



SKORZENY IN SPAIN

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN EUROPE was the title given by the American press to Otto Skorzeny, alias Rolf Steinbauer, former SS Colonel in the Nazi Intelligence Corps. Presently living in Spain, Skorzeny maintains a small apartment in Madrid with his alleged wife, Countess Ilse Von Finkenstein, a well-educated woman who is very bitter about the war. According to the United States Air Attache in Madrid, their contacts include large numbers of the Nazi SS "Old Guard," of whom a great many undoubtedly reside in Spain in an effort to lose their former identities. Willi Messerschmitt, who visited Spain in March 1951, was seen frequently with Skorzeny; and, on a trip to Lisbon in June, Skorzeny met one of the outstanding air aces of the German Luftwaffe, one Hans Ulrich Rudel, ex-Lt. General, who is now living in Argentina and from time to time lending services regarding air matters to the Argentine Air Force.

As a resident of Spain, Skorzeny appears to be enjoying the confidence of certain high ranking members of the Spanish High General Staff, frequently seeing Lt. General Juan Vigon Suero Diaz, Chief of the High General Staff; Lt. General Agustin Munoa Grandes, Captain General, First Region, who formerly commanded the Spanish "Blue Division" which fought in Russia; and Major General Arsenio Martinez de Campos, Deputy Chief of Staff, High General Staff. Skorzeny is also believed to be on very good terms with Major General Eduardo Gallarza-Gonzales Irragori, Minister of Air.

On several occasions, Skorzeny has stated to the US Air Attache that the Spanish High General Staff are very anxious to enter into a bilateral agreement for mutual defense with the United States. He claims the chief difficulty is that the Spanish are too proud to ask for the measure themselves, and wish that the matter could be broached by a third party to the United States. Spain is, however, according to Skorzeny, adamant in her desire to remain out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, wanting no part of a "plan doomed to failure." He claims that Spain would definitely fight anywhere in Europe, given the proper equipment, a chance to train at least a year, and the opportunity to observe the probable capabilities of her would-be allies, i.e., France, Belgium and Holland. Skorzeny,

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(Personalities)

SKORZENY

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although he hates the British, feels that they are the only good ally at present, but he doubts that they would send another expeditionary force to Europe in the event the Continent was lost.

Skorseny's primary interest appears to be to find a position as a professional soldier, a trade in which he excels. He has spoken of a scheme offered to the Spanish High General Staff last August, which was authored by German General Hains Guderian, recently elected to the steering committee of the new German veterans' organization, The League of German Soldiers. (See Page 3). The plan involved the training of a cadre of commandos composed of 5,000 troops of any nationality who wanted to fight against the "common enemy". Skorseny champions the cause of these nationals of other countries who fought with the Germans against the Russians and who are now held in prison as German collaborators in their respective countries. He evidently envisages their release from prison to serve as members of the proposed commando cadre, which would become the nucleus of a new German army to combat the Soviets. The former Nazi has not clarified his stand regarding the participation of German units in the Western defense system, and it is quite likely that a unit formed by him would be permeated with a desire to avenge the Nazi defeat by the Soviets, rather than with a sincere wish to cooperate with the Western nations if the Soviets attacked a nation other than Germany.

Skorseny recently published an account of his military exploits during World War II, entitled Skorseny's Secret Missions. These exploits include the recapture of Mussolini for Hitler in 1943, the overthrow of the Hungarian government in October 1944 to bolster the German eastern front, and the use of behind-the-line commandos which seriously threatened certain sections of the Allied front during the Battle of the Bulge. Skorseny further avers that he worked with Hitler and Himmler in planning the bombing of New

York with rocket weapons, and that he was head of the "secret army" which enforced Nazi demands on Pétain. The autobiographer, who without bragging has a rather high opinion of his prowess, is bitter over the loss of revenue from the sale of his book in the United States. The Treasury Department has informed him that all profits from the book will remain in the United States inasmuch as German assets are frozen by law. His wife probably accurately reflected Skorseny's unconstructed attitude when she supposedly said, "Do you realize that our money, going to the U. S. Treasury, is actually paying for re-arming the French?"

Skorseny was admittedly a clever master planner, especially in the use of shock or commando troops, but the US Air Attache felt that he seemed rather ill informed on the overall or strategic concept of warfare. In any future conflict, Skorseny could be expected to answer himself into a position demanding great courage and skill in devising further exploits suited to his particular talents. He is apparently anxious to perpetuate his reputation in connection with upheavals, whether political or military, until an opportunity for real action presents itself. For example, he informed the U. S. Air Attache in June 1951 that a friend had just arrived from Germany stating that Chancellor Adenauer of the German Federal Republic had decided that Skorseny obviously was fostering a revolution in Germany made up of personnel who are discontented with the present German Government. His connection with neo-Nazi trends in Germany is obscure, but it is entirely possible that Skorseny, with his ability to remain in contact with large numbers of prominent members of the Nazi "Old Guard," could lead to the whereabouts of many missing Germans. It is obvious that Skorseny, still a young man, has no intention of living a quiet life in exile. Observation of his future activities, in the light of his militaristic background, should prove highly interesting.

SECRET