

East German spies arrested in Zurich

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East German Spies Arrested In Zurich

An important espionage affair has broken out in Zurich. It is believed that a Sulzer engineer naming himself Hans Kaelin and established in Zurich since 1967 was the head of the East-German Espionage Services in Switzerland. Mr Kaelin and his wife were arrested on September 12th in their home in Zurich where several sophisticated radio transmitters, secret documents, cameras and coding devices were also found. The Federal authorities have not yet disclosed how the two spies, whose real name was Wolf, had been arrested.

In a Press conference, Mr Kurt Furgler, Head of the Justice and Police Department and the retiring Federal Attorney, Mr Hans Walder, said that Mr Wolf had come to Switzerland in 1967 as an officer for the East-German WFK Services. He settled in Zurich with the help of perfectly forged documents attesting to his origins in the village of Einsiedeln. In Zurich he met a "journalist", Ursula Meissner, who also turned out to be an East-German having illegally entered the country.

"Hans Kaelin" then 45, found a job as a machines engineer in the vast factories of Sulzer Brothers in Winterthur. Later he switched to the computer and production department. As far as one knows at this stage, his activities covered the whole of Switzerland and a wide variety of political, economic and military matters the content of which was revealed among the documents found at his Zurich home. Among other devices, police found a modern transmitter hidden inside a wooden chest. It could transmit long coded messages in a matter of seconds making detection and localisation particularly difficult. "Kaelin" was

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The Federal Council met in special session to discuss the case and sent a note of protest to the East German mission in Berne.

Ironically, one of the most important post-war espionage cases in Switzerland also involved Sulzer Brothers. Three years ago, an engineer working in the firm's Turbine Department sold plans of the Swiss-built "Mirage" fighter to Israel for over 800,000 francs. But Sulzer's Press chief announced that the "Kaelin Affair" wasn't as serious as the "Frauenknecht Affair." He said that "Kaelin" had not had access to any secret material which was not the case of Alfred Frauenknecht, who had been an executive of the company. The Press officer added that it was not practical to step up security at Sulzer's as a company of this size could not operate without a minimum of trust.

It is not known how the East-German couple came to be arrested, but Sulzer's have said that they had never suspected their engineer of delving in illegal activities.

Switzerland Maintains Diplomatic Relations with Chile

The Swiss Embassy in Chile appeared to have trouble interpreting and applying a call by the Federal Council for political hospitality. Shortly after the September 11th Coup, the Swiss Government said that Switzerland would continue recognising Chile and added that the Embassy in Santiago had been instructed to help all those that might be in serious physical danger. This promise applied in the first place to Swiss nationals, but one gathered from the Federal Council's indications that the Embassy in Santiago would have its doors wide open to people in trouble calling for help. A short while later, it was rumoured that Ambassador Masset had turned away many applicants for political asylum or a safe-conduct out of Chile. Several Swiss were reported to have been left in the lurch.

At the time of writing, it appeared that only a handful of Swiss had actually sought protection at the Embassy. One or two had actually been repatriated. In their immense majority, the many Swiss living in Chile lived through this political upheaval without risk to their lives and properties. On the other hand, the Embassy was flooded by calls from Chilians and other Latin Americans asking for protection and safe-conducts out of the country. There is a Latin-American agreement whereby anyone who seeks refuge in an Embassy may in principle receive a safe-conduct out of the country. The Swiss Embassy had to explain to its many callers that Switzerland was not a party to this agreement. It appears that Ambassador Masset interpreted recommendations from Berne in a restrictive way. The Swiss Embassy was by no means an open door to security and political asylum during the troubled days in Chile. But it is true that the Embassy could hardly have welcomed and processed the thousands of left-wingers tracked down by the military in Chile.

Switzerland was one of the first countries to recognise the new regime. The Government explained that Switzerland recognised other countries regardless of their political systems so that the recent events had not modified Berne's attitude towards Chile.