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OTTO SKORZENY.

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The Real Menace That Lurks Behind 'The Most Dangerous Man in Europe'

SKORZENY'S SECRET MISSIONS
By Otto Skorzeny. Translated from the French by Jacques Le Clercq. (E. P. Dutton: \$3.)

Reviewed by Mary McGroty

These memoirs of the chief of the Nazi Commandos, whose most famous exploit was the kidnaping of Mussolini in 1943, are as interesting for what they leave unsaid as for what they say. Skorzeny's account of his dare-devil missions and the painstaking preparations which preceded them are a worthwhile addition to commando literature. What is more fascinating, however, is the author's personal history since

the war. Of Skorzeny's incredible experience since an American court freed him for his part in the Battle of the Bulge, the jacket gives no hint. News- paper files reveal that he has escaped from a West German prison camp, where he was being held for appearance before a de-Nazification court, in 1948. He has been variously reported in Argentina and in Paris. More recent dispatches have him secure in an Alpine hideout forming the tough core of a new German nationalist movement—called Der Spline, the spider—sparked by intransigent ex-Nazis. He has also been reported as the object of courtship by the Soviets in their drive to recruit top Nazi officers.

Of this, as I say, the book jacket gives no hint. The publishers, with undue reticence, do not mention, either the fact that publication of the memoirs in a conservative French newspaper touched off the bloodiest street riot (Communist-inspired) Paris has seen since the war. Moreover, Skorzeny is said to be using proceeds from the book to finance his new Nazi movement, a factor which makes his appearance in this country at this time controversial; to stay the least.

The jacket calls him merely

"the most dangerous man in Europe," an estimate apparently based on his wartime record, and without reference to the menace he currently offers.

To get down to what Skorzeny tells of his own story—and it is precious little when you consider what he must know—this is a highly impersonal, non-political record of the various missions he undertook at the behest of Hitler, of whom he always speaks in the most reverent tones. His most dashing feat was the air abduction, in 1943, of Mussolini from Gran Sasso, where Il Duce was confined by his countrymen.

He describes frankly the failure of such projects as the Himmler plan to bomb New York and complains constantly of the meagerness of his resources compared with those of the British.

In his most interesting passages he recounts the sabotage operations which were his contribution to the Battle of the Bulge. picked men were trained not only in the use of American slang but also in the chewing of gum and "the American way of opening cigarettes." In deference to the Geneva Convention, they wore Nazi uniforms under their American and British kit, since the convention makes men wearing enemy uniform in battle subject to espionage rather than combat.

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