

Robert Jan Verbelen and the
United States Government

A Report to the Assistant Attorney General,
Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice

FOR COORDINATION WITH

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DoJ/OSI

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I. Introduction

A. Background of Verbelen Investigation

On 27 December 1983, Assistant Attorney General Stephen S. Trott, director of the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice, instructed the Division's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) to conduct a preliminary inquiry into allegations that the United States Government had employed Robert Jan Verbelen, a convicted war criminal now living in Vienna, Austria. The allegations had been brought to the Justice Department's attention when the U.S. Army released documents indicating that Verbelen had worked for the Army's Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) in Austria from 1947 to 1956. Verbelen, a native of Belgium, was convicted in absentia of war crimes and sentenced to death by a Belgian court martial in 1947.

OSI's preliminary inquiry determined that Verbelen did in fact work for the 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment in Vienna, probably beginning in 1946. When United States forces withdrew from Austria in 1955, Verbelen became an informant for the 66th Counter Intelligence Corps Group, which apparently knew him by an alias. After Verbelen revealed his true identity in 1956, the 66th CIC dismissed him "without prejudice" and noted in his file that he was "considered suitable for intelligence re-employment." Verbelen was arrested in 1962 after the public prosecutor in Vienna learned of his conviction for war crimes in Belgium. Because Verbelen had received Austrian citizenship in his true name in 1959, the Austrian Government could not accede

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to Belgium's request for his extradition. Although an Austrian jury found in 1965 that Verbelen had incited the murder of two people, it acquitted him on the grounds that he had been carrying out superior orders. The Austrian Supreme Court overturned this acquittal in 1967, but the case has never been retried.

As a result of these preliminary findings, the Office of Special Investigations received authorization from Assistant Attorney General Trott on 30 March 1984 to conduct a full investigation of Verbelen's relations with the United States Government.

B. Scope of Investigation

In conducting this investigation, OSI has sought to answer the following questions:

- What did CIC know, and what should it have known, concerning Verbelen's identity and wartime activities?
- Why did CIC dismiss Verbelen in 1956 and why did it classify him as "suitable for intelligence re-employment?"
- Have U.S. Government officials been in contact with Verbelen since 1956?
- Did U.S. Government officials assist Verbelen in acquiring Austrian citizenship?
- Did the United States Government protect Verbelen and prevent his being brought to justice?

In addition, OSI has sought to answer other relevant questions which lie outside the immediate scope of Verbelen's relations with the United States Government. This is the second

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investigation conducted by the Justice Department concerning the employment of a convicted war criminal by the Counter Intelligence Corps. In March 1983, the Criminal Division conducted an investigation into the relations between Klaus Barbie, the "butcher of Lyon," and the CIC. The findings in this investigation prompted the United States Government to make a formal apology to the Government of France for the actions of certain CIC officials who had protected Barbie from the due process of law.^{1/} In view of the continuing public interest in this matter, OSI has in the course of the present investigation attempted to ascertain what were the CIC's policies and actual practices with respect to the employment of war criminals and former Nazis or Nazi collaborators in postwar Europe.

Verbelen's wartime activities have not been a subject of this investigation. His conviction for war crimes by a legally constituted court of an ally of the United States would have provided sufficient cause for the U.S. Government to have assisted in his apprehension (and, if so requested by the Belgian authorities, his extradition to Belgium). Therefore, the section of this report concerning Verbelen's activities before 1945 relies almost entirely upon Belgian court records. With regard

1/ See: U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Klaus Barbie and the United States Government: A Report to the Attorney General of the United States (Washington, August 1983).

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to Verbelen's acquittal by an Austrian court in 1965 on the grounds that he was carrying out superior orders, it should be noted that Article Three of the charter which established the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg and which was signed by twenty-three members of the United Nations, including the United States, states that obedience to superior orders cannot justify the commission of a crime and may only serve to mitigate punishment. ^{2/} Furthermore, although defense counsel at the Nuremberg trials interviewed many of the Nazi Party, SS, and German Armed Forces personnel being held in internment camps, it was unable to produce any witness to an incident in which refusal to carry out a criminal order resulted in injury to life or limb. ^{3/}

C. Conduct of Investigation

In the course of this investigation, OSI officials have conducted extensive research in the archives of the United States Army, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the National Archives, as well as at the Documentation Archive of the Austrian Resistance and the Documentation Center of the Federation of Jewish Persecutees of the Nazi Regime in

^{2/} The Nurnberg Trial, 6 F.R.D. 69, 110-11 (1946).

^{3/} Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen Ludwigsburg, Zum Problem des sog. Befehlsnotstandes in NSG-Verfahren. Rechtliche und tatsaechliche Aspekte nach dem derzeitigen Stand der Erkenntnisse (n.d.).

Vienna. OSI also requested several other U.S. Government agencies to search their records for information on Verbelen, which they did with negative results. The Belgian Government transmitted copies of court records from Verbelen's trial, while the Austrian Government allowed OSI officials to interview Verbelen and granted access to the records of his trial in Vienna. In addition, OSI interviewed some twenty persons who were either involved in the events under investigation or able to provide useful background information.

The very nature of the Verbelen investigation has made it necessary for OSI to consult numerous classified documents pertaining to U.S. intelligence sources and methods, information which by law must be protected. Such documents have provided the basis for many of OSI's findings in this investigation. Although it is not possible for OSI to make public in every detail all the information it has gathered regarding Verbelen's relations with the U.S. Government, the agencies with authority over that information have given OSI permission to publish those facts which are essential to its findings in the Verbelen investigation. The U.S. Government cannot legally reveal the methods by which it acquires certain types of information, nor can it ignore its obligation to informants and their families to protect their identity. For these reasons, this report names no informants whose work for the United States is not already publicly known, and references to the sources of information in certain passages are either incomplete or have been entirely omitted.

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All the U.S. agencies and individuals consulted for this investigation have fully cooperated with OSI. Nevertheless, as is perhaps inevitable in the investigation of events that occurred so long ago, records have been lost or destroyed, memories have faded, and some persons who might have provided useful information either have died or cannot be located. One problem peculiar to this investigation was presented by the subject himself, who since 1956 has been engaged in writing espionage novels and in working as a speaker and publicist for neo-Nazi organizations. Over the years, Verbelen has given many varied and contradictory versions of his work for the United States, all so replete with exaggerations, lies, and absurdities as to make it questionable whether he any longer remembers the truth. Although these drawbacks have prevented OSI officials from ascertaining every detail of Verbelen's relations with the United States Government, this investigation has succeeded in answering the major questions which it set out to resolve.

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II. Early Life Through World War II ^{4/}

Robert Jan Verbelen was born on 5 April 1911 in Herent near Leuven (Louvain), Belgium. During the 1930s, he actively supported the Flemish separatist movement and was Secretary General of the Flemish Football Federation. Soon after Germany occupied Belgium in May 1940, Verbelen voluntarily joined the Algemene SS Vlaanderen (General SS of Flanders), which was a subordinate organization of the Nazi German SS.

In addition to recruiting Belgians to fight for Germany in the Waffen (Armed) SS and carrying out propaganda activities, the Algemene SS Vlaanderen served as an auxiliary force for the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), the security service of the SS.

Verbelen's achievements as the stormleider (company leader) of the SS in Leuven soon won him promotion to Untersturmfuehrer (SS 2nd Lieutenant) and commander of Stormbaan Brabant, one of the four stormbaans (battalions) of the Algemene SS Vlaanderen. From his headquarters in Brussels, he organized the activities of the Flemish SS in Brussels, Leuven, and Limburg and conducted propaganda throughout Flanders. In 1942, Verbelen became a

4/ Except where otherwise noted, the information in this section comes from the following court records, provided by the Belgian Government, of Verbelen's trial in absentia for war crimes by the Seventh Flemish Chamber of the Court Martial of Brabant: "Uiteenzetting der Zaak. In Zake: Verbelen en konsoorten"; "Pro Justitia Vonnis," nos. 3221-3280; "Liste des Crimes Retenus a Charge de Verbelen Robertus par le Conseil de Guerre de la Province du Brabant (7eme Chambre flamande) le 14 Octobre 1947."

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Vlag and the SS, Jungclaus also used it in "the struggle against terrorists and sabotage actions and . . . in counter-terror." ^{5/}

One early action occurred on 28 February 1944, when the Veiligheidskorps committed the following crimes: the assassination of Alexandre Galopin, director of the Societe Generale de Belgique; the attempted murder of State Minister Michel Deveze; the attempted murder of Attorney-General Charles Collard de Sloovere; the attempted murder of Robert de Foy, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice; the attempted murder of J. Jamar, First President of the Court of Appeals; the attack by hand grenade on a cafe, in which eight people were injured; the attack by sub-machine gun and hand grenade on a tavern, in which two persons were killed and twenty-six injured; the attack, led by Verbelen personally, on the police commissariat of Vorst (Forest), in which four policemen were lined up against a wall and gunned down, although one person miraculously survived. Verbelen's performance as commander of the Veiligheidskorps won him the German War Meritorious Cross and promotion to Hauptsturmfuehrer (SS Captain).

When the Allies liberated Belgium in September 1944, Verbelen and his men fled to Germany. The Nazis then created a

5/ Richard Jungclaus, Higher SS and Police Leader in Belgium, Heinrich Himmler, Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police (29 July 1944), National Archives and Records Administration, Microcopy T-175: Records of the Reich Leader of the SS and Chief of the German Police, Roll 80/frames 2600648-2600652.

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fascist Flemish exile government which appointed Verbelen plenipotentiary for police matters. In addition, Verbelen organized a special police battalion, which he hoped would assist in the recapture of Belgium by Germany. That plan was never realized, and the battalion disbanded in March 1945.

The U.S. Office of Strategic Services identified an SS Obersturmfuehrer Verbelen as the commander of the De Vlag Veiligheidskorps in July 1944. ^{6/} Perhaps as a result of this information, Verbelen's name appears in the July 1945 issue of the Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects (C.R.O.W.C.A.S.S.), the principal wanted list used by the United States and Allied Forces in identifying and apprehending suspected war criminals. However, the C.R.O.W.C.A.S.S. entry for Verbelen lists him only as a security suspect, gives his nationality as German, and does not identify the nation seeking his arrest. ^{7/} Verbelen's name does not appear in any other issue of C.R.O.W.C.A.S.S. (subsequent C.R.O.W.C.A.S.S. lists included only names of war crimes suspects and witnesses, those of security suspects having been deleted.)

^{6/} "Special Annexe on Belgian Quislings: Recent Developments among the Traitor Organisations" (4 September 1944), National Archives, Record Group 226: Records of the Office of Strategic Services, file XL 1534.

^{7/} Central Registry of War Criminals and Security Suspects, Wanted List (July 1945), Part II, p. 434.

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III. War Crimes Trial in Belgium ^{8/}

Verbelen's name headed the list of 62 members of De Vlag whose trial on war crimes charges began on 23 June 1947 before the Seventh Flemish Chamber of the Court Martial of Brabant. Verbelen was one of eight defendants being tried in absentia. On 14 October 1947, after more than 50 sessions, the court-martial convicted 59 of the defendants and sentenced Verbelen and 24 others to death. Verbelen was also fined 500,000 Belgian francs. The judgment assigned to Verbelen the primary responsibility for the deaths of 101 persons, in that he instigated and organized acts of blind terrorism which were carried out as reprisals for the actions of the Belgian resistance movement and in which victims were arbitrarily selected to be arrested, beaten, tortured, imprisoned, deported, or murdered.

Despite Verbelen's indictment and conviction, the Belgian Government never registered him with either C.R.O.W.C.A.S.S. or the United Nations War Crimes Commission. This investigation has found no evidence that Belgian authorities ever requested the assistance of the United States in locating and apprehending Verbelen.

8/ See footnote 4 on page 7, also: "Les Tueurs de 'De Vlag': Vingt-Cinq Peines de Mort" and "Le Criminel de Guerre Verbelen a ete arrete a Vienne," Le Soir (Brussels), 16 October 1947 and 13 April 1962.

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IV. The 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment in Austria

A. Mission, Organization, and Personnel

The 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment ("430th CIC" or "430th") was responsible for "the detection of treason, sedition, disaffection and subversive activity and the detection and prevention of espionage and sabotage" within the areas of Austria occupied by United States forces from May 1945 through August 1955. ^{9/} Its headquarters in Vienna had the duty of directing, supervising, and inspecting the three Sub-Detachments: Sub-Detachment (or Region) "A" in Land Salzburg, with a main office in Salzburg and five field offices; Sub-Detachment (or Region) "B" in Land Upper Austria, with a main office in Linz and eleven field offices; and Sub-Detachment (or Region) "C" deployed in the U.S.-occupied districts of Vienna, which was also occupied by British, French, and Soviet forces. ^{10/}

Originally, the 430th CIC Detachment's primary mission was to carry out the denazification program, whose purpose was to locate persons formerly associated with the Nazi regime and the

9/ Headquarters, 430th CIC, to Chief of Staff, CIC, "General and Statistical Information" (1 July 1954), in National Archives, Record Group [hereafter cited as: NA, RG] 319: Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Carlisle CIC Collection, file 228-08: Correspondence re History, Organization, Personnel and Mission of the 430th CIC Detachment, 1947-1964, Box C-145.

