

ARGOSY Magazine
November, 1953

What was the deal Mussolini made with Churchill? What did Tito promise Stalin? Who sabotaged the Long Island saboteurs? What "friend" tipped off the Allied landings? Read this story of history's most amazing double crosses

by **WILHELM HOETTL** as told to **LADISLAS FARAGO**

I AM a marked man, hunted and harassed— but I'm not saying this for effect. Whether I like it or not, my life is full of melodrama. Complete strangers finger me on the streets and secret agents trail me all the time. They watch my house, search my files, rifle my mail and photograph my visitors—because for 10 hectic years of my life I was one of Hitler's master spies.

Those who know the story of my life—the strings I pulled, the men I moved and the events I helped to shape—refuse to believe I am no longer in the espionage racket. A man like him, they say, can never retire! He must be up — or down — to something. So they keep after me and link my name with every spy plot in Europe.

Only a few months ago, when two American spies were caught in Vienna, they picked me up again. They went through my papers and carted me off to jail. I didn't know why. Neither did they. I was promptly released. But just as I was leaving the jail, a headline hit me with my name in it. The article "exposed" me as Europe's most mysterious mystery man, and a millionaire to boot. I was called "the keeper of the fabulous slush fund of Hitler's secret

service that disappeared without a trace" if it ever existed at all.

In Europe it is enough to mention my name to make certain people scurry for cover. I am "Exhibit A," a kind of museum piece, because I am Germany's only big-time spy who is still alive.

The strange men who headed German Intelligence during its turbulent decade between 1935 and 1945 are all dead, and only one of them died in bed. Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler's personal spy chief, was the first to go. He was killed by British agents near the Czech town of Lidice. He was followed by his greatest adversary, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, whom the Nazis hanged with piano wire.

Then went Heinrich Himmler,

the Big Boss, and Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Heydrich's successor. Himmler committed suicide and Kaltenbrunner was hanged by the Allies in Nuremberg. Shortly afterward, the Yugoslavs hanged Hermann Behrens, Heydrich's right-hand man.

My last boss was Werner Schellenberg, the genius of the German secret service who masterminded the biggest plots of World War II. He died a few months ago, at the age of 40, under obscure circumstances in exile in Italy.

But I'm still alive, a freak by that very fact alone. But then, I was a freak, anyway, throughout my career in the secret service. If we should meet by chance, I don't think you would recognize me as a spy. I don't look the part, although I don't really know how spies are supposed to look.

I am still a young man today, not quite 40. And I was nothing but a kid, just out of Vienna University as its youngest graduate, when I was sucked into the game. In the University, I was a kind of prodigy because of my somewhat precocious preoccupation with political science. It seems that people who looked for budding spy masters, the way baseball scouts look for rookies, noticed me as a



"Since Allan Dulles was the chief U.S. spy in Europe, it was fortunate we could read all his cables."

WIDE WORLD



**"The Russians' purge of
Tukachevsky was com-
pletely engineered by
the German Intelligence."**

INP

boy who would bear watching.

Then I went down to the Balkans, the hotbed of Europe, to gather material for my doctor's thesis. When it came out in print, I got a call from someone who said he was my friend. "Read your paper," he said. "I think it's darned good. Would you be interested in working for us?"

At first I didn't quite get who "us" were, but my friend quickly enlightened me. It was the German Intelligence Service, he said. At that time, in the middle Thirties, it was just getting back into the business again.

I told the man who recruited me that I was a sort of intellectual who had very little to offer by way of brawn. But he scoffed at me and said, "The spies of today are no muscle men or buccaneers. We need people with brains, and you seem to be filling the bill."

The German secret service which I entered was an untidy organization functioning on two levels. Each was more or less independent of the other and even operated at cross purposes. On one level was the actual Intelligence Service called, misleadingly, *Auslands-Abwehr* or Foreign Defense, to camouflage its real activities. The over-all Intelligence Service

of the armed forces, it was headed by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, a shortish, graying, soft-speaking dreamer to whom espionage was but a means of anti-Nazi activities.

The *Abwehr* was organized in three Departments. Department I was Secret Intelligence Service. Department II was Sabotage under another bitter anti-Nazi named Erwin von Lahousen-Vivremont. Department III was Counterespionage.

The *Abwehr*, I found, had instructions to stay away from political intelligence. This job was assigned to Bureau VI of the Nazis' own *HSA*, or Foreign Political Intelligence Service. This Bureau VI was organized in nine sections, of which Section D was

spying on the United States. When, in 1944, the Nazis assumed total power in Germany, this dualism was abolished and *all* Intelligence work was centralized under the *HSA*.

But when I joined the service, this fateful reorganization was still eight years away. Because of the political nature of the work for which I was slated, I was assigned to Bureau VI of *HSA*. At that time, in the middle Thirties, it was in personal charge of Reinhard Heydrich, the notorious "Hangman."

To learn my trade I was first ordered to spy on German churches and then was shifted to the Central and Southeastern Europe section where, after several years, I rose to acting head of District VI there. My first job was a shocking one. It turned out to be the plot of the decade, that weird overture to World War II, the Sudeten crisis in Czechoslovakia.

Much has been written about this but the truth has never been told. The truth often isn't pretty; in this case it is ugly. But now the time has come to tell it since it provides a vital footnote and lesson to the history of our time. Here is the true story of the Sudeten crisis. (Continued on page 72)



**"Mussolini was ambushed
by the Partisans—after he
was put in their hands by
the Duce's own chiefs."**

WIDE WORLD

In popular memory the man crisis is remembered as a typical Nazi plot. In reality it was a conspiracy hatched within the British Intelligence Service as far back as 1933 when Adolph Hitler was still more or less an unknown quantity. It was thought up by Sir Gilbert Vansittart who, as the permanent under-secretary of the Foreign Office, was the ex-officio chief of the PID, Britain's own Political Intelligence Division.

Vansittart tried to kill two birds with one stone when he developed the gigantic plot. With the settlement of the old Sudeten-German conflict, Vansittart hoped to undermine the Soviet's influence in Prague, while at the same time he expected to take the wind out of Hitler's sails. As long as the Sudetens were an "oppressed minority," Vansittart felt that the Germans had a case against Czechoslovakia. But once they were firmly integrated into the federation of the republic, Hitler could not properly ask for a revision of their status and mingle in the internal affairs of the Czechs.

An obscure member of the British Intelligence Service named Colonel Graham Christie was chosen to develop the plot. And he in turn picked an unknown gymnastics teacher and anti-Nazi, Konrad Henlein, to head this British-inspired and in part British-financed Sudeten-German movement. Right at the outset, Colonel Christie took Henlein to London and introduced him to men like Vansittart, Harold Nicolson, Alfred Duff-Cooper, and even to Winston Churchill and his son-in-law, Duncan Sandys. Henlein soon became a favorite figure in London's diplomatic drawing rooms.

