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[Text] Stuttgart/Wiesbaden--The revelations of Werner Stiller, the GDR lieutenant who defected to the West 2 weeks ago, appears to have given rise to a mass exodus of suspected GDR agents. According to DPA sources, by Sunday a total of 16 suspected spies had gotten away. A BILD AM SONNTAG report spoke of "more than 40 suspected agents" who are said to have fled from federal territory. It is possible, however, that this number includes members of the agents' families who escaped with them.

No official confirmation of the defections could be obtained from the Federal Prosecutor's Office in Karlsruhe. A senior public prosecutor said, however, in connection with the disappearance of Erich Ziegenhain, chief executive officer of the Hesse Ministry of Social Affairs, and the question of a possible escape: "That is conceivable, but I have not yet heard the name." Ziegenhain called in sick from seafood poisoning last Tuesday and has since disappeared with his wife and two children.

According to the Hesse Ministry for Social Affairs, Ziegenhain was concerned with tax questions. An investigation is said to have indicated that he had left his flat in a hurry. A staff member of the Preussage firm is also said to have escaped, according to BILD AM SONNTAG. The Karlsruhe comment on this was: "We have already heard the name Preussage."

The documents on GDR spy activities in the Federal Republic which Stiller brought with him fill 16 files with several thousand pages, according to DPA sources. It became increasingly clear by the weekend that the flight of the high-ranking security officer from the GDR Ministry for State Security has enabled the West to score what is probably one of the greatest counterespionage successes since the end of the war. A spokesman for the Federal Prosecutor's Office said: "We have not yet made a list of those who have made off."

The most prominent of the espionage suspects to date, Bavarian SPD Diet Deputy Fritz Cremer, is said to have been in the confidence of leading SPD politicians. He was also a member of the party council, the highest body between party congresses. It was learned from security circles that there had been grounds for suspicion against him "for several years," but that these had not been sufficient to instigate investigatory proceedings until Stiller recognized an East Berlin agent next to Cremer in a photo. The politician's application for a review of his remand in custody had not been received by the Federal Prosecutor's Office by the weekend.

Even after the issuing of an arrest warrant by the Federal High Court, friends of Cremer are still convinced of his innocence. A long-standing acquaintance of Cremer pointed out that the case of SPD Bundestag Deputy Uwe Holtz--who was wrongly accused by Romanian defector Ion Pacepa--turned out to be a blind alley.