later in North Rhine-Westphalia, in West Germany.

Introduction

On 6 November 1961, Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND, Federal Intelligence Service of Germany) staffer Heinz Felfe (1918–2008) was arrested at the BND Headquarters in Pullach under accusation of spying for the Soviet Union. Over a period of 10 years, the former chief inspector, a member of the NSDAP (National Socialist German Worker’s Party), SS-Obersturmführer (Senior Storm Leader) in the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) of the Reichsführer-SS (Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS) and staffer at Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA, Reich Security Main Office) worked for the BND and its predecessor organization, the Organization Gehlen, in his last capacity in a senior position in the BND Branch in charge of counterintelligence/Soviet Union. For 10 years, he and his ex-SD fellow soldier and BND colleague Hans Clemens (1902–1976) spied for the Soviet secret service against the foreign intelligence service of West Germany. In 1963, Felfe was sentenced to 14 years in prison for high treason. In 1969, he was exchanged for other Western agents. He moved to the German Democratic Republic (GDR), where he finally was awarded a professorship for criminal science in East Berlin in 1973. Until now, the case of Heinz Felfe is considered to be
the most important such spy case in the BND and, for that reason, has adversely affected the image of the intelligence agency.¹

After his arrest, people began wondering how it had been possible that an ex-dyed-in-the-wool anti-Communist could secretly work for such a long time for the Soviet intelligence service. During the criminal proceedings, Senior Federal Judge Kurt Weber (1907–1985) asked Heinz Felfe about the reasons for his change of global political views. Felfe replied: “I have always been red-minded. The thing is, that none of them had ever noticed.”² In the autobiography he wrote by order of the Committee of State Security, which was published in West Germany in 1986 and titled Im Dienst des Gegners (serving the enemy), Heinz Felfe justified his road of life. In line with Moscow’s Communist ideology and usage, he elaborated on the milestones and breaks in his life, his transformation from the enthusiastic National Socialism intelligence officer to a committed “Envoy of Peace.”³ To him, the time after the 1940s marked a watershed, when his political understanding and judging reportedly changed and when he reportedly recognized “that the moral superiority of the Soviet Union had its roots in the socialist social system and in Marxism Leninism, the analytical, realistic, scientific and profoundly humane policy of the Soviet Union, in other words, that the future belonged to Communism.”⁴

That was how Heinz Felfe described the period between his release from British war captivity in fall 1946 and being hired as Soviet agent in fall 1951, when he studied law and political science at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Bonn.⁵ Not only in his sociopolitical legitimation, but also in his curriculum vitae, he wrote that at a later stage in the GDR, in his capacity as external professor for criminal science at Humboldt University in East Berlin, he remained the Communist he had been since his early student days. Indeed, he had already been a founder member of a university student society, an offshoot of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), at Bonn University. At that time, he attended vocational courses in East Germany. Heinz Felfe worked also as a freelance correspondent for the KPD paper, was member of the “Nauheimer Kreis” (Nauheim Circle) and the “Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands” (Cultural Association of the GDR).⁶ By his own account, he tried to meet as many people in the KPD scene as possible hoping that those contacts would serve him in the future. That is why he traveled so often to the Soviet Occupation Zone (SOZ). Following that phase of self re-orientation, he finally graduated. After a short phase in a law firm, Felfe worked for the Federal Ministry of Intra-German Relations, before Moscow wanted him to join the Organization Gehlen. His spying mission had begun.

However, that self-reflection is not the truth and was retroactively red-washed, because Heinz Felfe did not approach the KPD out of political conviction. He did not travel to the GDR out of his global political beliefs and had by no means turned into a staunch Communist whose spying for Moscow was just the logical consequence of that development process — as an act of self-fulfillment. Because, as of the second half of the 1940s, Heinz Felfe worked for almost three years for the British secret service.⁷ And his mission was to spy out Communist activities at Bonn University

⁴ Ibid., 195.
⁵ Ibid., 148.
and the KPD in the British Occupation Zone (BOZ) and/or in North Rhine-Westphalia. His British commitment was first unearthed after his trial and was covered by contemporary Western reporting.\(^8\) In an interview in *Der Spiegel*, the weekly German magazine, on 24 March 1986, Heinz Felfe was directly confronted with the question of how his transformation into the “socialist humanist” — as he liked to refer to himself — was compatible with spying for London at the same time.\(^9\) He replied evasively, saying that he had used every opportunity for traveling to the GDR in order to find a “permanent link” to Moscow. The following is a content-related description of Heinz Felfe’s activities for the British secret service at Bonn University and against the KPD and helps to explain his motivation at the time. An overview of his statements in biographical order shows that his spying activity for Moscow was by no means the result of his transformation into a hardline Communist.