I don't know whether the British ever realized how delicate and dangerous their game really was. By the time I got into it, they had already lost all control over the conspiracy of their own

making. At that time Neville Chamberlain had replaced Stanley Baldwin at 10 Downing Street and appeasement of Hitler became the official policy of Whitehall. Sir Gilbert Vansittart was removed from political intelligence and men like Graham Christie were quarantined. The bewildered Henlein was left to shift for himself. Inflamed with the dream of a German federal state within Czechoslovakia, and deserted by the British, he decided to risk a deal with Hitler.

We in Section E had our own agents within the Henlein movement and learned immediately of this major change in Henlein's plans and fortunes. We lost no time in bringing Hitler and Henlein together, and from then on the conspiracy which the British Intelligence Service had launched became our own undisputed plot. I became one of the behind-the-scenes managers of the Sudeten crisis that was soon rocking the entire world.

We Set the Pace

From then on we called the tunes and the British danced. Men like William Strang, brilliant chief of the British Foreign Office's Eastern European division, Lord Rothermere of the *Daily Mail*, and even Lord Halifax, did, unbeknown to themselves, exactly what we wanted them to do. It was, in a sense, on our initiative that Lord Runciman was sent to Prague "to settle the crisis." Throughout his mission, Runciman was our unwitting tool. We listened to his phone conversations, read his mail, overheard his conversations through concealed microphones, decoded his cables, planted advisers on him, and in fact, arranged his weekends in the homes of nobility sympathetic to our cause.

It seemed to me that the British were so hell-bent on appeasement that they actually wanted us to lead them around by their noses. The only man wise to our game was Jan Masaryk, son of the founder of Czechoslovakia, then serving as his country's ambassador in London. He chanced to meet Konrad Henlein during his periodic visits to England and didn't seem to bear a grudge. On the whole, he watched the unfolding events with melancholy resignation and said so to Henlein.

"You, sir," said Masaryk, "may tell them as much as you please. It's quite immaterial what you desire or what I want. Whether or not we'll slide into a war one of these days, you and I have no control. The decisions are made elsewhere."

During the height of the Sudeten crisis, when he was on his way to 10 Downing Street, Masaryk was accosted by reporters. He told them: "Gentlemen, I am merely the envoy of Czechoslovakia. Who cares?"

In the chaos that followed, the British suddenly realized that their plot had backfired. In a last-minute effort to regain control over it, they took Christie off the shelf, dusted him off and sent him to Czechoslovakia to re-establish contact with Henlein. But by then, in the summer of 1938, it was too late. "I'm sorry, Colonel Christie," Henlein told him. "I followed your advice for building a German state and then tied myself to Herr Hitler body and soul. There is nothing more you or I can do. Czechoslovakia is doomed!"

Chamberlain made a last desperate effort to stop the march of events by going to Godesberg and then to Munich in September, 1938, but we in German Intelligence had nothing but pity for his naïve endeavor. For the first time in history, the young German Intelligence Service had beaten its great opponent,

this was my baptism of fire. It was a fascinating spectacle to watch, if only because everything was done with the cold precision of a surgeon operating on a cancerous body. Far from the conventional cloak-and-dagger stuff of the spy yarns, this was a brainy operation, a real battle of wits.

Try to visualize yourself in my place. I was a mere kid, an apprentice spy, but I was permitted to assist on a work of art the way one of Cellini's pupils was allowed to help with a precious piece of metalwork. The men with whom I worked belong to the most obscure pages of history. Their names are forgotten. Most of them are dead. But then, during those perilous days, they dominated the scene. They were the unseen masters of Europe. And I was one of them.

Probably because I am the last surviving spymaster of Germany, my name is now used as a synonym for all the intrigue that legend pegged onto Hitler's spy system. The chances are, though, that you have never even heard my name. But I'm sure you have seen some of the things I did, because they made the front pages of the newspapers throughout the world.

Do you recall Stalin's bloody purge of 1937 when he killed Marshal Tukachevsky and destroyed the commanders of his own Red Army? Or the last day of Benito Mussolini and the famous picture that showed him hanging upside down with the limp body of his mistress at his side?

I was there in the background of both dramas. I watched them from the wings and helped move those marionettes.

During the war itself, while you were impressed with the struggle of Mikhailovich and Tito, I used to buy from them trainloads of military supplies which your High Command had smuggled into Yugoslavia. Men under me forged the English pound notes with which a strange spy we called Cicero was paid for his betrayal of the Allies' most closely guarded secrets. You have probably seen this quaint adventure in the motion picture "Five Fingers."

It was a monumental case of espionage which still makes British diplomats and counterspies blush. The personal valet of the British Ambassador to Turkey, with unexplained access to the diplomatic strongbox in His Excellency's bedroom, was an ordinary spy working regularly for us. He was a shiftless Albanian who knew no loyalties and owed allegiance to no one. When he discovered with what ease he could gain possession of the most secret documents of the Allies which his boss used to keep in his private safe, he set himself up in business. He stole those documents, photographed them and sold them to us for \$250,000 in cash, the highest price we ever paid to a common garden-variety spy.

But it was worth it, because through this tricky Albanian we obtained copies of the protocols of the Tehran and Cairo

conferences and a draft of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Europe scheduled for June 1944. It was especially worth it if we consider that we paid him every penny of his price in money we ourselves had forged just for such an eventuality.

Whatever I did, I was merely doing a job. I was one of the directors of HSA, the Haupt Sicherheits Amt, whose Section VI was Germany's super-secret espionage service. I was assigned to the Balkans and Italy, traditionally the most fertile fields of intrigue. I was working on the home grounds of history's most intrepid and ruthless spies.

Even when Germany was on the brink of defeat, I was still fighting on the secret front. Ask your own spymaster, Allen W. Dulles, about me. He knows me because he dealt with me when the German secret service emerged as Hitler's most dangerous enemy. What cruel irony of fate! The fantastic secret force which Hitler himself created, the powerful system of espionage, not only speeded his downfall but made his victory impossible from the very beginning.

Today it is a matter of historical record that instead of aiding Hitler in his war, his own secret service aided the Allies. From the first day of the war, treason was rampant within the German Intelligence Service. Its supreme chief, a peculiar old admiral named Wilhelm Canaris, betrayed Hitler at every step by faking information to mislead him or by withholding from him decisive bits of intelligence.

Hitler's personal orders, to kill and sabotage, were themselves sabotaged. Very often the German Intelligence Service worked directly for the Allies. For instance, it warned the Dutch that their country would be invaded. It also leaked information to the Russians about Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union.

