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GERMANY (Federal Republic)

Developments within the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde".  
(The Association for Military Studies)

A well placed right-wing source has reported the following:

1. In March, 1952 Professor Classen, secretary-general of the Association, had a conversation with a friend in Munich. Classen said that since he had last discussed his organisation with his friend he had still not been able to have the organisation entered on the Munich register of associations. On the other hand, he had been to the Military Security Board in Koblenz where he had received a verbal assurance that the Board did not consider that the formation of the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde" was in opposition to Allied Control Council Law No.23. He was now waiting for this decision to be made known to the Munich authorities so that the licensing might then be accomplished without a hitch. Classen said that a number of important people had made this licensing a condition of their joining the organisation. He named ex-General Blumentritt as one who had made this condition and who had also insisted that both the Blank office and Otto Lenz, Secretary of State in the Federal German Chancellery, would have no objection to his joining. Classen stated that both Lenz and the Blank office had since informed him that they did not see any reason to object to Blumentritt's membership of the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde".
2. Classen explained that besides the managing board of the Association there was also a Scientific Board (Wissenschaftlicher Beirat) which in turn was divided up into a number of committees (Arbeitsausschuesse) dealing with all types of military problems. These committees were given particular tasks by the Scientific Board, which also forwarded a questionnaire on any such problem to the chairman of the committee. The chairman of the committee passed this questionnaire to his committee members and after receiving their answers combined these in a consolidated report which he again returned to the Scientific Board.
3. Questioned as to whether any connections existed between the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde" and the Gehlen organisation, Classen stated that there were some members of the association who were also working with Gehlen, but that no official contact had been established. It also appeared that there was some animosity between Gehlen and ex-SS General Felix Steiner, the reason for which Classen had so far been unable to detect.
4. Classen stated that his association was also busy forming branches (Sektionen) over the entire area of the Federal Republic and that already some sixty had been formed. Ex-General Freiherr von Edelsheim, former GOC 24th Armoured Division, was in charge of the Konstanz branch and Dr. Nord, of the "Stifterverband der deutschen Industrie", in charge of the Essen branch. Ex-General von Natzmer also had one branch and ex-General von Thunert was supposed to take over a branch in Southern Hesse.
5. Classen agreed that the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde" would need considerable funds to be run properly. He had in mind the publication of a periodical on Military-Political Science, which would probably bring in some money. He was also considering the formation of a "Gesellschaft fuer Politik" which would undoubtedly find support amongst industrialists. Pressed for names of any supporters, Classen stated that Dr. Friedrich, general manager of "Phoenix", Harburg, and former raw materials adviser to the Federal Government, was interested in this scheme.
6. Classen explained that within the "Gesellschaft fuer Wehrkunde" he had so far brought together a large number of younger officers and staff officers and also a few generals, although he was least interested in the latter group. These people were dispersed over the entire /country and

country and were being educated to work systematically and discreetly. The 1953 Federal elections would probably allow him to use this organization for the best possible purpose and to try and foil an electoral victory of the SPD. In the battle between the present Federal coalition and the SPD, he was most certainly going to help the coalition, but he was not certain whether it would not be possible to form a new Right Wing party in between the present coalition and the SRP. Classen pointed out that the FDP would never be able to attract large working-class votes because of its reactionary attitude to social affairs. He thought that the Deutsche Union, of which movement he was still a member, might possibly be the party to support in the coming Federal elections, but all these matters were still under discussion and he could only advise his friend to try and keep his political allegiance as free as possible in order that he might be of help at a later time.

NOTE: The following are some details of the obscurer personalities in the report:

- (i) Dr. Walter ECKHARDT (para. 2), Munich 38, Zuccalistr. 33. A former Ministerialrat who acts as tax and financial adviser to a number of firms. Has been associated with Haussleiter's Deutsche Gemeinschaft, the Bruderschaft and is member of the Refugee Party (BHE) and the Deutsche Union.
- (ii) Dr. FRIEDRICH (para. 5.) This is most probably Dr. Otto A. FRIEDRICH, General Manager of the Phoenix Gummiwerk, member of the Praesidium of the Federal Association of German Industry. A former member of the NSDAP.
- (iii) Dr. NORD (para. 4). The "Stiftverband der deutschen Industrie/ of which NORD is a member, exists ostensibly to distribute funds supplied by industry for "scientific and cultural purposes. NORD is a member of the supervisory committee of the "Deutsche Soldatenzeitung".
- (iv) Ex-General Oldwig von NATZMER (para. 4). NATZMER has a record of nationalist, including Bruderschaft, associations during the post-capitulation years and has shown opposition to a policy of cooperation with the West. GUDERIAN and NATZMER share an identity of views and, according to a private observation of Graf von SCHWERIN, NATZMER remains an unrepentant Nazi.

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