**Anti-Communist is looking for a job**

As of early 1945, SS Senior Storm Leader Heinz Felfe served under the Commander of the Security Police and of the SD for the occupied Dutch regions at SD-Branch Enschede. After the war, he was in Canadian and/or British war captivity in the Netherlands. He was interrogated over months also by members of the British secret service. During his interrogations, he provided much information about his activities in the SD. In one of those interrogations at the British detention camp Fort Blauwkapel near Utrecht, he was quite frank about his wish to join a German police force to be established, for which he had reportedly received even a British letter of recommendation.\(^10\) In addition, he wholeheartedly agreed to a future cooperation with the British secret service.\(^11\) After his release from war captivity in Munster in early November 1946, Felfe remained in the BOZ and moved to Rhöndorf in Rhineland. Fearing, for good reason, persecution, rendition, and reprisals by the Soviet military regime and its secret services, the ex-SS Senior Storm Leader and SD officer wanted under no circumstances to return to his beloved home town of Dresden (and/or to his apartment in Dölzschen), where his wife and son lived.\(^12\)

A former chief inspector, Felfe pursued only one goal after the war: reemployment in a police station in the BOZ (e.g. at the criminal police in Aachen or at the Wasserschutzpolizeigruppe [Water Police Force] “Rhein” in Cologne). After unsuccessful months of trying to be reemployed, he contacted the British secret service in the Occupation Zone and requested support for his applications. The contact to the local British secret service was established by Erich Jung (*1908), who lived in Rhöndorf, too.\(^13\) The latter used to be a chief inspector himself, among other positions, at Gestapo in Koblenz. Jung used to be in charge of Communist ideology and Marxism. As of 1942, he was subordinated to the Chief of the security police and SD in Paris.\(^14\)

Felfe contacted the “Intelligence Division” of the “Control Commission for Germany/British Element” (CCG/BE), of the British military government, which existed between 1945 and 1949. In Bonn, the unit in charge was the “Area Intelligence Office” of the intelligence station of the “Regional Intelligence Office” 11 (Rhine Westphalia).\(^15\) That was where he presented his case and

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8 See, for example, Der Spiegel issue 24 February 1969, 74; Die Welt issue 17 Juli 1970; Berliner Morgenpost issue 25 September 1988.
10 See CV Felle, in BND Archive 5.157-OT, 130; Felle. Im Dienst des Gegners (cmt. 3), 50.
11 See Report Heinz Felle about Helmut Proebsting dated 14 October 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 166.
12 See of CV Heinz Felle, in BND Archive 5.157-OT, 131.
13 In the overview of Heinz Felle’s contact persons who knew about his activities for the British secret service, Erich Jung is mentioned first because he established the contact. See overview of Heinz Felle’s contacts in the British Occupation Zone dated 4 March 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 198; übersicht der Lebensdaten von Heinz Felle vom 3. Juli 1961, in BND Archive, 5.157-OT, 40.
requested support for reemployment by the criminal police. The head of the “Intelligence Section” in Bonn, Mr Bowen, had Felfe’s data checked in London but did not have recourse to the German criminal police. On the contrary, he offered him the chance to work for the secret service. Due to the lack of professional alternatives, Felfe accepted the offer. Nevertheless, he kept applying to the police and/or criminal police in the following months. Initially intended to be a makeshift solution, the relationship between Heinz Felfe and the British secret service lasted for almost three years, from the day of his introduction, on 4 July 1947 to 14 April 1950, the day when he was dropped. Thus, for almost six months after the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, he was active as a British spy in Germany. The cover story for his mission was that, as of 25 August 1947, Felfe worked as “Geographical Expert” for the “Geographical Survey Unit,” until the unit was officially disbanded, on 8 September 1948. After his matriculation at Bonn University, his study of law provided further cover.

Heinz Felfe put a lot of energy into denying his activities for the British secret service and for the SD towards Organization Gehlen, for example, in his application in January 1950 to become a criminal police officer in the Bundeskriminalamt. In various statements made to the Organization Gehlen and the BND, Heinz Felfe presented a modified version of his CV. In his book and in official CVs in the GDR, he persistently failed to mention his anti-Communist activities for the British secret service. However, the Ministry for State Security was very well informed about his mission for the British Crown and stated that he was in “1947 integrated by the British military government into the British secret service MI6 (Military Intelligence, Section 6) as a police informant.”