The Allies could invade North Africa, Sicily, Italy and France with relative impunity, despite the fact that we knew well in advance the exact dates and spots of the landings. The information about the landings in North Africa came to us from two specific sources. One was a highly placed Hungarian, stationed in Stockholm, who fooled the Allies by working for us. But more important was an unexpected source in London which had knowledge of these impending landings because of his own direct interest in them. He was the Spanish Ambassador, the allegedly pro-British Duke of Alba, who was frequently an important source of information for us. Even during the blitz when our communications intelligence people proved incapable of breaking the rapidly changing British codes, we learned the success of our operations from the reports which the Duke was sending to the Foreign Ministry in Madrid. We actually read his reports, as if they had been prepared for us, on many an important development in the Allied world.

Because of the arrangements the Allies had to make for their operations in the

immediate vicinity of Spanish possessions, the Duke of Alba had learned more about them than proved healthy for the Anglo-American armada. This information was passed on by the Duke to his people in Madrid and from there it came into our possession.

This was, too, how we came into possession of information about D-Day in Normandy, although it was but one of several of our reliable sources. We had our agents planted inside the French and Dutch undergrounds and learned from their instructions virtually every detail of the Normandy landings. A final clue came from Cicero, the Albanian valet of the British Ambassador in Ankara, who supplied the date and the place of the impending landing from the inexhaustible safe of his employer, although we could never figure out why such information had ever been forwarded to a diplomatic officer in faraway Ankara.

Confusing Intelligence

But whatever information the Abwehr managed to collect about the intentions of the Allies, it was either kept from Hitler or supplied with confusing contradictory intelligence, leaving it to the Fuehrer's intuition to make the choice. In the case of the North African landings in November, 1942, Admiral Canaris accepted the misleading information put out by London as fact and served it up to Hitler. According to that, the Allies were planning to invade Norway. When this balloon was punctured, Canaris set up an elaborate intelligence conference in Paux in Southern France at which Allied intentions were examined from all angles. While he had definite information on file that the landings would be staged off Casablanca and Oran, he persuaded the Wehrmacht that they would be at Dakar and Bengazi, many hundreds of miles from the spots where the Allies actually came off their boats.

As a result, the major German air force was shifted from the Western Mediterranean and Southern France to Italy and Libya and the bulk of the U-boats concentrated off Dakar. All that was left to them was to listen in on their radios to the Allied communiqués which described the landings. In Normandy, German Intelligence sold Hitler on the idea that it was but a feint and that the real landings would come off somewhere else. Thereby German Intelligence became instrumental in holding back the main German defensive forces in the Atlantik Wall until it became too late to throw their weight against the Allied tide.

German Intelligence was among the best in the world. Throughout the war, we read every word in the cables which the American Legation in Bern, Switzerland, was sending to Washington, and every bit of Tito's coded communications. In November, 1939, we smashed Britain's most important spy nest in Europe. For almost four years we ac-

4. tually managed a whole British spy network from the Netherlands by operating 18 secret "underground" radio transmitters. This story has just been told in the new book by H. J. Giskes, "London Calling Northpole," which has rocked Britain.

We maintained brilliant spies in Britain whose identities are still unknown to MI-5, the British counter-intelligence service which is supposed to know everything. And there are a few secrets which we managed to keep even from the FBI.

We read the protocols of the Tehran and Cairo conferences virtually the day after they were signed and knew in advance every move the Allies were planning to make. We knew them all—but Hitler didn't know them. Information that could have helped him win the war was not allowed to reach him. He was left groping in the dark, blinded by his own intelligence service.

I entered this house divided against itself on the ground floor. At that time Hitler was playing his game pretty close to his chest, so there wasn't a need yet for a big espionage organization. But the world was full of stories about the omnipresent German spies. I myself heard a British politician say that in Britain alone we had more than 70,000 spies.

I looked around in our office and laughed. At that time, in 1938, we had about 50 full-time operatives. Even at the peak of our work, during the war itself, the permanent staff of our political intelligence service had only 200 members.

This doesn't mean that we didn't have informers at large in the world: V-men for *Vertrauensmann*, or confidential informers, as we used to call them. We had people everywhere who sympathized with Hitler and supplied information to us. They often even volunteered it against their own governments and armies. If you could read the roster of our V-men you would be surprised by some of the big names on our list.

But the agency that co-ordinated and directed them, which evaluated and disseminated their reports, wasn't big at all. The victories we scored were not due to any lavish expenditures or to the efficiency of a super-organization. As a matter of fact, we had to operate on a shoestring. Whenever we had to pay out big sums for the real stuff, we had to get the money ourselves by counterfeiting it.

And insofar as the organization was concerned, the much vaunted German efficiency was nowhere evident in our secret service. The whole network was split by bickerings, duplications, inter-departmental jealousies. There was infelision at the top. Orders were given only to be countermanded. Operations were planned and abandoned almost in the same breath.

Once during the war, for reasons known only to him, Hitler decided to liquidate the venerable French General Maxim Weygand. He ordered Section II of the Abwehr to assassinate Weygand.

He took this plot extremely seriously and assigned Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel to supervise its execution. But General Lahousen, in charge of Section II, decided to defy Hitler and sabotage Weygand's assassination. In this daring insubordination, Lahousen was aided by Canaris himself.

Hitler was growing impatient and kept inquiring about Gisella, the cover name by which the plot was known. And Keitel dutifully called Canaris from time to time, asking, "What about this Gisella? How long do we have to wait?"

"For heaven's sake, Keitel, be patient, my man!" Canaris answered. "These things are not as simple as you think there at the headquarters of the Fuehrer."

Finally the pressure became so great that something had to be done. Canaris decided to go to Paris to settle Gisella once and for all. He was accompanied by Admiral Leopold Buerkner, his second in command, and General Lahousen, the unhappy chief of the sabotage section of the Abwehr. By the time they reached Paris, they had their counterplot all ready: they planned to tip off Weygand and actually organize his escape from their own assassins.

But just then Weygand managed to escape on his own, leaving Canaris in a pickle. And, as usual, Keitel was on the phone the moment Weygand's escape became known at the Fuehrer's headquarters.

"Hitler is very angry," he said rather ominously. "How could you botch up Gisella so badly?"

At that moment Lahousen handed Canaris a slip of paper on which a few words were hastily scribbled: "Heydrich has just been killed in Czechoslovakia. This is definite."

Canaris read the paper and a broad smile came upon his face. "This is one case for which you won't be able to blame us, Keitel," he said. "This whole Gisella business was taken away from us; we were overruled as usual by Heydrich. He actually forbade me to handle the case. If you want to, you may ask him personally about it."