10/ "Historical Report for the Year of 1949; Vienna Sub-Detachment," NA, RG 407: World War II Operations Reports 1940-1948, Central Intelligence, Box 18337.

German war effort, put them on trial for their activities, and ensure that they had abandoned their National Socialist sympathies before admitting them into mainstream society. During 1946, however, the focus of the CIC's activities changed. As the Soviet Union, whose troops in Europe far outnumbered those of the United States, tightened its hold over Eastern Europe, while Communist parties, which answered to Moscow, increased their strength and influence in Austria and Western Europe, the United States came to view its former ally as a far greater threat to American security than its former enemy. Consequently, the 430th CIC began devoting its resources to gathering intelligence concerning the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and the Communist Party of Austria (KPOe), and its participation in the denazification program decreased. In February 1946, the Allied Commission controlling Austria transferred primary responsibility for denazification to the Austrian authorities, and the CIC retained only a general supervisory role, which ended in May 1947. In addition to its normal counterintelligence function, CIC was assigned responsibility for collecting positive intelligence which included "information on economic, political, psychological, scientific (technical intelligence), military (order of battle), topographical, socialological [sic] and who's who intelligence (foreign intelligence personalities)." ^{11/}

^{11/} Ibid.; also, "Appendixes to Historical Report, U.S. Forces in Austria," (November 1944 to June 1947), *ibid.*, Box 415.

In accordance with this change in focus, the 430th's sub-detachments were organized into two main branches: Positive Intelligence and Counter Intelligence. While the Positive Intelligence Branch was subdivided into External and Internal Affairs, the Counter Intelligence Branch consisted of six sections: General Investigations, Security, Research, Denazification and Employment, Police, and Visa. ^{12/} Although the Positive Intelligence Branch supposedly had responsibility for conducting all positive intelligence activities, this investigation has found that in practice the boundaries between the different sections were never clearly drawn. Consequently, agents and operations assigned to other sections frequently engaged in collecting positive intelligence information, and in many cases the activities of one section overlapped and even duplicated those of another.

The American personnel who worked for CIC during the immediate postwar years had one significant common characteristic: inexperience. By late 1945, most CIC agents who had gained operational experience in Europe during the war had returned to civilian life in the United States. For the most part, their replacements either came from other service branches or were new army recruits. An official CIC history concludes

^{12/} "Historical Report for 1949, Vienna Sub-Detachment," *ibid.*, Box 18337, and chart depicting "Headquarters 430th CIC Detachment City of Vienna (10 March 1948), NA, RG 319, file 228-08, Box C-145.

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that the necessity of replacing most CIC personnel in 1945 and 1946 "resulted in the assignment of many immature and inexperienced officers and agents, through an over-liberal waiving of requirements. . . . The outstanding effect of the entire situation was a deterioration of the operational efficiency of the Corps." ^{13/} Moreover, even experienced CIC agents lacked training in the positive intelligence techniques needed for the Cold War, nor did they have much knowledge of Soviet intelligence-gathering methods or Communist Party organization.

B. Use of Former Nazis and Nazi Collaborators

Consequently, the 430th CIC was forced to rely on other sources for information. The intelligence organizations with the most recent and most extensive experience in covering the USSR and Eastern Europe were those of the recently defeated enemy, Nazi Germany. Individuals having knowledge of Soviet intelligence techniques and contacts in the Soviet intelligence organizations could provide information of obvious and crucial value to the United States' counterespionage activities. These individuals included former members of the SD, the German Secret State Police (Geheime Staatspolizei or Gestapo), and German military intelligence (Abwehr), as well as non-Germans who had collaborated with the Nazis.

13/ "CIC Center," CIC History, 1945-1948, National Archives, Record Group 319: Army Staff, ACSI [Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence], Carlisle CIC Collection.

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Although the CIC found it necessary to employ such persons, it did not originally intend to protect them from the denazification process. A May 7, 1947 directive of the CIC in Germany concerning a special project for recruiting German informants and "informant-runners" instructed that no one involved in ongoing illegal activities should be employed;

neither should we acquire agents or informants whose past will inevitably be brought to the surface and compromise both them and CIC. For example, a high-ranking SS officer might be able to provide valuable information, but if he is scheduled for the Spruchkammer [German denazification court], his use might as well not be contemplated. There must be no falsification of Fragebogen [questionnaires submitted to denazification authorities], etc. . . .

In describing the qualifications for German informants, the directive noted that "[a] valuable but not indispensable characteristic is previous experience at recruiting and exploiting informants, such as that of former Abwehr agents who have been released from internment." 14/

The most notable example of a former German intelligence official who worked for the United States after the war is provided by Reinhard Gehlen. During World War II, General Gehlen served as head of the Wehrmacht's (German Armed Forces) "Foreign Armies East" section, which was responsible for gathering intelligence concerning the Soviet Union and, especially during the last year of the war, worked in close collaboration with the

14/ U.S. Army Investigative Records Repository [hereafter IRR], file XE 184719 I 8H027.

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SD and the SS. At the end of the war, Gehlen fled to Bavaria, where he surrendered both himself and his files to the American forces. In June 1946, the United States War Department agreed to allow Gehlen to set up an intelligence service in Germany that would be financed by the United States, which in turn would receive the results of its work. The Central Intelligence Agency took control of Gehlen's organization, known as the "Org," in 1949 and stationed CIA liaison officers in its headquarters in Germany. In July 1955, the cabinet of the Federal Republic of Germany decided to make the Org an official government intelligence service with the name of Bundesnachrichtendienst (Federal Intelligence Service), or BND, and with Gehlen as its president. The BND continued to cooperate closely with the CIA for some years afterward. 15/

According to former CIC agents, certain procedures were supposed to be followed before the CIC could officially employ an informant. The CIC control agent would obtain from the prospective informant a complete statement concerning his background and personal history. This information was then forwarded to the detachment vetting officer, who was responsible for conducting an investigation to verify the informant's background. The investigation included checks of local police (if they could be done without compromising the informant) and of friendly

15/ Heinz Hoehne and Hermann Zolling, The General Was a Spy: The Truth About Gehlen and His Spy Ring (New York, 1972), passim.

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intelligence agency files, as well as of the Berlin Document Center, where Nazi Party and SS personnel records are maintained. The results of this investigation were passed to the detachment's operations section, where they were evaluated. If appropriate, permission was then granted to use an individual as an informant. Most former CIC agents interviewed by OSI agreed, however, that these procedures were not always followed, particularly if a prospective informant had access to valuable information or had been introduced to the CIC by someone deemed reliable. Obtaining background information concerning subsources recruited by indigenous informants often proved particularly difficult. Although the CIC required that "informants of German informant-runners should be listed with complete personal details," it also admitted that "it is possible that occasionally the only information provided . . . will be a name." The CIC instructed German informant-runners to obtain a "brief autobiography" from each of their informants, but "only if it can be procured without difficulty." 16/

For the CIC, its mission of protecting American security apparently justified the use of persons who were morally repugnant. A May 22, 1947 CIC directive explained that, while was preferable to use informants whose ideals were similar to those of the United States, this did not preclude "use of an informant of the 'stab-your-neighbor' type if it seems that there

16/ IRR, XE 184719 I 8H027.

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is definite value to be obtained thereby. It is realized that all types of characters must be used in order to obtain adequate coverage." ^{17/} Nearly all the former CIC agents interviewed in the course of this investigation acknowledged that membership in the SS or participation in questionable war-time activities did not disqualify a person from use as a CIC informant. Indeed, Verbelen's first CIC control agent maintained that it was advantageous to use such persons, not only because of their knowledge and experience, but also because their dependence upon the United States for protection ensured their reliability. ^{18/}

^{17/} Ibid.

^{18/} Interview with Frank Harris (15 November 1984).

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V. Verbelen's Versions of His Work for the CIC

Over the years since he first revealed his true identity to the 66th CIC Group in June 1956, Verbelen has recounted various histories of the circumstances surrounding his recruitment and work for the CIC. These versions invariably contradict one another on critical points. Some of the stories are recounted below:

A. Explanation to the 66th CIC Group ^{19/}

Verbelen told his CIC handling agent in 1956 that when he first arrived in Vienna in 1946, he met a former SS general with whom he had worked in Belgium. This unnamed general supposedly asked Verbelen if he wished to continue fighting Communism and, upon receiving a positive reply, took him to a sub-office of the 430th CIC in Vienna on the Porzellangasse and introduced him to Mr. Harris. Harris "flatly stated that he did not know [Verbelen's] name and asked who he was in such a manner that [Verbelen] knew he was being asked for an alias." Harris further stated that the United States could not risk official involvement with former SS members and warned that, if trouble developed, Verbelen would receive no support from the U.S. Army.

19/ Region IV, 66th CIC Group, "Summary of Information: VERBELEN, Robert Jean" (11 July 1956), IRR, file H8198901.

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About one month after Verbelen began working for the CIC, a reorganization occurred that resulted in the dismissal of most of the former SS officers. Verbelen continued working directly for Harris as the leader of an informant network or "net" that gathered positive and political intelligence and was housed in the tobacco monopoly building in Vienna. This organization disbanded when an interpreter from another section defected to the Soviets, who soon afterwards tried to pick up members of the net. Verbelen was one of the few members of the organization -- and, he claimed, the only important one -- who was not evacuated to other parts of Austria but remained in Vienna. Shortly before the organization disbanded, its members had been instructed to fill out Personal History Statements. As he was completing the statement, Verbelen looked questioningly at Harris, who put his fingers over his mouth, signalling that Verbelen should put down false information. Accordingly, Verbelen completed the form with information concerning Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab, and ever since that time he had worked for the CIC under the alias of Schwab.

B. Testimony At War Crimes Trial ^{20/}

At his trial for war crimes in Vienna late in 1965, Verbelen recounted a substantially different story concerning his

^{20/} "Verbelen-Prozess: Ein wortreiches 'Nichtschuldig,'" Kurier (Vienna), 30 November 1965.

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recruitment and work for the CIC. He claimed that, after helping his comrades to escape at the end of the war, he stayed in Austria and reported to the Americans, who made him a bartender and then a manager in a non-commissioned officers' club, first in Zell am See and then in Hofgastein. Early in 1946, he went to Vienna and, after two months, reported to CIC headquarters, where he was introduced by two Austrian officers. Verbelen claims that he then told his true name to the CIC, which decided after six weeks of interrogation that he had only been involved in "permissible reprisals" and not in persecuting Jews. It therefore did not consider him to have committed major war crimes that would have rendered him ineligible for service. The CIC gave Verbelen false papers under an assumed identity and used him to infiltrate Soviet intelligence organizations. After a number of CIC agents were captured by the Soviets, Verbelen was entrusted with rebuilding the group. He was given the cover name "Herbert" and the group was consequently called "Department H." Verbelen worked for the CIC until the occupation of Austria ended in 1955 and proved so effective that he twice received the thanks of Austrian Interior Minister Oskar Helmer. The Americans invited him to go "over there," i.e., to the United States, but he preferred to stay in Vienna. He claimed to have written 3300 reports for the CIC but never to have accepted any money for his espionage work.

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C. Flemish Interview ^{21/}

In an interview published around 1970 by the right-wing Flemish nationalist organization Vlaamse Militie Orde, Verbelen claimed that he reported to the CIC in Zell am See at the end of the war, fully expecting to be extradited to Belgium. After six weeks of interrogation, however, the CIC asked him to work for a secret service being established by two Americans, Major Chitrik and Captain Harris. Verbelen became the deputy chief of the service led by Harris. After the Soviets discovered and destroyed the informant networks of "Bobby" and "Nick," only Verbelen's "Herbert" net remained. He was therefore called to the American headquarters and requested to build a new service, which received the name "Group H." Verbelen wrote "not fewer than 3,332 detailed reports" for the American headquarters, and his group performed invaluable services for Austria and all of Europe.

According to Verbelen, when the Americans withdrew their forces from Austria in 1955, they asked him to come with them, explaining that, after nine years in the service of the United States, he had a right to American citizenship. They supposedly offered him the rank of a United States officer and a guaranteed income for life, which he would earn by carrying out important

^{21/} "Mijn Eer is Trouw," pamphlet published by the Vlaamse Militie Orde - Ghent, ca. 1970.

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assignments in either Berlin or Frankfurt. Verbelen refused the American offer.

Shortly afterwards, Verbelen claimed, he was approached by the Austrian State Police, which knew him to be the best informed man in all of Austria concerning the secret services of the Eastern Bloc. Verbelen refused the Austrians' request for his assistance in establishing a counter-espionage service but did make available his knowledge concerning Soviet and Eastern European agents. In return for his valuable services, he received Austrian citizenship.

D. Statement to an Austrian Journalist 22/

In his 1983 book Nelkenstrauß ruft Praterstern, Harald Irrnberger, an Austrian journalist, reports on an interview with Verbelen conducted by one of Irrnberger's colleagues. Verbelen told the interviewer that, when he supplied his men with false papers at the end of the war, he also provided himself with a passport in the name of Peter Mayer. In Zell am See, he met a U.S. Captain Roemer who obtained employment for him as a manager in the Hotel Austria, which also housed a U.S. officers' club. Roemer also invited Verbelen to work for U.S. intelligence, but Verbelen preferred to move to Vienna.