Heinz Felfe as a Communist student

All military governments in the occupied zones in Germany made sweeping use of their occupation law. For example, they made direct or indirect use of communication monitoring, whilst installing units of their own intelligence services, and/or extending already existing organizations. In June 1945, intelligence work was reorganized and authorized in the BOZ. In 1945/46, the units of the “Secret Intelligence Service,” better known as “MI6” were transformed into the “Intelligence Division” of the CCG/BE. For the military government, the restitution and maintenance of public order enjoyed top priority. That included monitoring ex-National Socialists as well as military groups and their networks with right-wing, nationalist, and/or separatist tendencies. All in all, the British were very skeptical as to whether the Germans were capable of supporting democracy. Any threat to the upcoming democratization was in the focus of the intelligence agencies. In addition to threats in the form of right wingers, any Communist activity and the influencing role played by the Soviet Union were also scrutinized. That is why not only Communist groups but also legally operating parties such as the KPD were put under surveillance. In contrast to the politically
and morally shaken German society, Communists were considered to be homogeneous, well-trained, and Moscow-controlled activists of conviction.25

For their collection of intelligence information, the British made massive use of German intelligence agents and/or trusted men, the so-called “V-Männer” (sources).26 Felfe himself was hired as a source. As paid informant, he operated in the BOZ for the local military government. His case officer went by the name of Mr Cutter. Felfe received missions from him and reported to him. In the first months of his activity as a British informant, he usually prepared weekly reports, drawing conclusions about the Communist activities he observed. At a later stage, he prepared incident-, individual-, and subject-related reports.27

The British military government meticulously controlled the transformation process of the ex-NS society on its way to democracy, with the focus being on education.28 Since early 1947, the responsibility for university education was mostly back in the hands of German authorities. That is why the interest towards information and control requirements of the British about political activities at the universities were relatively high.29 As Felfe had studied several semesters of legal science before the Second World War at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University, Berlin, the plan was to have him collect information on pro-Communist students at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-University in Bonn. At the Bonn-based university, there were several prominent Communist students. Three active KPD members belonged to Allgemeiner Studentenausschuss (General Students’ Committee): Karl Günther Bönninger (1925–2000), Heinz Engelbert (*1922), and Ferdinand Pollmann (*1925). They were followers of the famous Marxist Walter Markov (1909–1993), KPD-member, co-founder of Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ, Free German Youth), and, as of 1949, professor for Modern History in Leipzig.30

In the winter semester of 1947/48, Heinz Felfe matriculated in the legal science and state science faculty at the Pädagogium, Otto-Kühne-Platz 1, third floor, in Bad Godesberg, near Bonn.31 In order to support his cover story as a Communist student, Heinz Felfe joined the Bonn-based KPD in the spring of 1948. In the personal file of the GDR Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachhochschulwesen (Ministry of Higher Education), Felfe cooked his data, stating that his KPD membership started one year earlier, from 1947 to 1950.32 In 1961, the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution of North Rhine-Westphalia informed the BND that Felfe had held a formal KPD membership at least until 1952.33 As his studies and his party membership were only for cover purposes as Communist student on British orders, Heinz Felfe submitted bills for extra expenses such as for his university fee of 27.00 Deutsche Mark or party fee of 1 Deutsche mark for October 1948.34 Although differently described in his autobiography, neither his studies nor his KPD membership reflected his personal mindset or even global-political conviction.

27 See letter from Heinz Felle to Mr Cutter, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 185.
28 See Christian George, Studieren in Ruinen: Die Studenten der Universität Bonn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht Verlag, 2010), 277.
30 See Walter Markov, Zwiegespräche mit dem Jahrhundert (Berlin-Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1989), 120; Christian George, Studyieren in Ruinen: Die Studenten der Universität Bonn (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht Verlag, 2010), 277.
32 See personal file Heinz Felle, in Bundesarchiv (in the following BArchv) DR/3/B/195, Ministerium für Hoch- und Fachhochschulwesen-Berufssachen, 4.
33 See overview of Heinz Felle, in BND Archive 5.157-OT, personalle file Heinz Felle, 92.
34 See cost sheets dated 15 October 1948, 8 July 1949 and 9 June 1949 by Heinz Felle, in BND Archive, 100.225-OT, 158, 160, 224.
In his book from the year 1986, Heinz Felfe commented on his Communist commitment in his student days in Bonn: “like students everywhere, we had passionate discussion about politics and formed respective interest groups. I affiliated myself with those who were honestly willing to learn from the bitter past.”

