SECRETS OF GERMAN ESPIONAGE

BERNARD NEWMAN

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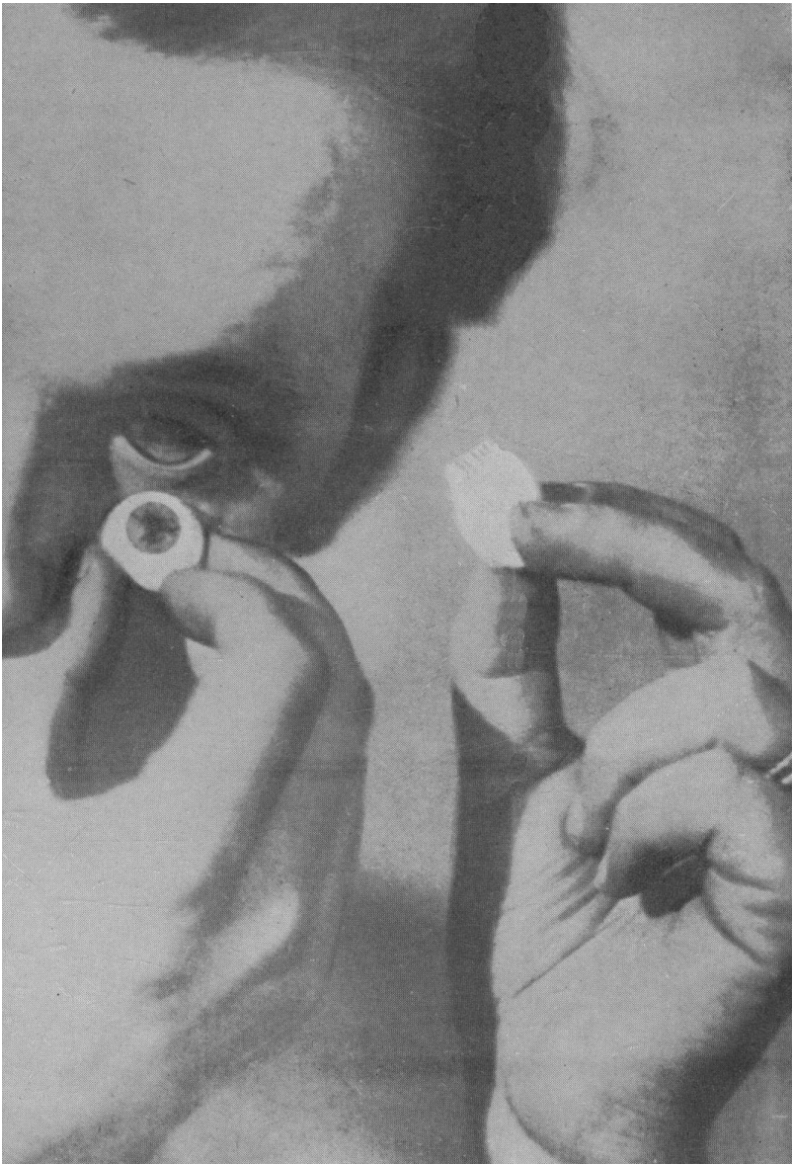

Eye Spy: German spy who carried his messages inside his glass eye

SECRETS OF GERMAN ESPIONAGE

By BERNARD NEWMAN

"When it comes to spies, master-spies, and the endless excitement of intrigue, Mr. Bernard Newman is quite supreme!"
—Evening News

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The pictures of the Maginot Line are reproduced by permission of the March of Time. Most of the other photographs are from German sources.

INTRODUCTION

This book does not pretend to reveal all there is to know about the German Secret Service. It does not even detail all I know about the subject. These are days when discretion goes far beyond legal requirements; I would add a special request to American readers, asking them to be good enough to recall, as they read, that the book is written by a British author who is anxious for the triumph of the democratic cause.

By exploiting old or new devices, I might have evaded the modern degree of censorship prevailing in Britain in war-time. I have tried to act as my own censor, rejecting stories or arguments which even indirectly may be of some slight help to the enemy. For, as we shall see, espionage is strangely conservative, and some casual phrase may be hailed with delight by some harassed agent. One successful operative, on one occasion, sought me out, and gave me a magnificent dinner—because he had devised an ingenious code from a suggestion in one of my books of spy fiction.

I have seen in my own experience too many cases of inadvertent aid to the enemy—the very freedom of spirit in the democracies tends to discount the necessity of war-time restraints. It might have been tempting to have aimed for notoriety by making "sensational revelations," but I hope I have avoided that charge. The American journalist who evaded the British censor and got home to his newspaper the story of the damaging of the cruiser *Belfast* executed a fine journalistic coup—but he rendered a grave disservice to the democratic cause: until the news was announced in New York, the Germans did not even know that the *Belfast* had been hit, and it was obviously to the Allied advantage that they should never know.

This book is no apologia for espionage, but rather a non-sensational account of some aspects of the activities of German spies. They are widespread enough in all conscience (even before the war, they cost the Nazis over eighteen million pounds a year), but I have confined my outline almost entirely to Europe, which is the part of the world I know best, and where I have for many years been interested in German espionage activity. The work of Nazi spies in the United States of America has already been adequately described, but if only by the very familiarity of the subject, in Europe it has been treated with the proverbial contempt. In Britain to-day there are posters on the hoardings: "Don't help the enemy! Careless talk may give away vital secrets."

The warning is badly needed. The British have been accustomed for generations to speaking their minds freely: there is no Gestapo or Ogpu, and authority can be freely criticized, and it generally is! The freedom of discussion and comment is an essential feature of democracy, but in war-time a voluntary discipline is necessary. In spite of all the sensational stories about German spies—or maybe because they are so sensational!—the British public amiably discounts the possibility of Nazi agents at its elbow. Misled by Hollywood, it visualizes a spy as a bearded foreigner or a glamorous blonde, instead of the colourless man sitting in the corner of the railway carriage, listening to the conversation of sailors going on leave. If I can persuade my readers that the official warning should be taken seriously, I shall be well content.

BERNARD NEWMAN.

Harrow
January, 1940

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF ESPIONAGE

I

ESPIONAGE is a dirty business. Colonel Nicolai, head of the German Intelligence Service during the war of 1914-18, used to declare, "spying is a gentleman's job." He was correct in so far as it generally demands extreme patriotic devotion from the men and women who undertake it. But not even the sacred cause of patriotism can disguise the fact that espionage is a profession without law or scruples. A spy with scruples could scarcely expect to produce startling results.

Maybe Colonel Nicolai's dictum was accurate a generation ago, when spying was at least a straightforward business. Then Germany sent agents into France seeking information about French defences: at the same time, of course, France sent equivalent agents into Germany. To-day activity has developed far beyond these limits. A spy is not a mere seeker of information: he is a saboteur and—perhaps more dangerous—an *agent provocateur* whose business it is to stir up strife between peoples. Quite recently I came upon the track of a German agent operating in Corsica. His task was not to gain information about the defences of Corsica—he was endeavouring to rouse the Italians in Corsica against the French—to cause bad blood between France and Italy, a feeling which might ultimately react to the benefit of Germany by plunging these two neighbours into war.

I can recall dozens of espionage episodes within my own knowledge which could scarcely be classed as pretty. Yet the dirtiest of them all dates from the first days of the present war. Germany, as we shall see, has been well served by her minority in Poland—men and women who could, of course, go freely throughout the whole of the land. In the first week of the war a clerk came into a post office near the Ministry of War at Warsaw and handed in an enormous sheaf of telegrams. They were all written on the correct form, and the telegraph clerk, after a startled glance, gave them priority over the rest. A few hours later yet another bundle of telegrams was handed in; then another, till some thousands had been dispatched. Except for the name and address the telegrams were almost identical—they carried a message which is all too familiar in the stricken Europe of to-day, to the effect that a son or a husband had been killed in action.

Not until several thousands of these telegrams had been dispatched was it discovered that the clerk who delivered them was not sent from the Ministry of War, but was a German agent. The sons and husbands named had not been killed at all—this was a German device to attempt to lower the morale of the Polish population. Imagine the anguish in thousands of hearts as those telegrams were received! I wonder, would Colonel Nicolai class such work as a gentleman's job?

II

I doubt if there is any subject more delicate of discussion than espionage. In Britain, quite correctly, the Official Secrets Act looms on the horizon, forbidding revelations which would really deserve the overworked adjective "sensational." Even thirty-year-old secrets may not always be revealed—because the method employed may be capable of use again. Naturally, I propose to observe not merely the letter but the spirit of regulations governing the discussion of espionage.

Such reserve, I must admit, spoils some of the best stories I could tell. In the war of 1914-18, for example, it will be recalled that the German General, Lettow-Vorbeck made a gallant fight in German East Africa. In 1916 he was short of many military supplies, and the Germans decided to send a Zeppelin with some of the things needed—scientific instruments and other non-bulky goods. The first attempt was a failure, as the Zeppelin ran into bad weather early on its journey. On the second occasion it crossed the European danger zone, was over the Mediterranean and well on its way to German East Africa. Suddenly it received wireless orders to return. The Captain, within a few hundred miles of his destination, queried the orders, which were promptly repeated. Of course, he turned back—for all he knew General Lettow-Vorbeck had now been forced to surrender. But when he arrived at his base at Friedrichshafen a pretty comedy was played.

"Well, did you deliver the goods?" asked the Base Commandant.

"No, you recalled me."

"What are you talking about? You weren't recalled!"

"I was!"

So the debate went on, for a few moments reminiscent of stage cross talk. But the Base Commandant and the Zeppelin officer were both correct. The Zeppelin *had* been recalled—but the orders were not sent out by the Germans!

Here, the reader will perceive, is the outline of a story not lacking in potential thrills and interest: but if I could reveal *how* that Zeppelin was recalled, I could guarantee that the reader would grip the sides of his chair in his excitement.

I make no grumble whatsoever at the legal restrictions surrounding the subject of espionage. It is too easy by a chance phrase to give useful information to an enemy or a potential enemy. No one can calculate the possible effect of the most innocent revelation, however trifling. Many of my readers will recall that thirty years ago Lord Baden-Powell wrote a little book called *My Adventures as a Spy*—for in his younger days the Chief Scout did valuable work as a British Intelligence Officer. These, indeed, were the days when spying might have been a gentleman's job. In this book he revealed some of the ingenious devices he had adopted to conceal information he had collected, and the dodges he employed to escape arrest. On one occasion, he related, he was arrested on suspicion by an unimaginative village policeman in a continental country. The policeman did not know how to deal with the case, but informed Baden-Powell that he would be held until his officer arrived.

"You don't mind if I smoke, while I'm waiting?" asked the British officer.

"No, of course not," said the policeman.

So Baden-Powell produced his pouch and cigarette paper and rolled himself a cigarette; then another. When he had finished smoking them, he sat back in great content, not caring whether all the officers in Europe came to interrogate him. He *had* been a spy; he *had* collected information—and he had made his notes on two pieces of cigarette paper! Thus, under the very nose of the policeman who arrested him, he had smoked away the only possible evidence against him!

Now this little book, written by the Chief Scout, was naturally translated into most of the languages of Europe. Its implications ought to have been obvious. They meant that if a man were arrested on suspicion of being a spy and asked permission to smoke, the most unimaginative policeman would immediately seize the cigarette he produced. More than one spy has gone to his death because he disregarded the second commandment of the spy law. The first commandment reads: "Thou shalt not be found out"; the second, "Thou shalt not use a method which has been found out." As we shall see, German conservatism has rendered more than one counter-espionage officer's task easier than it ought to have been.

III

In a perfect world Secret Service will be unnecessary. Unfortunately, our own world is far from perfect, and espionage is essential—as it always has been, from the days when Moses sent forward his spies into Canaan, to the time when Wellington wanted to know what was happening on the other side of the hill. The early years of the present century saw a whirl of activity, which itself was naturally dwarfed by the espionage of 1914-18. In war-time Intelligence is vital; without it, an army is like a body without a brain. Few people realize the vast load of work and responsibility carried by the Military and Naval Intelligence Officers, censors and spies. It is estimated that during the World War over half a million people were directly engaged on Intelligence work in the belligerent countries, and of these more than fifty thousand were active spies.

In post-war years the spies of Europe dwindled to a mere ten thousand, distributed unevenly over the different countries. In war-time tens of thousands of amateur spies are engaged. Consider the occupied provinces of Belgium and France during the war, where every patriotic inhabitant yearned to serve his country. At that time the districts were literally littered with spies—amateur, yet determined and often resourceful. The successful spy of peace-time is usually a professional—by choice or compulsion.

First come the military, naval and air attachés at all principal embassies and legations. These might be called official spies—they would not like that designation, but it is substantially accurate. I ought to emphasize at once that it is no part of their duty to engage in the shady side of espionage. Their official work is perfectly straightforward, a gentleman's job, indeed.

They are sent to all countries, potential allies and enemies alike, to keep a sharp look-out on the appropriate armed forces. It is their duty to study all developments of their respective arms. A vast amount of information is presented to them—it is not appreciated by the average man what a considerable exchange of ideas takes place between the staffs of different countries. This suggestion, I know, conflicts with prevailing ideas—in fact, it robs many books of fiction of the very basis of their plot. In such books the German spy will go to great trouble and expense—to say nothing of thrilling danger—to secure a new map which has just been published by the British War Office. His trouble is quite unnecessary: when the map is published, British officials make a present of a copy to the German military attaché. Similarly, the Germans present the British military attaché in Berlin with military productions. This all makes for simplicity. If it were not done,

it would be necessary for the Germans to steal the British map and the British to steal the German.

An acute observer can gather a good deal of real information from what he is told and what he sees. Both kinds require interpretation as well as reception. The military attaché will be taken on manœuvres and a staff officer will be attached to him to explain what is happening. Yet all the while something vastly different may be happening only a few miles away. Faced with such a situation, visiting officers have been known to resort to unofficial methods. There was one German military attaché who became well known in half the countries in Europe. He was not content with summoning extra assistance from Germany; he even engaged spies himself to supplement his own observation.

He was safe enough until he disobeyed the first commandment of the spy; then there was trouble.

"We can't have this," said the offended Government to Germany. "Here is your military attaché, living among us on terms of diplomatic immunity, and all the time he is nothing more than the director of a gang of spies!"

"Dear, dear!" said the German Chancellor of the day. "What a foolish man! What a wicked thing to do! I assure you that he did it entirely without our knowledge. It was, of course, absolutely outside his province—quite unnecessary, too, since our countries are on such friendly terms. I can only imagine that excess of zeal caused him to lose his discretion. However, we will, of course, withdraw him at once—he shall be heavily punished for his fault."

He was immediately withdrawn. Instead of being punished, however, he was promoted and sent somewhere else, for actually he had done remarkably good work.

Consuls, too, must be included in the category of the official spy. Most of their information is economic—but this is often just as important as any item of military or naval news. As in the case of the attaché, the consul's calibre is shown not by the official information he collects, but by the use he makes of it.

The Germans have never hesitated to employ their consuls more openly. The German consul at Madrid during the World War co-operated with the naval attaché in directing a vast espionage organization, mainly concerned with the provisioning of U-boats seeking shelter on Spanish shores, while the German Consulate at Berne was the headquarters of one of the widest systems of espionage that Europe had yet known. Much of the information gathered in France found its way to this extraordinary building on the

outskirts of the city. It was fitted up like the dream of an imaginative novelist who is also a conjurer. The protective devices were amazing. Burglar alarms started at the garden gate, and if an intruder wandered from a fixed path he was liable to fall into prepared traps which were painful, if not indeed fatal. An infra-red ray apparatus was alleged to cover the entrance to all doors. Inside, the devices were multiplied. If you trod on certain planks on the floor, then a number of bells would ring in various parts of the house, warning the staff that there was an intruder in the study. If you sat down without warning in some of the armchairs, then so much the worse for you —for you might go clean through the floor. There was a rug in front of the fire, and if you trod on the embroidered rosette in the middle of it, then even that casual action might cause your death, for beneath it was a trapdoor which could be released by a mere press of a button by whoever sat at the desk. You had to be very careful how you touched anything made of metal— a key-ring or window latch. In the course of the war two unfortunate servants of the Consulate who forgot this primary precaution were electrocuted.

The whole place, in fact, was utterly fantastic: it resembled, rather, a Hollywood film producer's idea of a spy's headquarters than what it actually was—a very important practical centre of German espionage.

Consuls, by virtue of their commercial connections, are ideal agents for the recruiting of spies—they are, of course, in touch with all their nationals in their own districts. The Germans have never lost an opportunity of impressing upon these people their overwhelming duty to the Fatherland. The instructions would be given innocuously enough; the German consul in the district covering Portsmouth, for example, would get into touch with some local German merchants.

"Now it is understood, I don't want you to do any spying," he would explain. "Naturally, I would not think of getting you into trouble with the police. Besides, England and Germany are at peace, and there is no necessity for espionage; but, of course, no one can say how long these halcyon days will last, and if ever there should be trouble between England and Germany we must all be prepared to do our duty to the Fatherland. You agree with that, of course?

"Now what I want you to do is this: you live in Portsmouth, which is an important naval base. I want you to get intimately acquainted with all corners of the town—and particularly its waterways. There must be no spying—that is understood. All you have to do is to take frequent walks about the town and along the waterfront, so that you know every square inch

intimately. Get a copy of the municipal map of Portsmouth, and work on that basis. Then, if an unhappy moment of friction ever does arise, you will be able to interpret that map in detail to our naval authorities."

IV

Although their work is invaluable, the diplomatic agents seldom come into the limelight—that is, or should be, an essential condition of their job. No spy wants publicity, but if he fails he generally gets it. A diplomatic blunder can be hushed up, but the capture of an active spy means a trial.

The spy proper is usually a specialist—often a naval, military or air force officer with the gift of languages and an aptitude for intrigue. He is an expert in some such subject as ballistics, engineering, or aviation. His professional knowledge is essential; an expert can see at a glance what an ordinary man would have to take great risks to discover. He undertakes this risky job for patriotic reasons, not financial—he usually draws the normal pay of his rank, plus minor allowances. He is the pivot on which the whole espionage system of his country turns.

The Germans have never been short of able and courageous technical officers who have volunteered for espionage duty. Their success has, however, been more limited than their zeal. The Germans are among the most assiduous and painstaking language-learners in the world, but they always remain Germans. British and Americans are lazy in this respect, but you will occasionally find a British or American speaking German which is perfect. More than one German officer has been detected for the slightest irregularity of accent. One dangerous German spy was unmasked in a few second's conversation with an astute Frenchman, who noticed his inability to pronounce the *v* in *vingt*. Nevertheless, the German spy is happier in France than in England, for in France there is a good deal of difference between the accent of (say) the Breton and the Catalan, and the German might pass himself off as a provincial from some far corner of France. The usual pose is as an Alsatian, for in Alsace a German dialect is freely spoken.

We shall see something of the work of these professional spies who serve their country with unswerving loyalty. Sometimes they work actively, sometimes as organizers. The first method is favoured by the British, who counter the German mass organization by individual brilliance.

The Germans, while occasionally using their technical experts for individual espionage, generally employ them as directors of groups of sub-spies, or agents—and it is more often the agent than the spy who gets into

the newspaper, for the task is not infrequently precarious. Some of these agents are neutral hirelings, who are trusted just as far as they can be seen. A few are even traitors willing to sell their country for German gold. But the majority are German nationals.

The Nazis have always regarded every German as a potential spy. Patriotism is usually the urge, but political blackmail has been used. In many cases Germans have acted as spies without knowing it. German visitors to Britain and France were frequently interrogated on their return to Germany, and sometimes innocently provided items of information. I remember meeting a German canoeist in Finland, wandering by canoe about the great maze of lakes. Three months every summer he passed in this pleasant manner, he told me. I asked how he managed to get the necessary foreign currency for his maintenance.

"Oh, I never have any difficulty," he said. "My journeys are looked upon as research. When I get back I write a monograph on my voyage, with sketch maps showing how lakes are joined by natural channels, and where I have been able to pass. Our people are very keen on geography, and my notes are very useful to our map-makers."

I agreed with him! They would be more than useful to the German staff if they ever considered an invasion of Finland. My acquaintance was providing most valuable information, but I am convinced that he did not know that he was a spy.

The German War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry each control a vast organized Intelligence Service, but the hub of German espionage is to be found in the Foreign Office. This department freely borrows technical officers from the service departments, and in addition employs a large number of political spies—who are ready to turn their hands to any form of intrigue. It is this type of spy who is generally selected to control a squad of agents operating in a foreign country, for it may be necessary to plan a veritable campaign—for, say, the dislocation of some branch of martial industry, an orgy of sabotage, a spate of propaganda, or the fomenting of unrest by *agents provocateurs*.

V

Expert knowledge is not essential to the espionage agent or sub-spy; it is sometimes to the advantage of his employers that he should work in the dark, not understanding what he does. An unconsidered trifle, meaningless to him, may be of vast importance to his headquarters. The mere news that a

naval officer has paid a casual visit to a certain factory may lead to an espionage coup of high importance. Often the news that he gathers will be no more than a series of trifles, but by the German method all information is valuable: ninety per cent of it may never seem likely to be used, but it is carefully filed away against the time when a companion piece of information can be matched with it. You might liken espionage very conveniently to a jig-saw puzzle: a dozen of the pieces by themselves are valueless, but the day may come when they form the essential clues to a complete picture.

There is nothing romantic or spectacular in this kind of espionage, but it does yield definite results. The Nazi agents scattered throughout the world are generally German nationals: this has advantages and disadvantages. It ensures their loyalty, generally speaking, for even the Nazis have been hoodwinked in this respect more than once; but at the same time it makes the agents suspect in the countries in which they are working. Since the emergence of Hitler, at any rate, there has always been suspicion of a German, however honest and friendly he might appear.

These agents are not professional spies as such. Practically all of them have a full-time occupation, and undertake fragments of espionage work as a spare-time job—sometimes unpaid, sometimes for a small retaining fee, and sometimes payment by results. When there is a definite objective in view, it may be necessary to plant agents in positions of vantage. The German system, however, favours such a widespread espionage net that there are usually agents already on any spot which is likely to prove interesting. Many of them follow comparatively humble occupations; waiters and hotel employés have long provided favourite "cover" professions for spies. Ships' stewards are perhaps even more favourably placed, for there is something in the atmosphere of a liner at sea that tends to ready confidences and indiscreet conversations. Commercial travellers hold many advantages because of their freedom of movement. Even more valuable as agents are journalists and press photographers; these men move freely in all parts of a country, and the magic name of the press is often sufficient to secure them entry to places from which the ordinary public are excluded. Their acquaintances are wide and varied, and if they know their job include many men of influence in the country to which they are accredited.

A new "cover" profession has recently developed, for pilots on commercial air-lines, together with members of their crews, have, of course, unique advantages for aerial observation. It is known that the Germans have made a photographic survey of a large portion of Kent through the medium of pilots flying ordinary routes to Croydon.

All these men go about their ordinary work with true German thoroughness, serving their civil employer efficiently and loyally; but they never forget that other loyalty, the overwhelming claim of their country. There is little drama in their lives; on the contrary, their career is often dull and colourless. Not for them the thrill of a direct attack upon the secrets of a potential enemy: necessarily they must be kept ignorant of the very idea prompting their existence—German secrets could not be spread abroad among so great a number of people. Working in the dark is wearisome and annoying, and the system has many disadvantages. If a spy does not know what his employers are aiming at, the information he sends may be positively misleading. I recall one German resident in Great Britain who was a spy, but who did not know that the British authorities knew that he was a spy. I used to meet this young man occasionally—he was charming company. My task was to give him casual information in confidential fashion. He certainly appeared to believe all I told him—there was no reason why he should not. If he passed on to Berlin one-tenth of the ideas I put into his head, then I am very content.

Sometimes the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle are fitted together by patient work over a long period: sometimes after a wearisome struggle, when nothing seems to fit, pieces fall into place almost by accident. The Germans favour the first method, and are willing to go to endless trouble and expense to ensure the fitting of two or three pieces—or even to ascertain that the relative pieces exist. I came across a good example some months ago. An English youth had been spending a holiday with a German family, arranged by one of those excellent organizations which promote the exchange of young people, with consequent benefits to ideas and ideals. This youth spent several months in Germany, and had a happy time with his friendly hosts. He saw many things which he appreciated—for, of course, it is ridiculous to imagine that everything in Germany is wicked merely because we don't like Hitler. The holiday passed almost without a strained moment—it is very doubtful if, when the time came to return to England, the youth could recall the trifling incident which was to have considerable after effects. One evening after dinner the conversation in the family circle turned to an uncomfortable subject, the possibility of war. The German youth reassured his friend: there would be no war, he said: he was not arguing on moral but practical grounds, he claimed—England was so far behind Germany in her preparations that she could never catch up. Therefore there would be no war.

The English youth's pride was naturally roused; he didn't want war between England and Germany, he declared, but the Germans were quite wrong when they imagined they were so far ahead. Why, even in the air,

before many months had passed, England would draw level with Germany. His father, he explained, was a designer in a famous aircraft factory, and had commented on the orders for thousands of aeroplane engines which had been received and which were already in hand.

The conversation passed on without any emphasis on this feature of the discussion. But the German host, as in duty bound, reported the English youth's remark to his local party-chief, and in due course it was then filed in Berlin. Instantly the vast espionage machine began to function. In most countries the casual remark of a youth stung to boastful reply by a hint of his country's helplessness would hardly be counted of high moment. But in Germany everything is worthy of investigation: in this case the method was simple. When the English youth left for home, his German friend accompanied him: by some large-sighted vision on behalf of the authorities, who apparently appreciated British cultural influences, he had been able to secure the necessary grant of foreign currency to make an extended stay in the English youth's home!

Naturally he was not expected to come back with plans of aeroplane engines; but by careful attention to the casual gossip of the English home—where spies are unknown and the freest speech flourishes—he was at least able to confirm that the English boy's remark had been no mere boast, but that a programme of aeroplane construction of greater magnitude than had been imagined was actually in progress. Further agents were sent over, endeavouring to gather some fragments of information that would add towards the completion of the picture. Actually the air staff at Berlin found themselves facing something of a poser. If their reports were correct, then the British were constructing ahead of personnel—within a few months they would have more machines than pilots to man them!

The next section of the jig-saw puzzle came from a totally different source—from one of the army of eavesdroppers who may pass a lifetime in petty espionage without recording a single salient fact. Sometimes, however, a mere phrase will be useful. There is no doubt that in democratic countries many people do talk too freely (in totalitarian states, too, when they are certain that no member of the secret police is within earshot!). It is a human failing—a man likes it to be thought that he is "in the know," and very often he will talk more freely than he ought to do in order to obtain the respect of authority from his friends. This is quite a common failing in Britain, and even more usual in France. The generation of statesmen who ruled France during the decade prior to 1914 were notoriously careless in conversation, and German espionage has since boasted of the ease with which information could be gathered in Paris.

A military mission from a Balkan country was scheduled to visit London: the Germans were naturally anxious to know its purpose, which presumably differed considerably from that announced. The agents detailed to the task, however (most of them were German newspapermen resident in London), reported that the conversations seemed to be of the most innocuous description. Far more interesting was a report from a "Swiss" waiter, working in a famous hotel in Paris—one of the quieter but more substantial hotels favoured by people of means and culture.

This waiter, a gifted linguist, as all good waiters should be, noticed that two or three men from the particular Balkan country had registered in the hotel, and that they held long meetings with two or three English visitors. Naturally they did not discuss their business openly in his hearing, but he did hear references to aeroplane engines—apparently the bodies were to be built in the Balkans. The "Swiss" waiter was working completely in the dark—he knew nothing of the visit of the Balkan mission to London, but he passed on his scrap of information for what it was worth—which was a good deal. It became obvious to the Germans that while the political side of the mission—with its military authorities—had gone to London to exchange polite courtesies, the actual practical work was being conducted in Paris. The British officers were shadowed as they left their hotel to return to England. One of them, after reporting to the Air Ministry, made his way to a Midland factory. And one of the technical designers in that factory was the father of the English youth who had protested that England was not entirely unprepared.

The designer commanded a good salary, and ran a middle-class establishment of considerable comfort, employing a cook and two maids. Suddenly one of the maids was offered a better job. Very conveniently the designer's wife was told of an agency which provided Austrian maids. "Such good workers, my dear—only ask twelve-and-sixpence a week, and most moderate in nights off." The designer may have had some hesitation, but after all, his home was his home, not his factory—he was not one of those misguided men who try to carry the atmosphere of their work to their fireside. Besides, the girl was Austrian, not German.

At this point factual narration must halt for a moment and conjecture take its place. It is doubtful whether the Austrian maid secured any information of value; it was not known if she had any connection with a mysterious fire which ravaged a section of the aeroplane factory a few weeks later—fortunately damaging only stores which could be replaced. The fire was so fortuitous that sabotage was suspected: widespread inquiries led the British authorities to believe that it was a deliberate attempt to hold up

production in the factory. It might be that the Germans imagined that they had some monopoly of trade in the Balkans, and were jealous of British intrusion.

In the course of the investigation the police naturally made inquiries about the Austrian maid; their inquiries led them to the domestic agency which had placed the girl in the job. It was a most efficient agency, well patronized by prospective employers. Every girl sent out was German or Austrian, and employers were delighted with their hard-working qualities and pleasant manners. And every girl was a spy.

The agents sent servants and children's nurses to dozens of homes: naturally, many of them were wasted as agents—the average English household has no military secrets to reveal. But one girl in twenty might find herself in a house where the owner was a key man in British industry—and her report might be worth the subsidy paid to the other nineteen.

The Special Branch of Scotland Yard acted rapidly and efficiently. There was insufficient proof to stage a trial, which in any case might not have been diplomatic. The licence of the agency was discreetly withdrawn, and the lady who ran it was given the hint that the sooner she returned to Germany the better. A few days later all the German and Austrian maids who had been placed by the agency received a general recall—Hitler wanted more labour in the Fatherland.

It would have been nice to round off the story, and to place all the pieces in position to demonstrate the complete picture: but unfortunately I am unable to do this—at the moment. My purpose in presenting this story, it will be recalled, was only to show by what a variety of methods the jig-saw fragments are gathered together for the assembly.

VI

I have referred to the activities of air-line pilots on espionage work. One of them had the shock of his life during the summer of 1939.

It was noticed that this pilot, who worked regularly on a commercial route from Germany to Croydon, had a habit of deviating from the direct route. Every time he left Croydon he would veer to the north, would not turn off to his true course until he sighted the Thames. In his perambulations he passed continually over an area where the presence of a potential enemy was, to say the least, inconvenient.

The British airport officials gave him a polite hint, but he took no notice: then one of the directors of the British air-lines wrote to his opposite number in Germany. Fulsome apologies were returned—but within a week or two the German pilot was off his course again.

The British authorities were about to suggest that he should be blacklisted and not allowed to fly to England. At this stage, however, the counter-espionage service took up the case, collaborating with military officers. The area was scheduled as prohibited to aircraft—yet still on occasion the German flew over it. "Very well," argued the military authorities, "he has been told that the area is dangerous; and if he runs into danger, that is his look-out. We have a new anti-aircraft shell; we have tried it out against Queen Bee aeroplanes, but it would be nice to see its effect on a live target. If we happen to be experimenting with this shell the next time he flies over, then he can't blame us."

By a strange "coincidence," the next time the German flew over the prohibited area the anti-aircraft batteries were experimenting with this particular shell. One exploded several hundred feet below his machine, but so violent was the concussion that the aeroplane was turned completely upside down, and only by consummate airmanship did the pilot bring it to earth in a forced landing. There was no need to give him further warning—he had accepted the kind of argument which Germans well understand.

Some years ago I was in Andorra, the tiny pseudo-republic in the Pyrenees, on the occasion of the opening of the new road across the little country from north to south. My host remarked casually:

"It is a very peculiar thing. We always used to have plenty of visitors to our mountains from England and America, but very seldom from Germany. But now, in my little hotel alone, I have entertained three German press photographers within the last fortnight. Why should Germany so suddenly become interested in Andorra?"

The answer was easy. As a holiday resort Andorra was of no interest whatsoever to Germany. But there are only half a dozen roads over the Pyrenees, so the strategic importance of a seventh was obvious. In view of subsequent events in Spain my suspicions have been proved legitimate. Had events moved as Hitler wished, these fully documented photographic records of the new Andorran highway would have been of inestimable value to the German Command.

The justification of espionage is no part of my thesis, but while I will not whitewash the conduct of spies, I must at least give them credit for courage. The resolution needed for this single-handed underground warfare is strange indeed. In battle a man can draw strength from his comrades—though they may be as nervous as himself, their mere presence is encouraging. A spy, patriotic or mercenary, if he is wise, works alone. The very Government which employs him will be the first to disown him if he is foolish enough to get caught. This is a diplomatic fiction which is well understood by all parties. Its working is illustrated by an episode which took place two years ago. At that time the Poles caught a German spy who had given them much trouble. Naturally, the Germans disclaimed any responsibility.

"That man?" they said. "Never heard of him! Do what you like with him—execute him if you like. He doesn't belong to us."

But almost at the same time the Germans laid their hands on a Polish spy. In their turn the Poles denied that they had ever heard of this man. Each country, of course, knew quite well that the other was lying, and the farce was brought to an end when sensible Polish and German officers met and agreed to exchange the captured agents.

Of the traitor spy who for pay reveals the secrets of his own country, there is little to be said—he is neither esteemed nor trusted even by the country which employs him. The adventurer spy, although he looms large in the books of fiction, is insignificant in the real world of espionage—though he does actually exist, as we shall see. Again, the bulk of the work is done by the patriot. He is paid for the job, of course, for even a spy must live. Nevertheless, the fantastic sums named in spy stories are quite misleading: during the last war the Germans paid their agents six pounds a week—not a fantastic sum for a calling which involves risking one's neck! The trouble with the mercenary spies is that their information is generally unreliable, and requires the most careful cross-checking before it can be accepted. The patriot spy is not concerned with financial results: he knows that incorrect information is a greater danger to his country than no information at all.