22/ Harald Irrnberger, Nelkenstrauß ruft Praterstern. Am Beispiel Oesterreich: Funktion und Arbeitsweise geheimer Nachrichtendienste in einem neutralen Staat (Vienna, 1983), 77-80.

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Verbelen claimed that, after he arrived in Vienna, he met a South Tyrolian nobleman and former Wehrmacht officer who was working for the CIC and introduced Verbelen to its leading agent in Vienna, the former SS-Hauptsturmfuehrer Hermann Milleder. Milleder took Verbelen to the CIC, and Verbelen underwent six weeks of interrogation by Captain Harris, Colonel George, and Major Chidrik on the third floor of the rear wing of the tobacco building on Porzellangasse. The CIC then hired Verbelen, and when two of its nets, "Bobby" and "Nicky," were betrayed to the Russians by Harris' adjutant, Brugger, Verbelen was asked to develop his own network, using the cover name "Herbert." Verbelen claimed to have had 150 informants in his net, one third of whom were women while the rest were mainly former Nazis, SS men, and nationalists of all types, including members of the Arrow Cross (a Hungarian fascist organization) and the Ustasa (a Croatian fascist organization). He wrote 2,350 reports for the "CIA," which provided the information therein to the Austrian Government. Verbelen claimed that Group "H" was the only U.S. net of any consequence in Vienna after Milleder moved to Salzburg in 1947. After the United States troops withdrew in 1955, Verbelen was recruited by the Austrians.

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E. Version told to OSI 23/

When interviewed by OSI officials in 1985, Verbelen stated that, as chief of police in the Flemish exile government, he had received a number of blank identity documents, some of which he gave to his men, while filling out one for himself in the name of Peter Mayer, a displaced person born in the Netherlands. Using this false identification, he reported to the Americans in Zell am See and obtained work as a bartender at the American club in the Hotel Austria. Late in 1945, he moved to Hofgastein, where he again worked as a bartender in an American club.

Verbelen claimed that soon after he moved to Vienna in May 1946, he met a former SS officer working for the CIC who invited him to assist the Americans in combatting Communism. The Berlin Document Center has records on this individual, an Austrian who belonged to the Hitler Youth from 1932 until 1939, when he joined the Nazi Party and the Waffen SS, eventually rising to the rank of SS Untersturmfuehrer (2nd lieutenant). OSI has confirmed that he was a 430th CIC informant. 24/

According to Verbelen, the SS officer introduced him to another former SS member, Hermann Milleder, who was working for CIC agent named Captain Harris. Verbelen claimed to have revealed his true identity and background to Milleder, who

23/ Interview with Robert Jan Verbelen (Vienna, 28 June 1985).

24/ Interview with former CIC agent Nicholas Alexander (16 December 1985).

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undertook to arrange his employment with Harris. Before introducing Verbelen to Harris, Milleder explained that Verbelen would be known as Peter Mayer and would use the cover name "Herbert." Verbelen never learned whether Harris, who only addressed him as Peter Mayer or Herbert, knew his true identity.

Verbelen claimed that he seldom met Harris but worked mainly through Milleder or some other contact. His job was to form an informant net, and he used false identity documents that were issued in several names, including one in the name of Albert Kluge that was furnished him by Harris' assistant, Brugger. After Brugger defected to the Soviets, Harris and two ethnic German informants named Bobby and Nick had to leave Vienna. Verbelen claimed that he was also invited to leave but preferred to remain, and that he assisted Harris in burning numerous documents. Following Harris' departure, Verbelen maintained that he worked independently, without a control agent, and only maintained a liaison with the CIC headquarters.

Verbelen claimed that he ceased working for CIC after U.S. forces withdrew from Austria in 1955, with the exception of a few contacts with one of his former handling agents. This agent supposedly suggested that Verbelen work for the Central Intelligence Agency, but Verbelen refused the offer. Verbelen denied that the CIC ever suggested that he emigrate to the United States. He also denied that he ever revealed his true identity to any U.S. Government official, even in 1956.

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VI. Verbelen's Employment with the 430th CIC Detachment

Most of the information which OSI has obtained concerning Verbelen's employment with the CIC is based upon the numerous documents pertaining to him that are located at the United States Army's Investigative Records Repository (IRR). Unfortunately, neither OSI investigators nor the officials of the IRR were able to find the operational records of the 430th CIC's Vienna Sub-Detachment for the years 1945 through 1947, and it appears that those records no longer exist. The only document dated before May 1948 in Verbelen's CIC file pertains to a false identity card with Verbelen's photograph that was issued by the CIC to an Albert Kluge, whose real name is recorded as Peter Mayer. ^{25/}

A. Work for Harris

Later documents in Verbelen's CIC file indicate that his first CIC handling agent was Captain Frank Harris, ^{26/} whom Verbelen identified to the CIC in 1956 and to OSI in 1985 as the CIC agent who first recruited him. In 1947 and 1948, Harris was the chief of the CIC Denazification Section in Vienna, which was located in the tobacco building on Porzellangasse. That section conducted investigations of persons seeking employment by U.S. occupation authorities or applying either to marry U.S. citizens

^{25/} IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

^{26/} Informant registration form on Schwab (ca. 1950-51), *ibid.*

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or to emigrate to the United States. Under Harris, however, the Denazification Section also collected intelligence information from numerous informants and produced false identity documents used by persons traveling via the "Rat Line." ^{27/}

When interviewed by OSI, Harris ^{28/} identified Verbelen's photograph in a photospread as being that of "Herbert," a sub-source developed by a CIC informant called "Bobi." Harris recalled that Herbert was a former SS officer who worked for German intelligence during the war, possibly in the Balkans or in Hungary, and that he was forced to remain "underground" -- i.e., not register with Austrian authorities or carry identity documents in his true name -- for fear of arrest. Harris never asked or learned whether Herbert feared arrest on account of his SS rank or on account of his wartime activities. Harris only met Herbert a few times, as Bobi was his primary handler and probably the one who provided him with the Kluge I.D. Harris could not recall Herbert's true name and did not recognize the name Verbelen, nor did he remember that Herbert ever worked in the offices of the Denazification Section. He did recall, however, that Herbert provided valuable information and performed useful services for the CIC. In particular, Herbert recruited a former

^{27/} The Rat Line was an underground railroad used by the CIC to smuggle defectors, informants, and refugees out of Vienna, which was surrounded by the Soviet occupation zone, and into areas under U.S. control.

^{28/} Harris interview (15 November 1984).

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high-level Nazi who forged the provincial stamps needed for the false papers issued by the CIC to refugees being smuggled via the "Rat Line."

Early in 1948, Harris' interpreter, Emil Brugger, was kidnapped by the Soviets, and soon afterwards a number of other CIC informants were taken into Soviet custody. Bobi and another of Harris' informants named "Nick" were evacuated to safer areas of Austria, and a few months later, Harris was transferred to another CIC Sub-Detachment. Harris maintains that he severed contact with his remaining informants in Vienna and did not turn them over to any other CIC agent. He does not know whether Bobi disposed of his own sources in Vienna.

When told Verbelen's 1956 version of how he was recruited by Harris and later encouraged to conceal his true identity, Harris stated that he had no memory of those events and, in particular, denied that he ever encouraged an informant to lie to the CIC. He explained that there was no CIC policy forbidding the use of persons with Nazi pasts as informants and thus he would have had no reason not to report an informant's true identity and background. He further maintained that, while he served in Vienna, many of the CIC's informants were former members of the SS or German Army who had worked in intelligence. When asked to give specific examples of such persons, he stated that Bobi had been an SS officer active in intelligence in Eastern Europe during World War II.

In fact, Bobi never joined either the SS or the Nazi Party. OSI has learned, however, that both Bobi and Nick, who were

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ethnic Germans from the Balkans, worked for the Abwehr in several countries during the war. One of these countries sought Bobi as a war criminal after the war, but investigations by United States and Austrian authorities failed to find any basis for war crimes charges. 29/

In addition, OSI has learned that Nick and perhaps also Bobi were originally recruited to work for the CIC by a former Nazi official named Hermann Milleder, whom Verbelen identified to OSI officials in 1985 as the person who first put him in touch with Harris and arranged his employment with the CIC. Milleder joined the Hitler Youth in Austria in 1928, was later arrested for illegal Nazi activities, and escaped to Germany, where he allegedly joined the paramilitary Austrian Legion. After Germany annexed Austria in 1938, Milleder returned to his home as the head of the Nazi Party personnel and business offices in that district and eventually rose to the post of Gauredner, a propagandist for a Nazi Party province. In 1942, he joined the German Army and served in propaganda units until he was reported missing on the Lower Dniester front in August 1944. 30/

Milleder was employed by the CIC's Vienna Section in late 1946 or early 1947 after he presented a recommendation from the

29/ IRR, XA 194869 I 5E009 and XE 583298 I 3B499.

30/ Ibid., and XA 017697 I 3C126; Nazi Party records pertaining to Milleder at the Berlin Document Center and military records pertaining to Milleder at the Deutsche Dienststelle (WASSt) in Berlin.

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CIC office in Grieskirchen explaining that he could not be employed there because the Austrian authorities had issued a warrant for his arrest for his past political activities. Milleder worked for CIC agent Nicholas Alexander, who was involved in collecting positive intelligence. Through his wide range of acquaintances, Milleder succeeded in developing a large net of informants who were for the most part former members of the Nazi Party, SS, or Abwehr. When Alexander was transferred to another CIC Sub-Detachment late in the summer of 1947, he turned this net, including Bobi and Nick, over to Harris but took Milleder with him. 31/ Shortly afterward, the Austrian police arrested Milleder but had to release him when he produced a CIC certificate stating that he was under city arrest and could not be handed over to other authorities without the approval of the U.S. military government. At both the beginning and the end of 1948, the Director of Intelligence of the U.S. Forces Austria denied the U.S. military government's request to place Milleder in Austrian custody but promised to notify the military government when Milleder was finally released from city arrest. In 1949, Milleder was transferred to another 430th CIC Sub-Detachment. 32/

31/ IRR, 430th CIC SI [Special Investigations] File, Microseries Number 54859, and XA 194869 I 5E004 and XE 583298 I 3B499.

32/ IRR, XA 017697 I 3C126.

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Apparently, Milleder did not sever contact with the sources he had developed in Vienna, for the CIC repeatedly discovered that he was submitting the same information as were informants in other Sub-Detachments, including Verbelen. A comparison of CIC documents indicates that Milleder and his closest co-worker from Vienna, who also followed Alexander to his new post, worked simultaneously for two different informant networks being run by two CIC Sub-Detachments in Austria. These networks came to the attention of Austrian authorities who were investigating the Nazi backgrounds of their members. ^{33/} A CIC investigation into the duplication of information submitted by Alexander's network, Harris' network, and another group of CIC informants disclosed that "the informants of Alexander were Abwehr men; the informants of X ^{34/} group were Abwehr men and the informants of Harris group were Abwehr men. It is also known that the Harris group are in contact with members of X group and know rather completely the activities of the Alexander group" Listed among the informants of the Harris Group are Bobi, Nick, and Herbert

33/ IRR, XA 045467 I 3F, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 38179, 36360, and 38859.

34/ This information is classified and has therefore been deleted.

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Meyer ^{35/} -- the latter being, in reality, Verbelen. Since both the value and accuracy of Milleder's information also declined, he was dropped as an informant late in 1949. ^{36/}

Alexander ^{37/} confirmed to OSI officials that Milleder had run a large net of informants for him in Vienna and that one of Milleder's co-workers had been the man Verbelen named to OSI as his first CIC contact. In general, however, Alexander did not meet or know the names of Milleder's sources.

Alexander recalled both that Milleder was a "hot Nazi" seeking to avoid arrest and that the man named by Verbelen had been an SS officer. According to Alexander, the CIC used many informants who had belonged to the Nazi Party or the SS or had been Nazi collaborators, and it sometimes even protected them from arrest. Like Harris, Alexander maintained that the threat of arrest helped to insure an informant's reliability.

Although Alexander and Harris knew each other in Vienna, they never worked together. Alexander could not recall any informants named Bobi or Nick, nor did he recognize Verbelen from his photograph or by any of the names he used. On the other hand, although Harris could no longer remember Milleder, a CIC document shows that, after Milleder left Vienna late in 1947, he

^{35/} IRR, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 38859.

^{36/} IRR, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 37500 and XE 252100A 7 17I056.

^{37/} Interview with Nicholas Alexander, 17 December 1985.

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contacted Harris through Nick. 38/ Harris and Alexander both admitted that CIC operations were not sharply delineated or tightly controlled; it was therefore perfectly possible for informants from different nets to know each other and for an informant to work for more than one CIC agent or operation at the same time. In particular, Alexander stated that Milleder was thoroughly familiar with CIC's organization in Vienna and so may well have known some of Harris' informants. CIC documents show that Bobi knew most of the CIC agents controlling informant networks for the Vienna Sub-Detachment. 39/

B. Project Newton

The earliest documents in Verbelen's CIC file concern his participation in Project Newton. Begun in May 1948, this project had the mission of penetrating and spying on the Austrian Communist Party (KPOe). George Neagoy, Special Agent in Charge of the Research Section in the 430th CIC's Vienna Detachment, was the operational control chief of the project. Listed among the project "cut-outs" is Peter Mayer, alias Herbert. A "cut-out" was an intermediary who provided the only link between a CIC

38/ IRR, XA 018571 I 3D129.

