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TIMS MAG

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End of the Chase

These wretched people are sent to filthy slaughterhouses like a herd of sick, neglected cattle. But I won't talk about it, I only get nightmares from such thoughts.

—Anne Frank.

The Diary of a Young Girl

Anne Frank's nightmares finally ended in the concentration camp in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Last week the man who, as Adolf Eichmann's legal expert, helped organize the roundup of Anne and 110,000 other Dutch Jews was arrested in Austria and held for investigation on the charge of having "aided and abetted" the massacre. He was former SS Captain Erich Rajakowitsch, 57, for whom life as a respectable businessman in Italy had abruptly come to an end.

"Heart & Soul." Born in Trieste, the son of a prosperous merchant, Rajakowitsch became a lawyer and moved to Vienna, where his intelligence and good looks soon earned him a wide circle of friends. One of them was Adolf Eichmann, who in 1938 was busy planning the

expulsion of Jews from Austria. Rajakowitsch volunteered his services to Eichmann, providing a neat formula whereby the Nazis got quick cash ransoms from Jews who were forced to quit the country. When Rajakowitsch formally applied to join the SS, Eichmann wrote a warm letter recommending him as "somebody who puts himself at the disposal of the cause with heart and soul, a National Socialist of the purest race."

He was that, all right. Rajakowitsch traveled as Eichmann's deputy to Czechoslovakia, Poland and Berlin; then, in 1941 he was rushed to The Netherlands, where intermittent month-long protest riots had broken out in major cities after the Nazis' first raid on the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam. Rajakowitsch soon got the roundups rolling smoothly. As boss of the dreaded Section IV-B-4 (Special Office for Jewish Affairs) in Holland, he was so thorough that when he was asked to spare a handful of Jews of Portuguese origin, he declared: "Jews are Jews—out!"

Tired of Running. Soon afterward, Rajakowitsch dropped from sight, and many believed he had died on the Eastern front. But after Eichmann told Israeli police that he had talked to his old friend in Buenos Aires after the war, the net started moving around him. Simon Wiesenthal, chief of the Jewish Documentation Center in Vienna, who had helped track down Eichmann, traced Rajakowitsch to Milan. There, under the name Enrico Raja, he had built up a flourishing business importing metals and machinery from Communist Eastern Europe.

Since Rajakowitsch was legally still an Austrian citizen, Wiesenthal asked Vienna cops to request his extradition. They refused; Italian police refused to expel him. Finally, about three weeks ago, Wiesenthal took the whole story to Milan's (and Italy's) biggest newspaper, Corriere della Sera, which printed it.* At that, Rajakowitsch fled to a Swiss villa he owned near Lake Lugano, but was quickly expelled as an "unwanted person" by the authorities. Tired of the chase, Rajakowitsch hopped a flight to Munich, then drove to Vienna where he gave himself up. He had expected to be freed on bail, and his arrest, said Rajakowitsch, was "very surprising," since he had come back only to "clear myself."

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