Not a small proportion of the professional non-national agents since the World War have been recruited from the rank of Russian *émigrés*. Over a million Russians fled from their country at the time of the Revolution, including tens of thousands of officers. They had to make a living—and they knew only one profession. They owed no loyalty to anyone and were prepared to offer their services for a moderate wage and the precious gift of nationality and a valid passport. Few of them are full-time spies—most of them were given some suitable cover; a considerable proportion of the taxi-

drivers of Paris are Russian—some of them sons of noble families; and more than one of them is or has been an espionage agent. More than one power found them of inestimable value in 1919, when the Peace Conference was sitting, for a taxi-driver with a gift for languages might pick up a single sentence of overwhelming importance.

Some of these Russians, devoid of nationality and of hope, have lent themselves to the lowest sorts of espionage. You will find them among the ranks of a petty spy, the saboteur, the *agent provocateur*. A certain type of mentality is necessary for this latter kind of work. Incidentally, it is interesting to recall that this was Hitler's first job after his discharge from the German Army in 1919.

VIII

The British Secret Service still remembers the exploits of one of these international or traitor spies, whom I will call Schiller. To reveal his real name might, even now, involve numerous people who were among his victims. He was a German, an officer of one of the crack Prussian regiments. He had been a valuable staff officer, but was unable to resist the attractions of the young wife of a high German military authority, and was found out. Cashiered from the army, like so many of his kind, he was forced to live by his wits.

His staff experience, however, still had its value; he found a ready market in other countries for some of his knowledge, and from the outset he sold to the highest bidder. Even when his own information was exhausted he was able to have some access to his country's military secrets, and he soon became a thorn in Germany's side. The counter-espionage men were instructed to arrest him, and he was eventually caught by the Gestapo after he had stolen some military papers relating to a small but vital part of the plan, then highly secret, for occupying the Rhineland.

The papers were found on him, but he persuaded his captors that a photostat copy had been made and was even then on its way across the frontier. He frankly blackmailed not only the Gestapo, but even the Wilhelmstrasse itself. If he were given his freedom *and* a sum of money, the photostat could be recovered! The Gestapo verified his statement; there seemed little doubt that this other copy was on its way to undesirable hands and could be stopped only by the spy himself.

The bargain was made, and Schiller was cunning enough to see that it was properly made, for the documents were not handed over until he was

safe on Dutch soil. That was the first, but by no means the last, of such bargains that Schiller made in various parts of Europe.

At last he came to England, under another name and as an apparent sponsor of an Anglo-German friendship association. Here he stole some plans which related to the early experiments with radio-controlled aircraft which eventually produced the Queen Bee aeroplane. The theft, a particularly audacious one, was one ably assisted by the almost incredible carelessness of a group of naval and air force officers. It is amazing, the reader will agree, how many important documents are left in unattended cars!

No attempt was made by the Special Branch to arrest him, and he was allowed to board a boat and leave for Germany. This in itself astonished him, for he had reckoned on being arrested, and then, with the usual photostat deposited in some place known only to him, striking one of his celebrated and profitable bargains. But, of course, the British are proverbially stupid.

This time the laugh was on him. The plans relating to the radio-controlled aircraft were fakes. From the moment that Schiller had begun his journey to England, the British Secret Service and the Special Branch had been warned. He got into the country without difficulty; he was even surreptitiously helped to steal the papers. He returned to Germany only to find that he was offering incorrect information. He was arrested: no one knows, but we can guess his fate. (Incidentally, his folly reveals an essential difference between the expert spy and the agent or adventurer, or even the spy of technical experience who ventures out of his depth. A specialist would never have been taken in by the spurious plans!)

So objectionable do these international parasites make themselves that on more than one occasion a country has warned even one of its rivals about them in the hope of breaking their power.

Although spies of the mercenary type can often command very high prices for real information, there is generally a limit imposed by their own circumstances. Nearly all of them are desperately hard-up. Time is vital, and they cannot afford to hold out for the price they know their information to be worth.

Although they are among the lowest principled types of mankind, they seldom resort to actual crime. On the other hand, it is curious that the criminal classes, no matter how highly skilled or cunning they may be, seldom or never make successful espionage workers. Those highly coloured

stories, by the sensational novelist, of the spy who employs a crack thief to open up the Embassy's safes and strong-rooms are for the most part fiction.

IX

The twenty years which followed the World War produced an enormous crop of spy literature. I say without hesitation that ninety per cent of it is fiction. My remark applies not merely to those books published as fiction—as a matter of fact, some of these have at least a firm foundation of fact. Many of the books of spy memoirs are liberally romanticized: some of them have no basis in fact at all. It would be possible to count on the fingers of both hands the number of spy stories which could claim absolute accuracy. Maybe my estimate is a trifle harsh, so I will throw in the toes of both feet as well.

It is not difficult for the experienced reader to pick out the false from the true. In England there is one acid test—the Official Secrets Act. Many spy stories could never have been published had they been true—but the Official Secrets Act does not concern itself with fiction, even if published in the guise of fact. In most cases the very form of the stories give them away: they have adopted a fixed pattern and run in a groove, just as do the conventional detective stories. Further, there is always a tendency to romance—and it is not often that romance is to be found in the life and work of a spy!

I recall a book written by a German gentleman named Gustav Steinhauer, who modestly described himself as "the Kaiser's Master Spy." I cannot dispute his claim, so can only pity the Kaiser—and remark that I once mentioned his name to two German officers who *were* directors of Intelligence during the World War. One had never heard of Steinhauer: the other had some vague recollection of him as a minor operative.

Among other things, Steinhauer relates that in July, 1914, he made an exciting journey to Scapa Flow, destined to be the base of the British Grand Fleet. There he took soundings by an ingenious device of his own invention—he fished from a little boat, and had previously tied knots in his line every two or three yards, with a sinker at its end, so that the depth of water could easily be calculated. The Romans used this method two thousand years ago, and did not think it very original then.

However, we will allow that Steinhauer took his soundings with the knotted fishing-line—rather late in the day, one would have thought, since the Germans had known for two years that Scapa Flow was the likely British base. But why should Steinhauer have risked taking soundings when for two

shillings he could have bought an official map which would have given him all the information he wanted—and slightly more accurately?

Steinhauer provided an excellent example of how a reputation can be built up. His story was one of the first espionage "records" to appear after the war, and he was frequently quoted by subsequent writers who wanted to prove their authenticity. Later, more critical faculties were developed as expert commentators in Britain and the U.S.A. entered the field of espionage literature. To them Steinhauer is just a joke, but thousands of people still believe that he was the Kaiser's master spy. Later we shall comment on another spy with a manufactured reputation—Mata Hari.

X

At all costs, it seems, the story of a spy must be made sensational. Yet some of the most successful spies scarcely experienced a thrill in the whole of their careers. One of the most valuable spies the British employed during the war was a Belgian railwayman, a shunter with a phenomenal memory and a keen observation. All he had to do, from his unique position of vantage, was to observe what trains passed his junction in all directions; and what was the nature of their cargo. By virtue of his keen eye and freedom of movement, he was able to identify units going towards the line and coming away from it. He soon learned to calculate, by counting the number of trucks, what numbers of men and guns were being moved up to the lines, and how many wounded men were coming down. That was all—no hairbreadth escapes for this invaluable agent. Every evening he reported his observations to a woman in his town. To her and her helpers came the thrills. The gathering of the information was easy: the difficulty arose in its transmission to England, involving a perilous journey across Belgium into Holland.

The spy story often slips up, too, on the question of disguise. Generally the agent is a "master of disguise." He rushes into a room; the police are on his trail; he is disguised as a Chinaman; he halts before a mirror. A few rapid passes with his grease-paint, a hurried donning of wig and whiskers, and he marches out of the room a Russian, humming the Volga Boat Song and shaking the snow off his boots.

That can be exciting (or amusing) as a story, but in real life it is fantastic. All those who have had any stage experience can tell you the limitations of the use of grease-paint. If you doubt them, try to-morrow morning—disguise

yourself with grease-paint and whiskers, and see how far you get down the street before you are held up by the officer on duty.

XI

The days have long passed—if they ever existed—when the spy was a dark, handsome man with a black moustache, accompanied by a glamorous blonde. The successful spy of to-day is the most ordinary person—that is why he is successful. If he should be held up by the police, his papers are in perfect order: he always has a perfectly legitimate reason for being where he is. He gets his best results in the least sensational fashion.

I remember once visiting a certain Balkan country on a bicycle. From casual gossip in village inns, I heard that this country was erecting a series of concrete block-houses round one of its frontiers. They were kept well away from railways or main roads, but, said the village gossip, had already been built to cover the frontier by-ways. The block-houses sounded interesting, and naturally I wanted to have a look at them.

Had I been a spy of fiction, my course would have been determined for me. I would have approached the first sentry cautiously, and strangled him with my bare hands—why strangling is always essential in spy stories I have never been able to discover. Then I would have got into a ditch and crawled for a mile or two—the idea being that the ditch would have given me cover. Actually, as I am somewhat large, it would have to be a considerable ditch. Approaching the block-house, I would find the way barred by another sentry. Disposing of him—also with bare hands—I would begin to make notes in some complicated code of the dimensions and sites of the little forts. These alone would be insufficient—a photograph is more valuable than any sketch. I would be prepared for this; before setting out upon the expedition, I would have consulted my old friend Dr. Thorndyke, whose invaluable assistant would have produced for me a camera disguised as a water-melon. This I would place on the edge of the ditch: it would be a remarkable camera, able to take pictures through a twelve-inch wall.

I do not claim that it would be impossible to get information by such methods—it *might* be possible, though I never yet met any spy who did. Such thrills and fantastic devices were, however, quite unnecessary. I simply rode my bicycle along a country lane towards the frontier. Sure enough, a hundred yards from the road, instead of the wooden hut which usually houses frontier guards, was a veritable miniature fortress. The men on duty appeared very pleased to see me—no one ever passed along this road, and

they were bored. It was a hot afternoon, and when I remarked on this I was immediately invited into the block-house for refreshment. As I passed through the door, naturally I glanced sideways—and was able to estimate the thickness of the concrete wall. From this it was but an elementary calculation to discover the size of the guns which would be necessary to knock the fort down.

Sitting at the table, chatting with my hosts, I noticed that the windows were rather small—and that a metal shield was parked at the top and the bottom of each window. By casual glance I observed that if the top sheet were lowered and the bottom one raised, they would not quite meet in the middle—there would be a horizontal slot two or three inches wide. This immediately suggested the armament of the fort. A glance at the floor confirmed my estimate. Here were three small grooves lined with brass—obviously intended for the metal feet of a machine-gun tripod.

The armament was easily calculated, therefore—all I had to do was to count the number of windows. Yet my fantastic spy story would be correct in one instance—a photograph is highly advisable. After staying an hour or so, two of the frontier guards escorted me into the middle of no-man's-land—one of them shouldering his rifle, while the other pushed my bicycle. At the moment of parting I suggested that I would like to take a photograph of them as a souvenir of our happy meeting. They agreed at once, stood to attention—one of them still holding my bicycle. I carefully paced off the necessary ten feet, adjusted the focus of my camera, and pressed button "A."

When I got back to England, however, my photograph was a great disappointment. It appeared that I had made a hopeless mess of the focusing—instead of fixing the meter at ten feet, I must have swung it round to infinity. Consequently the picture of the two soldiers was hopelessly blurred. By a curious coincidence, however, by their side was a small white speck, which on examination under the magnifying glass proved to be the block-house, a hundred yards away. Through my unfortunate mistake with the focusing, the block-house was in perfect focus, and when enlarged twenty or thirty times gave an adequate picture of the miniature fort on this Balkan frontier!

XII

Espionage is full of paradoxes. I have insisted that the successful spy is an ordinary person. I know first-class Intelligence agents who have scarcely

experienced a thrill in their lives. I also know others who have had adventures which make the wildest fiction appear tame.

In one respect at least fiction has succeeded in getting in advance of fact. A generation ago spy stories invariably centred round an "international gang." Marvellous organizations were these affairs, the hero of the story was generally an Intelligence Officer or counter-spy, who flitted from country to country, but wherever he went, up popped some sinister member of the gang. At that time such organizations existed only in the over-fertile brains of espionage novelists. To-day they are actual enough; maybe we have to thank the imaginative novelist for their existence!

Three of these gangs attained a wide reputation. One was broken up by the French police four years ago: it contained members of eight different nationalities, including British and American—the latter comprising an amazing newly married couple who apparently had taken up espionage on their honeymoon! Of the other two organizations, one operates from Rotterdam and consists very largely of Germans: the other had the effrontery to make its headquarters at Geneva, home of the League of Nations! Its leaders claimed that this was an excellent centre, as they were able to do good business with the Conference delegates!

The prices they demanded for their secrets were not high; they were far from the fantastic sums of spy novels. You could buy details of a new secret gun for a matter of a couple of hundred pounds. But, of course, the gang would be selling the same secrets to thirty or forty customers, and so would net a tidy sum in all.

Already the gangs have scored some remarkable successes. The technical officers of one great power designed a new tank which was reputed to be able to cross open country at sixty miles an hour—a mighty difficult target to hit, as any gunner would agree. The day came for the official trials of the tank; generals and high officers of state gathered to watch, the whole area cordoned off by police and troops. The tank passed its tests with flying colours, and everybody went home highly delighted. It was naturally impressed on all observers, however high their rank, of the necessity for secrecy. None of them said a word—there was no time; for the day after the tank had been tried out, its plans were on sale in Paris to anyone who cared to buy them. The international gang had merely been waiting for the result of the tests to be known before fixing a price—the plans had been in their possession for some weeks.

On another occasion a new French automatic rifle was stolen in unusual circumstances. After being thoroughly tried out, the original prototype was

locked up in the War Office, while an ordnance factory proceeded with the manufacture of the bulk supply. When a quantity were ready for inspection, the technical officers went to get the prototype so as to compare with the mass product. But it had gone—and the French police actually discovered it on sale within a few hundred yards of the Ministry for War!

XIII

Having discussed generally and rather spasmodically the general outline of espionage, it is now time to pass to a more detailed examination of the German spy system. I shall interpolate many examples of German spy activities, for there is no better method of emphasizing a point. Further, we shall see that the Germans are intensely conservative, and it is reasonably certain that many of the espionage methods of the last war have been resuscitated to-day.

We have to cover an enormously wide range—necessary because of the German adoption of the "mass" principle. We must first see how German spies are recruited and trained, how they obtain, and especially how they transmit, their information. We must examine their activities in the years preceding the present war, noting how widespread were their efforts: we shall see them at work in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Spain and any troubled centre of Europe. We must glance at some special aspects of modern spying—sabotage and counter-espionage, for example. And, if only as light relief, let us spend a few hours with women spies.

One word of warning: in 1914 England suffered from spy-phobia. There are thousands of active German spies in Europe: in spite of our round-up, there may be some at large in England. Yet there is no cause for alarm: it is not within my theme to talk of the British Secret Service, and I would not if I could. But at least I can say this: that the British counter-espionage service is exceedingly efficient.

CHAPTER II

THE GERMAN SPY GOES TO SCHOOL

I

SINCE I first began to write on the intriguing subject of espionage, I have been overwhelmed by letters from young men—and women—who are anxious to become spies and are amazed when I give them discouraging advice. This is certainly necessary in their own interest, for few of them have the slightest qualifications for such intensive work (for that matter, in order to anticipate any further applications, let me say that I have no espionage work to offer even to those who *have*). In Germany, on the other hand, the way of the would-be spy is much easier. Since the mass principle is favoured, the Nazis never can have enough spies. We have seen that agents are selected even without their knowledge, and sometimes without their acquiescence: certainly any person with espionage ambitions has only to apply to the local branch of the Gestapo.

It does not follow, of course, that he will get a job: even spies to be used *en masse* must be people of reasonable intelligence. Before he is finally admitted, the amateur is given a series of tests. The first will be applied by the local Gestapo officer: the initiate will be required to do some snooping round in his own district, listening to the conversation of his fellow workers, and reporting any activities which by any stretch of imagination can be classed as "subversive." If he succeeds in passing his preliminary test, he will be moved to a regional headquarters. There are five or six of these in Germany. The organization and control differ according to the personality and ideas of the commandant, but the general principles of the tests and training are everywhere the same.

I received a most interesting account of one of these schools from a Pole who was a German subject. (Actually, the Germans did not know that he was of Polish stock—his family name had been Germanized—otherwise they would certainly never have admitted him to the school.) His idea in entering the German espionage service was to act as a double spy, carrying small pieces of information from Poland to Germany, and more important news from Germany to Poland.

In conversation I recalled some of the startling stories told about Nazi spy schools—how the students and teachers alike are masked so that they shall never know one another. He assured me that these accounts, sensational though they seem, were not exaggerated. It is the fixed idea of some spy schoolmasters that their agents must always act as individuals: in other schools, on the other hand, the view is taken that it may be useful for a spy to be able to recognize a confederate when faced with a difficult situation. The second method is perhaps more effective, but at the same time carries the greater danger—there is an obvious risk that a spy of another country planted inside the spy school would be able to recognize and denounce some of his fellow pupils!

The school to which my friend was posted was of the second type. The first tests were to try out his physical nerve. Arrived at the school—a country mansion a mile from the nearest village—he was shown into a room where a doctor gave him a most stringent medical examination. He was then taken out to a shooting-range: without warning a machine-gun opened fire and to his horror a group of men fell to the ground, apparently dead. Immediately the doctor pounced on the neophyte again, to feel his pulse and test his heart.

Candidates for air force commissions used to be familiar with the "revolving chair," which whirled them round and round at a terrific pace, and in a few seconds gave them all the sensations of acrobats—this proved an effective mechanical test of nerve and steadiness. Anyone who could sit in the whirligig throughout its course, and retain a steady hand and a normal heart-beat, was not likely to be troubled by the vagaries of air combat.

My Pole, after successfully passing this stringent test, found himself introduced to another form of the whirligig chair. In one of his lessons in physical espionage he was clad in an amazing boiler-suit of rubber cloth, inflated at all joints and vital regions of the body, and was given a flying "crash helmet." He was then seated on a contrivance not unlike a juvenile roundabout, except that it was smaller and very much faster. When it was turned at its fastest the seat suddenly collapsed and flung him to the ground, the inflated cushions saving him from injury. He was called upon to accomplish this feat time and time again, at last without any suit to protect him. The idea was to train him to jump from a moving car or train without injury. He was also given instructions in the use of parachutes, and taught to drive a car, practising with a dozen well-known makes.

Not only was a high standard of physical fitness demanded, but at the same time he had to attend classes in school. Languages were his first study,

and here he had few fears: most Poles are intelligent, and educated Poles, without exception, are good linguists.[1] He was able to pass his tests with flying colours.

The instruction was varied: although he was not primarily interested in naval affairs, my friend was given a lengthy course of instruction in naval matters. For a week the class was set to study the silhouettes of British and French warships in great detail, the instructor pointing out the characteristic differences between type and type and vessel and vessel. Nevertheless, my friend reported, when an examination was held at the end of the week, it was amazing how few of the pupils passed it, or even put up a good show.

He had a retentive memory, and was able to repeat to me many of the maxims which his instructors insisted, quite rightly in most cases, were an essential part of the spy law. When I considered German conservatism in espionage matters, I was not really surprised to find that the precepts were almost identical with those taught by the German spy school established at Antwerp in 1916 for the training of neutral hirelings.

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[1] Esperantists will remember that Dr. Zamenhof, the creator of the most successful of synthetic languages, was a Pole.

II

Certainly it was highly sensible to insist that the spy should *live* the character he had adopted—and particularly that he should not live above the income of his adopted class of life! More spies have perhaps been trapped through an unwarranted display of affluence than for any other reason.

It was insisted that any form of disguise should be simple. Instructors demonstrated the surprising change in appearance resulting from the parting of the hair on a different side to the usual. Even a thorough hair-cut has its effects. A few cuts with the scissors, and the arch of the eyebrows can be altered. Neutral glasses are a familiar adjunct to disguise.

The shape of the face is important. For temporary purposes it can be altered by inserting a piece of apple in each cheek. One agent I knew used to put a small metal spring up each nostril, completely altering the outline of the nose. Another used to adopt a familiar stage device—black out a tooth with black grease-paint: the effect was amazing—but the trick was perceptible at close quarters.

Another instruction at the spy school was sound. If an agent is to play the part of a limping man, in the excitement of the moment he may forget to limp. Therefore he should have a permanent reminder—with a pebble in his shoe he is certain to limp. A pebble in both shoes, and his walk will differ very considerably from the normal.

Any tailor will confirm that padded shoulders will make a man appear taller than he is. And every woman appreciates the use of stripes, up or round, to suit her figure. Simple deceptions like these can be invaluable, when a spy has to avoid a policeman armed with his description. There are a dozen devices with clothes which can be very effective—cloth is simpler to manipulate than flesh. The voice is difficult, but the invaluable pebble in the mouth will alter its pitch, and the spy's wit can disguise its accent. But the eyes are the most difficult of all to disguise.

Notes, it was impressed, should be avoided except when absolutely necessary, in which case they were to be made on cigarette paper or Japanese rice paper, which could be screwed up small and swallowed without difficulty. The spy was instructed to take the greatest care in disposing of the papers; tearing them up and throwing away is, of course, asking for trouble—in older days the charwoman who "did" for a foreign embassy could command a ready sale for the contents of waste-paper baskets. Even burned papers reveal their secrets under microscopic examination.

Many of the lessons were devoted to the training of memory—one of the most successful German messengers during the last war was a "Memory Man" well known on the music-halls. He had one of those freak brains which enabled him immediately to commit to memory any fragment of information he heard once. Often he did not understand the meaning of the news he carried, but though useless as a spy, he was invaluable as an agent.

The spy was taught to use mnemonics in place of open notes: any entries in his pocket-diary must be innocent—he must write not that he saw twenty-five aeroplanes, but that his travelling expenses for the day were twenty-five marks. It was impressed upon him that linguistic gifts should be concealed; this would encourage others to talk more freely. A persuasive and confiding manner must be cultivated; this is invaluable, for naturally the last function of the spy is to be suspected! Sometimes, however, it will pay to affect the mysterious attitude of the spy of fiction—there is a certain type of man who, approached with an intriguing air of mystery, will talk readily.

The Germans have always taught their spies that simplicity must be a feature of espionage work—yet actually this is a trait their activities seldom

disclose! Attention to detail is quite rightly stressed—and just as often neglected, as many a German agent has found to his cost. A spy can only make one mistake.

If they have to bargain with a man, the spies were told, they should meet him a long way from his home, so that he would be tired and strained before the encounter. They must never hurry; they must always appear to have a definite destination, and a legitimate reason for being where they were. All pupils were instructed in the use of explosives, for sabotage was likely to form part of their work. Detonators were a special study, and many methods of improvising destructive charges were described. There were nervous moments when the practical work began. After experiments on models of bridges, railway points, and the like, the potential spies were given their own explosives and told to blow up special constructions erected for the purpose in the grounds.

There was some attempt to study foreign psychologies, but, according to my Polish friend, the instruction was primitive. On the other hand, the use of miniature cameras was thoroughly explained, and much practical work was done. I shall later describe some of the ingenious cameras used. (The interesting point about my Polish friend's tuition is that it varies only in detail from that given by the Germans to their spies during the World War. I have compared notes with graduates of a famous school established in Antwerp in 1916. Except that to-day the Nazis pay greater attention to propaganda and sabotage, their espionage schoolmasters do not appear to have advanced in their technique during the intervening years.)

My friend, a good-looking young man of great attraction, was sternly warned that he was to beware of female bewitchers. He should trust no one —particularly women. It amused him immensely—for despite his youth, he was a man of considerable experience—when a hefty German officer read him a long private lesson of the pitfalls which might await him from the naughty ladies of the streets in foreign countries. No youth leaving the parental roof for the big city was ever given more anxious warning!

III

It is interesting to compare the description of an English spy school, given by one of the students. It was located, he asserted, in a country house in Devonshire, popularly known as "Black Castle." The German spy course was for a period of eight weeks, the British for three years, and by his account the training was remarkably thorough. The highest standard of

physical condition was insisted upon: gymnastic exercises were pursued constantly, so that every prospective agent became something of an acrobat. Every man must learn to swim, to ride, and to drive any make of car: he had to show ability in climbing trees and scaling walls of houses—the mansion was ivy-covered and offered excellent practice; he was given instruction in boxing and ju-jutsu. In the evening his training was of a lighter type: since a spy must be able to move in any circle, the students dressed for dinner, were served by waiters, and, if necessary, were taught social manners. They had to learn to dance, to play bridge—even how to frequent night-clubs with the necessary air. At the other end of the social scale, they were given instruction—should they need it!—in the code of conduct of the public-house and other plebeian haunts. A successful spy must be able to go anywhere without attracting attention. Serious attention was given to languages. French and German were essential, and there was usually instruction in some other language should the student show any special aptitude—in those days, before the war of 1914-18, the British were particularly anxious for agents who spoke Russian!

Skilled instructors gave lessons in draughtsmanship, so that the spies should be able to commit to paper what they saw. The class-rooms contained models of ships—mostly German—with plans and silhouettes. There were also models and drawings of forts and guns; in this respect especially the instruction was most thorough.

Communications were likewise given the most detailed attention. While the students were given necessary instruction in the use of codes, they were at the same time taught that the safest method of communication is by the innocuous letter. This, it is true, is one of the most effective methods of escaping the attention of the watchful censor.

Another branch of the work was more melodramatic. My informant described how a wing of this mansion was devoted to a special printing-house for forging passports, tickets or any other printed matter which the spy might need. An agent who set out as a commercial traveller could have all his sales literature printed attractively before he left his school!

IV

The adherence of the Germans to the mass principle ought to have received a shock from the fate of Captain Stewart, a British Intelligence Officer who operated in Germany prior to 1914. Stewart was the traditional British type of spy, highly intelligent, a volunteer for dangerous duty, and a

brilliant individualist. For many years he worked, effecting some remarkable coups; he was indeed one of the most successful spies in Europe.

He was at length assigned to a task of great complexity, and the War Office decided he would need an assistant. Stewart protested that he had obtained his best results single-handed, and was quite confident of his ability to complete the new task. The War Office assured him, however, that they had available a capable and reliable assistant.

Some years earlier a director of a famous whisky distillery had informed a friend at the War Office that he employed a commercial traveller in Germany, a German who enjoyed especially favourable facilities for espionage and who, he believed, would be open to persuasion. The German drummer was tactfully approached, and for a consideration agreed to betray his country. He rendered good service, for though he was not brilliant his information was always sound, and he thoroughly earned the moderate sums paid him. When Stewart had studied the man's record, in fact, he had to agree that here was the promise of a capable assistant.

Unfortunately an epoch-making event had intervened in the life of the German commercial traveller, unknown to either Captain Stewart or the War Office. The German had married; and, what was more, he had married the daughter of a German naval officer! His new family connections may have rearoused the latent patriotism within him. At any rate, he had no compunction about betraying Stewart to the German authorities.

The British officer had only served a part of his term of imprisonment when he was pardoned by the Kaiser. Unfortunately he was killed during the first weeks of the 1914 war, and British Intelligence suffered a severe loss. His case has been freely debated in espionage quarters ever since, and German spy schoolmasters have often based their lessons on his success. Many of them, however, do not appear to have recognized the basic essential of his exploits, the fact that he worked alone.

V

I have referred to the sensational type of spy school, where the pupils were kept isolated from each other, and even wore masks when in class. This type of school did actually exist. There was a famous establishment operating in the rue de la Pepinière in Antwerp during the last two years of the World War. The arrangements there were reminiscent of the most fantastic thriller. The house had several entrances, and recruits would be conducted to the back door—they had been met at the station by espionage

agents, were hurried off in a closed car, and were pulled out of the car almost before it had stopped outside its destination.

Hurried along the substantial corridors of the old house, the recruit would find himself in a comfortable bedroom—locked in. The windows on the street side were shuttered and barred, and he could only leave his room under the supervision of one of the staff. From the first moment he had to wear a black mask whenever he was out of his own bedroom: it was one of the obsessions of the German agent running the school that a foreign spy might effect an entrance and be able subsequently to denounce all its pupils.

The recruit lost his name from the moment he entered the school: instead he took a code designation—a letter and a number. All his meals were served in his room. In addition to his classes, he was given long spells of individual tuition. A friend of mine who inspected this remarkable school, soon after the recapture of Antwerp in 1918, told me that its equipment was really remarkable, particularly in its range of ships' models. Its library was extensive, including a number of illustrated books showing the uniforms, ranks and decorations of all foreign armies. The laboratory, too, was well equipped, and it was obvious that the study of chemical inks had been well developed.

In fact, judged by its curriculum, the Antwerp school was highly efficient. Yet the final appraisement of a school can only be by its results, and in this respect it is unquestionable, the fantastic school was an almost complete failure.

Espionage experts, including those of Germany, claim that the monastic-cell method is utterly unsuited to the training of spies. It lowers the pupil's morale, induces introspective ideas, and weakens confidence by the absence of association with the outside world. The French method is probably better: in France the prospective spy at school is carefully watched by counter-spies, who observe his habits and the strength or weakness of his character. This system has a double value—unsuitable recruits can be discarded at an early stage, and full advantage can be taken of the idiosyncrasies of the rest.

VI

Of a different type, of course, is the school devoted to the naval, military or air force officer who decides to place his special talents at his country's disposal. This might indeed be called the university of espionage: but no college was so exclusive as this. Here are trained the master spies—men who have already a technical background of naval, military or aerographic

information, and who are to employ that knowledge not on the battlefield, but in the underground campaign which is continuously waged.

For the first term the course follows that of the ordinary spy school, with particular reference to foreign arms. Because a German officer is a capable artilleryman, it does not follow that he knows all there is to be known about French and British guns. Actual specimens are available for inspection—the habit of so many great powers of selling munitions to all comers makes it easy for Germany to secure samples via small states (and, of course, it is equally easy for other countries to obtain German samples; so is the path of espionage made easy). He must become as well acquainted with the French seventy-five as he is with his own seventy-seven. He must be familiar with its every detail, so that at a glance he can appreciate any new feature which may be added, or any amendment in design. His technical background is advanced far beyond that of the ordinary field officer.

Special care is devoted to his command of languages; he is instructed in the use of codes; then follows one of the most important sections of his tuition—the organization of espionage. It may be that occasionally he will be employed on some individual coup; he is more likely to have charge of a group of active agents; he may be stationed officially in some other country in charge of the German Intelligence organization there. Obviously he must know exactly what kind of information is wanted. The agents can work in the dark, but not the master spy.

At all costs he must keep abreast of the mobilization plans of any potential enemy—must know any detailed amendments which may be added to existing plans. This is vital. A gain of twenty-four hours in mobilization may easily mean the winning or losing of the first campaign: he must know the mobilization programme—the railheads to be used. Incidentally, he can pick up masses of information in a casual fashion—information which is available to all, but can only be appreciated by the expert. A British general before 1914 used to spend all his leave riding a bicycle about the Meuse valley, studying the route which he was convinced the Germans would use when war came.

I remember once being accused in Odessa of being a British spy. A chance remark in conversation with a Russian officer seemed to make my situation the worse, for I mentioned to him the number of divisions which the Russians could employ on the Bessarabian front should an attack on Roumania ever form part of Russian policy. Here, apparently, was evidence against me from my own mouth. But, I was able to point out, my information was gained by the most casual observation: I had come by train

from the Roumanian frontier to Odessa; naturally I had looked out of the carriage window. Was that forbidden? I asked. Looking out of the carriage window I had necessarily noticed the size of the sidings at wayside stations. From these observations it was an elementary calculation to decide the size of the force which the railway could support with the necessary supplies.

The specialist spy organizer must necessarily pay great attention to the disposition of the air fleet of a potential enemy. He must not only identify existing aerodromes—this is simple enough—but by casual wandering in the frontier zone he must note sectors which could easily be converted into aerodromes at short notice. He must gather full details of the disposition of frontier forces—here again reports from a widespread net of active agents should supply all the information necessary. Naval Intelligence officers, of course, would work along parallel lines.

One feature of the course I was very interested to learn—from a graduate of the espionage university who subsequently decided that he did not love Hitler enough to die for him. Officers stationed—either diplomatically or as underground spies—in a foreign country are instructed to pay great attention to the actual commanders of armed forces. This is still one of the weakest points of political education, for the faulty German appreciation of foreign psychology has led to major disasters. On the military side, however, the psychological study is given careful attention. The stock example is that of Colonel Hoffman, who, rather than Hindenburg and Ludendorff, ought to be considered the victor of Tannenberg, where a Russian army was annihilated in 1914, and the Russian steam-roller halted—indeed, pressed vigorously into reverse. Hoffman's daring dispositions were largely founded upon psychological intuition. A Russian army under Rennenkampf had advanced into East Prussia, and had fought an indecisive battle at Gumbinnen. Farther to the west a second Russian army under Samsonoff was advancing parallel with the Vistula, to cut off the German Army in East Prussia. Leaving only a thin screen of cavalry to hold Rennenkampf, Colonel Hoffman initiated the move which led to the victory of Tannenberg—withdrawing practically the whole of the German force of infantry and artillery with which to meet the new threat from Samsonoff. If the Russians had struck together, then it must have been the German force which would have been annihilated. But Hoffman had served during the Russian-Japanese War as military attaché with the Russian forces. He knew these two commanders—had actually seen Rennenkampf and Samsonoff quarrelling and boxing one another's ears on Mukden railway station. Therefore, he argued, when Rennenkampf hears that Samsonoff is in trouble, he will not hurry to his assistance—he will rather be glad that his old opponent is having a rough time.