Ready for Sabotage

At another time, orders came direct from Hitler's headquarters to sabotage the planes of Pan-American Airways plying between New York and Lisbon, Portugal. When Admiral Canaris learned about the plot, it was advanced to the point where a time bomb had already been placed in one of the planes. The admiral rushed to Lisbon and supervised in person the removal of the bomb, only afterward thinking up an excuse to Hitler.

The famous mission of the saboteurs who went to the United States in submarines was deliberately bungled in Berlin even before they left. Orders to kill Churchill and Roosevelt were dismissed with scorn the moment they were received.

Part of this was undoubtedly due to

the disorder that was rampant in the organization. But part of it was due to a deliberate, organized effort to sabotage Hitler's plots. It wasn't as easy as it sounds to do this—and probably it would have been altogether impossible had not the British succeeded with a decisive plot of their own. With that one single blow to our solar plexus, the British destroyed the effectiveness of our organization, although I doubt if they planned it that way or if they are aware even today of the fantastic consequences of their operation.

This plot involved the liquidation of Reinhard Heydrich at the very height of his enormous powers. He was ambushed and killed on his way to the Reich just when he was about to take over direction of the whole spy system.

Heydrich is the most misunderstood and underrated figure in the espionage history of World War II. Due to the inevitable legend which springs up in the wake of every war, it is not Heydrich but Admiral Wilhelm Canaris whose picture is etched on the imagination of the world as Germany's master spy.

Despite his top position in the service, Admiral Canaris was merely a minor character. Called to head military espionage on the eve of his retirement, never trusted by Hitler, and himself torn between his loyalty to the Fuehrer and what he regarded as his duties to humanity, Canaris proved a dismal failure—no matter how glorious this failure now may appear from the viewpoint of the Allies.

Aside from an insatiable curiosity, his love of travel and an uncanny knowledge of the world, there was nothing in Canaris that qualified him for his job. He was a hopelessly bad organizer and a mystic who wrapped himself up in esoteric thoughts which had little relation to reality.

The Spy Master

The man who was the real spy master of Germany was Reinhard Heydrich, known in the west as "the Hangman." He, too, was a former Naval officer, but he was Canaris' junior by more than 30 years. A fanatical Nazi despite his partly Jewish origin, and a born practitioner of intrigue, this young man attracted Hitler's attention even before his seizure of power.

With nothing but determination and zeal to offer at first, Heydrich inched his way into Hitler's admiration and confidence. He was about to arrive on top, to replace Canaris, when he was killed. He died at the end of his titanic fight against Canaris—a plot by itself within the greater plot.

When I joined the German secret service, his struggle against the admiral was just beginning. Even so, it was a breathtaking experience to watch their fight. It started in the winter of 1937 with a plot that led to the bloody purge of that year and paid enormous dividends years later when Hitler decided to crush Russia.

During those winter days in 1937, we observed that Heydrich had a particularly mysterious air about him. He had just hit on an idea that was so fantastic that it staggered even Hitler's imagination. It was to become the spy plot of the century.

Heydrich suggested that "evidence" be produced for Stalin himself that the top-ranking generals of his Red Army were plotting the overthrow of the Communist regime. There were some rumors abroad that some of the Red generals did, in fact, think along those lines. It is entirely possible, too, that some of them had actual contacts with their German opposite numbers.

But Marshal M. N. Tukachevsky, the best brain in the Red Army General Staff, had nothing to do with this groping design. He was loyal to Stalin and a bitter enemy of Germany. This made him a marked man in Heydrich's eyes, who aimed his plot against him. Heydrich told Hitler: "I have an idea the success of which would certainly end with Tukachevsky's liquidation. It would start a purge in the Red Army that would not only destroy the morale of the Russian officers' corps but a great number of the officers themselves."

Hitler was fascinated and told Heydrich to go ahead. I was never to see secrecy in any secret service even approaching the one in which Heydrich shrouded this plot. He isolated part of the dreaded cellars in Gestapo headquarters in Berlin's Prinz Albrecht Strasse and established an office there whose sole function was the preparation of the conspiracy.

There were only six men who knew about these preparations. They were Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich himself, and three aides. One of them was Hermann Behrens, Heydrich's personal aide, who directed the technical apparatus. Another was a controversial Russian named Nikolai Skoblin, a former Czarist general living in Paris. He acted as a kind of technical adviser. The third was another Russian who deserted to us from the Soviet secret service. He prepared the necessary texts and forged the documents Heydrich needed.

By the strange whim of history, none of these men is alive today. Hitler, Himmler and Heydrich are dead. So is Behrens. Skoblin and the other Russian disappeared without a trace in the wake of the plot. I suspect that Heydrich had them killed to wipe out the only outside witnesses to his scheme. Even on the Russian side, nobody actively involved in the plot is alive today. There is no eye-witness anywhere in the world. But the documents survived. I probably was one of the few men alive who had a chance to see them before they were finally destroyed.

Heydrich set out at once to produce his "evidence": letters which Tukachevsky was alleged to have sent to his German "friends." It wasn't particularly difficult to forge these papers. There was plenty of bona fide correspondence between the

Some of them were lifted from the archives of the German War Ministry, and their stationery, rubber stamps and signatures duplicated. Heydrich even managed to procure a typewriter that resembled the one on which Tukachevsky's letters were written.

Dossier Goes to Hitler

By April, 1937, the documents were ready. They were bound in a red leather dossier and submitted to Hitler. All that remained to be done was to smuggle the dossier into Stalin's hands.

At first Heydrich planned to let it fall into the hands of the Czechoslovak General Staff because he was certain that they would forward it promptly to Moscow. But on second thought, when Behrens was already in Prague with the dossier, he canceled the plan. He felt sure that such a find would gain for the Czechs Stalin's eternal gratitude. And he wasn't particularly anxious to deepen the bonds of Russo-Czech friendship.

Heydrich decided to make a direct deal with the Russians. He instructed Behrens to contact an attaché of the Soviet Embassy in Berlin and to play the dossier into his hands. A secret meeting was arranged and the attaché was acquainted with the existence of the documents. The attaché then rushed to Moscow with the news and returned to Berlin with General Lev Mekhlis, chief of the Communist Party's military administration.

Mekhlis was empowered by Stalin himself to acquire the dossier by all means, but when he asked the middleman how much he wanted for the papers, he found that the agent was not ready to discuss a price. Heydrich never expected to get money for his dossier, so he failed to give instructions to his agent that would have covered just such an eventuality.

But he wasn't long in making up his price. It was 6,000,000 rubles in cash. The horsetrading began. After a few days of hard bargaining, Mekhlis paid 3,000,000 rubles and left Berlin with the dossier in the diplomatic pouch.