39/ IRR, XE 583298 I 3B499.

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agent and each of his informants. Project Newton cost \$200.00 a month, which was used to pay its cut-outs. 40/

In a July 1948 memorandum concerning Project Newton to the commander of the 430th CIC Vienna Sub-Detachment, George Neagoy is listed as the agent utilizing the net Herbert to monitor KPOe activities in Austria and to penetrate the KPOe Central Committee. 41/ On 31 August 1948, Neagoy filed a request for an Austrian police check on the ethnic German Peter Mayer, who lived at Turkenstrasse 17/1/III in Vienna's ninth district. Neagoy noted on the request that: "[t]his is all I know about this man." 42/

The 430th CIC's liaison with the Austrian police reported that Peter Mayer was born on 11 October 1915 in Wildenschwert in the Znaim District of Czechoslovakia and was the son of Josef Mayer and Maria Mayer nee Moleneas. Mayer was at that time renting an apartment on Turkenstrasse. As his previous address he had given Porzellangasse 51, a building that, according to the Austrian police, housed part of the U.S. Military Government (in fact, it housed the CIC's Denazification Section). Mayer's neighbors stated that he worked as a translator in an American

40/ "Registration of Networks: Project 'Newton,'" IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

41/ George Neagoy, "Memorandum to Major Earle: 'Nets' Utilized by Research Section" (12 July 1948), *ibid.*

42/ George Neagoy, "Request for Police Check" (31 August 1948), *ibid.*

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office, that he knew six or seven languages, including Slavic languages, and that he was the author of several books. When he registered with the police, Mayer had shown an identity card from the 430th CIC Detachment. ^{43/}

When interviewed by OSI, Neagoy did not remember an individual named Verbelen, Peter Mayer, Herbert, or any of Verbelen's other aliases, nor did he remember Project Newton, although he stated that Newton was his cover name. He expressed the belief that there was a "general feeling" that former members of the SS should not be used as sources, but could not remember any regulations stipulating such a policy. He admitted that, under the chaotic circumstances in Austria in the early postwar years, CIC employed any individual who could provide useful and reliable information. He also stated that CIC did not always conduct a complete background check before using a source if that source had been introduced to CIC by someone deemed reliable. ^{44/}

CIC documents indicate that Project Newton was reorganized by October 1948, and that "Herbert," one of its cut-outs, was being handled by CIC agents Peter Barry and George Zappala. ^{45/}

^{43/} "MAYER Peter, Investigation: Report" (7 September 1948), *ibid.*

^{44/} Interview with George Neagoy (26 April 1984).

^{45/} IRR: "Survey of Project NEWTON," 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 36360; Peter Barry to Chief, Vienna City Section, "Project NEWTON" (25 November 1948) and "SCHWAB, Alfred Heinrich Gustav, Informant's Background Report, Vienna" (30 July 1953), H8198901, vol. II.

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In November 1948, Barry reported that Herbert's real name was Peter Mayer and explained that Mayer had been "developed by a group of CIC agents in the fall of 1946. Ever since then Herbert has proven himself to be a reliable informant and conscientious cut-out man for various nets." Barry described Mayer as an ethnic German who moved to Vienna during the war and who was presently "writing two books on philosophical subjects." 46/

Barry also listed Herbert's 23 sub-sources. He used the information and cover names supplied by Herbert and noted that the CIC did not know the true names of all these sub-sources, "as HERBERT is reluctant to reveal their real identity at this time." Among Herbert's sources were:

1. "Duermann" - a former SS officer in constant touch with former members of the SS, NSDAP, and German Abwehr;
2. "Masep" - a former Nazi;
3. "Fred" - a former Nazi who was "in hiding from the law";
4. "Dresemann" - a former Hitler Youth leader who was still heading a group of former Hitler Youth members;
5. "Artos" - a former SS officer in touch with a "subversive" group of former SS men. 47/

Harris stated that Peter Barry worked for him in the Denazification Section. OSI has not been able to locate him.

46/ Barry, "Project NEWTON," IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

47/ Ibid.

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Early in 1949, the informants and sub-sources of Project Newton were assigned CIC code numbers. A report written after this change notes that the project was activated on 1 October 1948 and employed three sources and seven sub-sources. The first and highest paid source was Peter Mayer, an ethnic German born on 17 March 1914 in Apia, Samoa, who came to Vienna during the war and began working for CIC in the fall of 1946. The second source, later known to the CIC as "Charpentier," was a KPOe official, while the third source had worked for British Intelligence during the war. Mayer, "a convinced anti-Communist who is, however, engaging in intelligence activity largely for financial gain," received \$40.00 per month for salary and expenses. The report notes that, in November 1948, it was discovered that the same person was supplying information to both Project Newton and an operation controlled by another CIC Sub-Detachment. 48/

Also in 1949, Herbert submitted a report describing the activities of his informants and discussing his own personal dealings with Communists in his three years of service for the United States. He claimed that, at the beginning of 1947, he learned that two Russian officers training at the air force school at Aspern, Austria would be billeted at a certain farm. Herbert succeeded in persuading the owner of the farm to employ

48/ "Survey of Project Newton," IRR, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 36360.

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him as an agricultural laborer, and he registered with the police as Peter Mayer, trade: farming. He worked there for two months, became friendly with the two officers, who believed him to be a Communist, and was still visiting them regularly. ^{49/}

Herbert concluded his report by requesting that the strictest secrecy be preserved with respect to his informants. He justified this request by citing the example of the nets "Brugger," "Bobby," and "Nick," which operated under Captain Harris and which, he claimed, were all picked up by the Soviets. ^{50/}

On 22 December 1949, George Zappala filed Informant Registration cards on Peter Mayer and several of the sub-sources working for Project Newton. Mayer's date and place of birth were given as 30 June 1914 in Apia, Samoa. According to the original information on the cards, Mayer, alias Herbert, was stateless but of Dutch origin, a self-employed commercial representative presently residing at Turkenstrasse 17/3/9 in Vienna's ninth district. He had attended art school and high school, spoke some English, French, and German, had no immediate relatives, and had never previously worked for an intelligence organization. No military service was listed for him, and his political orientation was termed "pro-Western -- apolitical." Added under the "Remarks" section is the evaluation that Mayer was "a reliable

^{49/} Herbert, "Mitarbeiter und Informatore," (1949), IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

^{50/} Ibid.

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informant who has been in contact with this office for three years and with this agent for one year. He maintains his status as cut-out for Project Newton sub-sources efficiently and reliably." 51/

When interviewed by OSI, Zappala 52/ immediately recognized Verbelen's photograph as that of "Herbert Carpentier," whom he remembered recruiting a few months after his arrival in Vienna in the spring of 1947. Zappala's personnel file shows that he was not transferred from Italy to the 430th CIC's Vienna Sub-Detachment until late October 1947, so in fact this recruitment must have occurred some time later. According to Zappala, Carpentier came to the CIC offices to offer his services and indicated that he had been previously working for "friendly intelligence" but was unhappy with the way he was being handled, because he believed it unprofessional and not secure. Zappala learned that Carpentier had served in the German Army, which Carpentier confirmed but refused to elaborate further. Although Zappala learned very little about Carpentier, he received his supervisor's permission to use him without pressing for more details.

Zappala explained that he used Carpentier as a "stringer" who at first received low-level tasks and whose information was

51/ Informant registration card (22 December 1949), IRR, H8198901.

52/ Interview with George Zappala (11 September 1984).

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double-checked by reliable sources. When Zappala became convinced that Carpentier was capable and reliable, he used him to obtain information about Soviet troop and equipment movements into and out of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In order to carry out these tasks, Carpentier developed a network of sub-sources. He was also successful in providing information about possible defectors, in one case developing a lead to a senior Soviet intelligence officer who later defected. Carpentier developed contacts with Socialist youth groups, several members of which were recruited to work for U.S. intelligence and provided valuable information. Carpentier's work was so effective that the Soviets planned to kidnap him. To avoid this, Carpentier frequently changed identity documents and maintained various residences both in the Soviet and non-Soviet controlled areas.

Zappala had no memory of Project Newton and maintained that he never knew Verbelen as Peter Mayer but only as Carpentier or Herbert. Zappala did claim that once, when he asked Carpentier what name he would go by if he had to use an alias, he replied that he would use the name "Schwab."

Zappala maintained that he used Carpentier from 1947 until sometime in 1949, when Carpentier was turned over to an individual named "Rollo" from Detachment 35. CIC documents clearly show, however, that Zappala continued using Verbelen until the end of 1950, when he was taken over by CIC agent Leete Ekstrom.

Although Zappala's memory is faulty in certain respects, his statements indicate that after Harris severed contact with his

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informants in Vienna, Verbelen may have lost touch with the CIC. When he tried to reestablish contact he apparently was employed by Zappala and assigned to Project Newton. Verbelen stated to OSI officials in 1985 that he worked independently after Harris left Vienna and only had occasional contact with a CIC liaison, whose name might have been Captain George. Verbelen adamantly denied that he was ever known as either Carpentier or Charpentier. The latter was the cover name for one of his informants, a KPOe official who provided extremely valuable information. As previously stated, there was another informant for Project Newton whose code name was Charpentier, and he apparently was recruited by Verbelen, who appears to have provided his only liaison with Zappala. ^{53/} CIC documents indicate that both Zappala and Ekstrom referred to Verbelen by the alias Charpentier. ^{54/} Given the fact that both Zappala and Ekstrom only met occasionally and very briefly with Verbelen to give him instructions and receive his reports, it is possible that they referred to him by the name of his most valuable informant while always addressing him at their meetings as Herbert.

^{53/} IRR, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Numbers 9381, 9399, and 9776.

^{54/} Informant registration form on Schwab, IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

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In December 1950, the 430th CIC discontinued Project Newton and dropped Verbelen's coded sub-sources from its employment.

The memo recommending this change explained that

Little control over NEWTON sub-sources is now exercised through [the project cut-out] by the control agent; [the project cut-out] is now considered an independent informant who has KPOe sub-sources on the Bezirk [district] level. Most of [the project cut-out's] sub-sources are considered to be casual informants whom he has cultivated to obtain KPOe information. . . . This change will not in any way affect the nature of information submitted^{55/} nor payments made to [the project cut-out].

C. Change of Alias from Mayer to Schwab

In late 1950 and early 1951, Herbert's supposed true identity changes in CIC documents from Peter Mayer to Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab. Although OSI has been unable to determine the precise circumstances surrounding this change, statements made by Verbelen and Zappala do shed some light on this question. Verbelen told OSI officials in 1985 that, some time after Harris left Vienna, the CIC conducted an investigation to determine whether there should be cooperation between its informants and the CIA. For the first time since he began working for the CIC, Verbelen was asked to complete a form concerning his identity and background. Uncertain whether his true identity were known to the CIC and, if it were, whether the

55/ "Deregistration of Project Newton" (17 November 1950), IRR, 430th CIC SI File, Microserial Number 38186.

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CIC would wish him to admit it in writing, Verbelen decided to complete the form with information taken from false papers he possessed in the name of Schwab. He had received the papers from the real Schwab's sister, a refugee from Romania who wanted Verbelen to accompany her to Brazil, where her parents lived.

Late in 1950, preparations were made to establish an intelligence organization staffed by personnel from the U.S. military and civilian intelligence agencies and known as Detachment 35, or "Det 35." It was to this organization that Zappala believed he had transferred control over Verbelen. Detachment 35 was to take responsibility for all positive intelligence activities in Austria, and therefore the 430th CIC was to transfer to its control any informants providing information that was primarily of a positive intelligence nature. ^{56/} The establishment of Detachment 35 may have caused the CIC to discontinue Project Newton, for Zappala's statements indicate that Verbelen's net provided both positive intelligence and counterintelligence information.

As a result either of a CIC investigation of appropriate informants to be transferred to Detachment 35 or of Verbelen's change in status from a "cut-out" for Project Newton to an independent informant, Verbelen was the subject of two lengthy

^{56/} Memo from Acting Assistant Director for Special Operations to Director, Central Intelligence Agency (7 February 1952), CIA; "Austria Unit History -- Annual Historical Supplement CY 1952," NA, RG 319, file 228-08, Box C-143.

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Control Data Forms that apparently were completed late in 1950. Control Data Form II 57/ on an unnamed "Intelligence Operative (informant)" with the code number assigned to Verbelen as Peter Mayer was "to be filled in without knowledge of subject by Control Agent only," but there is no indication of the Control Agent's identity. According to the information on this form, a CIC agent whose name was unknown to the control agent first established casual contact with the informant in the fall of 1946. The informant was then slowly developed by the Vienna CIC because he had contact "with a number of sub-sources who were able to submit varied information about KPOe and Soviet activities." It was initially arranged to utilize the informant on a trial basis of two months with payment for expenses only, which amounted to several hundred Austrian schillings and cigarettes.