His reasoning was sound. Samsonoff, hopelessly defeated, committed suicide—and Rennenkampf did not move. The German forces, released by the victory, were again rushed back to the Gumbinnen front—and Rennenkampf in his turn had to make an over-hasty retreat.

This example is nevertheless misleading, for such a state of affairs could only exist in a corrupt country. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that a study of an enemy's command is just as important as a study of an enemy's weapons.[1] Long before 1914 the Germans knew of Foch's passion for the offensive—knew full well if he had a choice which way he would choose. Certainly before the World War ended they had appreciated Haig's bulldog grip—uncomfortable for the Germans, but very expensive for the British. I remember talking with a German general who had faced the British on the Somme: after the disasters of July 1st, he explained, any other general would have admitted defeat and transferred his efforts elsewhere. "But not so Haig; once he had set his face to a task, he would stick to it—and this knowledge was extremely useful to us. We knew that he would continue to attack on the Somme; it was elementary reasoning that if he continued to attack there, he would be unable to attack elsewhere. Therefore we were able to withdraw troops in safety from other parts of the line."

By far the most important task of the master spy is to establish an organization and a system of communication which will function efficiently in war-time. The second of these is the more difficult, as we shall see in the succeeding chapter. He must not merely organize espionage: sabotage and propaganda are almost as important. His agents must be so posted as to give information of war-time increases in forces and the distribution of troops. Local men must be prepared to give the necessary indication to raiding aircraft—who in these days of black-outs can never be certain of their exact position. In the organization of sabotage he must have no scruple. Above all, in his dealings with the agents he must not tell them too much: nor must they be put in touch with one another: there is always the fear that one may be captured—and be persuaded to talk.

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[1] On January 12th, 1940, a German aeroplane brought down in Belgium was found to contain, not merely photographs and plans of Belgian defences, but character sketches of Belgian commanders!

The propaganda spy must to-day be placed in the specialist class: he is not a combatant officer but a journalist, a commercial traveller or—the shame of it—a university professor. He is stationed in a neutral country: there his task is to "sell" Germany. Every German victory must be exaggerated, every German defeat minimized. There must be no question about Germany winning the war: this is particularly essential in these days, when Germany's trade is conducted so largely by barter or long term credits. Unfortunate neutrals know quite well that the immense debts owed to them by Germany will never be paid if Germany loses the war.

In an enemy country the position of the propaganda spy is difficult: in fact, to a German national it is impossible. This is one of the cases where neutral hirelings may be successful. It has not been unknown for British and French nationals to work for Germany or Russia—unconsciously, maybe, and certainly without pay, imagining that they are serving some great moral purpose.

A neutral journalist was politely asked to leave Paris soon after the outbreak of war; like a wise man he asked no questions, he just went. Nor did he suggest to his highly respectable newspaper that they should raise any complaint, for the French reply would have been revealing. The journalist was of Fascist persuasions, and had agreed to advance the German cause. In the early days of the war, when news was scanty, he was particularly well placed to spread rumours—always described as emanating from his own neutral country, whereas many of them came from his fertile brain, the rest from Germany via his country. Attention was early directed towards this gentleman—he had actually been watched for many months—when in his conversation he talked rather too freely about the horrors of war, trying to persuade people that anything was better than the events which were happening. This sort of talk might have proceeded from high moral principles—there are many people who hold similar opinions—but when he went on to suggest that the conflict could be arrested immediately if only the French Government went out of office, then it was obvious what lay behind the rumours he set on foot.

Some Allied newspapers actually played into the German hands in their own exaggeration. General Gamelin's initial strategy was eminently sound: it had a double purpose. By a cautious advance on to German soil he was able to afford some slight measure of relief to Poland, while all the time he hoped to goad Hitler into an attack on the Maginot Line. Had he succeeded, he would have won the war. But to read the headlines in certain Allied newspapers, you would have thought that this limited advance by a few French brigades was a major victory. Placards even proclaimed that the

French had broken through a loop of the Siegfried Line, whereas, in fact, they had merely approached its outer defences. This striving for sensation is dangerous: there is nothing so damaging to morale as exhilaration which subsequently is seen to be unjustified. We shall note how the Germans employed this method in Poland. It may or may not be legitimate for the Germans to resort to such tactics, but it is surely folly for responsible journalists in Allied countries to aid and abet them.

Nor were American newspapers entirely without blame—for the leading American newspapers are, of course, studied seriously in Europe. The detached American view is often invaluable. The journalist was not taking a very deep view when he cabled to America that the war was "phoney" because General Gamelin declined to pit his army against the strength of the Siegfried Line. The aim of the Allied High Command is, as it ought to be, to economize in human life, not to sacrifice it to the slaughter. We shall be very happy if the entire course of the war is "phoney." Although it may not provide the necessary sensations for the yellower section of the press, it may be that the war will end without a major and costly victory on land, sea or air: so much the better if it does.

VIII

Considering the patient organization, it is surprising that the mass-production of German spies has achieved so little in the higher phases of espionage. In the lower grades it has been effective, but it can produce few masterstrokes to compare with the brilliant individualist feats of British, French or American Secret Service (U.S.A. entered the World War with practically no Intelligence Service at all, but within two years had improvised one of the most effective in the world).

Certainly the graduates of the German schools have not always done honour to their *alma mater*. Probably the method of recruiting is the prime cause of failure. A gentleman named Marks was enlisted by a threat of blackmail. He was given a "thorough" instruction (in eight weeks!) and sent off to England. Certainly the role with which he was equipped was ingenious enough in its simplicity. He carried a collection of foreign stamps, and posed as a brainless hobby-rider. In England he was to frequent naval ports: if he posted a letter in Portsmouth to a fellow collector in Holland and enclosed a few duplicates, say three Martinique stamps, two Peruvian, four Chilian and three Columbian, that would indicate that on the date the letter was posted there were three battleships, two battle-cruisers, four light cruisers and three destroyers in Portsmouth harbour.

It was a good scheme, quite likely to escape the notice of the censor. Unfortunately for his persecutors, Marks never posted any letters. Immediately on landing in England his nerve failed, and he promptly gave himself up to the police!

Yet the failure of the spy schools is perhaps comprehensible. They teach the pupil how to face given situations. When a certain situation is encountered, he reacts as he has been taught, and promptly betrays himself to the local counter-espionage officers, who know the curriculum of the school as well as he does. And, of course, there are dozens of situations which no spy schoolmaster can foresee. They cannot be met by methods of the mass mind, but only by individual initiative and brilliant improvisation.

Since German spies form the subject of this book, there may be a tendency to regard their work as an overwhelming menace to the democratic cause. Without underrating the menace of espionage—particularly in the shape of underground subversive action—let me insist again that the German spy system is not supernatural or all-powerful. In another chapter the reader shall learn how the efforts of one of its most famous spy schools were completely defeated—by a little Belgian boy playing marbles!

CHAPTER III

CODES, CIPHERS AND COMMUNICATIONS

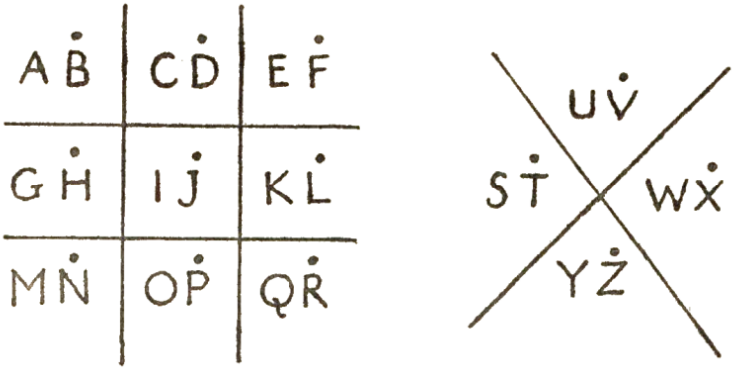
I

THE spy's weakest points are to be found along his lines of communication.

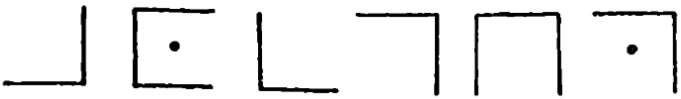
In war-time, especially, it is not difficult to pick up useful information. A German agent in England, by listening to the casual gossip of soldiers or sailors in a railway carriage or a tavern, could glean items of intelligence insignificant in themselves, but which, coupled with hundreds of other similar fragments, might make a revealing picture. A man who could recognize regimental badges and initials, by merely making a casual stroll about the streets of an important garrison town, would provide knowledge immensely useful to a German Intelligence Officer. It is not difficult even for an agent to discover what warships are in a particular harbour on a particular day, news which would be of real value to the German Naval Staff. The difficulty lies not so much in getting the information, as in getting it home.

The education of the spy includes a course of training in the use of codes and ciphers and in other more ingenious methods of conveying information. These are of especial use to the peace-time spy, when mail passes freely from country to country, and is seldom touched by the censor's disturbing hand. To understand his work we must consider some of the elementary methods in use. (By a "cipher" we mean a message in which each sign signifies a letter, or each letter signifies some other letter, of a message. By a "code" we mean one in which a sign or word stands for another word or for part of a message, or is even a complete message in itself.)

Here is a cipher which most of us used at school. Crossing six lines like a "noughts and crosses" diagram, and another two lines in the shape of a St. Andrew's cross, we have its basis. Next we write out the alphabet, putting a dot over every alternate letter.



The idea is simple. The shape of the adjacent line determines a pair of letters, those enclosed by the sign; a dot in the middle indicates the particular letter of the pair so enclosed. For example, two lines in the shape of a capital L do not represent the letter L but E: if the capital L had a dot within its angle it would represent F: similarly a complete square would represent I, while a square with a dot in the middle would represent J. If the bottom side of the square were missing the letter represented would be O, or with a dot in the middle P, and so on. Here is a short example—the reader may care to find the answer to this simple puzzle.



II

The first objection to this kind of cipher is that it is so obviously a cipher; the most unintelligent village policeman, should he catch you with a list of hieroglyphics like this in your possession, will detain you on suspicion of being a spy. A “letter” cipher is somewhat better, for if the policeman finds you with a jumble of letters, you may be able to persuade him that they represent words of a foreign language, or an unsuccessful attempt to solve a crossword! The simplest letter code is the sliding alphabet. You write your alphabet out twice, sliding it one letter as follows:

A B C D E F . . .
a b c d e . . .

Or you may slide your alphabet seven letters, or ten letters, or vary the slide by the number of the month or any other device which you have arranged previously with the confederate who will receive your message. You may even vary the arrangement of either or both of the alphabets according to a prearranged plan; for example, you may use the alphabet backwards or take alternate letters. Julius Cæsar wrote all his dispatches by the sliding alphabet, using d for a, e for b, and so on.

The Germans used to be very fond of the sliding alphabet, and their spies were given thorough instruction in its use. They discovered, however, that the method was easily broken through. (In passing, it is pertinent to say that no cipher, however clever, is foolproof. The deciphering may take time, but experts *will* eventually discover the hidden message. As Edgar Allan Poe once said, "It may be soundly asserted that human ingenuity cannot concoct a cipher which human ingenuity cannot solve.")

The sliding alphabet is easily attacked by the method of the frequency table.

This method is simple and scientific. If you were to take a passage from this book at random—a fairly long passage, two or three pages for preference—and count the number of times the different letters of the alphabet occur, you would find that the letter E outnumbers all the others. In a single sentence, of course, this might not be so—that is why it is important to take a *long* passage. At the same time this reveals the limitations of the method of deciphering. If the message is a long one, then the frequency table is invaluable, but if it merely consists of two or three short words, then it might easily fail.

The frequency table of the English language (it differs in others of course; the letter Z is an easy last in English but is well to the fore in Polish) runs like this:

E T A O N I S H R D L C U F M P B W G Y V K X Q J Z .

I do not wish to be misleading—the application of the frequency table is not so simple as it sounds. If you were to take a page from this book you might find that on that particular page there were more L's than D's—or even L's than H's. But the table does give you a start; after that you have to be content with the trial and error method. The mere fact that you have seven or eight letters which you can reasonably be certain are correct is a great help, as any solver of crossword puzzles will agree. For example, you ought to be able to identify E and T; then if your coded message contains several words T—E, it is fairly safe to assume that the missing letter is an H. Otherwise, if letters come in which do not fit, you must be prepared to

assume that they have occurred more frequently than is normal in this particular passage, so you must go down the scale a letter at a time.

III

German agents are also instructed in the use of the Playfair method of encoding and decoding, since this is frequently used in the British Army. It does not claim to be foolproof, but it takes a long time for an enemy to break through it—and it is based on a code word which is changed every day.

A large square is drawn, and this is divided into twenty-five smaller squares: only twenty-five are necessary—I and J are counted as one letter. First the code word is written down—the repetition of any letter being ignored: then follows the rest of the alphabet. For my particular example I have taken the word HITLER as the code word.

H	I	T	L	E
R	A	B	C	D
F	G	K	M	N
O	P	Q	S	U
V	W	X	Y	Z

The working of the code depends upon rectangles. If my message began with the letters HZ, these letters would represent those in the opposite corners of the appropriate rectangle, EV. Similarly RM would represent CF, and so on, the letters from the *opposite* corners of the appropriate rectangle always being used. If two letters come side by side, those above or below are used. If one on top of another, the next beside them. It will thus be seen that this code always works in pairs of letters. If there should be an odd letter left over at the end of the message, then the letter above it in the Playfair chart is taken. Here is an example based upon the code represented above:

I X S H L N F U M.

My readers again will have no difficulty in arriving at the answer—two instead of one.

A German agent who actually served in the British Army during the last war, as chauffeur to a staff officer, revealed to me some years ago an ingenious letter cipher which he employed and which he claimed was never discovered, a claim substantiated by the fact that he himself was not suspected throughout the whole of the war. Before August, 1914, he had made an arrangement with the Intelligence Officer in Germany who was to receive his messages. Its basis was—of all things in the world to be used for a spy's code!—the Bible.

The cipher was simple: for the first day of the war between Germany and England, the key to the code would be the actual words of Chapter I of Genesis, beginning at the same verse as the date on which the message was coded. For the second day of the war Chapter II, and so on. After the first month he would transfer to Revelation, then come back to Exodus, and thus work right through the Bible.

If the chapter had insufficient verses the number was subtracted from the date, i.e. if the date were the 27th and the appropriate chapter had only fifteen verses, then the code word would begin from 27 minus 15, equals the twelfth verse. Reading through the appropriate verse, the alphabet would be placed against the letters as they occurred, all repetitions, of course, being ignored. Any letters not actually used would follow at the end in their natural order.

An example will make the code readily apparent. Assume that the German agent was sending a message on August 5th, 1914—the first day of war between Britain and Germany—the message might read

5 L H K E Y L D Q .

To decipher its meaning we will copy out verse 5 of the first chapter of Genesis, placing the letters of the alphabet below their appropriate equivalent. The Intelligence Officer would, of course, do the same—the prefix 5 in the message told him the day on which the message was dispatched and so gave him the key to the code. The verse reads:

5. AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY AND
a b c d e f g h j k l m
HE DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT AND
n o p
THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE
q r s
THE FIRST DAY.
t

Thus the order of our code alphabet is:

ANDGOCLETHIYRKSVMWF

followed by the letters not included in their natural order: BPQUXZ. We now proceed to place our new alphabet in the Playfair square

A	N	D	G	O
C	L	E	T	H
I	Y	R	K	S
V	M	W	F	B
P	Q	U	X	Z

Let us now proceed to decipher the example I have quoted:

5 L H K E Y L D Q .

5, of course, is merely the clue to the chapter and verse. Split the other letters in pairs—LH KE YL DQ: now apply the code as previously, taking the letters at opposite corners of the appropriate rectangles. Thus our message reads NO RT IC NU: now turn this backwards, it becomes UNCITRON—*un citron*. Being interpreted, the answer is once more "a lemon."

As will be seen, the cipher is not nearly so complicated as it sounds, and the German agent assured me that he found it quite easy to encode messages of several sentences in ten or fifteen minutes. It is not absolutely foolproof,

but it would take an expert cryptographer hours or even days to break through it.

IV

Naval codes are a vastly different affair. A warship may operate thousands of miles from its headquarters, yet its code system must be such that it can receive orders and transmit information. The code is contained in a book, naturally of considerable size. This code book is one of the most precious possessions of the warship, and more valuable by far than one of its guns. Indeed, it may be more valuable than the ship itself. A ship lost is a ship lost, but a code book lost may lose the war. It is of *vital* importance that it shall never fall into the hands of an enemy. It is usually kept in an iron box, and has itself iron covers, so that if the ship is in danger it can be thrown overboard with the certainty that it will sink.

In the early days of the war of 1914-18 the German cruiser *Magdeburg* was wrecked in the Baltic, and was abandoned somewhat precipitously by its crew. Days afterwards, bodies of German sailors were washed up on the Russian coast. Among them was the corpse of a German petty officer, and in his arms was clasped a book with iron covers. It was easy to visualize the scene—he was the man entrusted with the vital duty of seeing that the book was destroyed, but had been overwhelmed by the inrushing water and had been drowned clutching his precious possession. And now it was in enemy hands!

The Russians very naturally reported their find to the British, as the principal naval power. The code book was considered so important that Mr. Churchill sent a cruiser all the way to Archangel to fetch it—and would willingly have sent the cruiser several times round the world if necessary. For months the British Admiralty enjoyed an incalculable advantage, for every order transmitted by the German Admiral's flagship was picked up and decoded. What was even more intriguing, it was possible on occasions to give false orders to such German warships as were still at sea.

It will be remembered that one of the earliest engagements of the naval war was fought off the coast of Chile, when a strong German squadron commanded by Count Von Spee sank two British ships. Obviously this intolerable humiliation had to be avenged, and a very strong British squadron was dispatched. Yet in the vast spaces of the South Pacific and South Atlantic the Germans might have escaped for weeks, months—even years, if they could have ensured their supplies. The British squadron

arrived at the Falkland Islands, and by a remarkable fluke the German ships sailed to the Falkland Islands the following day—choosing, of all places in the world, the one where an overwhelming enemy was waiting to spring upon them.

The Germans at the time complained bitterly that fate had served them a scurvy trick—that the British were ridiculously lucky in making this chance encounter. The answer is that it was not a question of luck at all: the German squadron sailed to the Falkland Islands because it was told to go there; but its order did not come from the German Admiralty!

V

A letter cipher can be used reasonably freely in peace-time, but at once attracts suspicion in war. Once war has broken out, therefore, the spy must be much more careful—a code is safer than a cipher. German agents are instructed in the use of verbal codes which sound like innocuous messages. One intercepted by the British authorities during the September crisis in 1938 was contained in a cable which read as follows: "Other sets only obtainable to employees. Obtain ten from Ashton. Atkins twice read inquiry at Lyons. If time Ogden should attempt sell Erons as likely extra ton at Sheffield held. Price spoils alliance talk until we ascertain allowance he offers at old basis. Use items on list. Agree this statement."

This is apparently one of the thousand business cables dispatched every day—apparent nonsense, but quite comprehensible to the man at the other end. This message would certainly have escaped notice except that the man to whom it was addressed was a suspect. On investigation the code proved to be a simple one. Take the second letter only of each word, and the hidden message is immediately revealed.

VI

Not merely a letter or a written sign, but any object can be used to stand for a letter in planning a cipher. During the summer of 1939, for example, I chanced across a most ingenious and amusing code used by a German agent in Corsica—where his object was not the gathering of military or naval information, but the encouragement of bad feeling between France and Italy. The streets of the old Corsican towns are very narrow, and houses are tall and closely built. Family washing is generally hung out on a pole which, by arrangement with the neighbour opposite, is hung from window to window

across the narrow street. Sometimes two or three poles laden with washing are to be seen across the street at different levels.

This spy had to communicate from time to time with a confederate. He was suspect, and did not wish to be seen in direct communication. Consequently, he signalled messages by means of the family clothes pole.

The pole, newly laden with clothes, would be hung up. Some little time later, naturally enough, it would be hauled in. Any clothes now dry would be removed, and others put in their place. The confederate, watching from a little distance, had a simple task to note the clothes on the pole, and with a little practice he could read off the message in a few seconds.

The method, too, was simple. All that the confederates had to do was to think of the first letter of the name of each article of clothing in the order they appeared along the pole; for the sake of convenience I have appended an alphabetic list in English.

Apron	Mat
Blouse	Nightdress
Camisole	Overall
Duster	Pants
Eiderdown	Quilt
Frock	Roller towel
Gloves	Shirt
Handkerchief	Trousers
Ironholder	Underskirt
Jacket	Vest
Knickers	Waistcoat
Lace	Yoke

Suppose, for example, the clothes which first appeared on the pole were an underskirt, a nightdress, a piece of lace, an ironholder, a mat, an overall, another nightdress and an eiderdown. The answer this time is in Italian.

VII

Pictorial codes have been popular among spies for over two thousand years: letter codes will transmit verbal messages, but the spy often needs to transmit diagrams as well. An ingenious artist—and a good spy is at any rate a competent draughtsman—can cover the essential detail of the plan he wishes to transmit by lines which completely alter its apparent character.

Lord Baden-Powell, during his career as a patriotic spy, was most inventive in disguising plans of fortifications as butterflies or church windows or ivy leaves. Another artistic spy turned the plan of a naval port into a most realistic black and white drawing of a rural scene.

One of the cleverest adaptations of the pictorial code was invented by a Swiss girl employed by the Germans during the last war as a messenger. She was not an active spy; her business was the vital one of collecting information from resident spies in France and conveying it to the German Consulate at Berne, whence a vast organization of German espionage was directed. Her job was nevertheless difficult and dangerous, and the crossing of the frontier an adventure.

She was no artist, but she was clever with her needle. She had read stories of royalist spies during the Napoleonic wars who used embroidery as a cover for the information they carried. The Napoleonic method was further developed later by another woman, who would stitch messages in Morse, using the appropriate long and short stitches.

The Swiss girl, however, was even more ingenious. One of her regular tasks was to carry back to Switzerland details of the British line of battle in France. The British had about seventy divisions in France at that time, and it was, of course, of the utmost importance to the German Command that the latter should know precisely where each division was. The divisions were naturally not arranged in numerical order, numbering off from the north: the order of battle might be Fourteenth Division, Twenty-first Division, Thirtieth Division, Sixty-sixth Division, Second Division and so on. The list of divisions in line, together with those in reserve, was so complicated that it was quite impossible to commit it to memory, so the girl embroidered it!

When she entered France she would naturally have in her case spare articles of lingerie. Among them would be a pair of knickers and a plain petticoat. In France she would proceed to embroider the bottom edges of the knickers with a suitable pattern—roses or similar decorations. Examine, for example, the specimen I show. Ignore the stems and leaves of the spray of roses, count the number of stitches, which, of course, showed up separately in the embroidery. In the first rose there will be found fourteen, in the second there are twenty-one, in the third thirty. This was sufficient to tell her employers when she returned to Switzerland; they merely counted the stitches and saw that the Fourteenth, Twenty-first and Thirtieth Divisions were in line, side by side.

Where there can be roses, there can reasonably be butterflies—particularly in embroidery. These represented the divisions in reserve—the

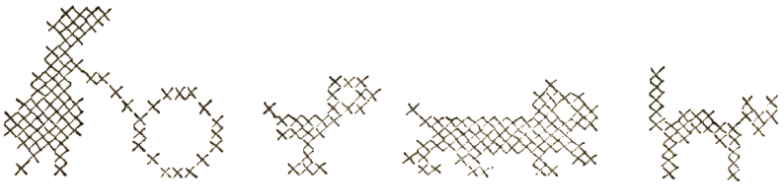
Seventeenth and Twenty-ninth Divisions in my illustration.

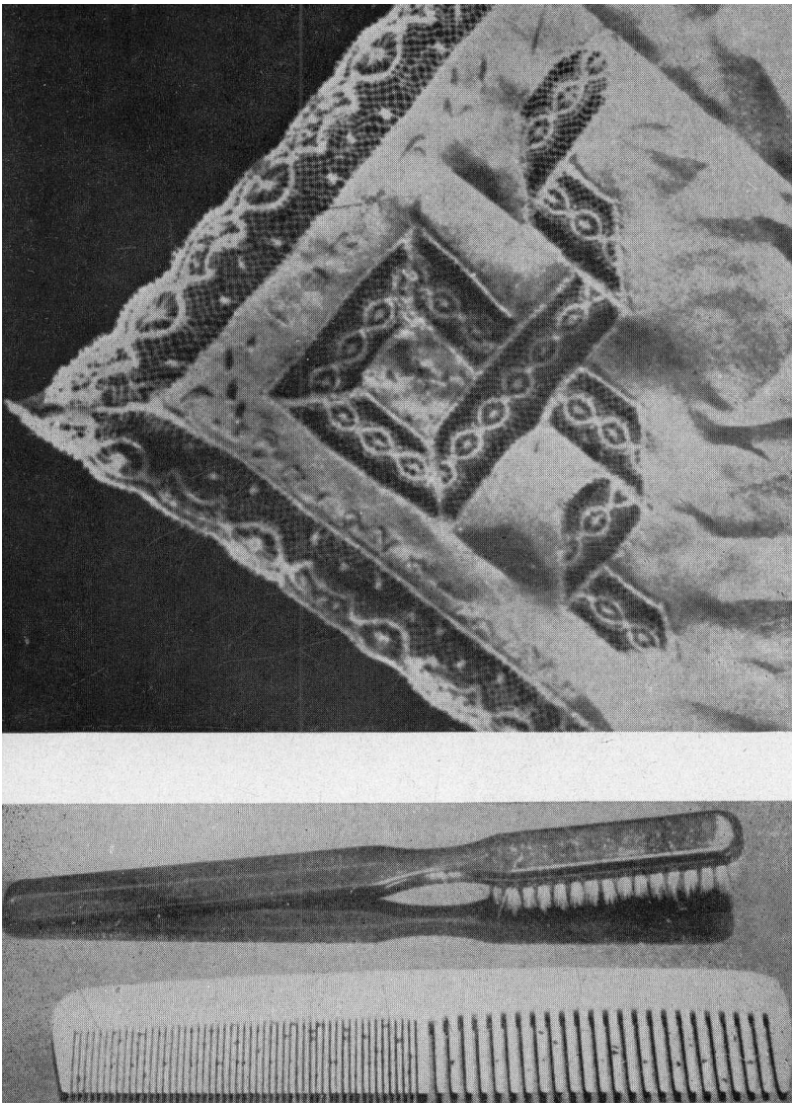
The order of battle from north to south used to commence from one of the same seams and would continue right round the leg. Then the story would be continued on the other, to be followed from a new starting-point on the petticoat to match. Special divisions, such as Australian, Canadian and Cavalry, were embroidered in separate colours, the details of which could easily be committed to memory.

This method was so simple and ingenious that it ought to have been foolproof; and in the case of the girl who used it first, it was. She mentioned the idea, however, to a confederate who was also working for German agents in Berne, and who also decided to adopt the system. A dozen times she made the journey from France back to Switzerland safely. Unfortunately, the girl was of an economical disposition, and it went against the grain to buy expensive underwear for every journey. Consequently, she began to purchase lingerie made of very cheap material, which she could bear to throw away after one use. This was an expensive economy; it led to her death.

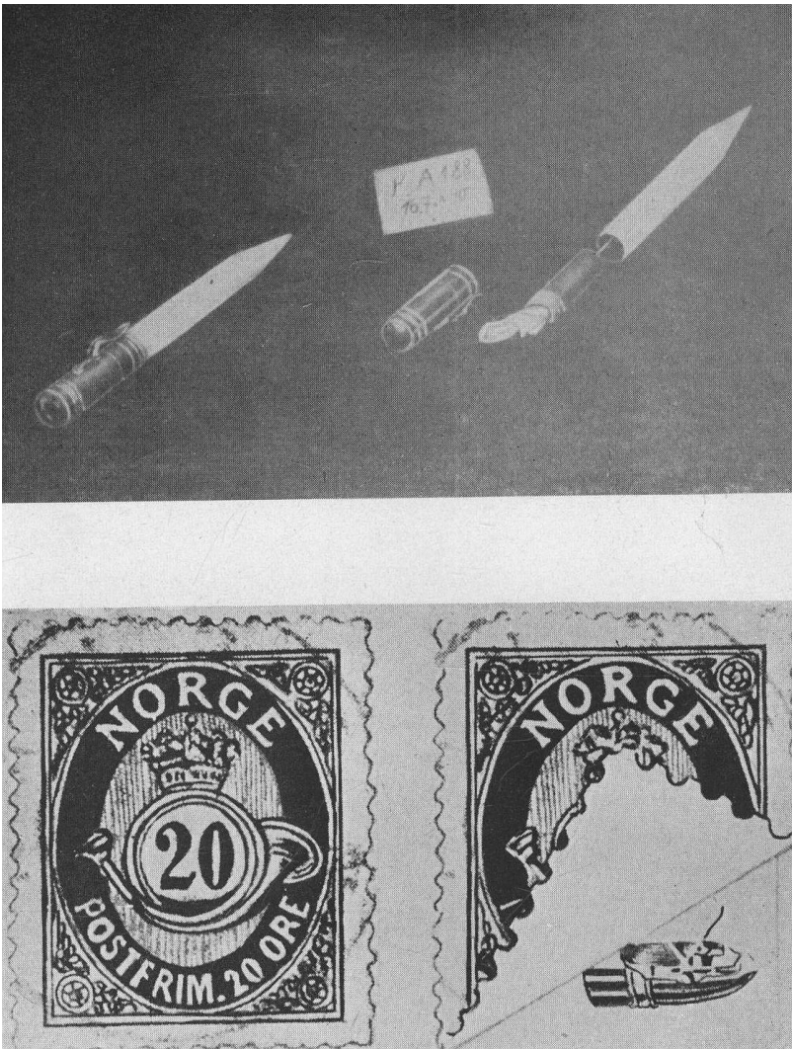
There came a day when she was being examined by a Frenchwoman searcher at Basle; and she, with true Gallic feminine instinct, noticed that whereas the underwear of the Swiss girl was elaborately embroidered, the quality of the material used was so poor that it would not stand up to half a dozen washes. Why? It is always dangerous when the word “why” is used in war-time: the unfortunate girl broke down under cross-examination and met the dread doom of the unsuccessful spy.

The original inventor of this method of communication, however, was warned in time and discontinued its use. In its place she devised a variant of the same idea which was free from peril, since the message could be sent by post. Still engaged on the periodic transmission of details of the British line of battle from France to Switzerland, she would send a birthday present to an imaginary niece in Berne, a pinafore made of some rough material, with animals and other childlike figures very amusingly shaped in crossed stitches. If anyone had thought to count the number of crosses they would have been found to correspond with the numbers of the British divisions. My illustration shows a fragment of one of these pinafores identifying the Sixty-sixth, Twenty-fourth, Sixty-first and Thirtieth Divisions—each complete X counts as one.





(Above): Crochet in code
(Below): Brush and comb codes. The irregular marks conveyed the message.



(Above): School pencil adapted to carry espionage messages
(Below): Drawing of a detonator hidden under a stamp: an over-worked device

German espionage is notoriously conservative. Among the Polish captures in the early days of the present war was a German girl whose embroidered underwear on examination revealed information which had nothing to do with feminine lingerie.

Nevertheless, the method is capable of such ingenious variations that women agents find it irresistible, and it is highly improbable that its occasional failures have prohibited its use.

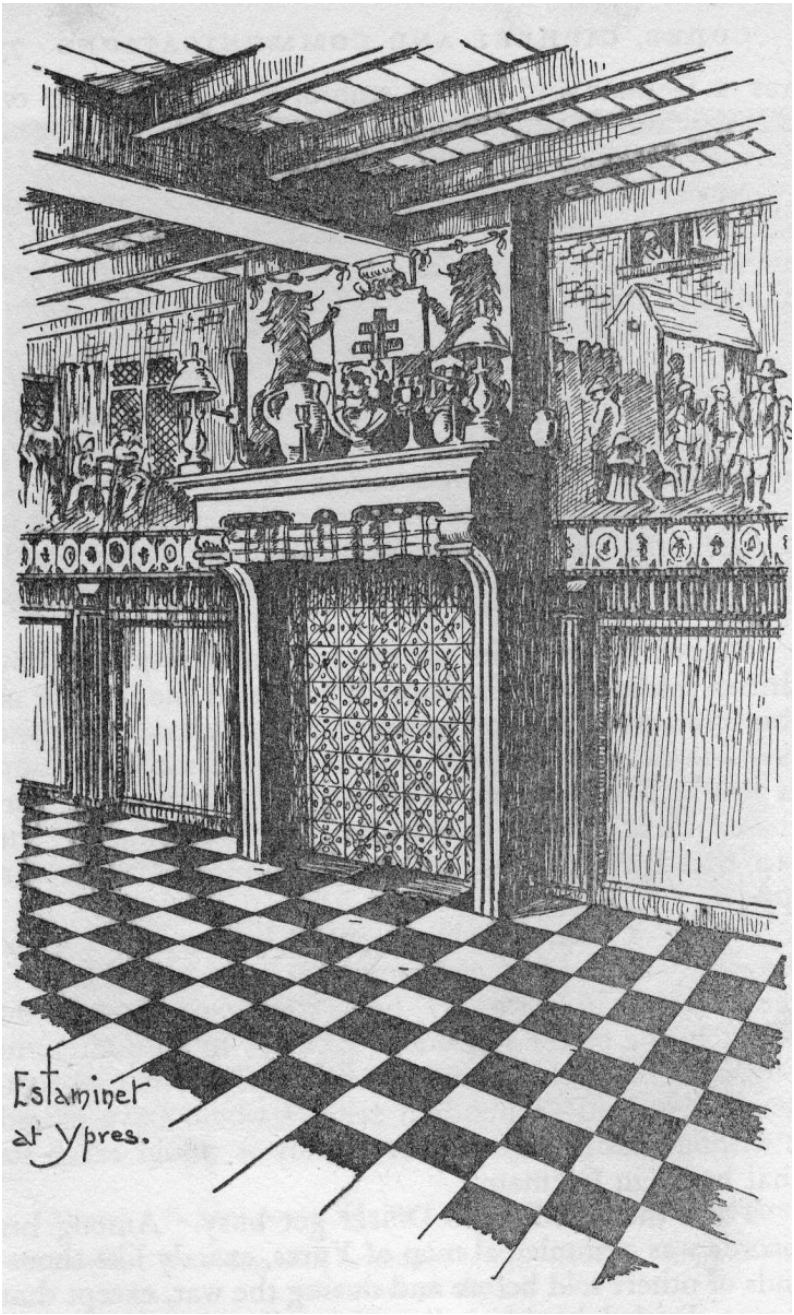
VIII

British troops at Ypres in the winter of 1914 were very familiar with a famous old *estaminet*, an ancient hostelry which was one of the sights of the city. The principal room carried a crest over its mantelpiece and had a magnificent beamed roof; the walls were painted with scenes of Flemish life, and the floor was tiled in black and white.