The consequences of the plot soon became evident to the whole world. At dawn on June 5, 1937, Heydrich was called by the Foreign Office and told that Marshal Tukachevsky had been arrested the night before. Then events followed with machine-gun rapidity. The great Red military purge was on.

At 10 a.m. on June 11, Tukachevsky's trial began. At 9 p.m. of the same day he and seven other generals were sentenced to death by a special military tribunal. It was not yet midnight when the flash came that all of them had been executed by firing squads.

During those exciting days Heydrich set up his own monitoring service in his office and listened to Moscow Radio. He remained at the set to the bitter end—to Tukachevsky's bitter end, that is.

The backbone of the Red Army was broken. Its top generals were liquidated, its morale shattered—without ge-

ing to war or sending even a single operative to Moscow.

Canaris was not in on the plot and, in fact, elaborate measures were undertaken to keep it from him. But somehow the admiral found out about it and recognized that a formidable opponent appeared on the scene in the person of young Heydrich. He turned his own spy organization to the task of collecting information about Heydrich. In the established tradition of the Continental intelligence services, Canaris believed that the rattling of a few skeletons in Heydrich's private closets would keep his adversary quiet. And he proved right. His agents succeeded in discovering evidence that Heydrich, the fanatical Nazi, was partly of Jewish origin—a crime far worse than murder in Hitler's eyes.

Then, spying on Canaris just as Canaris was spying on him, Heydrich got word of the admiral's discovery. Realizing that the great secret of his life was out, he decided to conclude a tenuous alliance with Canaris, although his first impulse was to destroy him.

Yet Heydrich continued to outsmart Canaris. While the admiral was busy with relatively minor assignments, surveying Czechoslovakia and Poland in preparation for the *Blitzkrieg*, Heydrich moved about boldly where the admiral feared to tread.

British Secret Service

He decided to challenge the arch-enemy, the British secret service itself.

We were on the very eve of the second World War and large-scale preparations were made to gear our work to new tasks. Just then we discovered that the British had beaten us to the punch. They had an intricate spy net all ready for the war, established in The Hague, the Netherlands, with tentacles reaching deep into the Reich. This net was supposed to conduct espionage and sabotage during the war, so it became imperative for us to destroy it before it could become dangerous.

British spy headquarters in The Hague were in charge of two rather timid-looking men, but we knew that they were ace operatives of the British Intelligence Service—in fact, members of Britain's professional intelligence officers' corps. One was a "civilian" or political agent named Payne S. Best. The other was an old-timer in military intelligence, Captain Stevens. Heydrich decided to strike at them and to destroy their whole network by removing its double head.

He picked one of his deputies, a young intellectual named Werner Schellenberg, to prepare the ground. Schellenberg went to The Hague and established contact with Best and Stevens as a representative of a disgruntled anti-Nazi underground within the German Army. The two Englishmen swallowed the bait and went out of their way to collaborate with Schellenberg.

Soon we were operating inside the British spy network. One of our master spies was a trusted agent of its two

chiefs. Then suddenly Heydrich decided to go after the whole organization.

Late in the afternoon of November 8, 1939, Heydrich called us into his private office and I heard him instruct Schellenberg to bring in Best and Stevens alive. A plan was worked out. The two British agents would be lured to a rendezvous at Venlo, the Dutch town on the German border, then kidnapped and taken across the frontier. "I am sick and tired of this cat-and-mouse game," Heydrich said. "I'll feel much better when I have Best and Stevens locked up in the Reich instead of pulling their legs long-distance."

With confidence in Schellenberg's honorable intentions, Payne Best and Captain Stevens showed up in Venlo as agreed. The moment their car reached the rendezvous, agents of Heydrich, dressed in the uniforms of Dutch frontier guards, rushed at them and dragged them into Germany. Like the famous Cicero case, the Venlo incident remains a soft spot with the British Intelligence Service and I am reluctant to open up old wounds. Yet the fact remains that we again triumphed where others failed, this time against our most formidable opponent.

Soon afterward we were to add insult to injury with still another plot that remains in the annals of espionage second only to the action against the Red Army General Staff. Holland was the scene of this plot as well, and the British Intelligence Service was again its victim.

This particular operation went under the code name *Englandspiel* or England Game. It began in September 1940 and lasted until April 1944. During that period the German secret service actually dominated the major British espionage activities in Western Europe. We directed British spies at will. We ordered supplies from Britain, called for agents and information, as if we were operating within the offices of Messrs. Blunt, Bingham & Co.—the phony firm which served as the cover for this branch of Britain's wartime secret service.

A few figures might indicate the magnitude of this operation and especially its success. While it lasted, we called for 190 parachute drops and received 95 of them. We obtained from our British "friends" 570 containers and 150 parcels with more than 7,000 pounds of explosives, 3,000 Sten guns, 300 Bren guns, 2,000 hand grenades, 75 radio transmitters, over half a million bullets, 5,000 revolvers, bicycles, raincoats, rubber boots, uniform pieces—everything we needed ourselves to equip our own secret agents.

We also called for and received samples of a weapon which the British guarded as the apple of their eyes: a special spy gun that could be fired without making a sound. Our British contacts were most reluctant to let us have this gun, but we coaxed them long enough and finally received six of them, an unexpected gift.

We also asked for money and got 500,000 Dutch guilders in 1941.

7.
piles of other currencies. The operation that yielded such enormous results was based on a monumental ruse. In September, 1940, we succeeded in penetrating an important branch of the Dutch underground, taking it under our wing and operating it as if nothing had happened. We masqueraded as British spies and Dutch patriots, and while we had to supply at least some information to our enemies, we received far more in return.

Foreign Agents Fall

During the climactic days of this operation, we had 18 radio transmitters in contact with headquarters in London and operated 14 landing grounds. More than 50 British and Dutch agents fell into our hands. Some decided to co-operate with us, but others defied us and preferred the gallows to treason.

In the end, three such young patriots forced us to abandon this espionage bonanza just when we needed it most—on the eve of the invasion of Europe. They escaped from us and returned to England with word about the *Englandspiel*. After three years and seven months our great secret was out. We decided to call it a day. But somehow we couldn't suppress the urge to send a last parting message to Messrs. Blunt, Bingham & Co.

"We are aware of the fact," the message read, "that you are doing business in Holland without our help. Having been, as we were, your sole representatives for a considerable period of time, we regard your conduct as rather unfair. Yet this will not prevent us, should you ever decide to pay us a visit on a far greater scale, from receiving you with the hospitality which we showed your agents."

This last message was dated April 1, 1944. After that the 18 fake transmitters went off the air and never opened up again.