The truth behind Felfe’s political interests was different. In order to get closer to pro-Communist students in Bonn, he founded a Communist student society, which was intended to become a pool for like-minded students. When the “Marxistischer Studentenzirkel” (Marxist Student Society) was founded in June 1948, Felfe was one of its founding fathers, along with Sigurd Binski (1921–1993) and Robert Klesper (*1924). According to the statutes, the group intentionally did not want to steer a hardline party-political course but to “[...] critically debate the concept of Marxism.” On 16 June 1948, the student group’s application for admission was submitted to the dean of the university. Supported by Heinz Felfe, the British military government and the leadership of the university approved of the foundation on 14 December 1948. He belonged to the leadership tier of the group as third chairman, along with the first chairman Robert Klesper and his deputy Alma Jacobi-Brohmann. Furthermore, he was secretary and treasurer, which was very helpful for his intelligence mission to collect information. That way, Felfe could easily obtain insider information about the Marxist Student Society, for example, about planned operations, specific members, as well as about guests and contacts to the KPD.

Living in the GDR, Heinz Felfe bragged to his Communist friends about his university days in Bonn. He kept name-dropping, mentioning names such as Karl Günter Bönninger or Heinz Engelbert. Both men had been awarded professorships in Leipzig and/or East Berlin. What he did not mention, of course, was that both men were under his surveillance at the time. Heinz Engelbert was one of Heinz Felfe’s first target persons. In 1945, the latter had started studying law in Bonn, joined a Communist student group, and was active in Asta Bonn. Only a short time later, he worked for the KPD faction in the “Parlamentarischer Rat” (Parliamentary Council) at the “Bundeshaus” (Parliament Building). On multiple occasions, Felfe reported about the ex-Asta member Karl Günter Bönninger, the brother-in-law of the historian Markov, who migrated to the SOZ in August 1948. His focus was on staying in East Germany. On a regular basis, Heinz Felfe reported about his tutor and fellow student, the Hesse-born Ferdinand Pollmann, as he did on all KPD members he met. As of January 1949, Pollmann worked as an office clerk of the KPD in Parliamentary Council. At a later stage, he worked as a journalist for the Communist Hamburger Volkszeitung and as editor for the KPD paper Norddeutches Echo in Kiel. Felfe reported constantly to the British secret service about Pollmann’s professional, private and political activities, for example, in the autumn of 1949, when Pollmann, as the man in charge of the student body, became a member of the KPD Landesleitung. Alma Jakobi-Brohmann was another regular subject of his reporting, for example, when she wanted to work for the Polish press agency as of January 1950.
Again and again, he used the Communist student association as the starting point for his collection efforts. On 27 June and 18 July 1949, for example, Heinz Felfe reported about an event by the student society, stated the names of participants and guest speakers such as Prof. Dr Friedrich Behn (1883–1970), who held a speech about “Marxism” or Rudolf Treiber (1904–1986), the KPD spokesman in North Rhine-Westphalia. Heinz Felfe informed the British secret service not only descriptively. He made assessments about the prospects of the student association’s efforts, stating “that the event failed to win over any of the attending students for Communism.” At the beginning of the winter semester of 1948/49, “Marxistischer Studentenzirkel” was renamed “Studentenzirkel zum Studium des Marxismus” (Student Society to study Marxism). That was intended to underline a more open orientation as far as party policy was concerned and to attract more students who might be interested. At the time, the Communist circle included, in addition to the leaders around Klesper, Jakobi-Brohmann, and Felfe, only four other active members. So, the basic problem of the student society was the low number of members and the lack of political commitment for the Communist agenda among the students, because the events of the student grouping attracted only few visitors, according to a report by Felfe dated 17 December 1948. In early November 1948, unreliable and inactive members were turfed. Felfe provided a detailed list of members and of their addresses. For the political activation and ideological training of the student group, training and discussion nights at two-week intervals were introduced at Meckenheimer Straße in Bonn on Tuesdays 7:15 pm. As part of his mission, Heinz Felfe attended every event. For example, on 2 November, the “idealistic and materialistic view,” two weeks later “dialectic materialism” and on 30 November, “historical materialism” were discussed.

But those measures also failed to significantly motivate the students. In the winter semester of 1949/50, Heinz Felfe described the student society, whose base among the students had never been very large, as having “failed to leave the embryo stage.” In the summer semester of 1950, on 25 June, the “Studentenzirkel zum Studium des Marxismus” was disbanded because of a lack of members. At the time, Heinz Felfe had already given up his studies at Bonn University and the British secret service had already dropped Felfe as informant.

Heinz Felfe and the KPD

With his KPD membership, Heinz Felfe had not only underpinned his cover story as a Communist student but also gained access to the KPD at the local and Land levels. The British secret service itself assessed his intelligence access to and his knowledge about the KPD as positive even if Felfe had no access to the KPD leadership level. In an “Intelligence Report” from 1947, he confirmed that “we can safely say that we know what we want to know about the organization, methods and plans of the KPD up to district board.” Heinz Felfe, the informant, had helped to collect information about the KPD.