At the time the form was completed, the informant was being paid \$60.00 and two cartons of cigarettes per month. He was in contact with no CIC employee other than the control agent, to whom he gave written reports based on information he received orally from his sub-sources. While the CIC had made no specific commitments to the informant "regarding future treatment, pay, medical care, assistance in event of compromise, evacuation, etc.," he was told that "U.S. Intelligence would try to help him

57/ "Control Data Form II," IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

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in the most applicable manner in case of an extreme emergency in Austria."

The investigations made into the informant's identity, background, and intelligence function consisted of checks conducted by his original control agent in 1946 and 1948 in CIC files, with the Austrian police, and with other official agencies, all of which revealed no derogatory information. In addition, information submitted by the informant was checked against other informants' information and proved to be generally reliable. The control agent wrote that the information he entered on this form was based largely on questionnaires and a curriculum vitae submitted by the informant in 1946 and 1948, but these documents are not present in the file. They supposedly indicated that the informant had served with the SD and "Voluntary Military Intelligence" from 1943 until 1945. Because of his anti-Soviet attitude, he considered U.S. intelligence the proper agency to which he should offer his services, although the control agent believed he was probably also motivated by financial considerations. Except for his anti-Soviet attitude, the informant was considered non-political by his control agent but likely to collaborate with any legal government or party that was nationalist and anti-Soviet. The informant had an excellent understanding of intelligence work, fit easily into all but the highest social classes, was courageous but cautious and security conscious, smoked and drank moderately, and, according to the control agent, was "a rather smooth operator with the ladies."

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Verbelen's file also contains a Control Data Form 1-A, ^{58/} apparently written after Control Data Form II, which was "to be filled in by subject, if feasible, in Control Agent's presence." It gives the name of the informant with Verbelen's code number as Herbert Schwab, born in Apia, Samoa on 30 November 1914 and presently residing at Josefstaedterstrasse 51 in Vienna's eighth district. His father, Oscar Schwab, born in 1885 in Stuttgart, Germany, was then a construction foreman in Stuttgart, while his mother, Adelaide Schwab nee Graf, a Brazilian citizen of English nationality, was born in 1886 in New Zealand and in 1950 resided in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Herbert Schwab had three siblings, all born in Samoa; his eldest sister resided with her mother, while his younger brother and sister resided with their father. Schwab attended grammar and secondary schools in Stuttgart, Germany from 1920 to 1931 and studied art at the University in Loewen, Belgium from 1933 to 1935. German was his native language, but he was also fluent in Dutch and French.

Schwab apparently claimed that during the war, he served as a Hauptsturmfuehrer (SS Captain) and recruiting officer with the "German Langermarke Division" from 1940 to 1943, during which time he was twice wounded and received the Iron Cross first and second class. From 1943 to 1945, he worked for the SD Hauptamt (Main Office), recruiting SS and MP battalions for the Russian campaign, and won the "Army Commendation Medal" first and second

^{58/} "Control Data Form 1-A," IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

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class. During the same period, he also served as a "voluntary officer for the reserve commando SKORZENI ^{59/}" and led "the group DE VLAG Frauenespionage (women espionage) group." Although he presently had no political affiliations and belonged to no professional, social, or political organizations, he had in the past been a National Socialist and in 1934 belonged to the "Union of Journalists in Germany." Herbert Schwab's signature on this form reads "Schwab Albert."

Another form in Verbelen's CIC file containing information on Herbert Schwab appears to have been filled out by Leete Ekstrom some time after he became Schwab's control agent in November 1950. ^{60/} The information originally typed on this form agrees with the information on Control Data Forms I-A and II. In addition, the form states that, after first coming into contact with CIC in 1946, Schwab was "slowly developed as a cut-out man for project NEWTON and later to serve as an individual Source." Schwab used the aliases Peter Mayer and Dr. Herbert, while Herbert Charpentier was the name "assigned by Agent." Ekstrom also added the remark that, because of his commando training and considerable knowledge of sabotage, Schwab "would be a good stay

^{59/} SS Obersturmbannfuehrer [Lieutenant Colonel] Otto Skorzeny, the organizer of special SS sabotage units, rescued Mussolini from Allied captivity in 1943 and abducted the son of the regent of Hungary in 1944.

^{60/} Informant registration form on Schwab, IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

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behind guerilla Agent" who could be useful in disrupting enemy supply lines.

Handwritten amendments and addenda on this form indicate that Ekstrom uncovered some additional information about Schwab after he first typed it. Under Schwab's first name, "Herbert" is typed out and replaced by "Albert," but this also was later crossed out and the words "Alfred Heinrich Gustave" were substituted in script. Added to the form is a handwritten list of Schwab's control agents: Frank Harris from 1946 to October 1948, George Zappala from October 1948 to November 1950, and Leete Ekstrom after November 1950.

Early in 1951, Ekstrom wrote a memorandum ^{61/} concerning Schwab in which he recounted "all the information which [Schwab] has given to me [emphasis added]." Ekstrom stated that Schwab's true name was Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab and gave essentially the same information concerning his background and wartime activities that he had previously listed for him. In addition, Ekstrom stated that Schwab had joined the National Socialist Party in the mid-1930s and was recognized within the Party for his devotion. Schwab told Ekstrom that after the war ended, he hid his SS and SD background, became friendly with some U.S. Army officers, and obtained a job as a bartender in the Officers' Club in Zell am See. When U.S. troops moved from Zell am See late in

61/ Leete Ekstrom, "Memorandum for Major Miller," (11 January 1951), IRR, *ibid.*

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1945, Schwab went to Hofgastein and worked for American Special Services. After that job ended in 1946, he proceeded to Vienna, where he met some friends who were employed by the CIC and who put him in contact with a CIC officer. Schwab accepted a job with the CIC "on the provision that he would be utilized against the Communists, and not against his former Nazi comrades." He worked in the Porzellangasse offices until the Russians picked up several CIC nets. While the other cut-outs "were sent over the border," Schwab remained in Vienna but dropped to informant status and allowed his former contacts for the most part to lapse. He told Ekstrom that he had worked for Captain Harris, Mr. Barry, and Mr. Anthony (the cover name used by George Zappala).

Although Schwab was registered as living at the Turkenstrasse address, he had not actually resided there since the Russians picked up his nets, at which time two Austrian policemen tried to arrest him. In 1951, he maintained several addresses and every night stayed in a different one of them or else with various friends. His only identification card was an invalid one made out to Peter Mayer, and he never carried any identification papers on him so that he would be nameless if arrested.

A fanatical anti-Communist dedicated to destroying the Soviet government and the Communist International, Schwab operated by "cultivating former Nazis who are active anti-Communists, women who are the mistresses and/or friends of KPOe functionaries, and minor KPOe members and functionaries" who

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joined the party out of opportunism. When Ekstrom asked Schwab what he would do if he could no longer live in Austria, "he replied that he wanted no trip to America or Australia, like the other cut-outs," but would go somewhere else in Europe where he could continue fighting Communism. He frequently urged that a plan be made to carry on this fight in Austria in the event the U.S. had to withdraw, and he claimed to know several young men, "mostly former Nazis," who would gladly form the nucleus of an underground movement.

Apparently at the end of 1950, either Ekstrom or someone else in the 430th CIC altered the Informant Registration Card filed on Peter Mayer by George Zappala. Written in as the informant's true name is Herbert Schwab and as his alias, Peter Mayer, while his control agent's name is changed to Ekstrom. The reference to Project Newton is crossed out with the notation "deregistered 4 Dec. 50." 62/

D. The CIC Ignores Verbelen's Change of Identity

Thus, between December 1949 and January 1951, CIC learned that the informant whom it had believed to be Peter Mayer, a displaced person with no previous political or military affiliations, was in fact first Herbert Schwab, then Albert Schwab, and finally Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab, a former Nazi Party member, SS officer, and SD official. Despite these

62/ Informant Registration Card, IRR, *ibid.*

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discoveries, however, the CIC did not conduct any investigation of Verbelen on the basis of the information it had recently acquired. If the CIC had requested Schwab's file from the repository of Nazi Party and SS records at the Berlin Document Center, it would have discovered that the Center possessed no record of an Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab, a highly unusual situation for a decorated SS officer who had achieved the rank of Hauptsturmfuehrer and had belonged to the Nazi Party since the mid-1930s. An attempt to verify Schwab's military history might have further revealed that the 27th SS Langemarck (not "Langermarke") Division was not organized until 1943 and that the "group De Vlag" was an organization of Belgian fascists and Nazi collaborators.

Moreover, a careful reading of the reports submitted by Herbert concerning his sub-sources and of the checks conducted on them would have revealed that one of them, born in Samoa and the daughter of Oskar and Adelheid Schwab, was apparently Schwab's sister. It would also have been possible for the 430th CIC to request the 66th CIC Group in Germany to conduct a check of Schwab's relatives in Stuttgart. This check was not performed until five years later, when it was discovered that no person by the name of Schwab had ever resided at the address indicated by Verbelen.

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E. Verbelen's Work for the 430th CIC from 1950 to 1955

1. Work for Ekstrom

When interviewed by OSI, Ekstrom ^{63/} was unable to shed any light on Verbelen's reasons for changing his alias. Although Ekstrom immediately recognized Verbelen's photograph in a photospread as being that of an informant he had known as Herbert, he did not remember Herbert's true name and recalled that he was never able to learn much about Herbert's background. Ekstrom maintained that he received control of Herbert not from Zappala but from a CIC agent named Olsen, whose first name he could not recall. CIC documents, which include Ekstrom's own notes, however, show that Ekstrom received control of Verbelen from Zappala. Ekstrom also insisted that he would not have had access to Herbert's source dossier. According to Ekstrom's recollection, Herbert lived in a town in the Soviet-occupied area of Austria and his work consisted mainly in gathering information about Communist organizations in small villages in the Soviet zone, for which he was paid a salary and expenses. Because Herbert lived in the Soviet zone, Ekstrom was unable to conduct the usual residence, neighborhood, and police checks on him. In the early months of 1951, several of Ekstrom's informants either defected to or were kidnapped by the Soviets, including a former source for Project Newton. As a result, the 430th CIC instituted major changes in an effort to tighten security. Ekstrom believed

^{63/} Interview with Leete Ekstrom (24 May 1984).

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that, because he was unable to check Herbert's background and was dissatisfied with the quality of his information, he either fired Herbert or placed him in an inactive status sometime in the late spring of 1951.

2. Work for Paulson

CIC documents indicate, however, that sometime between May and November 1951 Ekstrom turned Verbelen over to CIC agent Edward G. Paulson. ^{64/} When interviewed by OSI, Paulson ^{65/} remembered that he once had an informant named Herbert who was a former member of the SS, hated the Russians, and was extremely anti-Communist. According to Paulson, he received control of Herbert in 1951 or 1952 from Ekstrom, who was dropping most of his informants in order to work for Special Projects. Ekstrom told Paulson that Herbert had belonged to the SS and that contact ought to be maintained with him, even though he was not a very valuable informant. Paulson agreed that Herbert was highly anti-Communist, but also felt that he was an opportunist. Herbert claimed to be running as many as 17 informants about whom he was very secretive and who, in Paulson's estimation, really amounted at most to four persons. Nevertheless, Herbert's information appeared to be reliable, and

^{64/} Receipt, signed by Herbert, for 2,000 Austrian Schillings paid by Mr. Casket (Paulson's cover name) on 2 November 1951, IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

^{65/} Interview with Edward G. Paulson (1 October 1985).

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Paulson met with him at least once a month to receive his reports and to pay him his salary.

Paulson maintained that he worked with no former SS members other than Herbert, although he did have an informant who had belonged to the Nazi Party. The majority of his informants, however, were Communists. Paulson asserted that the most important qualifications for an intelligence informant were trustworthiness, reliability, and access to information, and that an informant's background was not of interest, although he did doubt whether the CIC would have employed "a proven wild-eyed murderer."

3. The 430th CIC Refuses to Conduct Checks on Verbelen and His Informants

In June 1953, Lieutenant Colonel George Sheldon, commanding officer of the Vienna Sub-Detachment, ordered the completion of an Informant Background Report on Verbelen and requested permission from the commander of the 430th CIC to conduct agency checks on 29 persons who were "contacts, sub-sources, and potential sub-sources" of Verbelen. Sheldon believed that, during the previous six to eight months, Verbelen had been submitting information that was far inferior to that which he claimed to be capable of providing. Concerning the contacts and sub-sources whose names Verbelen had submitted in January 1953, Sheldon maintained that they either should be utilized more intensively by the CIC "or they represent useless, worn-out claims" of Verbelen. Sheldon particularly worried that Verbelen

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might have been compromised many years previously. He noted that there was no record in the files of the background checks supposedly conducted in 1946 and 1948, while the "meager police report" on Peter Mayer, dated 7 September 1948, mentioned that his "registration actually includes notation of a CIC identity document and former residence listing at a CIC address!" Moreover, according to Ekstrom's memorandum of 11 January 1951, Verbelen claimed that the Austrian police had tried to pick him up at his registered address at the time of a Soviet action against CIC nets. ^{66/} Despite Sheldon's concerns, the deputy commander of the 430th CIC, Lieutenant Colonel Harry S. Chittick, Jr., denied the request for agency checks of Verbelen's sub-sources and contacts on the grounds that the entire network might thereby be compromised. ^{67/}

In response to Sheldon's order, however, Paulson did submit an Informant Background Report ^{68/} on Verbelen. The report was based only on available CIC records and on Verbelen's own statements. Paulson stated that Verbelen's true name was Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab and supplied the same information about Schwab's background and activities before 1946 that Ekstrom had

^{66/} "Informant [Verbelen's Code Number]: Vetting" (19 June 1953), IRR, H8198901, vol. II.