By then, Heydrich, too, was buried and forgotten. But in his place appeared a still greater genius, although he lacked Heydrich's bitter determination and ruthless zeal. He was Werner Schellenberg, the man who lured the British agents to their doom and who, in effect, controlled the *Englandspiel*.

At the head of the German secret service, Werner Schellenberg knew that he was representing a lost cause. His activities were devoted to an effort to bring the war to an earlier end. In the end, he was a failure. Although he was only 33 years old when Germany surrendered unconditionally, Schellenberg was an aged and broken man, with no will to live.

It was under Schellenberg's direction and guidance that I moved up in the hierarchy until I became commander in chief of that sector of the secret front that include the Balkans and Italy. The enemies against whom I had to fight were the guerrillas of Yugoslavia, the conspirators of Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, and the growing anti-Fascist forces of Italy.

a matter of fact, I never operated directly against either Britain or America. Few of us did. My job was to keep the tottering Axis coalition together and hold Germany's disgruntled allies in line.

It proved a super-human job and it failed in the end, but only under the hammer blows of the military defeat. Even so, for two long years I was the virtual ruler of half of Europe—the part of Europe which proved traditionally the most difficult to rule.

When I reached the Balkans as chief of Germany's secret service, I found an incredible mess in every country there. Conspiracies, intrigues and revolutionary moves were brewing everywhere. Large-scale civil war was raging in Yugoslavia. To make things worse, I found that our own ally Italy, was secretly collaborating with Tito.

In Bulgaria, the pro-German king was in danger, and no matter how I tried, I couldn't save his life. In Rumania, young King Michael was moving to head a palace conspiracy against us. In Hungary, the gaga old regent, Admiral Nicholas Horthy, plotted jovially and leisurely with a group of loud-mouthed but weak-kneed patriots, among whom a beautiful actress, Katalin Karady, appeared to be the only one with a really stout heart.

I didn't know what to do first. Then I made a hasty estimate of the situation and decided to take on what appeared to be the most dangerous foe: the Croat peasant Josip Broz, already calling himself Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia. It seems that the western world is still puzzled by Tito's gyrations and takes his defection from Moscow with at least a grain of salt. My own personal experience with Tito would indicate that at least some caution is advisable in dealing with this shrewd Balkan politician who was made by the fortunes of war.

Tito, I found, has three outstanding points of strength. One is his absolute faith in himself. The other is his savage determination, learned in Communist terror schools, to press home his own aims by all means, fair or foul. And the third is that he has no qualms about shuffling his alliances and making deals with anyone who at a given moment might serve his purpose.

Tito had no secrets from me because I had my agents firmly entrenched in his headquarters and read every scrap of communication that entered or left his radio shack. I studied his coded messages to (1) the Western Allies, (2) to Moscow, and (3) to Mussolini's High Command.

I was certain that sooner or later he would show up in my camp as well, offering to do business with Hitler. I bided my time, but I didn't have to wait too long.

I was most annoyed by the way the Italians were playing ball with Tito. It was the summer of 1942. Our own forces were getting set for a large-scale operation against the Partisans, and the plans called for an Italian army under General Mario Roatta to cover our southern front. But when zero hour came, General Ro-

atta was the little man who wasn't there. Without notifying us at all, he moved out of the territory allocated to his forces and allowed Tito to occupy the vacuum. With this sudden move, the German occupation collapsed even before it could be really started.

There was little I could do about it, not even when my agents reported to me that General Roatta was buying arms wholesale from Tito's men. But then something happened that brought me directly into the picture. Listening to Tito's secret radio, we overheard a fascinating conversation between Moscow and the marshal in the mountains.

First I heard Moscow telling Tito that the Western Allies were planning to invade the soft underbelly of Europe, to strike at the Germans by way of Yugoslavia. "What do you think of this, Walter?" Stalin asked Tito, using the name by which he was known in the Komintern. "And what are you planning to do?"

Tito answered promptly and indignantly. "I will resist them with everything I have and throw them back into the sea."

Stalin seemed to like Tito's truculence because he spurred him on. Just as this conversation progressed between Stalin and Tito, an envoy of the Partisans arrived at my headquarters in Zagreb. He said his name was Doctor Petrovic. He came to negotiate the exchange of some prisoners. He bore credentials signed by Tito himself and we had no reason to doubt, indeed, that he was Tito's personal envoy.

In the midst of these negotiations, this Dr. Petrovic suddenly confided to us that he was neither a doctor nor was his name Petrovic. In fact, he said, he was Lyubo Velebit, a general of the Partisans, and Tito's adviser on foreign affairs.

Velebit came to us to propose a truce. I refused to believe my own ears, but Velebit went even further. He told us about the Allied plan to land in Yugoslavia, and then, in the name of Tito, he invited us to form an alliance with Tito to repel this invasion from the west.

Even we, hard-boiled agents of the German secret service, were flabbergasted at such brazen opportunism. Tito volunteered through his envoy to place at our disposal the supplies his Allies were sending in and to collaborate with us in the field.

Hitler Reacts

The matter was of such importance that we had to submit it to Hitler himself. But Hitler recoiled. "What?" he shouted. "Make an alliance with bandits and rebels? Never! I won't negotiate with bandits! I'll shoot them!"

At about the same time, we made an important catch in Hungary. We captured a Partisan courier on his way to Tito from Moscow. We found on him a crucial document, a letter from Stalin to Tito. *In it Stalin formally endorsed Tito's plan to join the Germans and to*

fight against the Allies should Britain and the United States try to land in the Balkans. This at a time when the Communists throughout the world were clamoring for a second front!

This episode of the war is not included in Tito's official biography, but there are enough eye-witnesses still alive today to bear me out. At any rate, it provided us with a different picture of Marshal Tito than the world presently was holding.

From then on we dealt with him only clandestinely, as we were forbidden by Hitler to negotiate with him directly. He sold us immense quantities of his supplies. But he had an insatiable appetite. He refused payment in marks or lire, the currencies over which we had control. His agents demanded payment in American dollars or English pounds, and some of it had to be paid to an account in a Swiss bank.

With Hitler's orders to shoot rather than negotiate, my work as an operational secret service chief was concluded in Yugoslavia. Just in time, at that, because I had to turn my undivided attention to a tragi-comic plot in Hungary.

The leader of Hungary, doughty old Admiral Horthy, was discovered to be dealing with Tito and planning to desert the German cause. It was a rash and pathetic course. At dawn on October 16, 1944, old Horthy was taken in protective custody by the notorious Colonel Otto Skorzeny, about whom you will hear more later. He was carted off to Germany, and the floodgates of terror were opened up with his departure. The Hungarian Nazis who took his place in Budapest proved worthy pupils of their German masters and, if possible, they even outdid them in barbaric cruelty. They murdered thousands of innocent people during the closing days of the war and joined with the Nazis in destroying their homeland in futile resistance to the rapidly advancing Russians.