One of the favourite picture post cards dispatched by British soldiers to their homes represented the interior of this *estaminet*. It also appeared on little black and white sketches of post-card size available for the modest sum of five francs. Dozens of British officers and men purchased these pen-and-ink sketches, quite unaware of the fact that they were buying the handiwork of a German spy.

It was a woman who ingeniously developed these drawings as a method of communicating with the Intelligence Officers in Germany. From time to time she would dispatch one of the innocuous sketches to an address in England. Thence it would be sent on to another destination in Holland—a hundred censors would have passed it without hesitation—and eventually it would reach its final home in Germany.

Then the Intelligence Officer got busy. Among his records was a municipal map of Ypres, exactly like thousands of others sold before and during the war, except that it was divided by black lines into diamond-shape rectangles, and that these rectangles coincided exactly in number and position with the black and white tiles of the sketch of the *estaminet* floor. The method of using them was obvious, as reference to the copy of the sketch here reproduced will show. The floor of the *estaminet* was very old and was naturally chipped in places. The little drawings showed appropriate blemishes—a white mark on a black tile, a black mark on a white tile.



The Intelligence Officer would first fix the drawing to his municipal map, bearing in mind that the centre of Ypres is traversed by the straight rue de Lille. A glance at the drawing: the top of the “t” in the word *estaminet*

touches one of the dividing lines of tiles; this line represents the rue de Lille. At the other end of the line a minute "s" has been worked into the decoration —indicating, of course, the southern end of the street. With his own map of Ypres divided into rectangles exactly corresponding with the tiles of the drawing, the officer had only to stick a pin through the trifling blemishes in the tiles and note where the mark came through on the municipal map. He would then know the exact position of the British headquarters and billets. The British Army at that time thought it most uncanny—a few days after a unit had arrived in Ypres it seemed that the Germans knew precisely where it was billeted and turned their guns upon it. Yet no one thought of suspecting the innocent drawings which were sold for five francs in Ypres itself!

IX

The innocuous-looking letter is actually one of the safest methods of espionage communication, but it has to be very cleverly done—one wrong word, or a false-sounding phrase, may direct the attention of the vigilant censor. Most of the letters depend upon some prearranged code—like the telegram I quoted, where the second letter only of each word counted. On one occasion, however, I chanced across a more ingenious variation of the code letter. It was the work of a German spy operating behind the British front on the Somme prior to the great offensive during the summer of 1916. The railways of the region were less than adequate to the vast requirements of the forthcoming battle, and weeks before huge dumps of material were concentrated. The Director of Supplies and Transport allocated his limited number of railheads to the three principal services—engineering, ammunition and supply (i.e. food). Copies of the map with the railheads marked E, A and S were distributed accordingly to the subordinate officers who had to carry out the work of transport arrangements. The German agent was able to obtain temporary possession of a copy of the map, and a week later an officer of the Intelligence Branch of the German War Office received by way of an innocuous address in Holland a casual letter from an English friend: "I thought you might like to see Fred's last letter," it ran, after much family news. "He doesn't say very much—he never was a writer —but he seems cheerful enough in spite of his grumbling."

The letter enclosed was by no means startling. Ill-written, it was the typical product of a semi-illiterate man; it had been censored twice—in France regimentally and on its exit from England by the postal censor. I reproduce it on page 76. On this page is the map showing the allocation of

the railheads. Study of the letter will reveal that the capital letters commencing each sentence are all either S, E or A: comparison with the map reveals that their positions indicate the exact positions of the corresponding railheads.

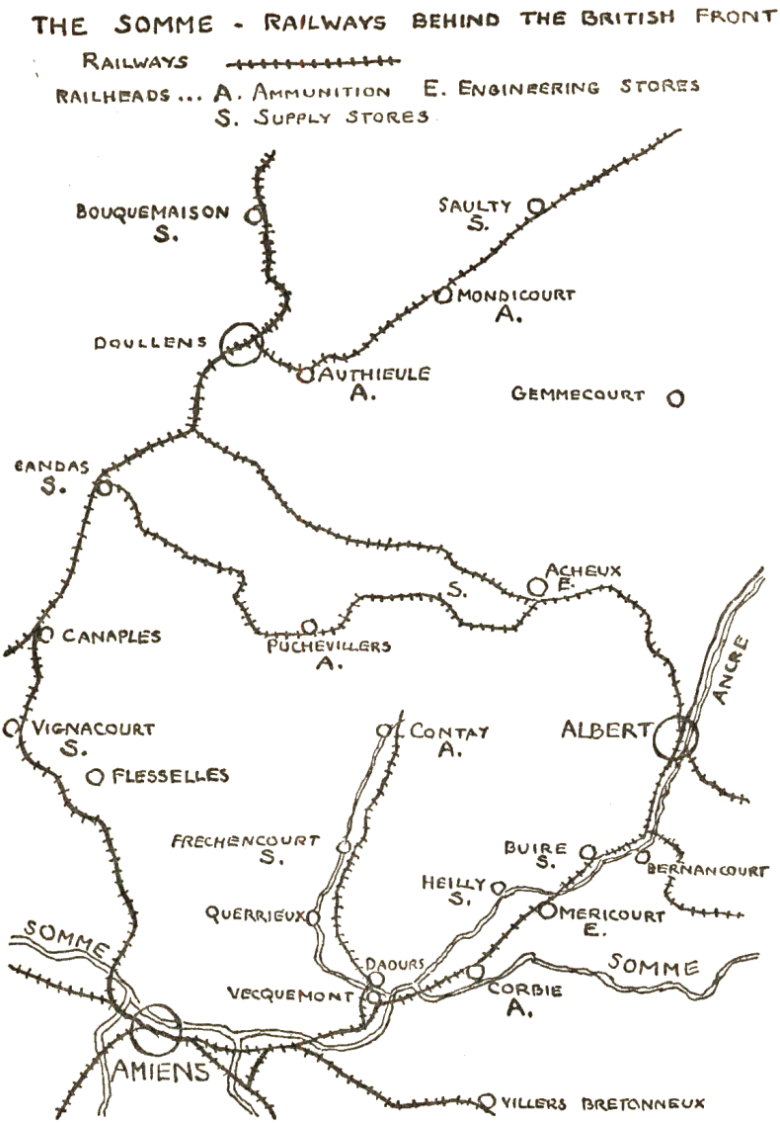
Pte. Fred Cook. No 4671

Darling Nancy,

Sunday. Some of the men are at church parade but I dodged it. And here I am on my kit in the tent writing you a letter. After a rough time in the line we are resting, as they call it. Still it's better than being in the trenches expecting to stop a packet every moment. Sgt Edwards is dead, poor chap. A parcel you sent reached me safely - many thanks So long now. A kiss for Albert he'll be such a big boy I shan't know him. Smile, Smile, smile says the song. Some hope!

Ever yours
Fred.

Are we
downhearted - no



As the scale was accurate, all the German Intelligence Officer had to do was to lay the letter over his own copy of the map of the district. The letter itself provided its own essential point of orientation. Albert is the name of a man and of a Somme town. The point once fixed, therefore, a pin through all the capital S's in the letter revealed the supplies railheads, and so on.

It was just as well that the British air defences on the Somme were strong, for with such valuable information in their possession German bombers might have been a nuisance. The whole course of the battle might

have been upset as a result of this "ignorant" letter which grumbled at church parades, sergeants and anything else the writer happened to think of. Fortunately at that period of the war British supremacy in the air was unquestioned.

X

Happy is the spy who has a confederate at home with a mind which works on the same wave-length as his own. Then the problem of communication is readily solved. By innocuous messages—sent via a neutral country—he can convey to his sensitive friend what is ingeniously hidden inside formal phrases. A favourite study in espionage circles is O. Henry's story *Calloway's Code*. Calloway was a (fictitious) New York newspaper correspondent with the Japanese during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. He could pick up interesting information for his dispatches, but the severe Japanese censorship made it useless. At last he got a hint of really important operations pending, and set himself the task of defeating the Japanese censor.

Nevertheless, his newspaper was startled when it received the following message—the Japs had passed it without hesitation, for it was a collection of rubbish which could have no reference to military operations. "Foregone preconcerted rash witching goes muffled rumour mine dark silent unfortunate richmond existing great hotly brute select mooted parlous beggars ye angels incontrovertible."

Editors scratched their heads and wondered if the rigours of the campaign had turned their correspondent's brain; it was left to a sixteen-dollar-a-week reporter to break through Calloway's code. Yet after all, it was very simple. Calloway had written his message in journalese, using only one word of a stock phrase. Thus "foregone" meant conclusion, "witching" obviously stood for hour of midnight; "dark" was the other half of horse, and "unfortunate" referred to pedestrians. The decoded message ran, "Conclusion arrangement act hour of midnight without saying report hath it host horse majority pedestrians in the field conditions White Way contested force few question times description correspondent unawares fact."

From which cryptic message an astute editor was able to deduce that the Japanese were advancing to the attack at midnight with a large body of cavalry and an overwhelming force of infantry. Their path was contested only by a small force. *The Times* correspondent's description might be questioned, as its correspondent was unaware of the facts. With this

foundation expert journalists wrote a thrilling account of the operations and scored a sensational scoop.

The sixteen-dollar-a-week reporter was just as important as Calloway. There was at least one Calloway in the German Secret Service during the World War, and his reporter was a bosom friend, an Intelligence Officer. The two men had worked and played together since boyhood: the most innocuous messages transmitted by the active German agent were at once given their true perspective when they reached Germany. On more than one occasion, however, the spy was able to transmit information without saying a word or committing a note to paper. Circumstances so arranged themselves that his friend was brought on occasion within earshot, and all the spy did was to play a piano. In the course of half an hour he gave the entire British line of battle—by playing the regimental marches of the different battalions. If he played "A Southerly Wind" twice that meant that the 2nd Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment was in the line; then would follow three repetitions of "Sir Manly Power," identifying the 3rd Middlesex; then "The British Grenadiers"—the 1st Royal Fusiliers; and so on. On another occasion he was able to warn his friend to pay particular attention to the sector of the front held by the Indian Army Corps—by playing selections from the "Indian Love Lyrics" continuously. His crowning triumph was achieved when he was able to convey a complete message in music. The message and its music code ran like this:

Message	*Air*
Scottish troops will attack	"The Campbells are coming" (*old air*)
To-morrow	"To-morrow will be Friday" (*traditional song*)
Evening	Schubert's "Serenade"
At 5-30.	Full chimes of Big Ben Five chords, then half chimes.
With two battalions	The appropriate regimental marches, i.e.:
The 2nd Camerons	"Pibroch Donui Dhu" (*twice*)
And 2nd Royal Scots	"Dumbarton's Drums" (*twice*)
At St. Yves.	"St. Ives" (*Hymn Tune*).

It requires a high degree of understanding to receive and interpret such messages, but the Intelligence Officer in Germany claimed to have decoded over two-thirds of the messages sent by his friend in such unconventional fashion.

This was not the only occasion on which music was used as an aid to spies. In 1917 French postal censors noted that monthly packets of printed songs were being dispatched to various addresses in France. They were quite ordinary songs, and attracted no attention; but one day the official passing the packet happened to be of Alsatian origin. Naturally, therefore, he was interested in a song called "Myosotis d'Alsace": being musical, he hummed the air through. Next month it chanced that the same man handled the packets again; once more "Myosotis d'Alsace" was included in the batch—*but it was not the same tune!* Suspicion was naturally aroused, and careful examination showed that "Myosotis d'Alsace" was the key to a code, the other songs being the actual instructions to agents, suitably coded. Actually the code was clumsy, and once discovered had disastrous consequences. All the addressees were promptly arrested, of course; any person with a copy of "Myosotis d'Alsace" in his possession was immediately revealed as a spy.

A most ingenious code depended upon ciphers in the form of simple fractions. It could not be worked too frequently, but an occasional letter would pass without attracting the attention of the most suspicious censor. The "proud father" would write from France to some relative in Denmark extolling his small son for his advance in his study of arithmetic. As a sample of his prowess, a page from the boy's exercise-book would be forwarded for the admiration of the uncle in Denmark. Working on an arranged code, the uncle had no difficulty in deciphering the message. The numerators of the fraction in the sum stood for lines in an agreed book, while the denominators meant letters in the same line.

XI

The would-be spy may, however, boggle at the use of codes. His mind may be of a peculiar calibre which reacts unfavourably to verbal puzzles. If so, the wise spymaster does not attempt to press him: he recognizes that some people are good at codes and some people are not. A few simple codes must necessarily be memorized: the use of complicated codes can be avoided by using invisible ink.

Invisible ink is not to be purchased in a stationer's shop; for that matter it is not necessary to purchase it at all—you can make your own. We have mentioned several times that ubiquitous fruit, the lemon. A spot of lemon juice will make an admirable invisible ink; take a perfectly clean nib, dip it into the lemon and write your message on a piece of paper; allow the juice to dry—and there will be nothing to be seen. Then run a hot iron over the

paper, and the writing will return—faint and light brown in shade, but readily legible.

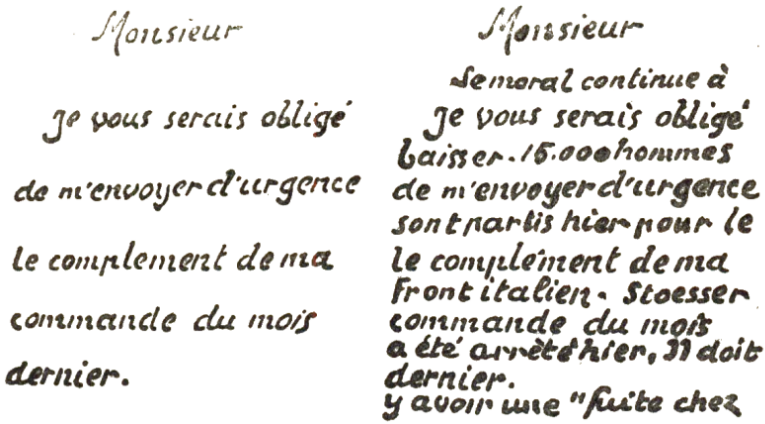
The Germans, however, prefer to supply their agents with chemical inks of greater complexity, but not so readily revealed. There are many in use which defy the hot iron; but there are, of course, reagents to all chemicals. If you receive a letter from a foreign country in war-time, you may have noticed that it carried broad smears across the page—the traces of reagents which have been used to bring out any message in invisible ink, which might have been written in the margin of the letter or between the lines. Even should German chemists succeed in inventing a new chemical ink which momentarily defied the Allied chemists, there is yet another method of attack.

Take a clean nib, dip it in water, and begin to write: or dip it in nothing at all—merely write with the dry nib on the paper. Your nib will make minute scratches on the paper—invisible to the naked eye, but easily seen under the microscope. Nor is microscopic examination necessary. An iodine vapour bath is an essential appliance in every censorship office: this is a simple apparatus—a tin oven in which iodine is maintained at the lowest temperature at which it will remain vaporized. The suspected letter is introduced into the bath: iodine tends to settle on rough surfaces; and in a few minutes, when the letter is withdrawn, it will be found that minute crystals of iodine have settled along the tiny rough edges formed by the scratch of the nib. The writing, clumsily outlined and with many blurs, comes to light by this ingenious device.

Yet even this can be countered. The Germans frequently supply their agents with ball-pointed pens—nibs with a tiny ball instead of a point. This makes no scratches as it passes over the page—it is necessary to write large in order to make the necessary loops. The resultant letter could pass even the detecting interior of the vapour bath without arousing suspicion. But, on the other hand, if a man were caught with a ball-pointed pen in his possession, then he was on the face of it a spy; there was no other reason for possessing such a thing.

Invisible ink, naturally, is not carried about in bottles so labelled! One German spy arrested in England carried his supply in a tin originally manufactured to house homely talcum powder! Others carried their ink in their clothing: before leaving their base they would dip handkerchiefs, collars or even socks in a solution of the chemical. The articles, carefully dried, were carried to their destination; then it was only necessary to dip the handkerchief or other article of clothing in a very small quantity of warm

water, and to squeeze it out to turn the water into an ink of adequate strength.



WRITING "BETWEEN THE LINES"—IN INVISIBLE INK

Until its use was discovered and the necessary reagent supplied to counter-espionage officers, the Germans during the World War made great use of a fluid comprised of naphthol, collodion and acetone in the proportions of one, twenty, sixty. This mixture was smuggled to their agents as medical tablets, which were always packed in paper bearing the trade mark of a genuine manufacturer of chemists' supplies. The spies were also supplied with point protectors in metal, which fitted over their pencils, and which served as a measure for the quantity of powder necessary for the production of the ink!

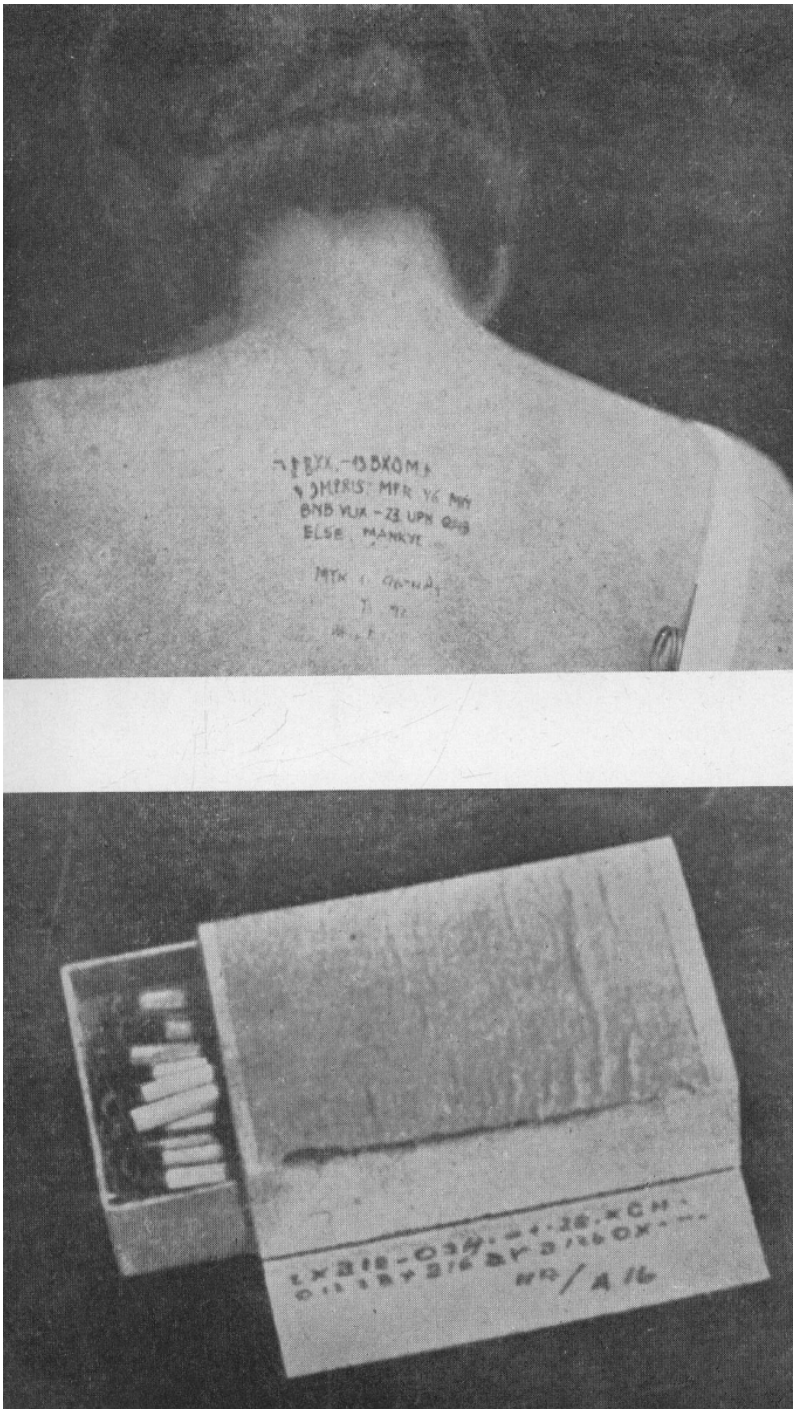
(Chemists may be interested in the reagent used to develop the invisible writing. Five grains of sulphuric acid were mixed with fifty cubic centimetres of nitric acid in a litre of water, and added cold to one gramme of sodium nitrate. Fifty grammes of sodium acetate were then dissolved in two hundred cubic centimetres of water. Working with a mixture of twenty cubic centimetres of this second solution with a hundred cubic centimetres of the first solution, the complete paper was then dipped in the mixture until all the letters appeared, and was afterwards washed in distilled water and dried between sheets of blotting-paper.)

Lead acetone is a frequent component of invisible ink, but many spies favour a mixture of brandy and milk as being components more readily obtainable. Italian spies in war-time were supplied with an ink made of potato pulp disguised as a remedy for toothache.

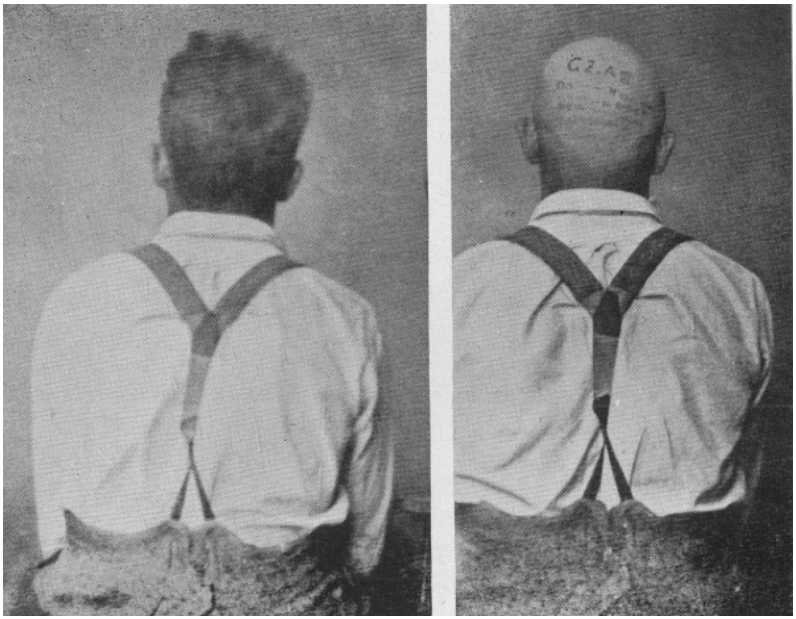
One of the most successful spies to use invisible ink was a Swiss railwayman employed by the Germans, who used to stick labels on trucks or consignments of goods passing from Switzerland into Germany. If he could not get all his message on the labels he was officially supposed to affix, he would add a few innocuous labels—"With Care," "Urgent," and so on! Naturally no censor thought of examining labels on trucks, but a keen Intelligence Officer in Germany studied the invisible writing they carried with great interest a day or two later.

Yet even he cannot claim pride of place in the use of this interesting medium. In one of my books I described a girl messenger who actually used to get a friend to write code messages in secret ink on her bare back! Allowing the ink to dry, she dressed and went to her journey's end. Then she undressed and sat with her back to the fire: the heat brought out the letters, and the receiving Intelligence Officer read them off.

A newspaper critic wrote: "This time Mr. Newman has gone too far. Surely he does not expect us to accept as true what must be a product of his fertile imagination!" I sent him a copy of a photograph, taken from German espionage records: but he never apologized.



(Above): Message in "invisible ink" on a girl's back!
(Below): Code message inside the covering of a match-box



A device, 3000 years old, still employed by the Germans for "long term" information: a tattooed head, the code being covered by growing hair

XII

Although agents are given instructions at the spy schools on communications, many of them prefer to concoct their own methods; sometimes they are successful, sometimes not. Messenger spies in particular prefer to work out their own methods of smuggling information across the frontier. A French counter-espionage officer once told me of some of the remarkably ingenious places in which he had discovered concealed papers. Clothing headed his list; women were particularly fond of this method of concealment: they would hide papers in sewn-up padding, hidden pockets, wrapped around the whalebone of corsets (a favourite hiding-place) and in one case at least most ingeniously hidden in a little pocket sewn under a press stud.

(At the great international spy trial in Paris in 1936, one of the accused was a Roumanian woman dentist. She admitted that her function in the gang's activity was to assist in the concealment of messages. Information would be written on thin fragments of paper, which she would screw into a tiny ball: this she would insert into a hollow tooth in the mouth of one of the gang selected to carry the message—usually Mrs. Switz, a young American girl who became involved in espionage on her honeymoon—and cover over

the paper with temporary stopping! This highly ingenious and simple method almost deserved to succeed.)

The choice of male spies was not less inventive, my French friend said. Hollow nails, the lining of clothes, hollow buttons, the ferrules of umbrellas, brims of hats, handles of suitcases, hollow tags of shoelaces, hairbrushes, balls of string—what method did they *not* use, he demanded. He gave pride of place to one Belgian who had apparently cut himself rather badly while shaving that morning, for one cheek was liberally patched with tiny patches of cotton-wool. When one of these was removed, however, it revealed not a razor cut, but a message written on screwed up cigarette paper.

I saw a spy film recently in which the beautiful woman spy pretended to have a broken arm in order that she could carry her message in the plaster surround. A film audience is not critical, but counter-spies are, and the lady would have achieved but a short shrift if she had essayed such an antique device in real life.

Sometimes, however, a spy can get away with a new variant of an old device. There was one German who favoured the hollow ferrule of an umbrella: inside this ferrule he carried a dozen small coins. Thus, if his secret were discovered, he could always pass it off as the little foible of an eccentric man. So he did, until an observant frontier officer noticed a fragment of paper in between the coins.

Compromising papers, my French counter-spy continued, were discovered between the double walls of a lead box, inside wine-bottle corks, inside cardboard cases with a false bottom, in the hollows of thermos-flasks and similar homely articles. Writing in invisible ink was a greater problem. Spies did not confine their activities in this direction to letters. In the early days of the present war the British authorities made a regulation prohibiting the exportation of printed matter. This was a result of the last war's experience, for it was found that the Germans favoured books as vehicles of espionage communications; either by means of letter codes of the type which we have described, or with communications in invisible ink written in the margin of pages previously agreed.

In modern times women spies have been able to summon fashion foibles to their assistance. One woman agent had her finger-nails brilliantly enamelled in red—a horrible and barbaric custom, but by no means uncommon. When the enamel was carefully removed, a highly interesting communication was discovered written in minute letters on the woman's finger-nails. Another spy carried her information even more confidently—

wrapped into a roll, encased in waterproof silk, and tucked away in her mouth between her upper lip and gum.

XIII

It is scarcely possible to mention any household article, or even item of food, which has not at some time or other been used as a method of espionage communication.

Eggs figure more than once in the spy records of Europe. There was one case of a lady who lived in France, but only a mile or two away from the Swiss frontier: legitimately enough, she used to have her eggs sent from a Swiss farm—in times of peace, movement over friendly frontiers is easy enough, and, a frontier being an artificial line, it is quite natural that local people should move freely from one side to the other.

Unfortunately for the lady, the French counter-espionage service grew suspicious. She had done nothing to excite their curiosity, but a French agent in Switzerland had discovered that the Swiss farmer was a German whose activities had been known in another connection some years before. For weeks, however, they were unable to discover any illicit intercourse—except for the consignment of eggs and payment for them, there seemed to be no communication. The cartons in which the eggs were delivered were examined by French agents. At last, in despair, it was decided to examine the eggs themselves. Within a few hours laboratory tests had revealed their secret, for when they were dipped in a certain solution of gallnut, writing was disclosed on their shells; the ink was identified as a preparation of tithymal.

Yet this method was primitive compared with another across which I have chanced on more than one occasion. I can still recall the amazement of a veteran counter-espionage officer when, peeling the shell from a hard-boiled egg, he noticed hieroglyphics in black on the white of the egg, which eventually deciphered themselves into letters. Yet the device is simple enough—and for that matter by no means modern. After the egg is hard-boiled and has been allowed to cool, the spy gets a small portion of alum and vinegar—both, it will be noted, homely articles arousing no suspicion. The alum is the more unusual, but a spy can legitimately carry an antiseptic block with which to rub his chin when he cuts himself while shaving. The alum and vinegar are mixed together to the consistency of ink; then the message is written on the outside of the shell. As this unique invisible ink

dries, there is nothing to be seen; but a few hours later the message (which must be written in large characters) will appear on the white of the egg.

A chemist friend of mine has given me an explanation of this apparently remarkable phenomenon. There is, of course, iron in alum—ferrous ammonium sulphate: commercial vinegar (acetic acid) is just strong enough to perforate the egg shell (calcium carbonate) carrying with it a little iron in solution. After the acid has eaten through the shell, it reaches the white of the egg. This contains sulphur—as you will have remarked when smelling a bad egg: the sulphur combines with the iron in solution to form iron sulphide, which is black.

Very often Intelligence information has to make a long and roundabout journey before it reaches its home. A German spy operating behind the Allied front in France during the World War had to send his information via Switzerland, or even by a longer detour; there was one agent who found it safer and more convenient to correspond with a confederate in South America. There were occasions, however, when a more direct method of communication became possible.

When the French lines finally settled across eastern France and Flanders in the autumn of 1914, they cut the Lens coalfield in two, the line running between Lens itself and Béthune. Thus half the pits remained in French occupation, the other half in German; and so desperately was the precious coal needed that both sides continued to work them, all pits up to within a couple of miles of the front line being in use.

Now many of these pits belonged to a single mining company, and had been developed together. They were connected by underground galleries—the different pits, in fact, were but separate exits of the same mine. To quote a particular case which was to come intimately to my notice: on the French side of the line near Annequin was Fosse (or pit) 9: on the German side of the trenches was Fosse 8, and the two were connected by mining galleries.

When the British took over this area from the French in 1915, they discovered to their surprise that French engineers were still working at an underground engine-house which was actually behind the German lines! The British suggested that the gallery between Fosse 9 and Fosse 8 ought to be blocked, but the French objected on the optimistic ground that we should soon drive the Germans back and should then require the immediate use of this mine—the blocking of the gallery and abandonment of the engine-house would ruin the ventilation and drainage systems.

The British engineers, however, persisted in their request, and at last the French agreed to block the gallery. But when the British examined the

concrete blocking inserted by the French, they found it was only built up to a height of four feet, and that there was ample space for a man to crawl over the top. Then the truth emerged—the French did not want to close the gallery permanently, because they were using it to pass agents behind the German lines! The converse possibilities could not be overlooked, however, and later I was able to establish that it was also used by the Germans, whose agents behind the French and British lines used to employ Polish miners to traverse the mining gallery and hand over information to a man at an agreed spot in the shaft of Fosse 8. Sometimes an actual encounter was unnecessary —the Germans would lower an iron kibble to the appointed place, and the miner would simply place his information in it. No wonder that the French preferred to take the risk of German use of the gallery, for such a ready method of communication was priceless to messenger spies!

XIV

One story of espionage communication is so macabre that it might have originated in the mind of a particularly morbid Russian novelist. On this occasion German agents appear in a defensive role, for the method was worked by Belgian spies in British pay. It is worth including in this book, however, if only to indicate that the Germans were by no means alone in concocting ingenious methods of communication. As a matter of fact, the best German efforts were easily beaten by the remarkable espionage exploits of that gallant band of men and women in occupied France and Belgium who in captivity served their countries so well.

If you will study a large-scale map of Belgium and Holland, you will find at a spot about twenty miles north of Turnhout a strange enclave called Baar le Duc. When the frontier between Holland and Belgium was marked in 1839, it naturally ran with many variations, guided by the vagaries of parish boundaries. Baar le Duc was claimed by the Belgians, and the claim was admitted by the Dutch; but to the south of the village was land which was definitely Dutch. So it happened that the Belgian village of Baar le Duc is surrounded by Dutch territory, with a neutral road a mile or so long connecting it with the mother country. These “inland islands” are by no means uncommon in the confused vagaries of the European frontiers. There is quite a considerable district of Spain, Llivia, which is entirely enclosed by French territory.

The importance of Baar le Duc becomes immediately obvious: since to reach the village the German troops would have to pass across Dutch territory, they never got there. The enclave was thus a natural centre for

Allied espionage activity. Once the volunteer agents of France and Belgium could get the information to Baar le Duc their work was finished, for the Allies maintained an Intelligence staff there.