^{67/} Lieutenant Colonel Harry S. Chittick, Jr., "Informant Vetting" (9 July 1953), IRR, *ibid.*

^{68/} "SCHWAB, Alfred Heinrich Gustav, Informant's Background Report, Vienna," (30 July 1953), *ibid.*

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provided in 1951. Schwab told Paulson that after he moved to Vienna in 1946, he (Schwab) was introduced to Frank Harris by some friends who worked for the CIC. Harris gave him (Schwab) a clerical job in the CIC's Denazification Section, housed in the tobacco building at Porzellangasse 51, and also used him as a control agent for an informant net. Schwab worked in the Porzellangasse offices during normal business hours. After a while, Harris instructed Schwab to register with the Austrian police under the identity he had been using since the end of the war, i.e., Dr. Peter Mayer, born 11 October 1915 in Wildenschwert, Czechoslovakia. He was to register his true address in the Turkenstrasse but give his previous address as Porzellangasse 51. Schwab claimed he protested against taking this step but was assured by Harris that he would not be compromised. Soon afterwards, in 1947, Schwab and the other informants ceased working at the Porzellangasse office. Since then, he had been living as a "U-boat," changing his residence two or three times a week and never using the name Peter Mayer. Sometime after he became a "U-boat," Schwab and the other control agents received instructions to submit detailed lists of their sub-sources. Schwab claimed not to have complied and that shortly thereafter the networks that had been reported were compromised, while his alone stayed intact.

According to Paulson's report, Schwab continued working as the control agent for Project Newton, responsible to Harris, until October 1948, when he was transferred to the control of George Zappala. Ekstrom followed Zappala as Schwab's control

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agent in November 1950 but used Schwab and his sub-sources more as surveillance teams than to gather information. Paulson credited Schwab's effectiveness in the latter capacity to "his highly developed imagination, histrionic ability, and ability to think coolly in a situation."

Schwab stated to Paulson that he recruited his sub-sources mainly from former fellow officers or people who had suffered at Communist hands, to whom he represented himself as a member of an anti-Communist organization that was concerned with the welfare of Europe rather than with that of any one nation. He submitted an average of 20 to 25 reports per week on the information supplied by his sub-sources and contacts. Paulson believed that Schwab worked for the CIC more out of anti-Communist zeal than opportunism and concluded that he "will continue to prove to be of great value to this Office for a long period of time."

Lieutenant Colonel Chittick commended Paulson for his Informant's Background Report on Schwab, which he considered "to be an outstanding example of a thorough, complete and conscientious [sic] effort . . . to comply with current informant policies." ^{69/}

^{69/} Chittick, "Informant's Background Report" (21 August 1953), IRR, *ibid.*

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4. Work for Giles

Although Paulson told OSI that he handled Herbert until June 1955, it appears from CIC records that Special Agent Peter B. Giles became Verbelen's control agent in August 1953. Giles employed Verbelen and his sub-sources on surveillance teams, to perform neighborhood and political affiliation checks on persons under investigation by the CIC, and to report on any anti-American leaflets and posters that appeared in the various sectors of Vienna. In July 1954, Giles submitted an Informant Personal History Record on Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab which simply repeated the information originally supplied by Ekstrom, and Lieutenant Colonel Sheldon requested permission from CIC headquarters to use Schwab as a registered informant. 70/ When interviewed by OSI, Giles recognized the name "Herbert" as being that of an informant whom he had principally known as "Winter." Giles recalled that "Winter" had been a professional German soldier who had assisted Otto Skorzeny in rescuing Mussolini and who had to conceal his identity from Austrian authorities. 71/

As the result of an international treaty, all foreign occupation forces withdrew from Austria during the summer of 1955, at which time the 430th CIC Detachment ceased its operations in Austria. Verbelen then became an informant for the 66th

70/ Peter B. Giles, "Informant Personal History Record" (12 Jul 1954), IRR, H8198901.

71/ Interview with Peter B. Giles (11 January 1985).

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CIC Group's Region IV, which was stationed in Munich, Germany. Perhaps in preparation for this change, the 430th CIC Sub-Detachment in Vienna requested in June that file checks be conducted on Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab by the 430th's headquarters in Salzburg, by the CIC Central Registry, by Detachment 35, and by the 66th CIC. ^{72/} Only Detachment 35 and the Salzburg office had any record of Schwab, but neither could provide any information which the Vienna Sub-Detachment did not already possess. ^{73/}

^{72/} 430th CIC Region "C," "Request for File Check" (15 June 1955), *ibid.*

^{73/} Headquarters, 430th CIC to Region "C," "File Check Results on SCHWAB, Alfred H." (21 July 1955), *ibid.*

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VII. Verbelen's Employment with the 66th CIC Group

A. Work for Wood

On 12 August 1955, Paulson, who had again become Verbelen's control agent two months earlier, introduced Verbelen to his temporary control agent from the 66th CIC, Major Norman T. Woods. ^{74/} Woods ceded control of Verbelen to Special Agent William Wood on September 10. ^{75/} Wood was stationed in Munich and travelled to Vienna once a month to meet Verbelen, who would then receive his salary of 2600 Austrian Schillings and submit reports on Communist Party and Soviet intelligence activities. Following one meeting in November, Wood reported that the "source badly needs documentation to permit him to continue to reside in and work in Vienna." ^{76/}

A Source Data Form dated 27 September 1955 in the 66th CIC's records shows that Alred H. Schwab's code number was X-0313-IV and contains the same information about Schwab which the 430th CIC had possessed. ^{77/} On 6 January 1956, Region IV submitted a request for approval to employ Alfred H. Schwab as an informant, noting that no investigations had been conducted into his

^{74/} Paulson, "Informant Contact Operational Report" (12 August 1955), IRR, *ibid.*, vol. II.

^{75/} Captain Howard H. Trimble, Technical Specialist, 66th CIC Group, "SCHWAB, Alfred H." (6 January 1956), *ibid.*

^{76/} "Informant Control Sheet" (29 November 1955), IRR, H8198901.

^{77/} "Basic Source Data Form" (27 September 1955), *ibid.*

background other than those performed by the 430th CIC. ^{78/} The 66th CIC Headquarters responded on February 6 that the Central Registry files contained no additional information on Schwab and that it had no objections to his employment. It also instructed that a final vetting report be submitted by 25 May 1956, but no such report is contained in the file. ^{79/}

B. Verbelen Reveals His True Identity

After their December 1955 meeting, Special Agent Wood did not contact Verbelen until 4 April 1956, at which time Verbelen submitted thirty-seven reports. ^{80/} Early the following June, Verbelen communicated to Wood by mail that he desired a meeting to impart important information. The two met on 15 June 1956, when Verbelen explained that he had been under surveillance by the Austrian police, perhaps because of his lack of proper identification papers. In the course of the ensuing conversation, Wood learned that the man whom he had known as Schwab was in fact Robert Jan Verbelen, a Belgian citizen and former SS officer who, during the war, had been involved in "counter-acting the resistance movement," which had subsequently murdered his wife and two children. Verbelen explained that, when introduced

^{78/} Trimble, "SCHWAB, Alfred H. (6 January 1956), IRR, AE502201.

^{79/} Headquarters, 66th CIC Group, to Region IV, 66th CIC Group (9 February 1956), IRR, H8198901.

^{80/} "Informant Control Sheet" (6 April 1956), *ibid.*

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to Captain Harris in 1946 by a former SS general, he had not revealed his true identity but had given his name as Mayer because Harris indicated that he should use an alias. When he later filled out a Personal History Statement, Verbelen supplied information from his Alfred Schwab cover identity, again believing this to accord with Harris' wishes. 81/

Verbelen was eager to legalize his status. He particularly wanted to receive German citizenship, both because of his past service for Germany and because he felt himself to be a German, but he planned to continue living in Vienna and to marry the woman who had borne his child. Wood agreed to check whether the 66th CIC could help him achieve these aims. He also questioned Verbelen about what agencies other than the Austrian police might have taken an interest in him and suggested that "as a former SD official resident in a location where the Gehlen group has an interest," he was a logical target for an approach by that agency. 82/

Following this meeting, Wood checked the CIC Central Registry, which contained information that a Robert Verbelen had organized the Flemish SS Brigade and was serving in it in Brussels in 1944, as well as that a Verbelen whose first name was unknown had, at a date not given, run a Soviet espionage school

81/ See pages 20-21.. Region IV, 66th CIC Group, "Summary of Information: VERBELEN, Robert Jean" (11 July 1956), IRR, *ibid.*

82/ *Ibid.*

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in East Germany. Wood then requested a check of the address that Verbelen had listed for the relatives of Alfred Schwab and learned that no such persons had ever resided there. A subsequent check of the Berlin Document Center revealed Verbelen's true date and place of birth and confirmed that he had been an officer in both the Flemish and the Germanic SS. Wood also checked the War Criminal and Security Threat files, which contained no record on Verbelen. 83/

On June 25, Wood received a message from Verbelen to the effect that he had received an order to report to an Inspector Smola of the Foreign Control Police in Vienna regarding his right to stay in Austria. As the order was addressed to Albert Heinrich Gustave Schwab, a name which Verbelen did not use, he had it returned marked "Addressee unknown." Concerned about the precariousness of his position, Verbelen wrote that he was ready to give Wood more information about his "present situation." 84/

Wood wrote back that he would meet Verbelen on July 4. On July 2, he received another message from Verbelen indicating that the Austrian police were subjecting him to increasing pressure. Verbelen did not attend the meeting arranged by Wood on July 4. Soon afterwards, Wood received another letter in which Verbelen indicated that he had been contacted by one foreign intelligence

83/ Ibid.

84/ Ibid.

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agency and perhaps by representatives of another agency or agencies. 85/

About the same time in early July, the Central Intelligence Agency sent the 66th CIC a request for information on a Robert Jean Verbelen, born 5 April 1911 in Herent, Belgium. In its request, the CIA informed the CIC that Verbelen had been condemned to death in absentia by a Belgian court-martial in 1947 and speculated that "he may at present be active for a U.S. intelligence agency. Shortly after World War II he may have worked for US Captain (fnu) Alexander." It was this request from the CIA which first revealed to the CIC that Verbelen was a convicted war criminal. 86/

C. A Western European Intelligence Agency Recruits Verbelen

OSI has learned that an intelligence agency of a Western European country was interested in hiring Verbelen at this time. This agency first became aware of him when Verbelen, using an alias, initiated an acquaintance with one of its agents. The name by which Verbelen introduced himself, however, was identical to that of a man once employed by Soviet intelligence. Fearing that its agent had been compromised, the Western European intelligence organization assigned another agent to investigate

85/ Ibid.

86/ Ibid.

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Verbelen. This agent, a former 430th CIC informant, established a close relationship with Verbelen, who eventually revealed his true identity and that he was working for a Western intelligence service.

Once it had learned Verbelen's true identity, the Western European intelligence agency conducted a further investigation which disclosed not only Verbelen's wartime activities and postwar conviction for war crimes but also two unconfirmed rumors that Verbelen had been in contact with Soviet intelligence. Suspecting that Verbelen was a Soviet double agent employed by Austrian intelligence, the Western European intelligence agency decided to pass some of its information concerning Verbelen to the Austrian Government. Thus it was apparently from this Western European intelligence agency that the Austrian State Police learned of Verbelen's presence and his intelligence activities in Austria.

Aware that the agent to whom he had confided his true identity worked for some unspecified intelligence agency and disgruntled over his lack of contact with his CIC handling agent, Verbelen offered to go to work for this agency. He apparently convinced it of his bona fides, for in July 1956, the CIC learned that this agency wished to employ Verbelen, despite the fact that he was a convicted war criminal.

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contemplated action in regard to SUBJECT's status as a convicted war criminal," and to authorize it to forward information concerning Verbelen to both the CIA and the Western European intelligence agency interested in hiring him.

G-2 replied on August 3 that Verbelen "has never been and is not . . . now wanted by [the] U.S. Government for war crimes." Consequently, it authorized the 66th CIC to pass on the information concerning Verbelen, stressing that "this request is honored solely for purposes of protecting an active source." ^{88/} The 66th CIC Headquarters thereupon instructed Region IV to encourage Verbelen to accept employment with the Western European intelligence agency that was trying to recruit him.

There were several reasons for this decision. In the past, Verbelen had produced no information that had proved valuable to the 66th CIC, and since he was currently being investigated by the Austrian Police and his work for the CIC was known to another intelligence agency, the CIC could not continue to employ him. Simply dismissing Verbelen from CIC service could be dangerous, however, since he might then be susceptible to pressure from the Austrians or from hostile intelligence agencies to reveal his knowledge of U.S. intelligence sources and methods in Austria. Moreover, Verbelen had apparently been negotiating with the Western European intelligence agency and had expressed an

^{88/} G-2, USAREUR, to Commanding Officer, 66th CIC (3 August 1956), *ibid.*

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interest in working for an organization that could provide him with legitimate papers and legal status in Austria and with "frequent contact," meaning regular pay. Transferring Verbelen to a friendly intelligence agency which could protect him and prevent his being used against American interests seemed the best available solution to the problem of disposing of him.