Disgusted by the consequences of an action I tried hard to prevent, I decided to seek direct contact with the Allies in the West. I refused to become a party to the vandal methods of warfare which a maddened Hitler was introducing during the waning hours of his power.

The man I sought out for contact was a prominent New York attorney by the name of Allan W. Dulles. He was established in a patrician house in Berne's Herrengasse, as an alleged member of

the American Legation staff. But I knew that he was in fact my American opposite number, chief of the Eastern European outpost of the Office of Strategic Services.

As a matter of fact, I knew quite a lot about Mr. Dulles. His ideas about the war were all known to me in detail, not because I read his thoughts, but because I had been reading his cables. I am sure Mr. Dulles will be surprised to learn that it wasn't the vaunted German secret service but merely the signal corps of the Hungarian Army which broke his code. But this enabled us to learn a lot about him and to size him up.

Reading those cables, we were annoyed by the vicious tone of the messages sent by the American Minister, Leland Harrison. Aside from their evident malice, they also showed that Mr. Harrison wasn't too well informed about us. On the other hand, Allan Dulles showed a remarkable knowledge of things and a prophetic foresight concerning the Russians. No wonder! He was fed accurate information by a conspiratorial group in the offices of Admiral Canaris.

It was to Dulles' new mousetrap that I was soon beating my path, armed with certain information that proved of incalculable value to the Allies. It was information about the Redoubt, the mythical mountain stronghold which Hitler was allegedly preparing for his last-ditch stand in the Alps.

But before I could wind up my career as a secret agent, I had a last mission to perform. It was a tragic mission, at that. It was probably the very last intrigue of the second World War, but it was intrigue on a monumental scale. It was the murder of Benito Mussolini, the pathetic Duce of Italy.

By then it was April 1945. The war had but a few weeks to go and Mussolini, who made all the miscalculations and mistakes a man in his position could make, was sitting on the floor between two stools. He knew that the Germans in Italy were negotiating with the Allies and were about to surrender unconditionally. He also knew that powerful forces within Germany decided to abandon him to his fate. In his despair, he turned to Winston Churchill with a plea for help.

The details of Mussolini's negotiations with Churchill are obscure. But now documents are produced to prove that

the Prime Minister promised definite help to the frantic Duce. The idea was for Mussolini to escape to Switzerland and there to place himself at the disposal of British Intelligence.

Into these negotiations burst an unexpected time bomb in the decision of certain die-hard, fanatic Italian Fascists to get rid of the Duce on the very eve of his escape. The man who was to supervise the liquidation was Mussolini's own former Minister of the Interior, a ruthless adventurer named Guido Buffarini-Guidi.

His plan was designed to remove the Duce without soiling his, Buffarini's, hands with his blood. He approached the panicky Duce with offers of help in his escape, and volunteered to obtain for him the necessary papers and to arrange for transportation.

Grasping at every straw, Mussolini accepted the offer and arranged with Buffarini the route of his escape. All was set. Mussolini, carrying his crated state papers and a substantial treasure with him, was scheduled to leave Italy in the direction of Lonza on April 26. He would make the crossing into Switzerland on April 27. From there, he would contact his new friends, the British in Cairo. Everything seemed in perfect order.

As soon as he made the arrangement with Mussolini, Buffarini rushed to the German secret service with the other end of his plot. It was my misfortune to receive the Buffarini plan in all its hideous detail during a meeting at German police headquarters in Meran. Buffarini asked us to supply the necessary papers to Mussolini and make his flight possible. But at the same time we were supposed to tip off the anti-Fascist Partisans and lead them to Mussolini's trail.

In a discussion that was remarkable only for its sound and fury, I refused to be a party to such dastardly a scheme. But we counted without Buffarini. He was determined to see his scheme succeed. When we kicked him out, he went directly to a prearranged meeting with a mysterious Colonel Valerio of the Italian Partisans. He was in reality Walter Audisio, one of the triggermen of the Communist underground. It was to this Audisio that Buffarini carried his lethal plan. From then on everything progressed according to schedule.

Benito Mussolini, traveling with his mistress Clara Petacci, left his hideout in Como as planned on April 26. Near

Nesso, at the exact spot where he was supposed to cross into the safety of Switzerland, his convoy was ambushed by an execution squad of the Partisans led by Colonel Valerio. But a few miles from safety, Mussolini lost his life. While Communist Partisans took credit for killing the Duce, the irony of it is that it actually was his own Fascists who led him to slaughter.

Slaughter Continues

His end came on April 29—yet still there seemed to be no end to the killing of World War II. Germany's southern front was wiped out. The western Allies stood on the Elbe and in the heart of Czechoslovakia. In Berlin, the Russians were fighting in the streets and Hitler was preparing his suicide in the besieged Reichschancellery. Yet the Allies were still worried that a dihard army of Nazi soldiers might entrench itself in the Alps and continue to fight in their impregnable fortress for years.

By then I was in close and daily contact with Allan Dulles in Berne. Not only did I supply him with information about events in Italy and Southeastern Europe, but also served as his intermediary with the men who were slated to prepare this Redoubt for Germany's last stand.

What was the truth about this allegedly impregnable fortress where Hitler planned to delay his total defeat?

In November, 1944, the Gauleiter of Tyrol, a Nazi named Franz Hofer, sent a memorandum to Hitler with the recommendation that a fortress be built in the Austrian Alps. He also outlined the possibilities of its prolonged defense. The plan was seconded by another Austrian Gauleiter, Friedrich Rainer. While nobody in the Wehrmacht seemed to take it seriously, the German secret service recognized in it an opportunity to mislead the Allies. Phony blueprints were drawn up and intelligence was leaked to the Americans, who seemed to be most prepared to believe such a romantic military plot.

Some of the blueprints themselves were smuggled into Allied hands with the help of double agents. It soon became known in Germany that the Allies were inclined to take the hoax rather seriously. Sporadic items in the Allied press indicated genuine apprehension. Spies reported serious concern at General Eisenhower's headquarters and also in the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington.

Hitler at first ridiculed Hofer's fantastic plan, but when he was told that the Allies were frightened by it, he thought the idea might not be so bad after all. He ordered Hofer to develop the southern positions of the planned Redoubt as quickly as possible. A team of SS geologists was sent into the region and pupils of the SS Mountain School were alerted to begin large-scale blastings in the Alpine rocks.

But the grand design of the Redoubt never passed beyond this stage. Even so, every move connected with it was leaked

to the Allies—the arrival of the geologists, the special exercises of the SS Mountain School, the moves of the Schoerner Army that was slated to garrison it. They all added up to feverish preparations where in reality nothing existed.