Throughout the war the Germans were continually in difficulties along the Dutch-Belgian frontier. In spite of all their efforts, information persisted in leaking over. By 1916 they had enclosed the frontier within belts of wire—not merely with barbed wire but with wire charged with high tension electricity that gave death at the touch. Machine-guns, searchlights, patrols and dogs endeavoured to keep the frontier closed; and normal traffic to Baar le Duc was completely halted. One day, however, there approached the frontier a pathetic funeral procession. In the coffin was the body of an old man, it was explained, a native of Baar le Duc who before he died asked to be buried in his native village. The German officer, a kindly veteran of the Landwehr, at once agreed, and even ordered the guard to turn out and present arms as the funeral procession passed. A fortnight later another body was brought for burial to Baar le Duc.

All this time information was leaking from Belgium, and German agents, by a process of elimination, were able to trace the point of leakage to Baar le Duc. Ace agents were accordingly dispatched to the adjacent point on the frontier, where they examined all the records of crossings and undertook a rigorous search of all who approached. The next funeral to come along was closely examined—there had been a suspicion that the Landwehr officer had been fooled and that the coffin was a fake. Nevertheless, even the hardened counter-espionage agents recoiled when they found that there was a body inside it.

Nevertheless, information continued to filter through to Baar le Duc. A few weeks later yet another funeral procession was halted, and this time was made to wait while a German doctor was summoned from a neighbouring camp. Then a macabre scene was played. The coffin was carried inside the frontier post, and the body lifted out and stripped of its grave clothes. The doctor examined the corpse carefully, only to find it had not been scarred in any way—the counter-espionage officer had suspected that a message might be conveyed by means of scratches on it. Then with delicate tweezers the doctor explored the nose and ears; next he forced open the mouth, and arranging an electric lamp to serve as a reflector fastened to his forehead, commenced a thorough examination of the mouth and throat. A few minutes later he drew from the dead man's throat a small roll of paper wrapped in waterproof silk. The counter-espionage officer seized it eagerly and unrolled it—to display accurate details of the German battery positions on the Menin front!

I have insisted that Germans by no means hold the monopoly of ingenious ideas. An American spy during the World War once carried vital plans inside the barrel of a key, cleverly hollowed out to admit them. A Belgian who lived near the Dutch frontier used to wrap his papers round the shaft of an arrow and shoot it by night over the wire fence which guarded the frontier.

One of the simplest and most effective methods used by a German espionage messenger was to hide a small piece of paper inside a bar of chocolate. The necessary slit was made with a knife and the paper was pushed inside; then the knife was heated and run over the edge of the chocolate, melting it and closing up the crack made. A dozen times the spy made his journey with his messages so cunningly concealed, but at last he had the misfortune to run into a clumsy frontier guard. While the suspect was being searched, the guard happened to drop the bar of chocolate, which broke in two and revealed the incriminating missive.

There was one Alsatian spy in German pay who carried messages ensconced in his glass eye! His case, and that of the American girl Switz, is matched by another German agent who had a hollow tooth, and used to press incredibly thin pieces of paper into a ball inside it. Incidentally, there is more than one authenticated case of spies who feared the inevitable result of capture and were determined to evade the possibilities of torture. A hollow tooth was ingeniously stopped with a small gold screw; inside its hollow was a small dose of potassium cyanide, which could be released by removing the gold screw when the wearer had abandoned all hope.

One German agent of the last war solved the double problem of obtaining information and of transmitting it to Germany in one clever stroke. This was J. C. Silber, who deserves a high place on the espionage roll; he served his country bravely and cleverly, and, in so far as a spy can, he played the game.

He was a man who had travelled widely, and he had been of assistance to the British during the South African War. In 1914, therefore, he was able to offer his services to the British censorship; his German was good—naturally, as it was his native tongue! Established in the censor's office, he could not only pick up many and important titbits of information by the reading of other people's letters, but he could, moreover, always ensure the dispatch of his communication, since he wielded the all-important censor's stamp.

His value to Germany during the World War can scarcely be over-estimated: each censor was, of course, supplied with a "suspect list" of

addresses in Germany, and particularly in neutral countries, which were suspected by the British of harbouring espionage organizations. Imagine the gain to Germany when this information reached it! Silber's principal difficulty lay in the necessity for memorizing the information he picked up from letters: as he worked in a room with dozens of other censors, he obviously could not halt to make notes.

His greatest coup can serve to demonstrate the responsibility of the ordinary man and woman in war-time. A woman, writing to a friend, referred casually to her brother, a naval officer; he was working upon hush-hush business, she said, arming an old merchant ship. Silber recognized that that ship might mean some new development, and made an opportunity to go to the town whence the letter was written; there he called upon the writer —in his official capacity as a government censor. He warned her of the dangers of casual gossip, which might yield valuable information to a German spy, and read her a lecture on her indiscretion; she was naturally genuinely concerned. Silber then adopted a friendly attitude, promised that nothing more should be heard of the matter, and so won her confidence. Her brother, the naval officer, had apparently been as careless in his correspondence as she was, and from his account of this "arming of an old merchant ship" Silber was able to give Germany the first warning of the Q-boats which were to take a dreadful toll of German submarines.

Silber's story provides an example of espionage of the highest quality— a veritable battle of brains, far removed from fantastic disguises, beautiful blondes and the strangling of sentries with bare hands.

XVI

Brilliant though counter-espionage methods are, it is sometimes a spy's own carelessness that wrecks even the safest plan and forms his most dangerous adversary. Before this present war a German woman, a messenger rather than a spy, had been given a message to take from Poland to Germany via East Prussia. She hid it in one of the heels of her shoes. This might have been safe enough, but unfortunately she was given to extremes in her dress —her make-up was too lavish, her clothes just a little too fashionable, and the heels of her smart shoes too high.

On the morning that she was due to leave the hotel, one of her six-inch heels buckled beneath her and threw her down the stairs. Immediately behind her was a Polish counter-espionage man who had her under suspicion and had not let her out of his sight for more than five minutes. He had

noticed that wobbling heel, and while the woman was lying groaning on the floor he picked up the shoe and took the piece of paper from it.

Another German agent who gave himself away by an unconsidered trifle was an artillery officer, Captain Hans Boehm. He was posing as an American citizen on an Atlantic crossing, but when the ship reached Falmouth for examination he attracted the attention of the examining officer. Eventually he was interrogated at Scotland Yard by Sir Basil Thomson, who soon formed the opinion that the American was not all he professed to be. Sir Basil continued to question him without breaking down his story. Eventually, however, Sir Basil paid the Atlantic traveller a neat compliment and his visitor promptly bowed—from the waist!

A spy or an agent or a messenger must never relax. He must always remember what he did or said years ago. Inability to do this led last year to the downfall of one of the most successful and notorious German spies. For some time this man had operated in England. The Special Branch had him watched, but as he picked up little that was of any value, they did not arrest him. This inactivity on the part of the authorities is frequently deliberate. A spy may be allowed to go on for years before any attempt is made to check his career. So long as he does not send out vital information, he may be more valuable at large than if he were under arrest. Were he arrested, some other agent more astute and harder to circumvent might be next to replace him. Meantime, the authorities know where to find him, if they want him. His very presence in a country brings other spies to him. Then, when it becomes necessary to have a general round-up (as when war is declared, for example), many more spies and agents are caught because one man has been at liberty for a long period.

This particular man, having spent some months in England, sailed for America in one of the large transatlantic liners. As it happened, a high British official was also in that liner, and a Special Branch officer was sent to watch both the distinguished passenger and the spy. Nothing untoward occurred, and the spy disembarked in New York, where the police were warned about him by the Special Branch officer.

Two years later the German was back in England. By this time he had advanced in his profession and he was regarded as a more dangerous type of spy; it was unlikely, therefore, he would be allowed at liberty much longer.

During his stay he made several furtive meetings with other suspects in a small hotel in the Waterloo Road. Something was undoubtedly “in the wind.” At last he was seen to meet a man who had been warned off a Royal Air Force aerodrome. The Special Branch men could not be sure, but they

believed that a paper passed between the two agents. If so, then the paper must be obtained at all costs. It might contain only a few pencilled notes or figures, but they were known to be of importance; it was imperative that the German should be searched. No sooner was he seen to leave the dingy Waterloo Road hotel and go to the boat-train platform than he was arrested at the barrier on some technicality connected with aliens' registration.

In the cab on the way to Scotland Yard he asked if he might smoke. Permission was given . . . and then, suddenly and dramatically, withdrawn. The pipe which was already between the man's lips was commandeered by the police. It contained the piece of paper stuffed in the bowl all ready to be burnt away. The spy was obeying the unwritten law of all spies, never to let any information fall into the other man's hands, but he had forgotten one thing. Normally he was a non-smoker, and when he had crossed the Atlantic he had said as much in front of the Special Branch detective. Scotland Yard has a habit of putting the same man on to the same job, and when the German returned to this country the same Special Branch officer kept track of him . . . and recalled this casual remark. Besides, thanks to Baden-Powell's revelations, this trick is now too well known to succeed.

A German agent crossing the Polish frontier gave himself away by a trifling slip. He was carrying plans of some size, strapped around his shins. Lest any frontier officer should take any notice, he affected a slight limp which would explain any stiffness in the leg. But, once over the frontier, he forgot to limp, and was promptly arrested. Evidently he had missed the appropriate lesson in the spy school—a pebble in his shoe might have saved his life.

Carelessness among the spies themselves is serious enough, but it is even worse when the people who teach spies are careless. The celebrated Lady Doctor was, towards the end of her career, in charge of a German spy school at Antwerp. She was as brilliant a teacher as she was a spy, but during the 1914-18 war she passed out two pupils who were guilty of the most incredible carelessness. Working under cover of travellers in cigars, representing a Dutch concern, they telegraphed messages from various naval ports, messages which read something like this: "Send three thousand Coronas, eight thousand Havanas to . . ." (a certain naval port). This would be interpreted in Germany (where the message eventually reached) as meaning that there were three battleships and eight cruisers in that port.

Very simple, and very ingenious in its simplicity, but it contained an error that not even Sherlock Holmes's Watson could have overlooked. . . . British sailors are not, indeed cannot afford to be, great cigar smokers. This

was soon spotted by the censors of cables. Why such large consignments needed at these ports, all of which were large naval bases? Inquiries soon revealed that the two men, Janssen and Roos, were spies, and led to their execution by shooting in the Tower of London.

Simplicity is the keynote of a spy's communications. The innocuous letter is the safest of all, but it is a feature of British espionage rather than German, which favours codes and invisible inks. There is something cumbrous about mass-produced efforts which makes the task of counter-espionage agents easier. The German counter-spies are hard-worked, and during the World War were constantly hoodwinked by Belgian and French amateurs.

News of the imminent offensive at Verdun had been gathered by volunteer agents: how to get it over the Dutch frontier? The Germans would have used an elaborate organization, which might have succeeded or have betrayed itself by its creaking. The Belgian volunteers used—a little boy!

He flew his kite near the frontier. Alas, the wind was too strong, and blew it away, into Holland. The little boy sobbed bitterly, so that a kindly German frontier guard gave him *sous* to buy sweets for comfort. I hope he got more sweets from his friends: certainly the Allied Intelligence Officer who received the kite in Holland, and who deciphered the information contained in the torn pieces of paper which had formed its tail, would have bought him an entire sweetshop.

CHAPTER IV

GERMAN SPIES AT WORK

I

IT is one of the complaints of Intelligence Officers in Europe that the Nazis have debased espionage from a profession to a racket. This statement has a reasonable foundation of fact. Scruples were never a strong feature of the spy's character, but certainly his moral standards have never been so low as to-day. Nothing is too mean, too sneaking, to achieve his results. Distress to innocent people simply does not count. Violence, robbery, blackmail, incitement—even murder—are everyday counts in the spy's calendar.

Spying is to Intelligence what blackmail is to crime. Judges and police alike declare their pleasure at the conviction of a guilty blackmailer; they are often sorry for a murderer, whose crime may have been unpremeditated, committed in the heat of passion. Blackmail, dirty and insidious, is an admirable companion for espionage.

The combination of blackmail and espionage is not new—it was known at least three thousand years ago. A spy seeks a secret which is held by but a few public men. It is impossible to bribe them, and they are so closely guarded that robbery is impracticable. Then there comes to the spy's knowledge the fact that one of the men has a discreditable chapter in his life: it has been successfully hushed up, but now the spy is able to reveal it—and prove it. It would mean ruin for the public man. What a chance for the spy—far more efficacious than a colossal bribe. Yet even then it is not always successful.

It is with no desire to vilify the German Secret Service that I say that it has always been fond of this particular approach to espionage problems. This charge does not apply merely to Nazis—the method was popular even in the days of the Kaisers. In Russia it was freely exploited. It is now known that one well-known general of Tsarist Russia was in effect a German agent. It has been assumed that he was bribed—plenty of his companions were—but the true answer is blackmail. He had become involved in a scandal with one of the royal duchesses. Had it come to the knowledge of the Tsar, the general would have lost not merely his command, but his life. He preferred

to betray his country as the price of silence. His eventual end was typical of his kind. When he saw the disasters which resulted from his treachery, he had sufficient moral sense to shoot himself.

For that matter, the Germans freely recruit their active agents of German nationality by means of blackmail. If a man charged with some serious crime is considered likely to be suitable for espionage work, he may be offered release without trial provided he agrees to serve as a secret agent. More than one German spy has been thus enlisted. It is not a very satisfactory method of attracting the best kind of agent! During the last war several recruits of this calibre landed in England; one of them was a very wise man—ten minutes after landing he gave himself up at the nearest police station.

II

The outstanding story of espionage blackmail is that of the *Black Book of the Forty-seven Thousand*, which was the centre of a sensational case in 1918. In that year a certain Pemberton Billing, who was a British Member of Parliament, ran a newspaper criticizing the Government. Publishing a remarkable article in this, he suggested that a list of forty-seven thousand names of English men and women had been collected by German agents: he described it as "a most catholic miscellany, the names of Privy Councillors, youths of the chorus, wives of Cabinet Ministers, dancing-girls, even Cabinet Ministers themselves, while diplomats, poets, bankers, editors, newspaper proprietors and members of His Majesty's household followed each other with no order of precedence." These people had, it was suggested, all been guilty of appalling moral crimes, which had been unmasked and recorded by German agents. Mr. Pemberton Billing's trouble was that he was unable to produce the book—but he did produce two witnesses who claim to have seen it.

Of course, the whole episode was completely fantastic, only credible in an age when minds were unduly strained. It would certainly have been quite impossible for German agents to have collected the private dossiers of forty-seven thousand people—particularly people of eminence—without attracting attention.

This was probably one of those amazing cases which were built up from modest beginnings. Very soon after the war I was in touch with a German Intelligence Officer who discussed the whole episode most frankly. He agreed that there never was a *Black Book of the Forty-seven Thousand*. At

the same time, he declared, it was true that the German Secret Service before the war did come across a few cases of moral delinquency, not only in England, but in other countries as well. The records of these cases were precisely filed with true Teuton thoroughness. This naturally does not mean that German agents went about England picking up bits of scandal; they had more serious work to do. None the less, in the course of their investigations on other matters they were bound to come across an occasional secret which someone would willingly have concealed. During the last few years the Germans have considerably developed the method of espionage by blackmail, encouraged by their success with their own nationals. Unfortunately for themselves, they have discovered that democratic mentality reacts effectively to threats, which may frighten some unfortunate refugee or harassed German who has fallen foul of authority.

Only recently I came across a case which well illustrates the difficulties of the German agents who employ this method. An English lady of good family had had in her impressionable youth a passing *affaire* with a man of her own class: later she married another man considerably older than her first lover. The years passed, and she had no idea that anyone had the slightest knowledge of her earlier indiscretion.

Judge her dismay therefore, when in August, 1938, a man whose casual acquaintance she made at a Society function made some excuse to speak with her alone. By means of clumsy hints he was able to convey to her that not only was he acquainted with the details of her *affaire*, but that he had documentary evidence to back up his knowledge. Naturally, she imagined that she was in the hands of a blackmailer of a particularly obnoxious type, and was prepared to deal with him firmly. He revealed, however, that his aims were not monetary: the lady's husband was by this time a statesman of considerable influence. The Czechoslovak crisis was coming to a head, and it was essential that British opinion should be "well informed," he claimed, of the German point of view. All the lady had to do, therefore, was to suggest to her husband that he should appreciate the Nazi outlook on the Sudeten problem; then, naturally, the sad news of his wife's indiscretion would never be known.

The lady's dilemma can be imagined. Even if it were possible for her to accept the course suggested, there was no guarantee that the undesirable visitor would not make similar demands in the future. In any case, however, the very idea was utterly obnoxious to her; she knew that her husband's views coincided with hers on the question of the Germans of the Sudetenland.

She demanded the opportunity to think it over, and her visitor had no option but to accede. An arrangement was made that they should meet again in two days' time—at the German's flat. The lady's action was bold; she sent a telegram to her erstwhile lover, now himself happily married. He hastened to London from his regiment and heard the amazing story.

Two days later both of them visited the blackmailer's flat: the question of British opinion on the Sudetenland was never mentioned. The officer, having locked the door, proceeded to give him the biggest hiding that one man could inflict on another. When it was finished, the Englishman assured his victim that if one word of the ancient scandal were revived he would follow the German, if necessary, to the ends of the earth and beat the life out of him; and with such conviction was the threat made that it was believed, and nothing else was heard about the affair.

A few weeks later, I heard a reasoned and eloquent denunciation from a British platform of the arbitrary German methods in the coercion of Czechoslovakia. It was made by the lady's husband: she sat on the platform, applauding vigorously.

III

Blackmail lies behind many a strange story of espionage. It may take many forms. Sometimes the spy takes advantage of some ancient lapse, but often deliberate traps are laid, especially where young and susceptible officers, politicians and diplomats are concerned.

Consider, for example, the case of the Czechoslovakian officer whom we will call Captain Brautsch. He was an expert on fortification and knew many of the secrets of the Czech "Maginot Line." Long before the crisis of September, 1938, these forts were the subject of violent controversy. It was claimed on the one hand that they were useless and that the Germans would overwhelm them; on the other hand they claimed to be impregnable. It was imperative that the Germans should know the truth before they laid any plans for an invasion. German spies had, of course, worked on the building of these forts, but their information had little reference to the fortifications themselves and to the lay-out of the armaments.

Captain Brautsch was a very efficient gunnery officer, apparently destined to go far in his profession. So highly did his superiors think of him that he was given work that would normally have fallen to a senior officer. Unfortunately, he was not only an efficient soldier, he was also very warm-blooded and susceptible to women. One evening, at a diplomatic ball in

Prague, Brautsch met a woman to whom he was immediately attracted. It would be impossible to imagine any woman who looked less like the conventional blonde spy of fiction. Maria was rather more than average height, dark-haired, with an exquisite complexion, good-looking and attractive but in a quiet, almost unobtrusive manner, demonstrating her intelligence before her beauty. Brautsch and she soon found much in common, and within a few weeks of that dance she was his mistress. He spent every free hour he had with her, visiting her flat frequently. Her personality was so sympathetic that he was completely deceived. Judge his amazement when one evening, as he basked in his lover's arms, a husband suddenly appeared in the flat. Brautsch had not been aware that the lady was married. He soon realized, however, that her reticence was not intentional. Madame was quite cynical about it, and her husband quite ruthless. There must be a price for his silence. The alternative was divorce proceedings. The price was named, details of the armaments of the Czech "Maginot Line."

Brautsch came from an old Slovakian military family. His father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather had all been soldiers. Now his father was dead and Brautsch was left with a widowed mother whose comfort in her declining years was that her one son was maintaining the proud tradition of his family. He thought of all these things . . . and of the alternative to refusal. Standards in the Czech Army were high, and he could not hope to survive a public scandal. Yet by accepting his faithless mistress's terms, at least his lapse could be hidden. And, he argued, surely the Germans knew all about the fortifications already. Self-persuasion is easy in such circumstances; he capitulated. But he could not survive his disgrace. When the Germans marched into Czechoslovakia he shot himself.

Captain von Rintelen, whose sabotage work in the United States of America formed one of the high lights of espionage during the World War, relates one incident of blackmail on a man who ought to have known better. A certain Dr. Scheele had been of service to von Rintelen, but then suddenly began to demand large sums of money and obviously was not to be trusted further. One of von Rintelen's associates, however, knew how to deal with the case. He discovered that Scheele had one weakness—he was fond of women, and always ready to make a fool of himself if they were young and pretty.

The services of a girl of the right type were enlisted, and an occasion was arranged so that she was able to make Dr. Scheele's acquaintance. Very soon he invited her to make a journey out into the country with him. They set off in his car, and in due course reached the open country. At a deserted spot a man was standing by the side of the highway, and as the car

approached him the girl suddenly began to scream and wave her arms in the air. Dr. Scheele, astonished, slowed down and asked her what was the matter: the man in the road came to the side of the car, while the girl kept on screaming that her companion had tried to seduce her. She demanded a telephone to ring up the police. The stranger announced that he *was* a police official, and informed Dr. Scheele that he was under arrest. For a consideration he agreed to hush up the matter, but a little later von Rintelen's agent brought it to Dr. Scheele's notice that the escapade was known and could be proved against him at any time should he give further trouble. As may be imagined, he held his tongue: but one can only wonder that a man of experience should fall into such an antique trap.

IV

Not merely blackmail, but murder! A regime of force, ready to make "purges" of its friends, is scarcely likely to harbour sentimentalities about its opponents. A long list of assassinations stands to the "credit" of German espionage, from Dollfuss of Austria to Calinescu of Roumania.

Now that the Russo-German pact has disillusioned Japan, the extent of Nazi underground intrigue in that country is gradually being revealed. Its principal aim was to embarrass England and, to a smaller degree, the United States of America. Any politician who favoured collaboration with the democracies was intimidated or "removed." The agents were Japanese, but the financial backing and the provocation were generally supplied by Germany.

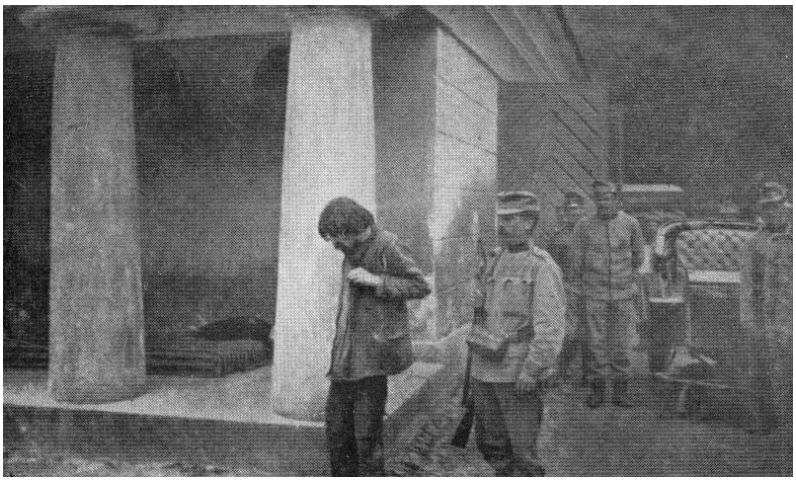
There exists in Japan an organization known as the "Black Dragon." It is doubtless prompted by motives which are thoroughly patriotic—they must be, for no organization could be so utterly ruthless, and have so many murders to its account, unless it had some powerful motive behind it, and in this case money is not the objective. It works for Japan and for no other cause. No one, not even its own members, is exempt from its terrible vengeance—no one except the Emperor of Japan, who is divine in the eyes of his subjects.

The Black Dragon was approached by German agents. Germany was ready, they declared, to help Japan in her fight for "progress"; her agents could work not only in Japan but in China and Manchuria. The Black Dragon was impressed; whatever Germany's motives (and the society were unlikely to have been deceived by them) here was an ally, and, moreover, a *white* ally, one who could the more easily stir up trouble among the Asiatics.

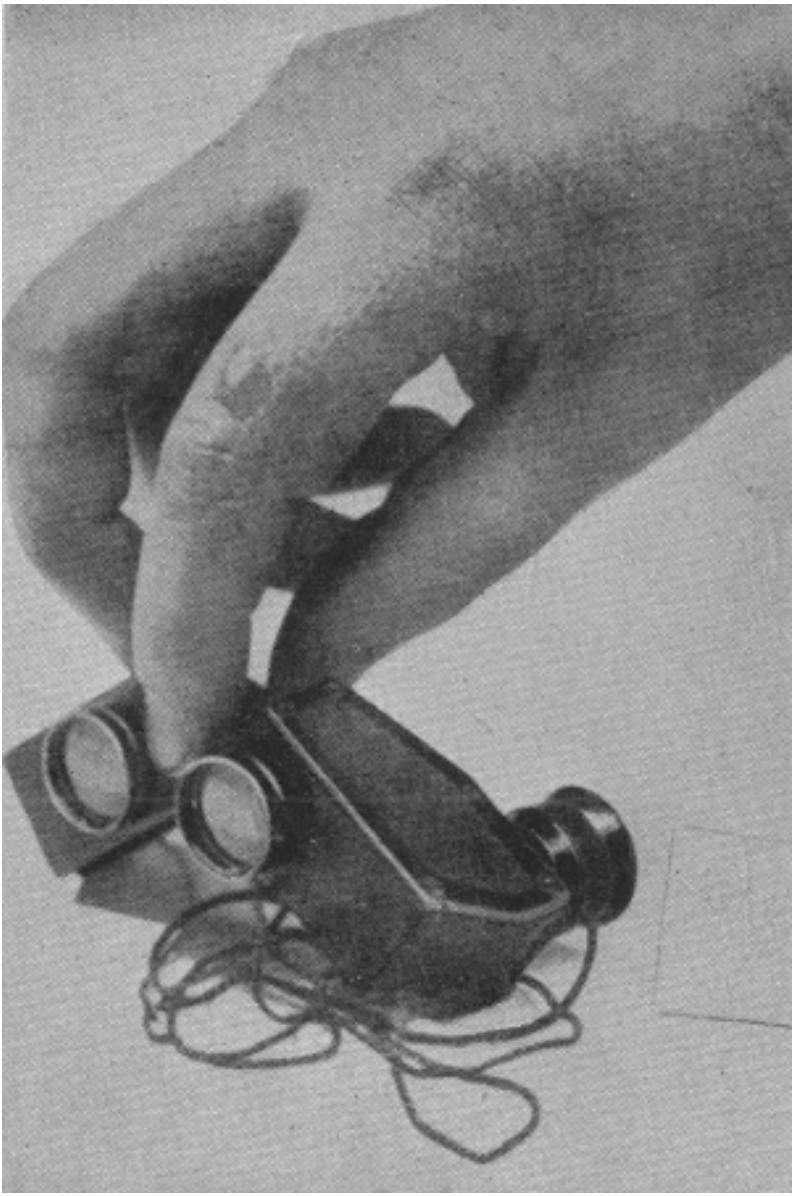
The Black Dragon set to work. Generals and politicians who opposed the policy of collaboration with Germany were ruthlessly "removed," and observers who saw the massacres said that the bloodshed would have been a credit to one of Herr Hitler's own national purges.

V

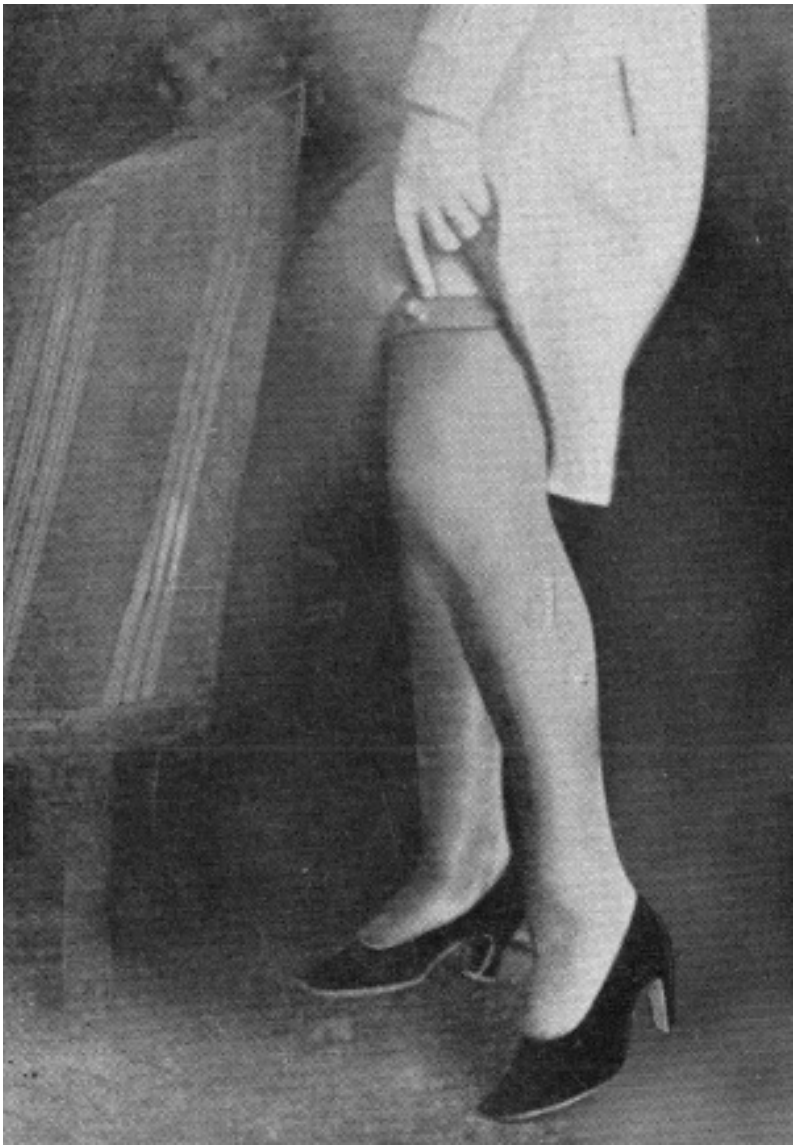
After such unsavoury cases, let us turn to a few pages of light relief, before examining some of the complications of German espionage in Europe to-day.



THE LAST WALK
The Germans take a Russian spy to execution



An ingenious camera disguised as a pair of field glasses



A feminine hiding-place for messages. This would stand little chance of evading detection to-day!

The direction of Nazi espionage may be clumsy—we shall see that in Czechoslovakia and Poland it would not have been successful save for the shadow of overwhelming force behind it—but when it comes to ingenuity of mechanical detail, the German agents are well backed by their organization. Many a sordid story of espionage has been relieved by some novel trifle of invention which deserved a better cause.

In some of the mechanical devices used by spies, again fact transcends fiction. The reader will, of course, be familiar with the spy of fiction who uses a camera disguised as a watch. There is nothing fantastic about this. A famous optical factory in Dresden has long specialized in the production of these ingenious cameras, which they market as the "Mysterium" type. At a glance such a camera is not distinguishable from an ordinary pocket watch. The spy has only to produce his "watch," ostensibly to look at the time, press the necessary catch, and a photograph is immediately taken, and a remarkably sharply focused photograph at that.

An even more delicate camera supplied by the same firm is in the form of a wrist-watch. I saw one of these, a miracle of ingenuity. It was not even necessary for the spy to touch the watch at all; he would hold it to his ear, then shake it as if to make certain that it were going, and a second after the shake the camera would automatically make its instantaneous exposure.

The same Dresden firm has on occasion turned out even more ingenious cameras for espionage purposes, in the shape of buttons, opera glasses, walking-stick handles, or even elaborate tie-pins! A couple of generations ago the spy might hope to get his information with the aid of such ingeniously designed apparatus, but now the management of munition works takes care to know as much about miniature cameras as the spy himself. All-important armament enterprises are necessarily in close touch with their governments; some of them even employ their own counter-espionage agents to amplify the efforts of the official police. There is more than one factory in Great Britain where a spy might take a dozen photographs in the course of his tour, but the film would be rendered useless before he left the premises; indeed, before he entered them. As he walked into the factory he would be conducted along a narrow corridor which was commanded by X-ray apparatus. The Röntgen rays have the property of fogging photographic films, and so the spy's effort is wasted.

Nevertheless, clever agents were able to counter even this device, by encasing their cameras in a thin coating of lead, through which Röntgen rays cannot penetrate. Once again the challenge was issued to the counter-espionage service. In at least one case their action was apparently effective. On the grounds that contact with chemicals might lead to injuries to clothing or flesh, the management insisted that every visitor to the factory should wear a suit of rubber-lined overalls, together with rubber boots and gloves. Such overalls, they thought, would effectively mask any hidden camera. In spite of this they discovered to their amazement that photographs were still being taken and secrets of their processes revealed. The spy was eventually

unmasked in quite another direction. He wore horn-rimmed spectacles, and in the rim was hidden an extraordinarily tiny camera.

VI

After this lighter interlude, it is necessary to return again to the subject of blackmail, one of the principal weapons in the armoury of the Nazi spy.

At the time of the trial and sentence of Lieutenant Baillie Stewart, "The Officer in the Tower," many thinking people scratched their heads and wondered. They accepted the findings of the court martial and were prepared to believe that the unhappy man was guilty of treachery to his own country, but what they could not understand was *why* he betrayed British secrets to Germany. Neither on moral nor financial grounds was the mystery explained by the published evidence.

The facts of the case may be briefly summarized. Baillie Stewart, a lieutenant of twenty-four years of age in a famous Scottish regiment, was charged on ten counts which alleged that he had collected at Aldershot information about tanks and armoured cars, and had forwarded it to Germany. It was alleged that he was in fact a spy in German pay, and that his liaison officer was a woman (called throughout the trial "Marie Louise"). The evidence showed that he had received from this woman two sums of £50.