In addition to these reasons, moreover, OSI has determined that the CIA played a role in the CIC's decision to transfer Verbelen to the Western European intelligence agency. The CIA's specific activities in this regard, however, cannot be revealed.

Special Agent Wood was instructed to meet with Verbelen one more time only and to obtain a quit claim, after which the CIC would sever all contact with Verbelen. ^{89/} Illness prevented Wood from contacting Verbelen until mid-October 1956, however, when Verbelen's sub-source wrote to Wood that Verbelen had left Vienna and was seeking contact with another agency because he felt abandoned by the CIC. The 66th CIC apparently inferred from this message that Verbelen was already working for the Western European intelligence agency, for no further plans were made for Wood to contact him.

Late in November 1956, however, Wood received a message from Verbelen urgently requesting a meeting in Vienna. Region IV proposed to 66th CIC Headquarters that Wood and another agent go to Vienna and debrief first the sub-source and then Verbelen

^{89/} CO, 66th CIC, to CO, Region IV (8 August 1956), *ibid.*

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himself about his activities since June. The agents would pay Verbelen a severance fee of 6000 Austrian Schillings and inform him that the CIC was severing all contact with him but that he would soon hear from another intelligence agency willing to employ him. Region IV warned that ignoring Verbelen altogether could force him into the hands of the Austrian security police, thereby creating "considerable operational difficulty" for the CIC, since Verbelen had knowledge of its agents and activities in Austria. 90/

66th CIC Headquarters agreed only that Wood should meet briefly with Verbelen to pay him no more than 5200 Austrian Schillings and to inform him that all contact with CIC was thenceforth severed. Verbelen was not to be questioned about his activities since June, because they probably involved his work for the Western European intelligence agency, to which he would report such a debriefing. 91/

On 13 December 1956, Wood finally met with Verbelen, who submitted approximately 150 pages of reports. Verbelen admitted that he had been in continual contact with the Western European intelligence agency since June but insisted that he had refused to work for that organization because he still considered himself to be employed by CIC. He was therefore quite dissatisfied with the amount of his severance payment and, after four hours of

90/ CO, Region IV, to CO, 66th CIC (30 November 1956), *ibid.*

91/ CO, 66th CIC, to CO, Region IV (4 December 1956), *ibid.*

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discussion, only agreed to sign a quit claim on the understanding that Wood would request the payment of at least an additional 6000 Schillings in back pay to cover Verbelen's debts. 92/ The 66th CIC Headquarters rejected Verbelen's claim that he was not already employed by the Western European intelligence agency and refused to pay him any additional sum. 93/

Region IV submitted a final memorandum on Verbelen to 66th CIC Headquarters on 14 March 1957. The memorandum explains that Verbelen was "dismissed without prejudice" from the CIC's employment in order that he might work for the Western European intelligence agency and classifies him as "considered suitable for intelligence re-employment." 94/

When interviewed by OSI, William Wood immediately recalled Verbelen, whose identity he maintained was unknown to him until mid-1956. When Wood took over some of the 430th CIC's informants in 1955, he did not request access to the informants' files. He did speak to the 430th CIC's operations officer and to Special Agent Edward Paulson about Verbelen, but these discussions only briefly addressed Verbelen's background and focused primarily on his character, his methods, and how best to utilize him. Wood tried to elicit background information from Verbelen himself, but his answers were never satisfactory until his investigation by

92/ CO, Region IV, to CO, 66th CIC (14 December 1956), *ibid.*

93/ CO, 66th CIC, to CO, Region IV (18 December 1956), *ibid.*

94/ Region IV to CO, 66th CIC (14 March 1957), *ibid.*

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the Austrian Police caused him to reveal his true identity. Once the CIC confirmed Verbelen's true name and background, it decided to terminate his employment. Wood insisted that the CIC would never have rehired Verbelen because he had lied to it for ten years about his identity and background. Wood explained that the terms "dismissed without prejudice" and "suitable for intelligence re-employment" were used with regard to Verbelen's termination because Verbelen wished to work for the Western European intelligence agency and, as he had provided reliable and useful information to the CIC over a long period of time, there was no objection to his working for a friendly intelligence service. 95/

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95/ Interview with William Wood (30 May 1984).

VIII. Verbelen's Acquisition of Austrian Citizenship

Despite the Western European intelligence agency's interest in hiring Verbelen, there is no indication in United States Government files that he ever worked for that agency. Verbelen himself stated to OSI that during the late 1950s he worked for the Austrian State Police, and Austrian press reports as well as statements made by Austrian officials at the time of Verbelen's arrest confirm this. Verbelen told OSI officials that, on the recommendation of his Austrian employers, he successfully applied to the Alien Control authorities in Vienna for legitimate identification papers in his true name. On 2 June 1959, Verbelen received Austrian citizenship after his naturalization application had been officially recommended by the Austrian State Police. 96/

In his book Nelkenstrauss ruft Praterstern, Harald Irnberger states that, according to "members of the [Austrian] State Police," Austria's Interior Ministry granted citizenship to Verbelen as a result of "massive intervention" on the part of the United States. 97/ Irnberger told OSI representatives in 1985 that his source for this statement was a former official, now deceased, of the Austrian Interior Ministry who had questioned

96/ "Verbelen's Protectors -- Die Staatspolizei: Befürwortung Staatsbürgerschaftakt," Neues Oesterreich (Vienna), 22 December 1962; "Montag: Der Monsterprozess um Robert Jan Verbelen," Kurier (Vienna), 27 November 1965.

97/ Irnberger, Nelkenstrauss ruft Praterstern, 79.

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the reasons for granting Verbelen citizenship. As the Austrian Interior Minister had approved Verbelen's application, however, it was processed without any investigation of his background. At first, Irnberger told OSI that his source stated he "thought" that the Interior Minister granted Verbelen's naturalization at the request of the United States, but later he maintained his source claimed to "know for a fact" that the United States intervened on Verbelen's behalf. Irnberger's source, who did not belong to the political party which dominated the Interior Ministry at that time, was later transferred to the provinces and chose to retire early. 98/

OSI has not found any evidence in CIA, Defense Department, or State Department documents that any U.S. Government agency ever contacted Verbelen following his dismissal by CIC or played any role in his obtaining Austrian citizenship. Verbelen stated to OSI officials that, except for meeting five or six times with a CIC agent in 1956, he did not work for any United States agency following the withdrawal of American troops from Austria and that he was unaware of any effort by the United States to intervene with Austrian authorities on his behalf. Verbelen was only one of thousands of informants used by the 430th CIC Detachment in Austria. According to both CIC documents and his handling agents, Verbelen's information, while generally deemed reliable was not judged to be extraordinarily valuable. Moreover, the C

98/ Interview with Harald Irnberger (Vienna, 25 June 1985).

never attempted to legalize Verbelen's status in Austria while it employed him, even when it was unaware that he was a convicted war criminal. It is therefore difficult to conclude that U.S. Government officials would have considered it to be in the United States' interest to procure Austrian citizenship for Verbelen three years after the CIC had dismissed him. On the other hand, Verbelen did work for Austrian intelligence in the late 1950s. At the time of Verbelen's arrest in 1962, a high-ranking Viennese police official reportedly stated that Verbelen had been one of the best informants employed by the Austrian State Police, which would try to defend him and prevent his extradition to Belgium. Thus it appears likely that the Austrian Government had sufficient reason to naturalize Verbelen without any interference by the United States.

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IX. Verbelen's Arrest and Trial in Austria

On 11 April 1962, representatives of the International Union of Ex-Resistants and Deportees (IURD) and the Austrian Resistance Movement informed the Public Prosecutor in Vienna of the presence of Verbelen in that city and presented evidence concerning his activities during the war and his conviction for war crimes in Belgium. The IURD had been investigating a Jean Marais, managing director of a neo-Nazi news agency based in Austria, when it found that Marais was in fact Verbelen. The IURD claimed that Verbelen had been writing articles for neo-Nazi publications for some years and that he maintained contact with Nazi underground movements in several countries. ^{99/}

Verbelen was arrested on 12 April 1962, and soon afterward the Belgian Government officially requested his extradition. The Viennese provincial government revoked Verbelen's Austrian citizenship. Verbelen successfully appealed this decision, however, when he was able to show that the Austrian State Police had recommended and requested expedition of his application for citizenship at a time when it must have known about his background, since it had been employing him for several years. In the course of his appeal, Verbelen apparently revealed that he had worked for a United States intelligence agency prior to his

^{99/} "Le Criminel de Guerre Verbelen a ete arrete a Vienne," Le Soir (Brussels), 13 April 1962; Michael Bar-Zohar, The Avengers (New York, 1967), 187-190.

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employment by the Austrian police. His attorney argued that it was "out of the question that the Americans and the Austrian State Police knew nothing about the past of the Belgian whom they had taken into their service." 100/ As a citizen of Austria, Verbelen was protected by law from extradition, and so the Public Prosecutor instituted proceedings against him in the Austrian courts. 101/

In his war crimes trial in Vienna, which began on 29 November 1965, Verbelen was charged on five counts of murder and incitement to murder. During his testimony, he maintained that his wartime activities had only involved protecting pro-German Belgians from the murderous attacks of the armed resistance. He explained that he had always acted under orders and that, as a mere captain, he was never empowered to give orders to kill. In an effort to prove his exemplary behavior during the twenty years following the war, he described his work for American and Austrian intelligence in the struggle to save Austria from Communism. He claimed that when the occupation forces withdrew from Austria in 1955, he rejected the Americans' offer to take him with them and went to work for the Austrian State Police instead. He ascribed his arrest in 1962 to his refusal to be

100/ "Verbelens Protektor - Die Staatspolizei," Neues Oesterreich, 22 December 1962.

101/ Indictment of Robert Jan Verbelen by the State Attorney's Office of Vienna (1 July 1965).

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blackmailed by a Communist intelligence agency that threatened to reveal his past in Belgium if he did not enter its service. 102/

Although the Austrian jury found Verbelen guilty of inciting the murder of two people, it ruled that he had only been carrying out superior orders and thus acquitted him of committing war crimes. 103/ This acquittal was later overturned by the Austrian Supreme Court, but the case has never been retried.

The negative reaction in Belgium to Verbelen's acquittal prompted the U.S. Defense Attache in Brussels to request information regarding Verbelen from the U.S. Army's European Headquarters. In its reply, the Army related the information which Verbelen had supplied to the 66th CIC in 1956 regarding his identity and past activities. The reply further noted that "records fail to indicate that USI [United States Intelligence] was aware of Verbelen's previous war record at the time of his CIC employment." The Army instructed that "the information pertaining to Verbelen's past association with USI is not repeated, not for release to public or Belgian Government because of potential embarrassment to the United States." 104/

102/ "Verbelen-Prozess: Ein wortreiches 'Nichtschuldig,'" Kurier (Vienna), 30 November 1965.

103/ "Unerwarteter Freispruch Verbelens," Volksblatt.

104/ Defense Chief of Staff for Intelligence, USAREUR, to Defense Attache's Office, Brussels (15 February 1966), IRR, AE502201.

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X. Conclusions

A. CIC's Relations with Verbelen

OSI has determined that Verbelen was employed by the 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment's Vienna Sub-Detachment from approximately 1946 to 1955 and by the 66th Counter Intelligence Corps Group from 1955 until the end of 1956. Contrary to Verbelen's statements both at his trial in Vienna and to the press, OSI has found no evidence that any Counter Intelligence Corps officials learned Verbelen's true identity before 15 June 1956. As noted earlier, however, records of the 430th CIC Detachment for the period 1945 to 1947 are no longer in existence. It should be pointed out that Verbelen himself contradicted his public statements when he told OSI officials that he never revealed his identity to any CIC official, even in 1956. CIC documents show, moreover, that when Verbelen did finally disclose his identity, he admitted that he had never previously revealed it to a CIC agent, although it would have been to his advantage to claim the contrary, since the belief that Verbelen had deceived it for ten years weighed heavily in the CIC's decision to sever all contact with him.

Also contrary to Verbelen's statements to the press, OSI found no evidence that any official of the CIC or any other U. S. Government agency ever offered to help Verbelen emigrate to the United States, either before or after his true identity became known. All Verbelen's CIC handling agents whom OSI interviewed denied that they ever made such an offer to Verbelen, and CIC

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documents state that no specific commitments were made to him other than that "U.S. Intelligence would try to help him in the most applicable manner in case of an extreme emergency in Austria." Moreover, Verbelen himself admitted to OSI that no U.S. official ever officially invited him to emigrate to the United States and that he was only unofficially asked whether he would like to work for U.S. intelligence, specifically the CIA, after U.S. troops withdrew from Austria.