Heinz Felfe, the treasurer of the Marxist students, frequently reported about the KPD’s tight budgetary situation. On 26 October 1949, he reported that “the financial situation was more than

47 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 18 July 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 226.
48 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 25 November 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 180.
49 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 17 December 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 193.
50 See letter by Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter dated 25 November 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 181.
51 See report by Heinz Felfe about the discussion with Peter Meter, dated 26 October 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 151.
52 See index card on Studentenzirkel about Marxism studies, in Archive of Bonn University UV 69, 428. George. Studieren in Ruinen (cmt. 37), 310.
53 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 22 October 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 172.
54 See on quotation by Jeffrey. M16 (cmt. 23), 667.
55 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 1 November 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 173.
poor [because only] half of the members paid their fees."56 But even cooperation between the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and KPD at the communal level was of interest to the British secret service. On 1 November 1948, Felfe reported that “as guideline for the communal-political work, it was emphasized that cooperation with the SPD was out of the question. There must be a clear line between KPD and SPD.”57 That is why the KPD had to decline motions by the SPD. On 17 November 1948, he wrote a report on KPD activities in Bonn, informed about a conference of officials at the municipal and area levels on 10 November 1948, as well as on their participants and the agenda.58 He focused on the dogmatic presentations by KPD speaker Jean Kachel (*1910) and on his reference to military success of the Communist armies in the Chinese civil war.59 Referring to Kachel’s conclusions, Heinz Felfe warned: “that the KPD was convinced that there would be a final clash with the capitalist powers of the West and about the need to be prepared.”60 According to Kachel, the KPD should turf inactive members as “the KPD needs only active members for the final struggle for power.”61 On 17 December 1948, Heinz Felfe explained the overall situation of the KPD in Bonn and informed his case officer about the schedules for party congresses and county councils in the following year.62 With his contact to Ferdinand Pollmann, who as of late 1948 belonged to the KPD also at the Land level, Heinz Felfe managed to gradually widen his intelligence access also in that direction. Sometimes, he even held speeches at the Land level, for example on 24/25 September 1949, at KPD Landeskulturtagung in Düsseldorf on behalf of the academic youth.63

Traveling agent in the SOZ

“I have always been interested in the courageous beginning of my fellow-nationals in the East, who started building a really free, democratic and peace-loving German state, the GDR” read a publication by Heinz Felfe about his allegedly incipient political interest in the development of the SOZ in the late 1940s.64 “I traveled many times also into the SOZ in order to participate in vocational seminars at Jena and Leipzig University or in other events, because I was interested in local development,” he added.65 He detailed his voyages to the Goethe festivities on the occasion of Goethe’s 200 anniversary in Weimar in 1949 and proudly boasted about his personal contacts, for example to the Prime Minister of Thuringia, Werner Eggerath (1900–1977), or to Prof. Dr Ulrich Noack (1899–1974), who was the founder of “Nauheimer Kreis.”66 Moreover in his trips into the SOZ in 1948/49, his interest in the policy and society of the future GDR was no result of a political mindset but served his intelligence mission.

After collecting intelligence on the KPD under his cover as Communist student in Bonn and North Rhine-Westphalia, he succeeded in extending his intelligence radius to the SOZ. Using his university and KPD contacts, he initiated an invitation to an international vocational course in Georgenthal Thuringia, which was conducted by Deutsche Verwaltung für Volksbildung der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands — Abteilung Hochschulen und Wissenschaft — (German administration for public education in the SOZ — department for universities and science) in

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56 See report by Heinz Felfe about the financial situation at KPD Kreisvorstand Bonn, dated 26 October 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 152.
57 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 1 November 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 174.
58 See report by Heinz Felfe about KPD Bonn, dated 17 December 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 178.
59 See letter from Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 1 November 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 178.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 See letter Heinz Felfe to Mr Cutter, dated 17 December 1948, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 194–196.
63 See report by Heinz Felfe about KPD Landeskulturtagung on 24/25 September 1949 in Düsseldorf, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 271f.
64 See Felfe, *Im Dienst des Gegners* (cmt. 3), 154.
65 Ibid. (cmt. 3), 171.
66 Ibid. (cmt. 3), 161.
cooperation with the student council of Jena University, between 21 August and 9 September 1948. On 9 August, Felfe and his fellow student Robert Klesper headed out for East Germany. Heinz Felfe reported at length about border-crossing procedures, the places he went to in the SOZ, such as Leipzig, where he should meet Prof. Dr Walter Markov, or East Berlin, where he was invited to a vocational course by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Zentralsekretariat (Central Secretariat). He wrote a detailed report about the group of participants and his contact persons. He proudly reported to his case officer that he quickly won the trust of the head of the vocational course “so that I had the chance to appropriately influence the anti-Communist students without being noticed. I was largely responsible for the collapse and the harsh split between participants from East and West.” According to that report, Heinz Felfe made in some cases even subversive efforts to agitate against Communism in the SOZ. The British secret service found his reports from fall 1948 about his stay in the SOZ so very interesting that the organization sent him as “traveling agent” to two more events in Eastern Germany.