His defence was ingenious, if not particularly honourable. He explained that Marie Louise had fallen in love with him, and that the sums of money were paid over to him as tokens of love; and the normal procedure in these unsavoury affairs was alleged to have been reversed. The court martial did not accept this explanation, for there was other and more damning evidence. He was found guilty and sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

It is a legitimate question: *Why* did an officer of a famous regiment and of honourable family betray his country? Surely not for a sum of £100—even a junior subaltern ought to have been able to have laid hands on such a sum if his financial state were indeed parlous. (The suggestion was made that he was heavily in debt, but only £100 was proved to have reached him from German sources.) Despite the confession which he wrote at great length for a Sunday newspaper after his release, in which he stated that he had been spying over a long period and was impelled by Nazi sympathies, no one in this country believed that he decided to betray England because he loved Hitler. I suggest that there is only one explanation which fits the facts—blackmail.

An interesting feature of the case lies in the fact that, at his court martial, Baillie Stewart admitted that he had known the woman, Marie Louise, but in the newspaper articles published after his release he denied that such a woman existed. His first statement, however, was correct, for there *was* such a woman as Marie Louise, who was well known to British counter-espionage agents. The method which was used with Baillie Stewart was not novel—she was known to have used it before (and, for that matter, has used it since—she will not use it for some time in the future, however, her prison term has still some years to run). Having innocently been hounded into an impossibly indiscreet position, Baillie Stewart found himself exposed to blackmail. Unfortunately, instead of facing it out—although this might have meant the ruin of his army career—he preferred to take what appeared to be the easiest way. His temptation must be admitted; and the thought of disgracing a family of great army traditions must have been exceedingly painful. It must have galled him when he received money from Marie Louise; and in the circles in which he moved this descent was perhaps even lower than the pursuit of espionage.

(Incidentally this case proved, if proof were necessary, the extraordinary efficiency of British counter-espionage. There was fierce debate as details of the proceedings were published, and thousands of people in Great Britain were not convinced of Baillie Stewart's guilt. Yet a court martial of his fellow officers, who would certainly not be anxious to bring disgrace upon a famous regiment, found him guilty. Therefore it is legitimate to suppose there can be no question whatsoever about his guilt. The answer to the riddle lies in the fact that part of the evidence was given *in camera*. A study of the evidence reveals that this must have been its most damning feature; and it was supplied by British counter-espionage agents operating abroad, to whom the woman, Marie Louise Schule, was well known. In fact, from the moment Baillie Stewart made her acquaintance he was watched.)

VII

The present war was three weeks old when two French soldiers, taking a walk over the countryside to the east of Nancy in the cool of a September evening, were startled to perceive a white apparition above them. In the dim dusk it was difficult to discover what the apparition meant—there was at first in their minds a suspicion that an observation balloon had broken away. A few minutes later, however, after racing across a field in the appropriate direction, they arrived in time to see a man make a rough landing on the earth by parachute. Naturally the *poilus* imagined that he was one of their

own airmen who had made a forced escape from a damaged plane, particularly as he hailed them in French. Unfortunately for himself, however, his French had a distinct accent! The soldiers had been warned that the Germans might attempt to land troops behind their lines. They were unarmed, but decided that a sudden rush might bring success; charging to the man's side and preparing to fling themselves upon him, they were amazed to discover that he was in civilian clothes.

Naturally, they took him prisoner on the spot; a general warning was circulated throughout the district, and within an hour two more parachute spies had been discovered. These actually never landed—for they were shot down by machine-gun fire while they were still in mid-air. The man who succeeded in landing was tried by court martial.

International law on this point has not been codified, since the aeroplane is still a novel weapon in espionage warfare, but certain principles are sufficiently clear. It is quite legitimate for the Germans to land soldiers in uniform behind French lines: these soldiers may promptly proceed to blow up bridges or railway lines, or to mount machine-guns commanding main roads. If they are captured, as eventually they must be, they are to be treated as prisoners of war. But if the Germans land men in civilian clothes or in French uniforms, then the men are spies—and there is only one fate for the spy in war-time.

In the early days of the Polish campaign, as we shall see, the parachute spy both in and out of uniform played a prominent part in the conduct of the campaign. If the war on Poland's eastern frontier had developed (it was, of course, a walk-over for the Russians, since practically every Polish division was in the thick of the fight against the Germans), we might have seen the Soviet armies employing their parachute troops in action. In manœuvres a few years ago a force of two thousand men were safely landed by parachute a hundred miles behind "enemy" lines, and it is not difficult to imagine the confusion such a force would spread along the lines of communication. At the same time it is obvious that such a force could only be landed and exploited in widely unpopulated expanses—it is unlikely to be freely employed in the confined spaces of Western Europe.

The parachute spy was a recognized feature of the war of 1914-18. He was generally employed by the French, who held the advantage—from the espionage point of view—of having millions of their nationals, all potential spies, behind the German lines. Thus their agent could be dropped by parachute from an aeroplane and could be certain that local peasants would not only shelter him and destroy his parachute and all other traces of his

coming, but would also help him collect the necessary information. His homeward journey was not so easy, for the French had to send a daring pilot to make an actual landing at an agreed spot. A famous American pilot earned wide fame in this highly dangerous and individualized form of warfare.

The Germans did make use of this method, but were not nearly so successful; many of their men, like the three at Nancy, were captured or killed as they attempted a landing. One German pilot, however, specialized in carrying not spies but pigeons for the use of an agent who lived in a lonely farm in Lorraine. One of the most expert bombers in the German Air Force, he was specially detailed for this important task. It was necessary for him to begin again and to practise for weeks the technique of dropping this innocent kind of bomb, a different technique because of the lighter weight involved. Soon he became adept, and was able to drop his basket of pigeons within two hundred yards of his destination. Many of the pigeons safely returned with important information, but quite a number were shot down as they flew over the French lines. A pigeon in war-time is an object of grave suspicion.

VIII

The Germans have always been active in industrial espionage. Unlike some forms of underground activity, this interest by no means dates from the rise of Hitler—it is traceable to the very beginning of German industrial development. It is a trait shared with the Japanese, who in their turn have been most ingenious in ferreting out the industrial secrets of competitive nations. I remember calling at the Swedish match town of Jonköping, where I asked if I might see one of the enormous factories which turn out such vast quantities of matches. It was explained apologetically that entry was now almost as difficult as to a munitions factory. Once upon a time visitors were welcomed, but the prosperity of the Swedish match industry depended upon patent processes which were kept a strict secret. Some years ago a group of Japanese visitors was shown round the works. They must have used their eyes well, and probably other things too, for soon afterwards these processes were being used in Japan. Thus one can well imagine that visitors to the Jonköping match factories are not so welcome as they used to be.

Industrial espionage is a skilled and lucrative profession. The operative, of course, must know his job, and must appreciate at a glance any novelty in process of manufacture. Although patent rights cover every new invention, they seldom cover every detail of manufacture. The patentee may be

protected by law against a direct imitation of his invention, but a careful study of his plans and specifications which result in the application of minor adjustments in design or improvement in manufacture may be sufficient to secure a new patent.

Such sharp practice is common to all nations and all industries. The Germans and the Japanese differ only from their competitors in that they are prepared to go a step beyond the normal bounds of business ruthlessness. There is at least one authentic case in which a German agent went so far as to commit murder in order to obtain an industrial secret. In this case a new racing automobile had been invented by a leading manufacturer and fitted with an engine in the rear. Many rival makers were very interested in the design, and one German agent was determined to learn something of its secrets. The trials took place under conditions of intense secrecy, but by bribing one of the works employees, who would have scorned to give away any mechanical secrets but saw no harm in gossiping about the success of the trials, he learned where they were to be held. The following morning there was an accident; the racing car collided with a lorry, the driver of which was obviously to blame, but was able to support his claim that his steering-gear had failed. It happened, too, that there was an eye-witness on the scene who, in order, as he explained, to be able to give his evidence correctly, took many photographs of the wrecked car. These photographs would give no detailed information, but they were sufficient to give an idea of the general design of this revolutionary car. The agent went home happy with the results of his morning's work—and not at all concerned by the fact that some of the photographs showed the mangled body of the driver of the car, crouched over the wheel.

IX

I have emphasized blackmail as a German espionage weapon because, by its very nature, little is heard about it. I emphasize again that many spies work in less dramatic ways.

Their task is perhaps more difficult in England than in any other country. In the United States there are millions of men of many racial origins: even in France there is a large population of foreign extraction—there are almost a million Poles, for example. Every other country of Europe houses minorities, and most of them include Germans.

In England, however, a German is a German, and does not stand one chance in a thousand of passing himself off as English. In France, he could

explain any accent by claiming Alsatian birth, and might receive employment in an aviation factory. In England he must approach the same problem by more roundabout methods.

He usually "disguises" himself as a neutral. A Swedish farm will open an agency in Birmingham. The manager is of Swedish nationality, but of German blood. Such details pass unnoticed in Britain, where the ordinary man is quite unable to distinguish between a German and a Swede. The agency manager does a genuine business: maybe it deals in some product concerned in aircraft production—aluminium rivets, for example. This would afford a pretext for visiting factories—if he could offer early deliveries of duralumin rivets he would be a very welcome visitor.

The agency not merely provides a *raison d'être*, but offers a suitable method of financing espionage: it is quite legitimate for the "Swedish" firm to send money to its agent. His next task is to find suitable people to approach—and here his difficulties begin. The reaction of the British workman approached by a foreigner is decisive. But, of course, it is not made bluntly. Often an intermediary is used, and his story is that he is acting on behalf of another aircraft firm. In his indirect approach the spy of fact differs from his confrère of fiction: in a book the agent calling for orders would be invited to the manager's office and steal the plans from his table.

There are workmen who are low enough to sell their employer's secrets to a rival firm, but fortunately there are not very many of them. Further, it is seldom that an individual workman has much to reveal—he is usually employed in some minute detail. That is to say, it may be necessary to suborn several workmen before the outline of a process can be determined. This is more than difficult, and the agent—or *his* agent—can only make one mistake. This form of espionage has proved singularly unsuccessful; more than one agency abruptly closed its doors at the outbreak of war, and its manager learned with astonishment that all his movements had been watched for several months.

Naval espionage has always been a feature of German spy activity in Britain; it is significant that the biggest round-up of potential spies was made in Scotland. The difficulties of obtaining details of naval construction are similar to those already described, but it is easier to get useful information about fleet movements. This information is of even greater interest to the German Air Ministry than to its Admiralty. Careless talk here aids the spy: a midshipman informed me proudly that his battleship, the *Renown*, was going to South America to sink the *Admiral Graf Spee*, news

which at the moment would have been of intense interest to the German Naval Command.

To-day science has come to the aid of the spy in his greatest difficulty—the sending home of his information. A short wave radio transmitting set is not difficult for a technician to assemble. Its value to the spy is incalculable—it not merely gets news back to Germany, but sends it instantaneously; very often a spy's information arrives too late to be of use.

But science also aids the counter-spies. There are methods of detecting illicit radio stations. And if in Britain a man is found operating an illicit apparatus, he is a spy.

CHAPTER V

GERMAN SPIES IN POLAND

I

A FEW days after the fall of Warsaw I was talking with a well-known Polish diplomat, who in his younger days had been an equally well-known soldier. I had been somewhat disappointed with the performance of the Polish Army. I had seen it on manœuvres more than once, and had been highly impressed, particularly with the quality of its personnel. I did not doubt that it had fought with great courage: I had known that it must in the end be overcome, but I had anticipated that it would be strong enough to hold the Germans at bay for a few months. I asked my friend if there was any explanation of its unexpectedly rapid defeat.

"Yes," he replied. "I quite agree with you. We Poles have also been bitterly disappointed—we expected at least to keep our army in the field until the bad weather set in; then we could easily have held our own until early spring—and who knows what might have happened in the intervening months? But several causes contributed overwhelmingly to our defeat. First was the German superiority in the air; our aeroplanes were outnumbered by ten to one, and were soon driven from the air. That meant that the whole of Poland was at Germany's mercy—all our communications were cut. Instead of fighting as one composite whole, the Polish Army had to fight as a series of detachments, unconnected and unsupported, and with its supplies in absolute chaos. Railway junctions and other centres of communication, hundreds of miles from the line of battle, were bombed and destroyed. Civilian populations were bombed or shot up, so that the ordinary life of the country came almost to a standstill. I am quite certain that military experts, once they have examined the situation in detail, will agree that the overwhelming German superiority in the air was the first cause of our defeat."

"And the second?"

"The second was not so important as the first, but far more important than anything else—espionage. Imagine the situation. There were nearly a million Germans in Poland—mostly living, of course, in the western areas:

that meant that there were nearly a million German spies in Poland—no, we had better say half a million—we will not implicate the children.

"For months before the German invasion preparations were afoot. Time after time our police discovered hoards of arms which had been smuggled into Poland. Maybe we ought to have given these discoveries more publicity than we did, but we were anxious not to disturb further the already troubled atmosphere of Europe. In Katowice over five hundred rifles and twelve machine-guns were discovered in a single week."

"How were they smuggled over?"

"In the Silesian industrial district it was only too easy. As you know, there is a fair volume of traffic between Polish and German Silesia, particularly in minerals. The Polish frontier guards could scarcely unload every railway truck load of coal that came into the country. Yet hidden under ten tons of coal there might be a machine-gun.

"Farther north, where the expanses are wider, aeroplanes were freely used. It was from Danzig that we got the first hint, for the Germans began dropping arms by parachute there quite openly in the daytime. Soon our counter-spy service discovered that this had been going on for a long time in the frontier districts of Poland. Intensive search revealed hidden arms—but it was obvious that we had discovered only a fraction of those smuggled in."

"How were they hidden?" I asked.

"The usual plan was not especially novel—a hole in the floor of the cellar. One organization at Vilna, however, was more original. One of its members was the caretaker of a cemetery—and he stored the smuggled arms in family tombs, neatly stacked on the top of the coffins!

"And now imagine the military situation as the Germans invade Poland. Our troops tried to hold *all* the frontiers—in this, I think, our military leaders were wrong: our frontiers are impossibly long; it would have been much better to have guarded the frontiers with outposts only and to have concentrated the main army for a decisive battle along a shorter line in the interior. However, that is useful conjecture only for military students. But here on the frontier we have a battalion of Polish soldiers, gallantly defending their line against the attacking enemy: they are holding out, although the mechanical odds against them are enormous. Suddenly from their rear comes a burst of firing—machine-guns in action. There is nothing so unnerving to the soldier as an attack from the rear. You will recall that at no time was there a continuous front along the frontier—rather a series of detachments, with areas between covered by patrols. So, on hearing the firing behind them, the Polish battalion naturally assume that they have been

outflanked—that a German force has made its way through the sparsely patrolled country to the north or south: consequently the battalion commander gives the only possible order—to retire. Only when he has taken up his new position does he find out that there is no question of any organized attack from the rear—the machine-gun fire was supplied by local Germans with weapons which have been smuggled into Poland in anticipation of this moment. I am not exaggerating when I say that this happened not once but a hundred times, and it was this series of attacks in the rear—or sometimes not attacks, but only feigned attacks—which led to the commencement of the Polish retreat. And, as you know, once a retreat begins it is very difficult to halt."

II

I have since been making widespread inquiries—naturally they are not yet complete—and find that my friend's opinion is more than justified. It is certain that thousands of weapons were smuggled by underground agents into Poland before the war began. It should be recalled that the German minority in Poland was more important economically than its proportionate numbers indicate, and many of the big industrial concerns in Poland were German owned—and had branches or associated companies in Germany. In the traffic passing between these branches it was not difficult to smuggle arms, much less to provide a cover for espionage activity.

The mass organization for once succeeded admirably. The American Ambassador has revealed that Germany was so well supplied with information that Hitler knew of the projected moves of the Polish Government even before they took place, and the new seat of Government was bombed within an hour of the arrival of the Diplomatic Corps. The whole story cannot yet be told, but it is already certain that more than one German spy had been planted in high quarters.

Yet the greatest danger came from the scattered German minorities, acting indiscriminately as spies. Some of them sheltered German Army officers who had been dropped by parachute either before the war began or immediately afterwards. These officers had with them the essential components for short wave emitting radio sets: gathering information from the local network of spies, the officer sent his directions to the advancing German commanders—that is to say, the German troops advanced not under orders from the rear *but under orders from behind the Polish lines*. Any ex-soldier will appreciate precisely what this implied. Together with the attacks from the rear, the reason for the Polish retreat is immediately apparent.

The German Air Force played a large part in the espionage system which proved so effective—in dropping officers, components of wireless, arms and ammunition, and uniforms so that local men could dress themselves as soldiers to escape the charge of espionage should they be captured. In some cases the uniforms arrived too late; in others the man dropped by parachute was in civilian clothes but carried the uniform with him, ready for emergency. By the rules of war he was a civilian—and a spy, and he was promptly executed.

In the earliest days of the war the Poles were amazed at the uncanny accuracy of the German bombers—not necessarily in the range of their bombing, but in the deadly selection of their objectives. As soon as half a dozen German aeroplanes had been brought down, the secret was revealed. Beside the German pilot sat a spy, a Polish subject, but a member of the German minority, who knew the district intimately. It was his business to indicate to the pilot suitable points for attack: not merely communications and important bridges, but even the parts of a village to be demolished and the parts to be spared.

Incidentally, the month's practice in Poland is not going to be a great advantage to the German Air Force. Now it is transferred to the west it has to face not a vastly inferior force and wholly inadequate ground defences, but in the combined French and British air armadas it has an opponent which is at least its equal and will very soon be its superior. The ease of the Polish conquest may be a fatal illusion. If you are booked to play against Budge or Perry at tennis, the worst possible practice you can have is a game against a very weak opponent.

III

Because of their Polish citizenship, which enabled them to move without hindrance about the country, German agents were able to prepare Poland for destruction with the same thoroughness that Stieber was able to claim when his spies invaded Austria weeks before the Prussian armies in 1866. I have seen one sectional map of a country district which was captured by Polish counter-espionage officers. To the printed map masses of explanatory details had been added: every railway depot, factory or other potential centre for sabotage or air attack was marked out—no commanders ever had such exact information.

It is small wonder that the Poles were bewildered at the accuracy of the German attack. In matters of detail the German Intelligence was so effective

as to be almost frightening. The inhabitants of Lowicz, a little town to the west of Warsaw, were almost prepared to believe that it was supernatural. By the time they occupied Lowicz, the German armies had outrun their supplies. A German soldier knocked at the door of one of the timber cottages.

"The German Army needs towels!" he proclaimed. "I shall take away all you have to spare."

"I have none to spare," protested the Polish housewife.

"Oh, yes you have," said the German. "I sold you a dozen only a month ago!"

On one occasion it was necessary for a German aeroplane to make an actual landing in Polish territory—the pilot was carrying a mechanism for the assembling of wireless sets, so delicate that it could not be trusted to a parachute. The method adopted was simple but effective. Agreeing with local confederates on a suitable spot in the newly occupied territory of Teschen, which was still in a state of some confusion, a German aeroplane approached by night. At the agreed moment the local agents set fire to a group of haystacks: naturally the entire population of the hamlet turned out to fight their ancient enemy—fire. The local policeman directed operations: if anyone heard the droning of an aeroplane overhead, he paid no attention; burning haystacks were infinitely more important. The fire served a double purpose. Apart from the distraction of attention, its glare supplied sufficient light for the aeroplane to descend in a neighbouring field.

It was not only among the national minority as such that the Germans found their agents. The course of the war provided ample evidence of espionage activity in corners of Poland where there was no German minority at all, other than a little coterie of merchants and language teachers who had chosen the district as a temporary residence. These were instructed in their duty to the Fatherland: for years prior to the invasion of Poland they had been spying systematically. In one town in Southern Poland a local German schoolmaster admitted that his favourite hobby was climbing to the top of the church tower, there to gaze on the peaceful scene about him. No one questioned him—if he cared to incur the fatigue of climbing the tower, that was his affair. A more acute counter-spy service would have shown that Germans in many other towns of Poland were fond of climbing church towers and such high places and points of vantage, from which they could get the necessary bird's-eye view so that when the moment came they could identify places of potential attack from invading aeroplanes.

Not all the guides to the German pilots were men. In many cases women had been systematically finding out local objects of military importance, and flew in German aeroplanes bent on errands of destruction. So systematically was this destruction accomplished that even the private houses of Polish generals or of engineers of important factories were picked out.

Another device was a modern development of an old treachery. The people of the little town of Bielce gathered in the streets to cheer as a squadron of aeroplanes bearing the Polish insignia swooped low over the roof-tops; swerving and returning, the machines again flew over the town—this time raking the crowded streets with murderous machine-gun fire.

IV

Working in the closest co-operation with their colleagues, the saboteur spies were equally active during the German invasion; and their part was no less effective. Conversation with Polish officers who took part in the fighting reveals that this country's resistance was seriously weakened by sabotage action, not merely in the battle zone, but far in the rear.

Many of the best stories of the Polish war cannot yet be told, for the men who could tell them are prisoners in German hands. Already, however, details of unusual incidents are available. A large body of Polish troops was holding out against an even larger force; but, despite the odds against them, they were holding the enemy firmly. Ammunition and food were urgently needed by the garrison, but hour after hour went by and no lorries came to bring the sorely needed supplies to the harassed men.

The convoy had not been attacked, for the very reason that it had never left its refilling-point. When the time came for each lorry to start up, no engine responded; and when the drivers searched for the trouble they found serious engine trouble, not due to mechanical failure, but to human interference.

I heard a similar story from a Polish flying officer. There were, he said, many instances of aeroplanes, particularly heavy bombers, being unable to start up, and the Polish counter-raids, which might have been vitally effective, had to be abandoned. He also told me the story of a friend of his whose machine crashed in flames only a few minutes after it had left the ground. This sort of thing happened so often to Polish aeroplanes that it came as no surprise when the disasters were traced to the hands of saboteurs.

Incidentally, the incidents reveal another prime cause of the Polish collapse—over-confidence. The Poles were justly proud of their army, and

man for man it could equal that of the Germans: but its equipment proved inadequate. Similarly it is now obvious that the potential dangers of the German minority were not sufficiently appreciated. Such a sequence of sabotage ought never to have been possible.

These disasters naturally induced an unhealthy state of nerves among the Polish pilots, particularly among the younger men. Many flying men are highly strung; in fact, the more sensitive the pilot, the better man he generally proves to be. All the courage in the world is useless if the pilot has no confidence in his machine; and this confidence must be gravely shaken by such a series of failures.

This loss of confidence in material spread throughout many sections of the Polish armed forces. Shells failed to explode; machine-guns jammed frequently. Brave men found themselves helpless at the approach of danger. The effect on morale can readily be imagined—when all the circumstances are considered, the stand of the Polish Army is seen in retrospect as even more gallant than was first supposed. Typical, perhaps, of its despairing efforts against overwhelming odds, was a battle near Katowice. A swarm of German tanks approached the town; a Polish general led two brigades of cavalry to resist them. Anti-tank guns were few, and eventually the Polish cavalry charged. Of 3,000 men only 180 returned alive. As an epic of gallantry it was magnificent: but, like the much smaller charge of the Light Brigade, it was not war.

One story of the Polish war deserves special emphasis—an ingenious idea of economic warfare. German aeroplanes flying over Polish towns dropped, not leaflets, but thousands of ten-zloty notes—forgeries. As it happened, the war ended before the trick could have any serious effect; next time it may be played on the Germans.

Imagine a fleet of British and French aeroplanes dropping ten-Reichmark notes over Germany. They are forgeries, but are so good that only an expert could recognize them. They would be eagerly seized by an impoverished people—no national discipline could ever stop attempts to put them to circulation. Even if they were discovered, the device would slow up business immensely—the simplest bargain could only be completed after the proffered note had been scientifically examined. With millions of spurious notes in circulation the internal economy of Germany would be seriously impaired. Here is an idea for a minister with imagination—an idea which loses nothing from the fact that I have made it public. In experimental fashion it was tried out during the last war, with an equally effective "pamphlet"—faked ration cards!

V

While it is perfectly true that the advent of the Nazis has seen not merely an intensification of espionage activity, but a considerable lowering of its morals, it would, of course, be ridiculous to place on their heads the blame for the state of spy activity which has always emanated from Germany. Long before the Nazis were ever heard of, the military directors of Germany had made up their minds that one day the problem of German-Polish relations would be critical. No one can ever accuse Germans of lack of foresight; generally their fault lies in the fact that their preparations are too wooden and cumbrous, rather than that their eventual aim is wrong. Long before the advent of Hitler, German spies were active in Poland, and I have recently come across an authenticated case of "long-distance blackmail" which must be almost unique in espionage history.

So far back as 1923, the Germans had selected a Pole, a young man whom they considered might one day be in a position to provide useful information (for that matter, they probably selected several young Poles—it may easily be that this story is no more than typical of their foresighted preparations). This man had but recently entered the Polish diplomatic service. He was clever and industrious, and as he had influential relatives it was not difficult to prophesy for him a successful diplomatic career.

At that time he was posted in London, and the necessary arrangements were set in motion. Among the recent recruits to the German spy service was a Belgian girl, good-looking and highly intelligent. In case it may seem strange that a Belgian should enter the German service, I should point out that she hailed from Malmédy, which was German until 1919, and which still houses a considerable German minority.

This girl was given ample supplies of cash, and was sent over to London with the necessary introductions to enable her to move in Society circles. Before long she made the acquaintance of the young Polish diplomat. He was immediately attracted, for a combination of beauty and intelligence is one which cannot be resisted by any man of Slav blood. The friendship rapidly developed, and he was intensely perturbed when informed that he was about to be transferred as an attaché to a Polish Legation in South America. The transfer had nothing to do with his friendship with the Belgian girl, who was *persona grata* in all quarters.

To his delight the sudden transfer worked to his advantage. Obviously distressed at the idea of parting, the Belgian girl agreed to follow him out to South America as soon as he had settled down. She kept her word, and soon after her arrival they were married.

Very shortly afterwards, however, they parted, and on some trivial ground which might have been adequate for a lovers' quarrel, but certainly did not justify so drastic a step. At first he was heartbroken, for he had been more than fond of his wife. Brooding introspectively in the Slav fashion, he was inclined to blame himself, but later he came to consider, quite legitimately, that his wife had served him shabbily.

Many years passed; the man returned to Poland and was posted to the Foreign Office, where his keen intellect assured speedy promotion. As the years passed he forgot his blighted romance, and he eventually fell in love with a Polish girl of excellent family. Now he was in a quandary: so far as he knew, his first wife was still living, but in spite of all his efforts he was unable to trace her. At last he decided her death might be presumed, as the lawyers say, and he married his new love.

The second marriage was delightfully happy; two children were born. Then the bombshell exploded: when the first sign of strained relations appeared between Germany and Poland, he was amazed to get a letter from his first wife asking his forgiveness and begging him to return! His dilemma may be imagined, particularly when she announced that she proposed to come to Warsaw immediately. Come she did, and he had to meet her and to confess that he had married someone else! She handled the situation very cleverly, for she had had suitable training and was a natural actress. After a few meetings, however, the truth came out, and he was calmly informed that the circumstances of his first marriage were no more than an act in a comedy —he had been deliberately trapped so as to provide a background for blackmail.

The Polish law regarding bigamy is substantially the same as the British. Since his wife had deserted him for so many years, he could marry again with the certainty that he would not be prosecuted—but this exemption did not make his second marriage legal! In any case, diplomats and financiers are not to be judged by ordinary standards; the slightest breath of scandal would wreck his career.

Nevertheless, anything was to be preferred before treachery to his country. Very cleverly he temporized, and then he bravely went to one of the chiefs of the Polish Secret Service and told the whole story. The Secret Service chief acted promptly and efficiently: within a few weeks, while the diplomat was still parleying with his tormentor, it was established that the Belgian girl too, had committed bigamy, and she had evidently been used as a decoy more than once. Confronted with this information, she collapsed: it was perfectly true that she could make things extremely awkward for him,

but at the same time she would lay herself open to prosecution if ever she returned to Belgium. The mere threat, together with the promise that if ever she came back to Poland again she would be promptly arrested on a blackmail charge, was sufficient to ruin the long-planned scheme.

VI

From the preparations for the German-Polish combat emerges one of the classic stories of modern espionage—a story complete with every element of drama, romance, tragedy and comedy. Captain Sosnowski was one of the most brilliant of Poland's espionage agents, and he had operated successfully for a long period in Berlin. Despite Hitler's pact with Pilsudski, it was known that the German High Command was preparing plans for an attack on the Polish Corridor and through Upper Silesia.

Quite unsuspected, Sosnowski moved in the highest and gayest of Berlin's social circles, for he was a man of distinguished appearance and high intelligence, with the typical Polish charm. He was a familiar figure at parties and dances and dinners; at one of these functions he met the beautiful Baroness von Berg.

They were attracted to each other from the first meeting. So far as Captain Sosnowski was concerned it began as a pleasant *affaire* with a beautiful woman. But the Baroness, like the heroines of the stories, fell in love at first sight—no mere casual affection, but a complete infatuation. She forgot her husband, and gave herself freely to her handsome lover. Her passion and devotion were infectious, and her beauty and charm irresistible.

The time came when she discovered that he was a Polish spy—so intimate was their life that it could scarcely be concealed. The contest between duty and passion was but short. So strong was her affection that she forgot her nationality as easily as she had forgotten her marital claims. She not only accepted the fact that he was a spy, but as time went on she helped him in his work.

Sosnowski had spent many weary months in Berlin, waiting for an opportunity to discover the German plans for invasion; he had had minor successes, but the German War Office was still a sealed citadel. His meeting with the Baroness proved to mean more than a happy loving—it provided the opportunity he had long sought. For the Baroness had a cousin, Fräulein von Natzner, who was working in the German War Office. She was no more than a typist, but because of her family connections she was engaged on

highly confidential work. Here were obvious potentialities, and, helped by his docile lover, Sosnowski met Fräulein von Natzner.

Although she was engaged on such important work she was poorly paid, and as she came from a family which had known prosperous days—her father had been a colonel in the German Army—she was unhappy and discontented. Sosnowski soon realized that she would not be over-scrupulous if she could have a gayer life and pretty clothes. Handling her with delicacy, he was able to hint how simple it would be for her to live the life she craved, and he eventually persuaded her to bring him small pieces of information from the German War Office. He paid her extraordinarily well for apparently trivial material, so that she was encouraged to play for higher stakes. If a man could pay her so well for a few paltry notes, what would he pay for something more important?

And then, by one of those coincidences which a writer of fiction would reject as unconvincing, Fräulein von Natzner was put to work typing some details of the potential German invasion of the Corridor and Upper Silesia. The arrangements concerned the supply organization, but from their details any staff officer could deduce the complete plan. By this time she was well established in a smart flat, was wearing equally smart clothes and living the glamorous life which she had craved. If anyone in Government circles had asked her for an explanation of her new-found prosperity she could, under pressure, admit that she was someone's mistress; and while that might be morally wrong, it is no crime against the State.

It was impossible for her to steal any of the actual copies of the plans, for they were all numbered and registered as a matter of routine; but she did steal the black carbon paper—she was careful to use at least one new set of carbons for each set of typescripts. This went on for some time. Sosnowski was pleased because he was getting details of the invasion as they were prepared by the High Command. The Fräulein was happy because she had pretty clothes, a smart flat and money to spend, and all in return for the mere passing over of pieces of carbon paper.[1]

The Fräulein had a mother who lived in the provinces, and when she visited her daughter in Berlin she was naturally glad, if a little curious, to see how well she was progressing in the Government service. The high standard of living had to be explained, and the Fräulein said that a certain General, a very old army friend of her father's, had found her a much better job.

Nearly a year passed, and then the long arm of coincidence moved again. The Fräulein's mother went to a social function in her provincial town, and there happened to meet the General who had been a friend of her husband

and who now had been so helpful to her daughter. What should be more natural than that the mother should thank the General for his kindness in finding her daughter such a good job?

The General was a busy man. In his time he had done many kindnesses for many people. A day or so later he recalled that conversation at the provincial party, but he could not recall ever having helped his old friend's daughter. And yet, on her mother's evidence, she was living in an expensive style in one of Berlin's smartest quarters. There might be nothing in it, possibly she was someone's mistress; but whatever the explanation, it was obvious that she had used the General's name. That in itself was serious, for people might believe that he was keeping the pretty Fräulein in the Berlin flat.

Perhaps, too, the General had Puritan instincts, and was concerned about the welfare of his old friend's daughter. He made inquiries, but nothing emerged which led him to believe that the pretty Fräulein was a kept woman. A staff officer of considerable experience, he was at once suspicious. He knew, of course, that she was engaged on confidential work: and he knew that when men or women live above their means, there is always something to explain.

The Berlin counter-espionage men worked secretly, and made exhaustive inquiries; the girl was watched while at her work. Very soon one of the agents discovered that she was taking away all the black carbons. The Fräulein was arrested and, faced by the might of the German War Office, and the terror of the Gestapo, she confessed. Captain Sosnowski and his Baroness were, of course, arrested. Thus the human factor had ruined a scheme which had been worked with remarkable success.

The story does not finish here—there followed a scene of high comedy. A few weeks after Sosnowski's arrest there were developments in Poland, where a famous German woman spy, Ozorel, and a male associate had been trying to obtain details of the Polish plans for a counter-invasion of East Prussia in the event of Germany making war.

Madame Ozorel was arrested, but the associate escaped the counter-espionage net by a matter of minutes, and fled to Danzig. There he boarded a ship bound for Stettin, and cleared the harbour just before Polish agents arrived, hot on his trail.

But the chief of the Polish counter-spies was a man of great resource. He chartered an aeroplane and flew to Stettin. Here he immediately sought out the local chief of police. A few weeks earlier the Polish Minister of Justice had been assassinated, and this gave a useful lever for an unusual request.