It was at this point that I could report to Mr. Dulles the true state of affairs in the Alps. Even during my first encounter with him, I discovered that he was most interested in intelligence about the Redoubt. A plan was worked out to gain as much genuine information as possible and then to win over to our side those who were slated to command Hitler's desperate last stand.

An operation plan was evolved and I got busy with its execution. My task was facilitated by the fact that the Redoubt's prospective commanders were, like myself, all Austrians, themselves anxious to save at least Austria from the inescapable collapse of the Third Reich.

Very soon I was able to assure Mr. Dulles that, first, the planned Redoubt was still in the stage of preliminary planning, that construction did not progress beyond some blastings; and, second, that all the men slated to command the troops in the Alps had expressed their willingness to co-operate with the Allies in frustrating Hitler's last grand design.

My report to Dulles brought forth genuine sighs of relief. Mr. Dulles stated quite frankly that my report to him, and the assurances I was authorized to supply, removed the last road bloc from the victorious path of the Allies.

When Germany's defeated leaders set their signatures under the instruments of total capitulation, my work as Hitler's master spy came to an end. I thought that the past would recede from me rapidly and that I could return to "normal life," to begin my studies where I interrupted them 10 years before.

A few months ago, however, this weird past returned to me abruptly for a fleeting moment. It came in the form of a strange and embarrassing discovery, reminding me of the manner in which Heydrich used to do business. The most secret of his operations, about which we used to speak only in hushed tones, was suddenly exposed by the chance discovery of a couple of Austrian fishermen. The secrets of our "Operation Bernhard" were out. The last mysterious plot of World War II had lost its mystery.

Two fishermen on the Austrian lake called Traunsee came upon big green and red patches on the surface of the lake that at first seemed to them a strange variety of water lilies. On closer examination they found that in reality they were pieces of paper, floating by the thousands on the surface of the lake. They picked up an armful of them and returned to their village with their find. You may imagine the surprise of the quiet village folk when the pieces of paper turned out to be—English pound notes.

I am able to clear up the mystery of their discovery and explain the sudden appearance of millions of English

pounds in an Austrian lake. It was money printed by the German Secret Service on Heydrich's orders and dumped into the sea when the end of the war found us with caches of it still on our hands.

Early in our game, and contrary to widespread belief, the German secret service was woefully short of ready cash. What we needed were dollars and pounds, the international currency of the espionage business. But neither the Ministry of Finance nor the Reichsbank had adequate supplies to pay for our quaint operations.

Already, in 1939, in the wake of his discovery of the counterfeit rubles, Heydrich hit upon the idea of printing the money we so urgently needed. At first, the technical difficulties proved almost insurmountable. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't duplicate the intricate paper design the British used in printing their five-pound notes. Nevertheless, the technical branch of the secret service finally succeeded in producing counterfeit pounds which were so good that most of the banks of the world accepted them.

But it was not until 1943 that the secret service could begin the dissemination of these counterfeit pounds in greater quantities. We had to devise fantastic methods to bring this money into circulation. A special branch was set up within the secret service which was devoted exclusively to the distribution of the counterfeit notes.

A network of special agents was established in Italy. They sold the pound notes to Italians for genuine lire and then used the lire to buy genuine pounds on Switzerland's black market. The losses we suffered in these transactions were enormous. But what did it matter as long as we were printing our own pounds?

Soon another method was found to get rid of the millions of pounds on hand. It became known that the Partisans of Yugoslavia were only too glad to sell some of the supplies they received from the Allies—provided they were paid in pounds or dollars. This led to the development of the most fantastic business

in the history of warfare. The German secret service appeared on the scene as the buyer of automatic weapons which Tito received from the Allies. Soon the business was flourishing to the point where whole trainloads of Allied supplies came into our hands. They were paid for with forged English pound notes. Our buyers traveled freely in the regions controlled by the Partisans even while our troops had a hard time fighting against them.

The counterfeiting of dollar notes succeeded only toward the end of the war, but even then the notes proved to be so primitive that our agents refused to peddle them. Only shortly before the surrender did the German Secret Service succeed in improving the quality of these forgeries, but there was no time left to bring them into circulation.

The British understandably took a very serious view of this operation. They discovered the existence of these counterfeit notes when an airman of the Royal Air Force was caught at an airport in the act of smuggling French currency into Britain. He had all kinds of money on him, including British pound notes. And on closer scrutiny, more than 70 per cent of them proved counterfeit.

The airman confessed that he received them as part of his winnings in a Belgian gambling casino. This discovery alerted the Bank of England and Scotland Yard. More and more forged pound notes were discovered and, in the words of one of Britain's outstanding spy experts, "the notes were such perfect forgeries that any British bank would have accepted them as genuine without the slightest hesitation."

A special forgery squad was formed by Scotland Yard under the famous Inspector Jack Smith, one of Britain's legendary spy catchers. Squads of Scotland Yard men were sent out into the world to track down every single note. Chief Inspector Rudkin was sent to South America. Inspector Smith went to France, Belgium and Italy. Inspector Minter moved straight into the lion's den, into Germany itself.

Minter discovered the German counterfeiting plant in Block 19 in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Millions in foreign currency were printed there by slave labor. Most of the men who worked in the plant were expert engravers and printers. They were taken from the various camps to this plant.

Everybody concerned with Operation Bernhard regarded this as a top secret and nobody liked to discuss it. The British were the most reluctant to talk about it because currency in excess of £50,000,000 was found and more than £100,000,000 was believed to be in circulation. When Inspector Minter raided Block 19 in Sachsenhausen, he found millions of pounds still stored there. He also discovered millions of rupees printed specially for a conspiracy in India which, however, never came off.

The Germans involved in the plot kept their mouths shut because they feared reprisals for something of which international law takes an extremely serious view. Were it not for that one airman and those two Austrian fishermen on the Traunsee, the whole plot might have remained the war's only undisturbed secret. But their strange catch created a greater stir than if they had caught the Loch Ness Monster in Traunsee.

With the belated discovery of the counterfeit notes, the secret war book of the German espionage service saw its last chapter written. As I look back on my part in it, I feel a certain pride in our achievements, just as a British or an American who served on the secret front must be proud of what he did.

My pride is enhanced by the fact that in the crucial days of the war's climax, I found my way to the Allies, contributing a modest share to the termination of the holocaust before the atomic bomb could make its cataclysmic appearance on the European battlefield.

In making the balance sheet of this strange enterprise, I find a lot on both sides of the ledger. If in the end we in the German Secret Service failed, it was only because we never wanted to succeed.