

1942-1952, Egypt: Nasser's Nazis and the CIA

By Marc Erikson, writer, *Asia Times*.

In the summer of 1942, when German General Erwin Rommel's Afrikakorps were poised to march into Cairo, Anwar Sadat, Gamal Nasser and their buddies were in close touch with the attacking force and – with help from the Muslim Brotherhood – were preparing an anti-British uprising in Egypt's capital. A treaty with Germany had been drafted by Sadat. It included provisions for German recognition of an independent, but pro-Axis Egypt, and guaranteed that “no British soldier would leave Cairo alive.” When Rommel's push east failed in the fall of 1942, Sadat and several of his co-conspirators were arrested by the British and sat out much of the remainder of the war in jail.

Islamist-fascist collaboration did not cease with war's end. King Farouk brought large numbers of German military and intelligence personnel as well as ranking ex-Nazis into Egypt as advisors. It was a bad move. Several of the Germans, recognizing Farouk's political weakness, soon began conspiring with Nasser and his “Free Officers,” who, in turn, were working closely with the Muslim Brotherhood, to overthrow the king.

On July 23, 1952, the deed was done and *Newsweek* marvelled that, “The most intriguing aspect [of] the revolt ... was the role played in the coup by the large group of German advisors serving with the Egyptian army... The young officers who did the actual planning consulted the German advisors as to ‘tactics’... This accounted for the smoothness of the operation.”

And yet another player fond of playing all sides against the middle had entered the game prior to Farouk's ouster. In 1951, the CIA's Kermit Roosevelt (grandson of President Teddy Roosevelt, who helped organize the overthrow of elected Iranian leader Mohammed Mossadegh and install Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1953) opened secret negotiations with Nasser. Agreement was soon reached that after the coup, the U.S. would assist in building up Egypt's intelligence and security forces – by reinforcing

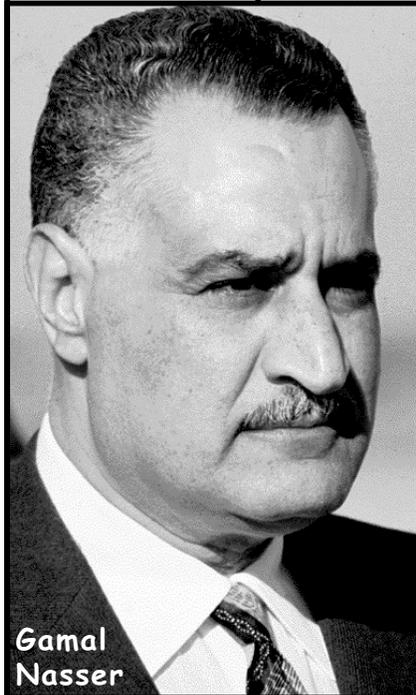


King Farouk

In 1952, with CIA help, Nasser overthrew Britain's puppet ruler, King Farouk. To build Nasser's spy and security forces, CIA boss Allen Dulles turned to Gen. Reinhard Gehlen, an ex-Nazi military intelligence chief, who then worked for the CIA.



Reinhard Gehlen



Gamal Nasser



Otto Skorzeny

Gehlen hired the best man he knew for the job, former SS colonel Otto Skorzeny, who organized the ODESSA network to help high-ranking Nazis flee to Argentina and Egypt.

Nasser's existing Germans with additional, “more capable,” ones.

For that, CIA director Allen Dulles turned to Reinhard Gehlen, the former head of Nazi military intelligence for the eastern front. [Editor's note: Just before the end of WWII, Gehlen turned himself over to the U.S. military. Dulles and the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS), reunited Gehlen with his Nazi associates to establish “the Gehlen Organization” which then functioned *within* the OSS and later the CIA.] By the early 1950s, Gehlen was in charge of developing the new German intelligence service.

To build Egypt's spy and security forces, Gehlen hired the best man

he knew for the job – former SS colonel Otto Skorzeny. At the end of the war, Skorzeny organized the infamous ODESSA network to facilitate the escape of high-ranking Nazis to Latin America (mainly Peron's Argentina) and Egypt. With Skorzeny now on the job of assisting Nasser, Egypt became a safe haven for Nazi war criminals. The CIA officer in charge of the Egypt assistance program was Miles Copeland, soon a Nasser intimate.

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