The Pole explained that a man suspected of the murder was on board the boat heading for Stettin.

"Good! Then we have him," said the German. "We will arrange his extradition at once."

"I wanted things to move much more quickly," the Polish officer explained. "If we could get this man back to Poland immediately, I believe I could persuade him to reveal the entire gang of assassins."

The German naturally demurred: he was a good official, bound by rules and regulations. At last, however, he was persuaded to telephone to Berlin for further instructions.

To his surprise, he got them. This was the time when Hitler was assiduously courting Polish friendship. Germany had nothing to do with the assassination, argued the Wilhelmstrasse, and would lose nothing by handing over the murderer at once—and would please the Poles. The chief of police at Stettin was given the necessary authority to act.

So a pretty comedy was played when the boat from Danzig docked at Stettin. The German spy protested that he *was* a German spy—but the local police had been warned by the Poles that this was his cover, that he would seek to implicate Germany in the assassination, and rouse bad feeling between the two countries. Highly incensed at the man's temerity, the German police peremptorily bundled him into the waiting aeroplane, and the Polish officers must have laughed loud and long as it took off, carrying as prisoner an important German agent, tamely handed over by his own people!

Thereafter the comedy continued along conventional and original lines. The Poles naturally denied that Sosnowski was a Polish spy: the Germans declared that they had never heard of Madame Ozorel and her accomplice! After the farce had been played long enough, Sosnowski was exchanged for the two Germans.

Now the story reverts to tragedy—stern tragedy on the Greek model. Sosnowski had escaped, but his lover and her cousin were condemned to death. There was a last-minute breath of romance once more. The husband of the Baroness, despite her unfaithfulness to him and her country, still loved her, and with quixotic devotion tried to rush through a divorce. Then, he urged, the Baroness could marry her lover, and, as a Polish citizen, might yet escape the fate of the spy.

The romantic plan failed: instead, a dread scene was played in the courtyard of a grim prison in Berlin. The headsman's block occupied the centre of the scene: simple but sinister, strangely out of place beyond the

walls of a museum. The headsman resembled a figure from a fantastic sword-and-cloak romance: he wore full evening dress, and the lower part of his face was hidden by a black veil.

The two women encountered death in different moods. The nerve of Fräulein von Natzner failed: she had to be carried, kicking, screaming, raving hysterically, to the execution block. It was a macabre, incredible scene as strong men held the struggling girl in position, her neck across the fatal beam. Small wonder that the executioner was flurried, and that the stroke of his axe was not so keen as it might have been.

The Baroness, on the contrary, walked to her doom in quiet calm. Captain Sosnowski had not yet been exchanged, and she believed that he, too, was about to die—that the headsman's axe was but the first step towards eternal reunion. She said good-bye to the prison officials; then advanced to the block like a queen of old. She knelt down, laying a photograph of Sosnowski on the ground, so that her eyes might gaze upon it even as the axe descended. Then with dignity she leaned forward: her throat touched the rough timber—with her own hands she tidied the hair from the nape of her neck.

"Strike, man, strike!" an officer cried.

But the headsman hesitated, great beads of sweat pouring down his face—on a chill February morning of 1935. The officer fumbled with his revolver: then the headsman automatically raised his axe, trying not to see the fair neck on the block. The axe descended, and the lovely head of the Baroness rolled on the ground beside the picture of her lover. The hardened prison officials left the scene in numbed silence, wondering if they had assisted at some mediæval rite.

And the headsman resigned his horrible profession. His friends cannot say which affected him the more—the struggles and shrieks of the girl who was afraid to die, or the calm dignity of the woman who so gladly passed into eternity.

I called the execution the last scene, but I was wrong. Three years later I called on Captain Sosnowski in Warsaw. I was shocked at the change in him. There was little sign of the handsome Polish officer who had with lion courage defied the German Secret Service single-handed. Here was a sleepless being, nerve-racked, tormented by memories, haunted by horrors. Always he dreamed of his lover, but his dreams were of death. Doctors failed to diagnose his malady, yet it was simple enough. The marvel is that he lived, for if any man ever sustained a broken heart, that man was Captain Sosnowski, one of the bravest, most brilliant spies of our generation. I am

alleged to be thick-skinned, but I am not ashamed to admit my emotion as I left him. Since the war began I have no news of him: if the Germans caught him, his fate is sealed: maybe he is already dead: if so, he is happy.

Am I right in describing this as one of the outstanding espionage dramas of our time?

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[1] I am afraid I must bear some unconscious responsibility for Fräulein von Natzner's subsequent fate. I learned later that she had adopted the trick of stealing the carbon papers from a perusal of my book *Spy*.—B.N.

VII

From Poland comes yet another story of drama, freely relieved by comedy. But in this case the final scene has not yet been played.

It is necessary to hail back to 1915, when the German armies were rapidly advancing on Warsaw. In the vaults of the Bank of Warsaw at Prague were gold roubles to the amount of six million pounds, and hasty arrangements were made to evacuate the bullion. An officer of the Russian Intelligence Service was in charge of the operation, and with him were a counter-espionage agent, a bank official, and a lieutenant commanding the military escort.

The convoy pounded to the east with its precious cargo. It reached Jedrzejow (the "City of Andrew") in the shelter of the Gory Swietokrzskie, or Holy Cross Mountains. One of these is known as the Lysa Gora, or Bald Mountain, because although its slopes are covered with forests, its summit is bare.

At Jedrzejow the convoy halted, for there were reports that the Germans had broken through the southern flank of the Russian armies, and had cut off the line of retreat. The officers held a council of war. Further progress was too precarious—it was decided to bury the gold on the near slopes of the Bald Mountain.

The soldiers were blindfolded so that they should know little or nothing of what was happening, and the officers themselves drove the lorries in turn, one after the other by devious and different routes, reaching an agreed spot on the edge of the forest. Here the soldiers dug deeply, and buried the gold. They were again blindfolded before the officers drove the lorries away. The

only people who knew the spot were the Intelligence Officer, the counter-espionage agent, the bank official and the lieutenant.

The lieutenant was killed soon afterwards: the bank official was murdered by the Bolsheviks: the Intelligence Officer, after fighting with Wrangel's force, was captured and executed. In the same confused fighting the counter-espionage agent was wounded, but managed to make his escape. Eventually he made his way to Italy.

His first years there are obscure, but it is known that he served one lengthy term in prison. He was probably a crook by origin—most of the Tsar's secret police were recruited from the criminal classes; the Russian joined one of those remarkable international gangs of spies, and was concerned in several episodes which attracted the attention of the police. It became obvious that the hospitality of Italy was becoming strained.

With a companion in crime, a German, he fled to Switzerland. Now all this time he had never forgotten the gold of Jedrzejow, but had kept his secret strictly to himself, but now the time seemed safe to divulge it to his companion.

Together they journeyed to Jedrzejow—it would have been amusing to see the Russian's face as he arrived. For the town under Polish rule had prospered exceedingly; its industry had doubled, and its suburbs had so extended that part of the forest had been chopped down to make room! The area where the gold lay deeply hidden was now covered with streets of suburban villas!

The chagrin of the conspirators may be imagined. The Russian's difficulties were immense; with local landmarks removed, he could not identify the site to within a hundred yards!

The pair returned to Switzerland. There a remarkable syndicate was formed, most of the members being receivers of stolen property. The two men again returned to Jedrzejow, and bought up house after house. Systematic excavation revealed nothing, however; evidently the Russian had been mistaken in his selection of the site. They returned to Switzerland for more money.

But the angry syndicate believed that it had been fooled. The Russian and German had kept all details to themselves, but now the furious fences demanded to know. There was a fight: the German escaped, but the Russian was badly beaten up.

A relative of his had married a Russian Jew who held some minor diplomatic post in Switzerland. Here he found shelter until he died from his

injuries. On his death-bed he revealed to his relative and her husband the story of the gold of Jedrzejow.

Many years now elapse: by 1939 the Russian Jew had become a man of some importance in his own country. The German gangster had been welcomed into the Nazi party and now held an important position in the Gestapo. And neither forgot the buried gold—especially when the German-Russian pact made the invasion and division of Poland a certainty.

The German reached the town first. The Gestapo agent had been given an Intelligence post with the invading armies. By virtue of the "information" he supplied, he was able to induce a German commander to order the bombardment of Jedrzejow. The suburb was literally levelled to the ground: now it would be possible to dig without hindrance.

In the meantime the Russian had been spurring on his own advancing troops. But if his chagrin was great when he discovered that the Germans had occupied the town first, imagine that of the German gangster when he learned that he had to retire and give up the town to the Russians! And of the Russian when, a week later, the Germans claimed to reoccupy the town!

This is an unfinished story, but the reader's imagination will supply the last scene but one. Picture a Russian and a German using the wiles of intrigue and high politics, freely plying death and destruction, each trying to double-cross the other, determined to find the hoard of gold.

As I gathered confirmation of this fantastic story—which is fully authenticated—I talked with a Polish officer of high rank.

"I wonder what the end of the duel will be," I said, after picturing the rivals in their frantic search.

"There will be no end," he answered. "Neither of them will find the gold."

"Why?"

"Because it is no longer there!"

But all my artifices failed to induce further confidences, and I must leave the story in this somewhat unsatisfactory state.

VIII

Trickery was the basis of Nazi intrigue in Poland. Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador, has revealed that whenever Hitler hesitated, his extremist advisers promptly invented a further series of Polish "atrocities."

Attacks on Polish custom-houses were represented as terroristic treatment of an oppressed minority. Nor were local agents slow in provoking incidents which could suitably be exaggerated.

The Polish peasant folk are simple and trustful, easy to beguile. They have the usual trust in the printed word. Consequently, when they saw a newspaper, they believed what they read: but forged newspapers were distributed wholesale by German agents. The incidents recall the triumph of Caporetto in 1917, when Italian morale was lowered by faked newspapers distributed behind the lines, giving "details" of riots at Turin and the appalling plight of the civilian population. Hundreds of names of killed and injured were given—names of real people, relatives of soldiers at the front. The German spy's telegram trick at Warsaw may have been a variant of this earlier success.

Not less effective was the spurious broadcasting station, purporting to be the Warsaw radio. Its propaganda was subtle enough for the Polish peasantry. It promised impossible things: the British fleet was in the Baltic, the French had broken through the Siegfried Line, hundreds of Allied aeroplanes had arrived in Poland, and so on. Fantastic hopes were raised: the aftermath was dejection and despair—even the feeling that they had been badly let down by their Western allies.

The moment the Germans occupied a Polish town, the reign of terror began. The task of the Gestapo was easy—they had already been supplied by local spies with lists of Poles who might prove opponents of the new regime.

To-day Poland lies under the heel of the Gestapo. The plight of its inhabitants may be imagined. Whole towns are being cleared at an hour's notice to make room for the Germans from the Baltic States. The weakness of the German case in the Corridor was that less than ten per cent of the population was German. By turning out the Poles and replacing them with Germans, Hitler hopes to present the world with a *fait accompli*—a hundred per cent German province.

Yet in spite of their sufferings, the Poles are not subdued. Armed bands lurk in the forests, or are hidden in the villages of the plain, waging guerilla warfare without fear or pity. Not even the presence of half a million troops and police can deter them—they are determined to keep Poland alive. Their activities will increase rather than fade, and they will reach their culmination at the moment when Germany is wobbling—that is the time for a decisive blow.

There is repressed fury in Polish hearts—and who can wonder? I am almost tempted to pity the German agents who find themselves in Poland when Hitler falls. They gave no mercy, and they need not expect it.

IX

Yet perhaps the best story from Poland emanates from the Russian frontier. My readers will recall the confusion at the time when Russian troops invaded Poland—it was not quite certain who was fighting whom. On the eastern frontier strange scenes were witnessed—Polish and Russian soldiers marching side by side! The stratagem was simple but effective: the Poles, their communications in a state of chaos, were stationed in isolated units: the Russians sent officers ahead under the white flag, and were able to persuade the bewildered garrison that they were coming to fight beside the Poles against the Germans! So are battles and campaigns won in these amazing days.

CHAPTER VI

GERMAN SPIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

I

DURING the summer of 1938 I travelled extensively in Czechoslovakia, so obviously destined to be the centre of the European scene before many months had passed.

One evening I was sitting in a charming house on the outskirts of Aussig, the industrial town so pleasantly situated on the banks of the picturesque River Elbe. My host and hostess, Czechoslovak subjects, were both German, for Aussig was in the heart of what was then called the Sudeten German country. Nevertheless, they differed considerably in temperament, mentality and culture from their cousins on the northern side of the mountains. It should never be forgotten that the Sudeten Germans had never known the sway of Berlin, but prior to 1918 had lived under the much gentler influence of Vienna. I remember well the morning I crossed into old Bohemia; the guards and peasants on the German side gave me the universal salute "Heil Hitler." The first man I met in Czechoslovakia was a German, but he gave me a greeting much older than Hitler—"*Grüss Gott*"—the grace of God.

My host and hostess, though German, were not rabid Nazis; they had many complaints against the Czechs—this was understandable enough. Until 1918 the Germans had been the dominant race in Bohemia, now they were only a minority—of course they had complaints. Throughout the evening my host developed most moderate theories—demanding, not union with Germany, but autonomy for the German-speaking districts of Czechoslovakia.

As we sat talking after dinner, his vivacious wife passed round a dish of chocolates: I accepted one, and promptly ate it. It had been covered in silver paper, and due perhaps to my interest in my host's conversation I did not throw the paper away, but toyed with it in my fingers. Many of us have peculiar habits of this kind. Who has not admired the weird sketches and designs which some people make while they are waiting for a telephone call to come through? I know one man who cannot resist a piece of string—he must loop it in and out his fingers. I have often found myself playing with a

piece of silver paper from a chocolate or a cigarette packet: I will roll it round and round my finger; I will stretch it out flat on the table, using my palms as an iron to take out the creases of its folds. All this is done almost unconsciously.

So I played with this piece of silver paper, which had so recently held a chocolate, while I discussed the grievances of Sudeten Germans with my host. Not for many minutes did I glance down to admire my handiwork; the silver piece of paper was now entirely smooth; my host was so interested in his speech that he did not notice my ill-repressed start of surprise, and I took good care that he should not notice the fact that I slipped the piece of silver paper into my pocket, instead of throwing it away.

I examined it at leisure when I had left the house: the paper would be about two inches square, and while the outer side was plain, the inner side carried lines—a considerable diagram, in fact. I borrowed a magnifying glass to examine the diagram; then started in amazement, for it appeared that engraved on this insignificant piece of paper was the plan of one of the forts of the Czech Maginot Line!

The reader can imagine my dilemma: it appeared that I had accidentally stumbled across my host's secret. He had talked to me moderately enough, but all the while he had been deceiving me: either he or his wife or one of his household was in active touch with the extremists within and beyond the frontier who sought to join the Sudeten country with Germany either by peaceful methods or by force. By some ill-chance—from their point of view—I had stumbled quite accidentally on one of their methods of communication—a most ingenious method, likely to avoid the attention of the most exacting frontier guards.

What ought I to do? I don't ever remember reading a book on etiquette, but I doubt if even one of these admirable volumes could have solved my dilemma. I could, of course, return to the lady and gentleman who had entertained me and point out that by mischance I had become possessed of one of their private secrets. This course had many objections—the knowledge that I knew their secret would make them uncomfortable, to say the least. And supposing I had unwittingly blundered into a deep-laid conspiracy, as so appeared? Many strange things were happening in the Sudetenland at the time; my host might respect his guest, but his associates might not—it would be very easy for an "accident" to happen to a potentially dangerous man.

Or I might hand over the telltale silver paper to the authorities at Prague. This involved disloyalty to my host and hostess. Further, was it my business

to involve myself in the internal affairs of another country? This suggested a third choice—that I should tear the silver paper into little pieces and keep my mouth shut.

But *was* this purely an internal affair of Czechoslovakia? It was already obvious that unless the situation were taken sternly in hand Czechoslovakia might easily find herself the unwilling provocation of a European War—in which my own country could scarcely be unconcerned. Eventually I worked out one of these compromises for which the British race is famous—I decided to hand over the evidence to a friend of mine in the Czech diplomatic service without revealing where I had obtained it.

I met my friend in Prague a few days later, and as soon as I was certain that we were likely to be undisturbed, I produced the significant piece of silver paper. To my surprise he smiled broadly when I handed it to him: then very gently he proceeded to disillusion me. Thanking me heartily for my concern in the welfare of Czechoslovakia, he told me that so far from chancing into the middle of some espionage plot against the security of the defences of the country, I had merely become possessed of a piece of chocolate wrapping which was typical of thousands which were being imported—usually smuggled—from Germany daily.

"I doubt if you could find any box of chocolates coming from Germany which does not carry things like these," he said. "Not only chocolates, but all kinds of goods which demand intimate wrappings. When these wrappings are removed, they are found to contain plans or even pictures of our fortifications."

"But I haven't got the idea," I protested. "Why should anyone smuggle plans of your fortifications *from* Germany into Czechoslovakia?"

"In the first place, they are not the plans of our fortifications—they only purport to be," he replied. "This is not military espionage, it is psychological propaganda. Sudeten Germans receive this kind of thing from Germany: they get the idea that Germany is absolutely on top—that she can march into Czechoslovakia at any time because she holds all Czechoslovakia's secrets. Thus is confidence imbued in the Sudeten German minds. I am not denying the cleverness of the scheme—and it works! The Sudeten Germans are quite convinced that Hitler is so far top dog that he only has to choose his time to march into Czechoslovakia. I can only say that if these diagrams are the best information that he has about our fortifications, then he is due for some nasty shocks if he does march into our country!

"The second part of the psychological idea has not been so successful. It may induce confidence in the Germans, but it does not induce despair in the

Czechs. Unfortunately for Hitler, we discovered this device at an early stage. To-day our people are not impressed by it—they merely laugh at it."

"He won't like that," I smiled.

"No, he has no sense of humour: but then, what dictator has?"

We began to talk then of more serious espionage, since what I thought was a cunning plot had turned out to be a rather childish device. There were over three million Germans in Czechoslovakia. About two million of them at this time accepted Henlein as their leader—that is to say, although they might not have known it, they had accepted Hitler. Thus there were about two million German spies in Czechoslovakia.

They were a considerable nuisance, as my friend admitted. Nevertheless, as I saw for myself, not even the presence of this enormous Fifth Column could affect the nerves of the people of Czechoslovakia. Nor was the vast epidemic of spying particularly successful. The Sudeten region reeked with petty espionage: any German who refused to join the Henlein party was soon smelled out by the Nazi partisans and promptly lost his job—he was lucky, indeed, if he did not lose his life.

So far as real information was concerned, however, it appeared that this huge mass of spies had produced surprisingly little result. I asked my friend for an explanation.

"Our counter-espionage service is very efficient," he said.

Every country claims this, so I demanded more details.

"Think back for a generation or two," he pointed out. "Then we were the submerged race in Bohemia. We were continuously plotting against authority; we invented more ingenious methods of extracting information and of conveying it. We were so numerous, so unanimous in our ideas, that authority could not hope to cope with us. A certain mentality was engendered by the situation—a mischievous ingenuity which no official rules and regulations could counter.

"Consider the situation to-day: the Germans are now the minority. Their struggle, though largely unjustified, is along exactly the same lines as our own; but we do not attempt to fight their mass espionage by official rules and regulations: on the contrary, the officers of our counter-espionage are the very men who twenty-five years ago were themselves doing precisely the same kind of spying against the Austrians! That is to say, they know exactly what to look for—and they usually find it."

"I see: it is a good example of our English proverb that 'a poacher makes the best gamekeeper.' "

"Precisely; that is an excellent parallel—I must make a note of it. One thing is quite certain, the Sudeten Germans will never beat us at underground warfare—our officers were experts at it while these young Nazis were being pushed about in their perambulators."

II

I have said that there were two million spies in Czechoslovakia before Munich. They were considerably augmented during the summer of 1939, when, with the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the German Army, espionage had become at last legalized, for with the army came thousands of Gestapo agents.

A friend who held a minor diplomatic position in the Government at Prague told me an amusing story of the way in which the Gestapo went to work.

"You may remember the maid I had when you visited me in Prague?" he said, "and she was—well, let us say—homely; a very hard worker, like all peasants, but distinctly homely."

Actually the phrase flattered the girl: I remember her well, and without hesitation would have described her as ugly. She had a face like a pudding and a figure like a sack of potatoes. She was a small stupid Slovak peasant girl—or woman, perhaps I should say, for she would never see thirty-five again. My friend's wife appeared satisfied with her, for she was quite content to do the housework and was a genuine worker.

"A week or two after the Germans occupied Prague," my friend went on, "my wife noticed signs of excitement in Anna. Soon the cause was revealed—a young man was looking at her. Naturally my wife was intrigued, in the first instance because she was interested in Anna; secondly, with the kindest thoughts in the world she wondered what kind of a man could possibly think of making love to a stupid, unintelligent, ill-favoured woman like Anna.

"Nevertheless, it was quite certain that he *was* making love to her, for from each successive evening out Anna returned in glowing excitement, the thrill of passion about her. It is always worse, I understand, when it comes late in life, and it is a reasonable assumption that no man had ever given Anna a glance before—unless it was a glance of amusement at her dumpy figure.

"It was my wife who got the first shock, for walking along the street one evening she met Anna with her lover. Instead of the man we had imagined—

a semi-imbecile perhaps, or maybe some work-shy who thought to live on Anna for the rest of his life—to her astonishment my wife saw Anna arm in arm with a very good-looking young man, at least ten years her junior.

"When I heard of this, naturally I began to think—everything was suspicious in those dramatic days. That such a man, who could have chosen over a wide field, should make love to Anna could not be explained by any biological or emotional standard. Therefore the phenomenon must have another explanation—an obvious one.

"Very soon Anna herself supplied the necessary confirmation. By this time her infatuation was complete—she never attempted to disguise it. It might have been this new outlook on life which impelled her to take a fresh interest in her job: hitherto efficient enough with the scrubbing-brush, she had been a sad failure as a parlour-maid. If she answered the bell, she just opened the door and let people walk in. Like most peasant girls, she was afraid of anything with wires, and studiously avoided the telephone.

"But now what a change was wrought by love! When a visitor called, Anna personally inquired his name and his business: when the 'phone bell rang, Anna rushed to it, again to discover the name of the caller before asking me to come to the telephone. I have often wondered if that lover of Anna's imagined me to be a congenital idiot!

"Naturally, I took what steps I could. I warned all friends and acquaintances to be particularly careful in their communications with me. Yet the situation was intolerable—to have a spy in my own house! As soon as the position was crystal clear, therefore, I called Anna and talked to her in a kindly fashion—explained that since the German occupation my salary had been reduced by a half; that meant that my mode of living must suffer; in future my wife would have to do all her own work. This meant—and Anna would doubtless see the point at once—that I must give her a week's notice. I should be glad to pay her an extra week's wages, and she could, of course, apply to me for the necessary reference.

"But Anna burst into a flood of tears. She would not think of leaving me, she declared. She was devoted to me and my wife: she quite understood that my cut salary was a domestic disaster, nevertheless she would be only too happy to stay and work for me for nothing!

"Naturally I argued, but she insisted. I could not very well throw her out—they would soon have found some regulation under which to prosecute me—so I allowed her to stay. Actually, I did decline to pay her, hoping at first that it would induce her to move on. Nothing of the kind. Nor was she

short of pocket money—she explained that her lover earned good wages and was very generous. These statements I did not doubt!

"Nevertheless, the situation was intolerable, and I was relieved when in July orders came to me to get out of Czechoslovakia. It was impossible to do this openly—I must make an emergency exit into Poland. There were all sorts of difficulties, for the frontier was heavily guarded, and in any case first I must escape the attentions of Anna.

"My scheme was simple and effective. My wife and I announced that we were going to stay with friends in the country for a holiday of a week or so. We impressed upon Anna that she would be in sole charge of the house—that on no account was anyone to enter. I threw out delicate hints that in my study were papers of importance. Naturally I had long since removed anything that mattered, for I had already suspicions that Anna was inviting her good-looking lover into the house.

"Anna willingly undertook to be the guardian of the house, and hurried me out with almost indecent haste. Those were tragic days for Czechoslovakia, yet when eventually I was clear of the city and safe in the depths of the frontier forest I sat down and roared with laughter. By this time, doubtless, Anna's Gestapo lover was rummaging the papers in my study. I had no doubt, too, that he would be delighted at what he found there!"

"I take it that you had left something for him to find?"

"Precisely. I had—I have forgotten that very picturesque gold-mining expression——"

"Salted," I suggested.

"That is it. I had salted the papers—naturally! Among other things I had left behind a document which would cause many awkward moments, not to Czechs or to Czechoslovakia, but to Germans. I can imagine hasty charges, indignant denials and nerve-racking suspicion for weeks after I made my exit from Prague.

"I have already mentioned the outstanding feature of this petty espionage. If this is an example of German spying, then I pity Hitler in the long run. The method was elementary—it has been in common use for thousands of years. But to believe that I should not see through it at once! To imagine that any human being with ordinary intelligence would not begin to suspect when a good-looking young man, not short of cash, began to pay court to a girl like Anna! That is the outstanding feature. And there we may have the clue to German weakness—it seems that they have the habit always

of underestimating their opponents, and in this I think you will agree lies the surest road to disaster."

III

The German spy system in Czechoslovakia went far beyond its first task of preparing the country for rapid invasion: it cleverly took advantage of the sympathy for Czechoslovakia freely expressed in all the progressive countries in the world, and it enlisted Sudeten Germans as missionary agents to be sent abroad. Some of these men were bilinguals and could pass themselves off as Czechs. (In spite of Hitler's race theory, Germans have freely mixed with surrounding races, and marriages between Germans and Czechs are quite common.) The bilingual element in the frontier districts is strong: it was never acknowledged before 1918 because the Austrian census was always conducted on a language basis, and if a man spoke any German at all he was unhesitatingly classed as a German.

Alternatively, if his command of the Czech language were insufficient, the agent could always represent himself as a persecuted Social Democrat fleeing the country. He could be certain of a sympathetic reception from Labour organizations in the democratic countries. Again there is no need for men who offered hospitality to these persecuted refugees to reproach themselves—ninety-nine per cent of the refugees from Czechoslovakia were only too genuine.

These agents, with the inestimable advantage of Czech nationality and a Czechoslovak passport, were seldom used on military or naval espionage; they were concerned principally with propaganda, and were naturally in a unique position to spread false rumours about Czechoslovakia. I remember hearing one Czech "Social Democrat" (as he called himself—he was later arrested) lecture to a sympathetic audience in a French town. He was extraordinarily clever; his discourse was a flame of democratic patriotism—yet all the time there was the suggestion of defeat, an underlying hint rather than a plain statement that Czechoslovakia was doomed and therefore, by inference, that it would be useless for France to make war on her behalf, so powerful was the German stranglehold. Not all were so clever as this man—I confess that at the time I was taken in completely. I explained his pessimism as a natural result of the appalling experiences he had undergone, and I admit my surprise when later his true character was proved. On the other hand there was one man who made similar attempts to influence opinion in England, but he was so clumsy as to be ridiculous—and he was very wise to make a rapid disappearance from England.

IV

Kindly people are easily fooled, as any crook knows. Consider the case of another German "Social Democrat" journalist who fled from the Sudetenland to England to escape the dread hand of Hitler. He was a man of forty-five or fifty, an able writer, with a plausible manner. He had more than the average German's social charm and grace—he had a becoming modesty which endeared him to many people in England. But, as he pointed out, these things were not enough, and he must live.

Through influence he obtained a job with a large firm which produced each week dozens of papers or periodicals. After a while that firm obtained a contract for the printing of certain technical booklets which, though not secret, were concerned with Britain's armed forces. His duties took him on many occasions to the War Office, where he met a highly influential staff officer, a man whom in the present war holds one of Britain's key positions.

The German had fought with distinction in the Austrian Army during the World War, and what was more natural than that the two men should talk about the war which had been the greatest thing in their lives? The acquaintance began to deepen into friendship—what had begun as professional visits became social calls. The British soldier asked the ex-German soldier to luncheon at his club. Here they fought again, with the aid of knives and forks and glasses and matches, the battles in which they had been engaged.

With a certain charming diffidence the German asked the British staff officer if he would care to continue the battle at dinner an evening or so hence. The invitation was accepted, and a week or so later the soldier asked the German to stay for a week at his place in the country. I do not know what information the German gained from the soldier, or how he tried to gain it. That he did send material to Germany I do know, and when first I heard this story I was astonished to think that a British officer of so high a rank could have been so indiscreet.

Two days after war broke out, happening to be near the office where the German journalist worked, I thought I would look in and see him. Though not interested in him personally, I was interested in his views on the war. He was not in his office. At twelve o'clock on that Sunday morning when Britain had decided to put an end to Nazi aggression, two Special Branch officers had called at his flat and taken him away.

I do not know in which internment camp he is housed, but I mentally apologized to that British staff officer. I ought to have remembered that one of the oldest and most successful counter-espionage moves is to let the other

man think he is getting away with something. The German spy school ought to have taught this, too.

Though Hitler had complained so passionately of Czech brutality and oppression, I knew from my own observations the Czechs were amazingly lenient: from the Deutsches Haus in Prague I was fed with information that could only be described as seditious. Long before Munich it had revealed itself openly as a centre of German espionage—military as well as political and economic. One of its cleverest moves was to adopt a school of pottery in the Sudeten district as its training college. Not only could it send out men to other countries from this college as representatives of the Sudeten pottery industry, but it could legitimately offer scholarships to students of other nationalities. Strangely enough, these students were always German—from Poland, from the Balkan States, the Baltic countries, and even from Italy. It is now openly admitted that while the students did study the art of ceramics at the school, they also studied many other things which have not the slightest concern with pottery.

By many other subtle means the Nazis prepared for the destruction of Czechoslovakia. It was one of the great complaints of the Sudeten Germans that they were not given their due proportion of Government posts in Czechoslovakia, though how they expected the Government to appoint overt or open rebels to positions of trust they were never able to explain. Actually, although it is true that the percentage of Germans employed by the Government was less than their proportion of the population, I remarked that the number of Germans in the higher positions was actually *above* that proportion. In particular, the Germans held more than the appropriate twenty-two per cent of posts in the higher administration of justice and in higher education.

For the greater part the judges, magistrates and professors were loyal to their country, though their integrity waned sometimes when the shadow of the Swastika loomed so largely over the Bohemian mountains. Some of them, however, were active German agents; it has now been revealed that a well-known professor at the Prague University was director of a considerable section of espionage activity. He was a man in a position of trust, who actually gave periodical lectures at the Military Academy; and he was a spy.

He and his agents had everything in their favour in Czechoslovakia. The number of minorities, with their malcontent element, the anxiety of the authorities that no move should be made that any flight of the imagination could class as aggression, the height of passion which enabled the Nazis to

set race against race, the easy freedom of the country, where all kinds of invaluable observations could be made and photographs taken without the suggestion of interference—all these facilities aided the German espionage system in Czechoslovakia. Use was also made of youth movements: it was in Czechoslovakia that the Sokols were born, and the Czech Government could scarcely object if the Sudeten Germans raised similar organizations. Sometimes these were even affiliated to the parent centre at Prague: in particular, the Government looked benevolently on the *Wandervogel* of the Bohemian mountains. What more natural than that youths and maidens should want to cross the beautiful valleys and climb the hills of their lovely homeland?

Nor should we class every German idea as evil because of the gangsters who have led the country to such an unfortunate destiny. The Youth Hostels originated in Germany, and represent a real gift to the culture of the day in many other lands—not excepting Britain and America. They were widely welcomed in Czechoslovakia. In the Sudetenland especially, the most beautiful region of the Republic, a chain of youth hostels was built. Reciprocal arrangements were made so that Germans passing over the frontier might use the Czech hostels, and Czechs the German. Frontier guards looked kindly on the little parties of wandering youths, burdened by their huge Bergen packs, who sang as they tramped across the mountains. Few of them thought of examining the contents of those packs—the open air youth is the least suspect of all persons, radiating as he does clean health and honesty. Yet from those very youth hostels there now comes strange stories. Not until the last moment were they suspect: when Czech students on the tramp noticed by a queer coincidence that certain hostels were always full. Some of these are now known to be centres of espionage activity, and it is known, too, that some of those Bergen packs carried charges and detonators ready for the dread work of sabotage.

V

For the greater part the course of German espionage in Czechoslovakia runs along parallel lines to that in Poland. My simile is not quite accurate, for the Czech intrigue was the parent of that in Poland. In the Sudetenland we saw the now familiar course—the use of minorities not only to provoke disorder, but to secure intimate plans of the countryside with its defences and its strategic points. When in Czechoslovakia in 1938, however, I did chance across one German exception to the general sordid rule of underground intrigue.

It was in a little town near Brno that the local chief of police told me the story. A circus had recently pitched its big tent and had given its couple of performances: it was a good circus, and attracted large crowds. (Central Europe is the true home of the travelling circus, which is often of a very high standard.)

As the circus was about to pack up after the last performance, however, it was suddenly raided by the police, who placed the entire outfit under arrest, the animals and all. Clever counter-espionage agents had been at work: there had been a series of sabotage outrages in Bohemia and Moravia, and an observant officer had noticed that they always occurred in towns which had recently been visited by the circus!

The artistes and employees of the show formed a cosmopolitan medley, as might be expected. There were several Germans among them, and naturally these men were given special attention. The lion-tamer was the last to be examined. A search of his caravan revealed nothing: but convinced that they were on the right track, the Czech plain-clothes men insisted on searching the cage itself. Under each of the animals' cages, between the wheels, was the usual large well or box, used to transport a section of the tent or equipment. The Czech investigators found that a portion of one of these wells had been ingeniously panelled off, and behind the panel were hidden the charges intended for use in a further series of sabotage outrages.

