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# The Last Nazi Redoubt

## Some Wanted War Criminals Are Living Quite Openly in South America

By Jack Brannan

**BUENOS AIRES (UPI)**—When Nazi Germany collapsed 20 years ago, many of its influential officials fled to South America to escape the biggest manhunt in history. Most of them are still here, protected and relatively unknown in their new countries.

Among them are at least four of West Germany's—and Israel's—most wanted war criminals:

- **Walter Rauff**, SS general who conceived and operated the mobile gas chambers used in the Jewish extermination program. He resides under his own name in Puerto Provenir, Chile.

- **Gerhard Bohne**, legal adviser to the Nazis' "mercy killing" program directed against crippled, elderly and undesirable persons. He resides in Buenos Aires under the name of Alfred Kurt Baudinger.

- **Eduard Roschmann**, former commandant of the Jewish ghetto at Riga, Latvia. He resides in Buenos Aires under the name of Friedrich Wegener.

- **Dr. Josef Mengele**, chief physician at the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, where he was known as the "Angel of Death." He resides in Paraguay under an assumed name that apparently is unknown to either Paraguayan or West German authorities. But highly authoritative sources confirm his presence there.

**OTHER WANTED** war criminals are known to be living among the several thousand former Nazis in South America. Some believe that Hitler's last deputy and hand-picked successor, Martin Bormann, resides in Argentina. Although he was declared legally dead in 1954, West Germany has offered a \$25,000 reward for him.

But even when their whereabouts are known to the prosecutors, Nazi war criminals are relatively safe in South America and the recent 55-month extension of West Germany's 20-year statute of limitations on war crimes has little effect on those who took refuge here.

The friendship that Argentina and Chile once had with the Third Reich has evolved into a protective sympathy for Nazi refugees. West Germany sought the extradition of both Rauff and Bohne several years ago. Chile refused on grounds that the accusation against Rauff—extermination of 97,000 Jews—was political and not criminal in nature. Argentina did likewise for Bohne in another precedent-setting case.

**ISRAELI SECRET** agents and independent groups of vengeance-minded Jews present the only danger to former Nazis in South America.

Israeli agents found and captured SS Col. Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires in 1960 and he was tried and executed.

A group that identified itself as "Those who shall never forget" tracked down a former Nazi party chief in Latvia, Herbert Albert Cukurs, who was operating a seaplane excursion business in Sao Paulo, Brazil. They lured him to Montevideo, Uruguay, with a business offer last February and assassinated him.

Nevertheless, some Nazis, such as Rauff, found it unnecessary to conceal their identities. Rauff, 56, operates a fishing boat and lives alone in a hilltop house at Puerto Provenir. Mengele lived openly in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay for years and did not change his name until after Eichmann was captured.

**THE STATE** and local police are generally unconcerned about the presence of Nazis unless they are in danger or violate the law. Authoritative sources said that the Chilean state police quietly deported three Israeli agents who entered the country early this year in an apparent effort to capture or assassinate Rauff or some other Nazi living there.

But on the other side of the card, Brazilian police arrested former Nazi counterfeiter Franz Bauer Ribka last March for using his counterfeiting skill for personal benefit in Brazil. Ribka was associated with the Nazis' famed Cicero spy ring, which printed worthless dollars and pounds for use against the Allies in World War II.

**AUTHORITATIVE** sources say that at least 50,000 Germans migrated to Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Paraguay between 1945 and 1951. Most of them came with forged documents or easily obtainable Polish passports. Their political and military backgrounds were not questioned.

They settled in German communities that dot the four countries, received help from the established Germans and went to work as toolmakers, technicians, mechanics, farmers and businessmen.

Some of the more skilled were employed by the governments. Argentine dictator Juan Peron welcomed Nazi aircraft designer Kurt Tank, Luftwaffe Gen. Adolf Galland, ace fighter pilot Ulrich Rudel and bomber pilot Werner Baumbach as advisers to the Argentine Air Ministry.

Other Nazis received jobs in the various nations' armies and police forces. Among these were former SS and Gestapo officers.

**THE MAJORITY** buried their public Nazism in the ruins of Berlin, but others brought with them to South

America the full spirit of Nazism, particularly its anti-Semitic aspects. Wilfred von Oven, former secretary to Nazi propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, edited a pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic newspaper in Buenos Aires in the early 1950s.

Among the already militaristic, pro-Nazi Argentines and Chileans, the German Nazis found ready followers. Neo-Nazi groups developed. One of the first was the Argentine **Tacuara**, a secret, anti-Semitic terrorist group organized in 1955 by a German Catholic priest, the Rev. Julio Meinvielle.

The Tacuara is now headed by the 27-year-old son of Adolf Eichmann, Horst Adolf Eichmann, who swore publicly to avenge his father's death.