That is why Heinz Felfe received the order to attend Volkskongress (National’s Peoples Congress) on 29/30 May 1949 in East Berlin, delegated by KPD Kreis (district executive board) and Landesleitung (state executive board). However, when crossing the border at Wartha, Felfe was stripped of his documents and could not accomplish his mission. Almost half a year later, he was invited to Weimar by “Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands” in order to attend the Goethe festivities, thanks to his contact with Peter Meter of KPD state executive in Düsseldorf. Between 21 August and 4 September 1949, Heinz Felfe traveled to the SOZ in his capacity as traveling agent with intra-Zone access with the mission to attend the cultural festivities there. In line with his mission, he identified the West German participants and subsequently paid a visit to Herbstmesse Leipzig (Autumn Fair of Leipzig), and reported about it on 6 September. In debriefings, he identified individual participants with his focus being on West Germans. He visited Funkhaus (radio station) Berlin. In Weimar, he learned about SED inside views on “Nauheimer Kreis.” Felfe reported at length also about the “Kulturbund zur demokratischen Erneuerung Deutschlands.” In East Berlin, he collected information about the accommodation of FDJ central council at Kronenstrasse but failed to translate into action his original plan to contact FDJ Secretary Peter Heilmann (1922–2003). He also collected information massively on the SED West Commission at Wallstraße. In the process, he sounded out the chance to work for one of the trading posts of “Deutsche Wirtschaftskommission der Ostzone” (German Economic Commission in the SOZ) — on behalf of the British secret service, of course. At a reception at the residency of “Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund” (Free German Trade Union Federation) in Weimar, Heinz Felfe also met the Prime Minister of Thuringia, Eggerath, as well as Prof. Dr Ulrich Noack. The neutralistic activities of Nauheimer Kreis had raised the suspicion of the British. To that end, Felfe described Noack in more detail and categorized his political attitude thus: “Prof. Noack does not love the Russians, but settles for the fact that they are our neighbors and therefore he is in favor of

67 See journey into the Soviet Occupation Zone and contacting of various institutions and SED members in Berlin, dated 13 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 152.
68 Ibid., 153r.
70 See report by Heinz Felfe about the failed border crossing at Wartha on 26 May 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 222f.
71 See report by Heinz Felfe about invitation to Goethe festival, 10 August 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 240.
72 See report by Heinz Felfe about journey into the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany, dated 6 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 245f.
73 Ibid., 252f.
74 See report by Heinz Felfe about FDJ Zentralrat in Berlin, dated 6 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 247.
75 See report by Heinz Felfe about discussion with member of the West Commission of the SED Zentralsekretariat on 6 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 222f.
76 See report by Heinz Felfe about participation in the banquet honoring foreign delegates in Weimar, dated 6 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 255f.
economic cooperation between Russia and Germany — but not politically. Like us, Prof. Noack accepts the Oder/Neisse line because bringing up that issue again involves the risk of a new war, something he wants to avoid at any price, also about the East German provinces [...] his plans provide for the creation of a neutral Germany as European centerpiece."

In 1949/50, Heinz Felfe’s focus shifted to the observations on Prof. Noack and the activities of “Nauheimer Kreis.”

Heinz Felfe and KPD leadership

On 1 September 1948, the Parliamentary Council constituted itself. At the early meetings at Pädagogische Akademie (Pedagogic Academy), which later became Bundesthaus, the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany was discussed. Among the North Rhine-Westphalian delegates with voting power, there were also the KPD members Max Reimann (1898–1977), Hugo Paul (1902–1965), and his successor Heinz Renner (1892–1964). On 8 May 1949, the prepared constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany was enacted. Four days later, it was accepted by the three Western allies and the Federal States. The body disbanded after the preparation for the first West German federal election on 14 August 1949. At a later stage, Heinz Felfe apparently casually remembered that he “witnessed the debate at Parliamentary Council on the Basic Law and the enactment [...] Of the Communists, I remember well Max Reimann and Heinz Renner in particular.” There, too, he was not the casual bystander witnessing German history. Rather than that, he collected information about the KPD faction at the Parliamentary Council for the British secret service, and, after the foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, in some cases also about them in Deutscher Bundestag (Federal Diet).