When it did finally learn that Verbelen had been convicted in Belgium on war crimes charges, the CIC informed G-2 and inquired whether any action would be taken against him. The United States was under no technical legal obligation to notify Belgian authorities of his whereabouts, since Belgium, presumably unaware of Verbelen's postwar residence, had never requested his extradition. (Moreover, for unknown reasons, the Belgium Government never placed Verbelen's name on any standard war crimes wanted list.) Upon determining that Verbelen was not wanted by the United States, G-2 took no further interest in his war crimes conviction. For the CIC, the fact that Verbelen was a convicted war criminal evidently played a lesser role in its decision to dismiss him than the considerations that: (1) his CIC employment was known to at least one foreign intelligence agency; (2) his intelligence-gathering capabilities were no longer of value to the CIC; and (3) he had lied to the CIC for ten years about his identity. The CIC nevertheless dismissed Verbelen "without prejudice" and termed him "suitable for

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intelligence re-employment" because it desired him to work for the Western European intelligence agency.

The CIC's methods of operation made it possible for Verbelen to work for it for ten years without revealing his true identity. In particular, the CIC's only contact with Verbelen was through his handling agents, but those agents only addressed him as "Herbert" or by some other cover name and generally did not have access to the CIC's files on its informants. The most important factor facilitating Verbelen's concealment of his identity, however, was that the CIC had little interest in and made few efforts to check his background. There is no evidence that the CIC made any substantive inquiries regarding Verbelen's background until 1950. Even when Verbelen told the CIC that his name was not Peter Mayer, as he had formerly claimed, but Herbert Schwab, then Albert Schwab, and finally Alfred Heinrich Gustave Schwab, the CIC made no serious attempt to check his background and identity. For ten years, until Verbelen revealed his true identity, the CIC apparently had no basis for its information on him other than his own claims.

B. Employment of Nazis and Nazi Collaborators by the 430th CIC Detachment

It should be noted that, even if the CIC had learned Verbelen's real name in 1946, it probably would not have discovered that he was wanted for war crimes, for his name was not cited on any of the standard wanted lists used by United States forces at that time. The CIC would have been able to

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determine, however, that Verbelen had been an organizer and member of the Flemish SS and had worked for the SD, activities that made him subject to automatic arrest. Ironically, revelation of Verbelen's involvement in the SS and SD probably would not have prevented his employment as a CIC informant in 1946. In fact, Verbelen established contact with the CIC through a group of informants consisting of former members of the Nazi Party, the SS, and German intelligence, and his first handling agent believed that Verbelen, whom he knew as Herbert, was an SS officer trying to avoid arrest.

As was true of other intelligence agencies -- not only of the United States but of all the Allied nations -- the CIC employed many informants who had once served actively in the Nazi Party or SS or had collaborated with Germany during the war. In the course of its investigation of Verbelen's relationship with the United States Government, OSI has found the following examples of such persons who were used as informants by the 430th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment in Austria: 105/

A. This informant's activities in the illegal SS and Nazi Party in Austria earned him a sentence of two years at hard labor

105/ The following information is based on documents from the Departments of State and Justice, the U.S. Army's Investigative Records Repository, and the Berlin Document Center and on interviews with former CIC agents. The names of the individuals discussed and the exact sources of the information contained in this section of this report are not given in order to fulfill the United States' obligation to protect the identity of intelligence operatives.

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for high treason. Following the Anschluss, he served not only as a Gestapo official in several cities, but also as an officer in an Einsatzkommando (a mobile detachment of the German Security Police and SD responsible for apprehending and executing Jews, Communists, and other "undesirable elements" in Eastern Europe). After working for the 430th CIC as a coded informant, he joined the Western European intelligence agency which tried to recruit Verbelen in 1956 and was the agent who first learned Verbelen's true identity.

B. A leading member of a pre-war fascist movement in a Balkan nation, this informant became a Gestapo agent during the war and served as deputy commander of a German-sponsored military organization whose tactics commonly included burning villages and murdering unarmed civilians. After he was arrested by United States forces in Austria, his native country requested his extradition on war crimes charges, but he was released a short time later. Through Hermann Milleder and the informant "Nick," he contacted CIC agent Frank Harris in Vienna and obtained an identity document under an assumed name. According to CIC agent Nicholas Alexander, Austrian authorities in the Soviet occupation zone issued a warrant for this informant's arrest. Believing the warrant to be a Soviet pretext for seizing a CIC operative, Alexander gave this informant a certificate stating that he was under CIC city arrest and could not be turned over to any other agency. This informant apparently continued to work for another CIC Sub-Detachment even after the United States Extradition Board

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ordered his arrest. He later moved to Germany, where he probably also worked for U.S. intelligence.

C. Even admirers of Dragoljub Mihailovic, leader of the anti-Tito Chetnik forces in Yugoslavia during the war, agreed that this informant, a Chetnik general, committed atrocious crimes which merited his extradition to Yugoslavia. The General Headquarters of the joint British and American Central Mediterranean Forces included his name on a list of Yugoslav quislings "who will be handed over to the Yugoslav authorities immediately they are arrested."

D. This informant served as Chief of the Security Service in a Nazi puppet state. After his retirement, he joined the SS and headed the secretariat of an armaments plant which employed slave labor. A CIC report evaluating him as a "valuable informant" and "staunch anti-Communist" noted that his native country's extradition request charged him with ordering the destruction of several villages as well as the massacre of their inhabitants and with responsibility for the execution of 30 workmen who were hanged or shot for sabotage. After Austria requested custody of this informant from the 430th CIC in 1948 in order to extradite him, the CIC ordered him to leave the area of the Sub-Detachment employing him and declared that the United States would not protect him. By 1949, however, he was working for the Gehlen Organization, which at that time was still under United States control.

E. One Eastern European nation sentenced Informant D to death in absentia and another sought his extradition on charges

that he tortured and murdered a number of people, including two priests, while serving as commander of a military intelligence unit and as the chief of a ghetto. He was arrested by U.S. forces in Austria in 1947 but later released after the United States refused to supply information needed to fulfill the extradition request. After working for the Gehlen Organization for several years, he became a coded informant of the 430th CIC Detachment, which tried to help him emigrate to the United States. Although the Displaced Persons Commission rejected his visa application at that time, he did later gain entry to the United States, where he has since died. His CIC file ends with the notation that "Informant is dropped without prejudice" and "is considered suitable for intelligence re-employment by an Allied agency."

F. This informant was imprisoned in Romania during the war for his role in the bloody uprising of the fascist Iron Guard in 1941. After fleeing to Austria in 1946, he ran an informant net for George Neagoy in Vienna and also worked for a former SS and SD Hauptsturmfuehrer (Captain) employed by U.S. intelligence in Germany.

G. This informant joined first the Sturmabteilung (SA) -- Nazi Stormtroopers -- and then the SS after Austria outlawed the Nazi Party and its organizations in June 1933. As reward for his services to Nazi Party intelligence in Austria prior to the Anschluss (Germany's annexation of Austria) in 1938, he received employment with the SD, eventually becoming director of a

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department in the SD Main Sector in Vienna and rising to the rank of Hauptsturmfuehrer (SS Captain).

H. This informant belonged to the Hitler Youth in Austria from 1932 to 1935, when he joined the illegal SS. After the Anschluss, he became an officer in the SD.

I. Although he joined the Nazi Party in Austria in 1933 and the illegal SS in 1937, this 430th CIC informant also succeeded in obtaining employment as an investigator for the International Refugee Organization after the war.

J. Originally an ardent Communist who was arrested many times for both political and criminal activities, this informant became an active propagandist for the then-illegal Nazi Party in the mid-1930s and joined the illegal SA as well. When Germany annexed Austria in 1938, he arranged the Nazi takeover of various Jewish and Catholic newspapers. His effectiveness as a propagandist soon won him the position of press chief in a Nazi Party Province. After the war, he became, along with fellow Nazi propagandist Hermann Milleder, one of Nicholas Alexander's top informants.

K. Another co-worker of Hermann Milleder and a close confidant of Informant J, this former SS-Obersturmbannführer (SS Lieutenant Colonel), had served during the war as a high-level official of the SD, responsible for carrying out its policies in several countries. The 430th CIC continued to employ Informants J and K despite rumors that they were in the business of manufacturing intelligence information.

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L. Despite his employment as an Austrian police official, Informant L joined the Nazi Party in 1933 and the SS in 1935. Before the Anschluss, he worked for the Nazi intelligence service in Austria and proved particularly useful in protecting fellow Nazis from arrest by warning them of impending searches and by suppressing incriminating evidence. During the war, he served as a high-level official of the German Secret Field Police.

M. Also an Austrian police official, Informant M began secretly working for the Nazi Party in 1932, for which he was arrested and imprisoned the following year. He escaped to Germany but returned to Austria to direct Nazi underground activity and in 1934 was arrested for complicity in the murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss. Managing to escape again, he joined the Gestapo in Germany. During the war, he served in the SS, rising to the rank of Sturmbannfuehrer (SS Major), and in the German Secret Field Police, for which he organized intelligence nets and trained agents and saboteurs. The United States arrested him after the war but turned him over to the British, who imprisoned him until 1947 and then transferred him to Austrian custody.

The CIC's experience with Informant M exemplifies the danger entailed in trusting a former Nazi and SS officer to be loyal to the United States out of hatred for the Soviets. Early in 1949 after being released from Austrian prison, Informant M met an old acquaintance, a Greek who had worked for the Abwehr in Czechoslovakia prior to becoming one of its agents in Greece, which sentenced him to death in absentia after the war.

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Informant M claimed that the Soviets were recruiting him as an intelligence agent and asked the Greek to secure him employment with the United States. The Greek had recently been dismissed by the Gehlen Organization for drunkenness and unreliability; he was, however, supplying information to an Austrian who was a 430th CIC informant. The Austrian had obtained employment with the CIC by selling to a U.S. officer a largely fabricated report and by claiming to have served in the Abwehr and as an SS Hauptsturmfuehrer (Captain) (in fact, he had only been a private in the German Army). The Austrian introduced Informant M to the 430th CIC as an old comrade, although they had never previously met.

Seeing an excellent opportunity to penetrate Soviet intelligence, the CIC hired Informant M and over the next few months paid him hundreds of dollars to develop a double-agent operation, for which he employed both the Austrian and the Greek. Late in 1949, however, the CIC discovered that Informant M was performing the same work for British intelligence. Subsequent investigation disclosed that Informant M was also in French employ but probably owed his primary loyalty to the Soviets, as did the Austrian and the Greek. The most damaging information supplied to the Soviets through Informant M had been provided by a Czech who, after being sentenced to ten years' hard labor for his treasonous activities in the Abwehr, had escaped from Czechoslovakia and secured employment with the Gehlen Organization through his former associate, the Greek. (The leader of the Gehlen net for which the Greek and the Czech worked

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had served as chief of police in his nation's capital under an especially brutal fascist regime.) After investigating Informant M's activities for the Soviets, his CIC handling agent concluded that "Subject is the particularly poisonous type of former GIS [German Intelligence Service] personality in that his kind are sought after in the postwar vacuum that has left central Europe the focal point of world espionage, and it is regretted that his ilk must, to a large extent, be relied upon by Allied intelligence agencies for the bulk of their information."

As these examples demonstrate, the CIC was not averse to using individuals with tainted pasts. In pursuing its mission of ensuring the security of the United States, the CIC, like most intelligence organizations, commonly followed the policy that the end justifies the means. Thus the CIC was often willing to overlook a person's past if it was judged that he could provide reliable and valuable information. It must be doubted, however, whether the CIC could correctly evaluate an informant's value and trustworthiness if it did not know his past activities or even, as in the case of Verbelen, his true identity. For example, if the CIC had learned Verbelen's identity and background in 1946, it might have questioned whether a Flemish fascist and traitor whose only expertise lay in conducting "counter-terror" against the Belgian resistance could make any useful contribution to the security of the United States.

Some former CIC agents maintained to OSI that it was advantageous to use informants with Nazi pasts, since their

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reliance upon the United States for protection from arrest insured their reliability. In fact, however, the relationship worked both ways. As the example of Klaus Barbie illustrates, an informant could gain knowledge of CIC agents and operations which could prove dangerous to the CIC if it did not protect him. Indeed, it was fear of what Verbelen could reveal about its sources and methods that caused the CIC to classify his dismissal as being "without prejudice" and to designate him as "suitable for intelligence re-employment."

The CIC's logic must also be questioned in its apparent assumption that a fascist would be more loyal to a democratic government than to a Communist one. A tainted past could make an informant an easy target for blackmail, regardless of his current political sympathies. In any case, as the CIC was aware, many former Nazis and Abwehr agents joined the intelligence agencies of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after the war. And yet, there were persons who succeeded in gaining employment as informants for the CIC by falsely claiming that they had served in the Abwehr or SS. Although it can be argued that the CIC's lack of experience in gathering intelligence on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union necessitated its reliance on persons who did possess that experience, no matter how repugnant their pasts, it is difficult to understand why the CIC did not make a greater effort to check those persons' backgrounds, particularly as it had ready access to Nazi Party, SS, and German military files.

The CIC's employment of Verbelen enabled him to support himself, to acquire false identification documents so that his

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presence in Vienna remained undetected, and to develop the experience in intelligence work that made it possible for him to obtain employment with the Austrian State Police and, ultimately, Austrian citizenship. Verbelen thus manipulated the CIC into protecting him from being brought to justice for his crimes. He was able to accomplish this, moreover, as a direct result of the CIC's reliance upon former Nazis and Nazi collaborators in its immediate postwar European operations.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal M. Sher

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