Almost on a daily basis, Heinz Felfe, who then acted as free correspondent for Communist newspapers, visited the press rooms as well as KPD representatives at Parliamentary Council. He was trying to obtain information about them at Bundesthaus. In most cases, however, they were barren. That way, his mission was de facto extended to KPD leadership levels. When on 7 November 1948, Max Reimann in a propagandistic way presented the “sozialen Grundrechte” (social basic rights) during a conference of the “Arbeitsgemeinschaft für eine gesamtdeutsche Verfassung” (working group for an all-German constitution) in Bad Godesberg, Felfe had already informed the British service about the event, the schedule and the list of attendees. He used Ferdinand Pollmann again as access agent, who as of early January 1949 worked as office clerk supporting KPD public relations at Parliamentary Council. Referring to the Parliamentary Council, he assured the British secret service on 29 December 1948: “now, that is the chance to use Pollmann for meeting various interesting people.”

On 11 January 1949, Heinz Felfe provided a detailed overview report on the local KPD faction, listed the delegates Max Reimann and Heinz Renner, as well as their secretaries, including background information on origins and home addresses. In addition to that, he listed the persons in charge of public relations Wilhelm Karl Gerst (1887–1968) and Peter Thelen, who were sent by Sozialistischer Informationsdienst (socialist information service). Soon after that, he met Max Reimann and Heinz Renner. That gave him the opportunity to report to his customers, for example, on 4 May about Renner’s personality, which he described as “very high-tempered” about his ideas and interlocutors, for example, when, in the presence of Felfe, he hotly commented on the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) delegate Dr Robert Lehr (1883–1956). Lehr was,
according to Felfe, quoting Renner, “Hitler’s trailblazer,” and that he intended to write an article about it.\textsuperscript{85} At the same time, he also reported about unspectacular scheduling, for example, the time, Renner intended to go on holiday.\textsuperscript{86} However, some of his reports were more relevant. In late April/early May, he informed the British secret service about a meeting between Reimann, Renner, and Gerst about the current German domestic policy, in the light of the planned negotiation between the allies and the Soviet Union on the future government of West Germany. That is why a major peace operation by the KPD faction was funded and planned in order to inform the public about the requirement to mobilize a peace treaty for all Germany. On 8 May 1949, in the final voting on the Basic Law for the KPD at the great plenary meeting of the Parliamentary Council, KPD chairman Max Reimann voted against Konrad Adenauer and/or held a speech against the CDU policy. One day later, Felfe reported about the background of the speech.\textsuperscript{87} On 23 May 1949, after a conversation with Heinz Renner, he reported that, together with the Parliamentary Council, the KPD faction was also to be disbanded.\textsuperscript{88} In a report dated 18 July 1949, Felfe described the relationship between Reimann and Renner and categorized their past work at the Parliamentary Council: “There is no doubt that Renner was the more experienced Member of Parliament, while Reimann in most cases did what he was told by Renner. In many cases, he had no idea about what a move was about at work and made no secret about it. He then acted on Renner’s order.”\textsuperscript{89} Furthermore, he informed the British service about the KPD stance on the capital issue, and that “he believes that for the time being, Bonn will remain the capital city. Basically, the KPD did not care whether it was Bonn or Frankfurt. Anyway, there will be a voting on the issue.”\textsuperscript{90}

With the end of the KPD work at Parliamentary Council, the access to information threatened to run dry. That is why Heinz Felfe on 21 July tried to get into the new Federal Administration for the KPD in order to have better access to information. At first, Renner promised to support him, as he assumed Heinz Felfe to be already denazified.\textsuperscript{91} However, the former SS Senior Storm Leader at the SD was not. That is why he urged the British secret service on 25 June for better positioning himself within the KPD and for the improved fulfilling of his mission: “If I have to produce a Denazifizierung Note for obtaining a position connected by Renner, it might be embarrassing for me. It is time, I advanced my denazification which needs to end with category V. Otherwise, Renner could not connect me.”\textsuperscript{92} Because of his work for the British secret service, the SS Senior Storm Leader and Head of Branch at RSHA, Heinz Felfe, on 20 October 1949 finally fell into Category V — unburdened — and was officially denazified.\textsuperscript{93}

Even after the federal elections on 14 August 1949, where the KPD entered Bundestag with 5.7%, Felfe kept spying on the KPD faction rooms at Bundestag and reported to the British secret service about it. Every room of the faction was precisely specified, individual staffers were identified and, in some cases, details about Bundestag members were provided.\textsuperscript{94} In March 1950, Felfe also reported about tension within the KPD Bundestag faction, albeit only in a very general way.\textsuperscript{95} Only a little later, the British secret service dropped Heinz Felfe, ironically, last but not least due to his Communist contacts.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 1f.
\textsuperscript{87} See Report by Heinz Felfe about the speech of Max Reimann, dated 9 March 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 298f.
\textsuperscript{88} See report by Heinz Felfe about the KPD faction at Parliamentary Council, dated 23 May 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 218.
\textsuperscript{89} See report by Heinz Felfe about the KPD faction at Parliamentary Council, dated 18 July 1949, in BND Archive, 100.225-OT, 227.
\textsuperscript{90} See report by Heinz Felfe about the function of the KPD faction at Parliamentary Council, dated 18 July 1949, in BND Archive, 100.225-OT, 227.
\textsuperscript{91} See report by Heinz Felfe about his conversation with Renner — Entnazifizierung, dated 25 July 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 236.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{93} See accredited copy of Entlastungszeugnis (certificate of discharge), dated 20 October 1949. In BND Archive, 5.157-OT, 131.
\textsuperscript{94} See report by Heinz Felfe about the KPD faction at Bundestag, dated 21 September 1949, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 266.
\textsuperscript{95} See report by Felfe about Rosemarie Waldemeyer, dated 8 March 1950, in BND Archive 100.225-OT, 313.
Conclusion

Heinz Felfe, who as SD officer was interrogated also during his war captivity by the British secret service and identified as anti-Communist, offered his services as agent in Bonn due to a lack of alternatives after the end of the war. In the subsequent years, he first collected information about Communist activities at Bonn University and, starting from there, about the KPD in North Rhine-Westphalia. He successively extended his mission up to the KPD faction at Parliamentary Council and Bundestag. He also used his KPD contacts in order to collect information about political organizations in East Germany, with priority laid on their Western contacts. However, he failed to deliver strategic information. In most cases, he provided simple information on individuals and occupancy plans or finished protocols of Communist events. The quality of the information to which he had access and his reports deteriorated significantly over the years, the more so when he shifted from the Marxism Student Society to KPD leadership.

After his exchange to the GDR, the Heinz Felfe story was used by Moscow in a propagandistic way as political parable: a National Socialist who has seen the errors of his ways and who as a student has understood the superiority of Communism. However, in reality, Heinz Felfe was just another British spy who played the Communist for cover reasons — without being "purified."

In 1949/50, Heinz started his parallel work as an agent also for the so-called “Informationsstelle” (Information Office) in Düsseldorf, the predecessor organization of “Landesamtes für Verfassungsschutz” (State Authority for the Protection of the Constitution) in North Rhine-Westphalia. The British secret service learnt about it.\(^96\) As he contacted two ex-SD fellow soldiers from Dresden from the 1940s, both of whom were suspected of cultivating contacts with intelligence services, Heinz Felfe was finally dropped in 1950 as agent by the British secret service. His loyalty was massively questioned by the British side. One of the ex-fellow soldiers was the former SS Senior Storm Leader and SD member Helmut Proebsting. Both men were together in British war captivity before Proebsting fled to the Netherlands.\(^97\) The other person was the aforementioned ex-SS Senior Storm Leader Hans Clemens. Felfe had tried in vain to recommend him to the British secret service as an agent. In early 1950, Clemens was hired by the Soviet secret service. It is noteworthy that agent Felfe had reported about both men and their then intelligence environment to the British secret service, including the information that Hans Clemens had been hired by the Soviets.\(^98\) However, at the time, the British secret service had no longer considered Heinz Felfe to be trustworthy and dropped him as an agent and no longer followed Clemens’ activities as Soviet spy. We all know how the story went on. One year later, Heinz Felfe also decided to work for the Soviets as a spy and penetrated, as Hans Clemens had done before, the Organization Gehlen and/or the BND. That was when the case of Heinz Felfe really can be said to have commenced.

Glossary

| AIO       | Area Intelligence Office |
| ASTA      | General Students’ Committee |
| BdS       | Commander of the Security Police and of the SD |


\(^98\) See reports by Heinz Felfe about the recruitment of Hans Clemens dated 28 February 1950 and the recruitment and agent activity of East zonal establishments in West Germany, in BND-Archive 100.225-OT, sheet. 145 a. 321; KGB Exploitation of Heinz Felfe. Successful KGB Penetration of a Western Intelligence Service, in NARA RG 236, Entry ZZ-10392, Felfe, Heinz, RC Box 34, 27; Memorandum For Record dated 13 November 2002 In: Swem Library Special Collections. The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Series 4: Intelligence, Box 3, Folder 24; KGB-Heinz Felfe, 2d. “Reuters reports that Felfe said he worked for British Intelligence from 1947 until 1949 or early 1950, during which time he travelled to East Germany several times. He said he reported to the British on the visits and he added that he attempted in vain to have the British recruit Clemens”, in Washington Post, 8 July 1963.
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Conflict of Interests

The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.