In another police museum in Bohemia I was shown some slabs of concrete seized from railway trucks emanating from Germany, when they were being unloaded at a Sudeten siding by German labourers. The stationmaster was a Czech; he had happened to lend a hand when one of the concrete slabs were being lifted, and its weight was so light that his suspicions were immediately aroused. He said nothing, but informed the police, who promptly impounded the whole consignment. So it was discovered that the slabs of "concrete" actually consisted of plaster of Paris, which, when broken apart, revealed drums of machine-gun ammunition.

After this discovery a much keener watch was naturally kept on railway communications, and more than one find was made of rifles, machine-guns and ammunition concealed under loads of coal. In some cases the drivers and guards of the trains were in German pay; once over the Czech frontier they would halt the train for a few minutes in a lonely spot so that some part of the cargo could be dumped overboard. The material jettisoned would be immediately picked up by local agents, and distributed over neighbouring villages, so that in the event of discovery the Czechs were only likely to recapture a small portion of the deadly booty.

VI

The very kindliness and conciliatory nature of democracy has worked to its own disadvantage. Could the Czechs have hired a few dozen ruthless spirits from the Gestapo, there would have been no disturbances in the Sudetenland!

The activities of the German agents did not end with their work among their own social elements. Czechoslovakia, like all composite states, had its weaknesses. The Czechs, for hundreds of years one of the leading races of Central Europe and held under the mild Austrian yoke for a mere three hundred years, were virile and progressive—the small admixture of German blood tending to add a leaven of efficiency to Slav imagination. The Slovaks, on the other hand, had lived for a thousand years under the Hungarians almost in a state of serfdom. When they regained their freedom, they were ill-educated, and almost illiterate. The small educated class had always drawn its culture from Budapest or Vienna.

It was scarcely surprising, therefore, that in the new republic the Czechs held the upper hand, not merely because they were the more numerous, but because in initiative and education they were far advanced. The situation would have righted itself in a generation or so, but in the meantime there was ample scope for the malcontent—particularly the unsuccessful man disappointed of a Government post. Among this class Germans and Hungarians found ready agents.

Few people who knew the situation were very surprised when in March, 1939, the Slovak cabinet "invited" Hitler to "protect" their country. Months earlier I had been discussing Slovakia with a Polish diplomat—soon after the Munich agreement.

"No, there were no difficulties with Slovakia," said the Pole. "Her politicians were amenable to reason. You know the country: here is a peasantry, intelligent but still ill-educated, politically in the hands of a small class of professional politicians. All of these were educated abroad: none of them were brought up to visualize a free Slovakia: all have personal ambitions. Of the Slovak cabinet of twelve, six were in the pay of Germany, four of Hungary."

"Only two honest men among them!" I commented.

"Not even that!" said the Pole. "The other two were in the pay of Poland—we had to counter Hitler by his own methods!"

In Ruthenia the German task of disruption was simpler. The economic life of Ruthenia was largely controlled by Jews—who were scarcely popular

with the poverty-stricken peasants. The agents employed by Hitler for anti-semitic and anti-Czech propaganda were young Ruthenians, who for the first time had been given the benefits of education, but who could be persuaded to turn against their benefactors. I remember at Uzhorod and Hust listening to lectures which amazed me—even in England the speeches would have been classed as seditious. Yet the Czechs did nothing: all these were growing pains, it was explained to me; very soon the Ruthenes would see where their future lay—I had only to wait a few years. Had it been left to the Ruthenes, this might have been so, but Hitler's object was to disrupt Czechoslovakia, not to allow its unity to be consolidated.

It is certain that the Slovaks to-day are sadder and wiser than they were, and the Ruthenes are at least wiser. It is significant that many of the lieutenants of Dr. Benes in his task of rebuilding the submerged republic are Slovaks, as was Masaryk, its founder. The day will not long be delayed when we will see Czechoslovakia restored to the map of Europe again, maybe in federation with its neighbouring Slav country of Poland.

In the meantime the Gestapo rules in Prague, and Czech students are massacred when they make a patriotic demonstration. It is dangerous to make so many martyrs. Twice the Czechs have revolted; the odds are hopeless, for they are unarmed—in September women fought the German soldiers, using as weapons planks of wood through which long nails had been driven. The Czechs are unarmed, I said. But hidden in the depths of the Bohemian forest are caches of rifles and machine-guns. These will be unearthed at the right moment—not yet, but when the Nazis are on the point of tottering. It is impossible to hold a nation down: the Germans ought to know this.

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN SPIES

I

GENERALLY speaking, women make rotten spies. This is no reflection on their intelligence or courage—it is purely a matter of technical knowledge.

I have already considered at some length the method of training spies adopted in Germany. Yet even Herr Reinhard Heydrich, spy schoolmaster in chief, would admit that a few months' training can be no more than superficial, fitting the spy only for the most elementary tasks. The first-class spy is the product of years of training; often he is an artillery or engineer officer—that is to say, he has a wide technical background; for him, if he has the necessary qualifications in command of languages and a natural capacity for intrigue, the spy course need only be brief—mastery of codes and methods of communication. Because so few women have ever taken the trouble to become fully qualified engineer or artillery officers, they have seldom attained the front rank of espionage.

This statement seems to conflict with well-known evidence. The name of Mata Hari is more familiar to the average reader than those of a dozen outstanding male spies of the World War period. The amusing thing was that it was never proved that Mata Hari did any spying! She was a German spy without question, for she fell blindly into the French trap. When under suspicion she offered to spy for France, and the Second Bureau, not likely to be taken in by a woman of such limited intelligence, sent her into occupied Belgium, giving her the names of six agents with whom she was to make contact. These agents were already suspects, and a week or two after her arrival in Belgium one of them was executed by the Germans. Here was ample proof that she was working under German direction. Further, the French were able to prove that she had received large sums of money from German sources, although she proclaimed that these were transmitted by some of her lovers. The amounts were large, but she explained that her fee was very high.

Although it was easy enough to prove that she was a spy, not even the Germans would have entrusted her with first-class espionage—she was

woefully deficient in the necessary knowledge and intelligence. How comes it, then, that this woman became world famous, so much so that to-day, whenever a woman spy is in the news, she is termed a "second Mata Hari"?

It is all a question of publicity. When the few outstanding women spies of the war died—women like Louise de Bettignies or Gabrielle Petit—their deaths passed unnoticed. If mentioned at all in the international press, their obituary notices consisted of half an inch at the bottom of an obscure column. When it was announced that Louise de Bettignies had died in a German prison, this meant nothing to the journalist of any country, for he had never heard of Louise. But Mata Hari was a different proposition. Here was a figure of world renown, a courtesan of princes. As soon as she was arrested, journalists were able to let themselves go. As soon as she was condemned and shot, they were free of the law of libel and could fill pages with spicy stories of her amazing life. Since she was no longer there to contradict them, they let their imagination run riot and gave her the credit of all kinds of feats of espionage for which she would never have had either the nerve or the wits. And ever afterwards, when a woman spy comes into the news, the same old stories are raked out and hashed up again in a new guise.

II

The true story of Mata Hari has often been told, but to this day innumerable legends are still in circulation—some of them encouraged by the imaginative efforts of Hollywood. As a corrective to sensational romance, let us summarize briefly the career of this second-rate spy before glancing at some successful but less publicized women spies.

The very name "Mata Hari"—"The Eye of the Morning"—implied legend. (It may, indeed, explain her espionage reputation. Would the press have made so much of her had her name been Jemima Snooks?) Yet Mata Hari was no mystic temple dancer from the East. She was in fact a Dutchwoman. She was born in 1876 at Leeuwarden, her name was Margaret Gerda Zelle. At the age of twenty she married Captain Rudolf McLeod, a Dutch officer of Scottish descent, who was home on leave from service in the Dutch East Indies. Their marriage is said to have been the result of an advertisement inserted by the Captain in a matrimonial paper—decidedly *not* romantic!

Two years after they were married, and after a son had been born, the family went to Java, where McLeod had been given a command. Their small son was poisoned by a native nurse, and this tragedy was probably the cause

of Mata Hari's subsequent career. It also perhaps forms the reason why her husband took to drink and became a wife beater. These misfortunes may further have driven Gerda into sampling the seamy side of life in the Dutch East Indies. She seems to have been fascinated by the lascivious native dancing.

A year or so later, when matters had gone from bad to worse, Gerda tried to divorce McLeod when they returned to Holland, after he retired from Government service. She was unsuccessful, but obtained a judicial separation. In spite of this, the gallant officer failed to support her, despite an order from the court. Mata Hari, as we will now call her, believed that she could earn a living as a dancer on the Paris stage; she had never forgotten those lascivious native dances she had seen in Java. Indeed Mata Hari was now a lascivious-minded woman herself. She had lived a fast and hectic life in Dutch East Indies, and she had no scruples about turning these factors to a profitable account.

She was not a beautiful woman. If you had seen her in the street you might not have given her a second glance, unless you had been struck by the grace of her body. And therein lay the secret of Mata Hari's instantaneous success on the Paris stage.

Dressed in the clothes of the day, she was inconspicuous. More or less undressed, and glamorized by Parisian night life, she was irresistible. She had a slim, sinuous, beautiful, bronze body. Its natural grace and seductiveness fitted admirably the snaky dances of the East Indies.

As her stage career was launched, Paris was flooded with tremendous publicity, the like of which has scarcely been excelled, even in this age of highly specialized publicity. Paris, eager for something novel, for a new type of sensation, was warned of the approach of a mysterious Burmese princess, who had been rescued from a fate worse than death by a gallant Scottish officer in the British service. McLeod could scarcely have recognized himself in the legend except for the name.

Her performance startled even sophisticated Paris. Her exquisite body was naked except for a few jingling bracelets: exotic perfumes passed from the stage over to the entranced audience; soft Eastern music was played, while Mata Hari began her dancing, slowly at first, then slightly faster until she finally reached a stage of eroticism which roused up the audience to fanatical applause.

This eroticism not only had the effect of amusing and intriguing jaded Paris, but it also served to hide the fact that the great Mata Hari was not really a dancer at all. The girls in the lowest Parisian music-halls knew more

about dancing than Mata Hari. But she undoubtedly had a tremendous sexual fascination, and the sensuous movements of her body were mistaken by a charmed audience for high art from the Far East.

For several years she was the toast of almost every capital in Europe. Her love affairs were notorious; probably she took lovers more from a sense of publicity than from a sense of passion. Eventually, as was bound to happen, the novelty wore off. There was a limit to the various tricks and physical stratagems, based on sexual attraction, which Mata Hari could produce. When her popularity waned she continued her life as a *demi-mondaine*. At thirty-eight her stage career was finished, she had spent every penny of the fortune she had earned. Thus she became a suitable candidate for espionage. In her hey-day she had been the mistress of many famous men in France, and some of them would probably have been glad to renew their acquaintanceship.

Mata Hari was desperate for money when she was approached by German espionage agents. She claims to have been paid a high figure for her work, but the Germans did not usually pay something for nothing. In the early months of the war she was very active at Vittel, the French Spa; and as a woman who was "easy" she was a by-word among many French flying officers. In 1915 she moved to Paris, and set up as a high-class prostitute, with Allied officers as her customers. The legends about her career as a spy are as fantastic as those surrounding her "romantic" origin. She was so clumsy in her activities that she soon attracted the attention of French counter-espionage officers. Suspicious, but unable to prove anything, and rather apprehensive because of her highly placed lovers, they deported her to Spain. After a spell she came to England, but was allowed no farther than the port at which she had disembarked. A few hours later she was put in another ship and sent back to Spain. But she contrived to get into France again, so supreme was the confidence of this amazing woman that her lovers would shield her from all harm.

Many legends give Mata Hari a great deal of credit for having provided vital information to Germany about the Allied plans. The claim is absurd: ever since early in 1915 she had been a marked woman. The stratagem to which I have referred—sending her into occupied Belgium, where she betrayed French agents—was the foundation of a cast-iron case against her. On this French officials insisted: they were not afraid of Mata Hari, but were nervous of her lovers. She was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. The sentence was duly executed on October 15th, 1917.

The fanciful stories concerning Mata Hari reached their culminating point in the accounts of her death. We are given a picture of her erstwhile lovers, men of high position, running round to French Cabinet Ministers, pleading on their knees for clemency. In the meantime, the doomed siren was calmly preparing for her fate, a nun sharing her cell to comfort her for the final moment. In the chill hour before dawn the tumbril rolls along the boulevards towards the fortress of Vincennes, clattering hooves of the horses of the armed escort resounded beside. Mata Hari is led to the fatal spot in the great moat; the soldiers of the firing party level their rifles: then at the last moment Mata Hari flings open the fur coat which she was wearing—to disclose beneath it that naked body whose beauty had exercised such charm on audiences and individuals.

Was it a theatrical gesture? It has been claimed that she hoped by this touch of melodrama to unnerve the soldiers so that they would refuse to fire, or miss their aim—and a woman of the limited intelligence of Mata Hari might be capable of believing such a thing. There are other stories which claim that Mata Hari believed that her execution was faked, that the ceremony had to be pursued in order to satisfy public opinion, but in the meantime her powerful lovers had secured a pardon, and that the cartridges in the firing party's rifles were blanks. All she had to do was to pretend to die.

Unfortunately for the claims of romance and drama, all these stories are the most fantastic fiction. Mata Hari did not at the last moment fling off her coat and reveal her naked body, because she was placed for execution in the usual French manner—that is to say, tied to a post with her hands fastened behind her! So much for the first part of the legend; the second needs no comment, for the cartridges fired at her were certainly not blank!

The post-mortem scene was even less dramatic. That beautiful body, once the rage of Europe's capitals, was sent to a Parisian hospital to be carved up as practice for medical students. I remember, years later, meeting a French provincial doctor who described with much gusto how he removed his first appendix—from the body of Mata Hari.

III

But if my women readers are offended that I should give them so little credit in the dangerous field of espionage, let me at least recover part of my lost reputation and proclaim boldly that though they may be unsuccessful as spies, they rank outstandingly as messengers. This is vastly more important.

Again I must insist that in war-time one of the spy's principal difficulties is not to get information, but to get it home. In the devising of ingenious methods of carrying information, women during the last war were supreme.

The finest examples can be gathered from the records of that gallant band of French and Belgian women who served the Allies so devotedly. Hundreds of them, headed by women of intelligence and courage like Louise de Bettignies and Gabrielle Petit, worked for France and England throughout the war, always in danger: many of them indeed made the great sacrifice before the war was ended. They even organized the gathering of information from railwaymen or professional agents. Then the women themselves carried that information across occupied Belgium: they had to face the fearful crossing of the frontier covered by machine-guns and searchlights, patrolled by sentries and dogs and protected by barbed wire and even more terrifying obstacles—a fence of live wires whose touch meant electrocution. The courage of these women never faltered, and throughout the war, in spite of all difficulties, they sent out a steady stream of information filtering through to Allied Intelligence.

As counter-spies too, women have been used with advantage. There was a recent case in England where misguided men of Communist leanings had been persuaded that the best way to help their cause was to institute sabotage in British munition works. One of the damning witnesses against them was a young girl whose identity was naturally kept secret. Her task had been simple, yet difficult. Posing as a Communist and studying its literature so as to speak the same language as her new comrades, she was in course of time accepted as one of themselves: and eventually she was able to insinuate herself into the absurd plot, and at the right moment to reveal it to the authorities. This line of activity is one of the commonest features of counter-espionage.

It was noteworthy that although the identity of this enterprising young lady was kept secret, she was freely described as beautiful. Good-looking she certainly was, but even had her face been homely that would have made little difference to imaginative journalists. A woman spy *must* be beautiful—tradition demands it. A generation fed on the women spies of thrillers and Hollywood films would sneer at the idea of a girl with a face like a pudding, engaged in international espionage. Yet for first-class spy work the same proviso applies to women as to men: the successful spy is the most inconspicuous person. The spy of the films, a beautiful, well-dressed person, exuding personality, could scarcely go about without attracting attention, and attention is the last thing a spy wants.

One of the most successful women spies I ever met was an Austrian. Not even an imaginative journalist could have called her beautiful: her face was plain and her figure was dumpy, yet she had another appeal, a high intelligence. After the Nazis marched into Austria, she left her own country and accepted employment in the service of another state. After a lapse of time I ran into her again on the steamboat which plies from Budapest down the Danube to Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Roumanian ports. There was a well-known Turkish Minister on board, and when we were alone my friend admitted that he was her objective. Actually two agents had been allocated to the job, both women. One was of the glamorous type with which we are so familiar, the other my friend. The vamp succeeded in her part of the mission; the Turk was a noted admirer of beautiful women and needed no great persuasion to share her cabin. There, however, her success finished; in his moments with her he insisted on talking love, not international politics. On the other hand, he esteemed the great intelligence and wide knowledge of my Viennese friend. There was no question of drama, no attempt to steal his papers, if he had any. For hours each day the two would sit apart, discussing European affairs as equals. When she landed at Giurgiu to take the train to Bucharest, my friend was quite happy. From her continuous conversation she was able to draw the gist of what was in the Minister's mind; she had never expected the details of the schemes which were afoot. She went so far as to give me her forecast of the trend of Balkan affairs for the next few months—a forecast which proved amazingly accurate.

IV

Until thirty years ago the German direction sneered at the idea of employing women on Intelligence work; the Kaiser himself had plainly indicated the true place for women. The World War altered some of these preconceived—or prehistoric—ideas. There was at least one woman who gave first-class service as a spy on the Russian front. There were two women who were outstanding in the counter-spy organization which the Germans had to impose on occupied Belgium. And there were dozens who gave magnificent service as messengers. Some of them were no more than hirelings, for the number of German women who could pass themselves off as French was very limited. Some, however, could pose as Swiss, some as Alsatians—some of them were indeed Alsatians. The success of these women impelled new ideas.

Nevertheless, in the immediate post-war years women spies were little used, and it was not until the emergence of Hitler that their place in

espionage again became important, and this in spite of the fact that Hitler had himself adopted the Kaiser's dictum that a woman's place was the home—the kitchen and the nursery, indeed—and that she should concern herself not with high affairs of State, a male prerogative, but with her children. Maybe that is still Hitler's idea, but it is an idea not entirely held by all his directors of Intelligence.

At first women were recruited purely for internal espionage, to spy on their fellows and even on the members of their own family. It was enjoined on every good Nazi woman that it was her duty to report the political delinquencies of others. The activities of these women were carefully watched; those who without scruple denounced even their friends were highly commended, and were marked down for more important tasks, for scruples are a great handicap to a spy.

I have said that of late years my correspondence has become something of a burden. Scarcely a day passes but I receive at least one letter from a would-be spy. He or she has been excited by one of my books and now demands to know how one becomes a spy. I am afraid that my replies must have disappointed many of my readers.

For, of course, there is no straight road to espionage—you cannot take a degree or even a course at a correspondence college. If you apply to the British War Office, you will probably get a post card of acknowledgment and never hear from them again. While it is perfectly true that many potential agents are thus lost to the country, it is equally obvious that indiscriminate recruiting is impracticable. The German system of internal espionage provided an admirable training ground. For months a German girl would be watched, unknown to herself, especially if she had outstanding qualifications which had attracted the attention of the higher authority. Among them linguistic ability was almost essential, and capacity as an actress was a great asset.

Let us consider an actual case; the girl in question later married a Swede and now looks back with deep disgust on the whole episode. When Hitler was fighting for power she was caught up by his grand phrases: there was nothing remarkable about this, it was inevitable that the youth of Germany should revolt against the restraints and indignities of defeat.

She became a fervent Nazi, persuaded that it was essential for the whole of Germany to adopt the Nazi ideals, and that any opposition from within was even more dangerous for the welfare of the country than enemies without. Distasteful though it might be, she was ready to report to her party superior the failings of those in her own circle. For this she was given a

good mark, and when Hitler rose to power in 1933 she was marked down for higher service.

First she was allotted a series of tasks to test her intelligence. For a short time she was attached to the German Consulate at Geneva that she might perfect her French; her English was already extremely good. A year later she was sent to one of the spy schools which I have described in another chapter. There was no question of her dabbling in first-class military intelligence, for she lacked the essential technical groundwork.

Her first assignment was in France. She travelled about the country, ostensibly as a representative of a Swiss firm marketing a new type of press stud. As such she was able to call upon the small shops, drapers and dress-makers all over France. There was no question of spying in the grand manner, but over a period of some months she was in intimate contact with a cross-section of France—ordinary people, not politicians. As a Swiss she was readily accepted. It is never difficult to persuade the French to talk politics, and at the end of those months she had gained a remarkably accurate idea of French popular opinion on European affairs.

Next she undertook a similar assignment in the countries of Scandinavia. Her work here was so thorough that her chief now decided to entrust to her a mission of a higher order. By this time the persecution of the Jews in Germany was in full force, and hundreds of refugees were finding asylum in England and other friendly countries. It was arranged for this girl to cross to England as a Jewish refugee. She was not a Jewess, but for many weeks undertook a course of instruction in Jewish religion, culture and habits. At the same time she reverted to a study of housewifery, simple enough for her, for like nearly all German girls her youth had been domesticated.

At the appropriate moment she came to England as a refugee to take up a domestic post, in a home carefully chosen by the German Intelligence. (The refugee association which helped her to escape from persecution naturally knew nothing whatsoever of the real state of affairs.) Here she found herself installed as housemaid to a gentleman of some means, whose son was an officer in the Territorial Army.

It is perhaps not essential to point out that junior officers of the Territorial Army are not entrusted with high military secrets—the Chief of the Imperial General Staff seldom shares his ideas with subalterns! At the same time it is true that English people as a whole talk far too freely on official matters: we are so accustomed to free speech on every occasion, the idea of internal espionage is so utterly foreign to us, that we are not always as careful as we ought to be. Sometimes the young man would bring his

regimental colleagues home to dinner, and ignoring the presence of the inconspicuous housemaid, they would discuss the affairs of the regiment; as this was at a time when the Territorial Army was being starved of modern equipment, the trend of their remarks can readily be imagined. When after nearly a year the girl returned to Germany on Christmas leave, her superiors were delighted with her report, so considerable an amount of information, especially about the deficiencies of the Territorial Army, had she gained. When my friend, now a Swedish subject, confessed all this to me, she imagined that I should be very annoyed because she had acted as a spy against England. I was able to reassure her that the Germans always had a habit of overdoing things, and that it was quite unnecessary to send spies to England to get information about the deficiencies of the Territorial Army. They had only to read the serious newspapers, whose military correspondents knew a good deal more about such deficiencies than junior subalterns, and who were not afraid to discuss them frankly, and they would have got all the information they needed! The Germans invariably tend to develop organization for the sake of organization—to overlook information which might be gathered simply in favour of methods which involve much organization and expense. And this although more than one first-class item of Intelligence has been gleaned from a casual paragraph in a provincial newspaper.

One thing I ought to make perfectly clear, that not one in a thousand of the refugees from Germany has any connection whatever with espionage. (Of the fifty thousand refugees in Great Britain, less than a hundred have been interned, some of these purely as a precautionary measure.) The others are utterly genuine, and far more anxious to serve the country which has given them shelter than that which had driven them out. It cannot be denied, however, that the exodus of refugees did give the Germans an excellent opportunity of introducing an occasional spy, just as in 1914 enemy agents were rushed over among the swarms of Belgian refugees which crossed to England, fleeing before the German fury.

Germany has also made full use of the more publicized type of woman spy—the glamorous vamp who seduces the young diplomat from both virtue and duty and steals his plans at a delicate moment. I have already explained that it doesn't often happen like this! Even budding diplomats occasionally go to the cinema or read a spy story, and are thereby warned to beware of glamorous blondes. Some of these ladies have, it is true, succeeded in stealing plans—to the great annoyance of their employers when they got the papers back to their own country.

The German woman as a rule, and with some startling exceptions, is not built for glamorous vamp work. The Nazis have therefore engaged women of other nationalities, sometimes with surprising results. The difficulty about a hireling spy is that of trust; she is, after all, not impelled by patriotic motives. One lovely Italian engaged by a German agent served her employers well, and the information she brought, though not tremendously important, was useful and always accurate. The Germans did not know, however, that they were subsidizing Italian Intelligence, for the clever spy was passing on to her own country all the information she had gained at the German expense.

V

"Yes, your point about lack of technical knowledge is a good one," an espionage agent once said to me, "but there are many other objections to women spies. They are not reliable: they are far too emotional—and they talk too much!"

"You sound as if you have had your disappointments," I suggested.

"I have! I could tell you some stories . . . if I liked. There was one girl, I remember, who bitterly disappointed me. She did one or two counter-espionage jobs very efficiently, and I was prompted to employ her on bigger stuff. The job was quite simple, however, and I had every confidence in her. For a few weeks she appeared likely to succeed—sent back quite useful information. All of a sudden—far too suddenly—she changed her tone. She was now convinced, she said, that the man I had sent her to watch was quite innocent—was merely a member of an extremist movement, and had no subversive intentions at all. I guessed what had happened. The suspect was a good-looking fellow, and she had fallen in love with him! I haven't quite recovered from that! I could forgive an agent who failed to get a man's secrets from him, but shall I ever know how many of *my* secrets she revealed?"

The most extensive use of women agents was perhaps made at Salonika during the Allied occupation in the Great War. It will be recalled that there were two opposing schools of thought in Greece—that headed by M. Venezelos favouring the Allies, and that headed by the Greek Royal family favouring the Germans. Generally the Allied troops were welcome, but in Salonika there was naturally a section of the population which took the Royal viewpoint. There was an even larger section which had no particular opinion about the rights or wrongs of either side, and was willing to work

for whichever paid the more. Morals are not always very severe in the Near East, and the Greek girls are good-looking. The Germans soon discovered that the brothels were frequented by Allied soldiers, and took immediate steps to enlist the girls as their agents. The Allied commander, General Sarrail, may have been a political general, but at least he had imagination: he promptly imported a whole bevy of ladies of love from Paris and Marseilles. They were carefully selected, good-looking and well dressed. They soon ousted their Greek rivals in the affections of the Allied armies, and went beyond their initial instructions in achieving considerable success in counter-espionage work—by seducing even Greek officers from their original allegiances.

One of the few successful German women spies of the World War generation was a lady who passed under the name of Irma Staub. It was not her real name: if I mentioned this, knowledgeable eyebrows would rise, for Irma belonged to an honourable family. Some of her reputed achievements certainly savoured of romantic legends. She easily beat that remarkable bird, mentioned by Sir Boyle Roche, which could be in two places at once, for on a summer's day of 1917 she was reported as identified by five French counter-espionage agents in different parts of the country!

She operated from Switzerland, her headquarters being the remarkable espionage bureau which I have already mentioned. While she frequently ventured into France and Italy, most of her work was done on Swiss soil, for Allied prisoners of war who were injured were often sent there to recuperate before being exchanged. Fräulein Staub nursed many of these broken heroes back to health, and welcomed their confidences in sisterly fashion.

On one occasion, at least, it was well for her that she was on neutral soil. A British espionage agent chanced across her at Geneva, sitting in a café talking to a German Intelligence Officer. Suddenly the Englishman saw her dip into an umbrella and withdraw an envelope, which she slipped up the sleeve of her coat.

The Englishman's plan of attack was simple. He waited until she left the café, and then attacked her in the guise of an ordinary footpad. While stealing her purse, he tugged hard at the sleeve of her coat. Not built for such rough wear, it came out, and the "footpad" promptly decamped, bearing the precious envelope. It contained the outline of plans for a German swoop against France through Switzerland, and proved of exceptional interest to the Swiss General Staff, to whom it was promptly handed over.

I remember one girl of the prostitute class who was designated to assist me in counter-espionage work. During the spring of 1916 Amiens was, of course, a most important base for the British Army—probably the most important railway junction along the whole front. It became obvious to the British Intelligence staff that there was a leakage of information. The Germans were gaining early news about the vast volume of military traffic which the preparation for the coming offensive demanded.

A special counter-espionage drive was organized. It seemed reasonable to argue that French railwaymen were implicated: it might easily be the case, of course, that the Germans had managed to insinuate an agent in some useful position of vantage. My own theory, however, was that the German agent was getting his information without taking any risks—that some French railwaymen, like most soldiers, were talking too freely. In spite of the stern warning posted on every hand, *Gardez vous! méfiez vous! les oreilles ennemis vous écoutent*, there was far too much casual gossip in the French base towns, innocent enough between French citizens, but dangerous should it be overheard by an enemy spy.

My chief agreed that my theory was reasonably sound, and I was allotted the task of proving it. The British and French had, of course, a widespread counter-espionage organization in Amiens, and I had an ample choice of assistance. I chose a girl named Regina; I doubt if that was her real name, for the girls of her class always forgot that they were christened Anna or Maria, and gave themselves high-sounding names. Regina was a most attractive girl, of no great education, but with a ready wit and a great intelligence. She had been marked down for service when she had, by clever deduction, recognized one of her fellow ladies of love and denounced her to the authorities as a German agent. Since that time she had been employed on minor missions and held a continuous watching brief.

I was so impressed with her intelligence that I consulted her as to my plan of campaign. Indeed, before our discussions were complete it was *her* plan of campaign which I adopted. A common sight in the back streets of Amiens, especially in the drab quarter behind the cathedral, was that of a French girl with a British soldier in tow. In the lower-class *estaminets* of the district a French girl with her temporary British lover passed without comment. They were almost part of the landscape.

Regina insisted that I should not understand one word of French, apart from the customary “parlez vous” and “souvenir” of the British soldier. While it was true that we were out to trap people who were talking too freely, my theory might be wrong; there might be an active German agent at

work in the railway service. Should we encounter him, I would hold a great advantage if he thought I understood nothing but English.

For many weary days we worked; I played the part of a semi-inebriated British private soldier. For hours we would sit in *estaminet* after *estaminet*, choosing those frequented by railwaymen as they came off duty. The most interesting feature of our work was the ingenious method of communication which Regina had suggested. When she wanted to say anything to me which no one else was to hear, she would not whisper, as this might have attracted attention: she would get a piece of grit in her eye, and naturally her eyelids would wink in spasmodic, uncontrollable movements. All I had to do was to watch her eyes; some winks would be lengthy, some of them short and sharp —for the very good reason that she was winking to me in Morse, the end of each letter being denoted by the rubbing of the eye with her handkerchief.

Eventually our mission was completed—with only partial success. We discovered one *estaminet* frequented by two railwaymen whose conversation was more than foolish—it was actually criminal. One of them was a signalman, who announced freely to the little company in the bar parlour of the grim fate which awaited the Germans. Only that day he had passed through another nine trains ladened with explosives going up towards the British lines.

I listened to the man for half an hour or more, while Regina played her part beautifully. We returned to the same place day after day; it was explained that I had short leave and was spending it at Amiens because I liked Regina better than I liked my wife. Almost every day the signalman continued to talk with reckless freedom.

Yet my task was not merely to get him; already I had sufficient evidence to close his mouth for the duration of the war. Who was the German agent who was collecting the information and passing it on? Here, however, I failed, for the company seemed to differ day by day, except for one or two habituals who proved on investigation to be local Frenchmen above suspicion.

When the time came to abandon my pose and to submit every frequenter to the *estaminet* to a prolonged examination, I was able to get a description of a customer who had always been singularly interested in the signalman's conversation—had even bought him beer on more than one occasion. Unfortunately, this customer had not been seen in the *estaminet* for two or three weeks. Naturally a close watch was kept, and all the habitual customers were warned that they must inform the police if ever they caught

sight of the man again. Eventually one of them did, and the German agent was arrested. It was a pity this did not happen until December 1918!

VII

One woman spy at least can claim a career parallel with the outstanding adventuress of fiction. This is Madame Marthe Richard, a Frenchwoman, born in Lorraine, and a clever linguist. Madame Richard is easy to look at to-day, and it needs no persuasion to believe that twenty-five years ago she was extraordinarily beautiful. The outbreak of war found her a happy bride, but in its earliest days tragedy descended upon her, for her husband was killed. She was overwhelmed by sorrow, and life had no further interest for her until she made the acquaintance of an astute French Intelligence Officer.

"Your husband died for France!" he argued. "Why should you not continue his work? Why should you not help to defeat these Germans who have brought such misery upon the world—and upon you?"

Such argument was unanswerable: she became a spy in the French service, and went to Madrid. It was known that the German naval attaché there was engaged in activities which formed a distinct trespass on the hospitality of a neutral state, and it was suspected that he was organizing supplies to the many German submarines which used the Spanish coast as a temporary shelter. Madame Richard was given the task of confirming this information and of thwarting its purpose.

She succeeded admirably. Posing as a Lorrainer of German origin and sympathies, and speaking fluent German, she soon made the acquaintance of the suspected naval attaché. Small blame that he looked keenly upon her, so much so that at last the inevitable moment had to be faced. Love meant little to Madame Richard now that her husband was dead: she accepted his proposal and became his mistress. Now his secrets were at least within her reach.

She deserved the fortune which favours the brave, and not even had she been writing an espionage novel could she have devised a better situation. Her lover, infatuated by her charm and beauty, was at the same time a practical man devoted to his job. As his lover was a French subject, why should he not make use of her? To his delight she agreed—and Marthe Richard was duly enrolled as a German agent!

French Intelligence Officers in Paris supplied her from time to time with information cleverly faked, with just sufficient leaven of truth to make it acceptable, but otherwise completely misleading. The information she

carried to Paris, on the other hand, was not faked, and more than one German submarine went to the bottom of the ocean as a result of the activities of this exceptional woman spy. A strong piece of comedy marked her career. Spying for France, she was actually paid by Germany!

VIII

Second only to Mata Hari in the world of espionage romance is the Lady Doctor. Indeed, if one-tenth of the sensational stories current about this elusive lady were true, she would rank as the outstanding woman spy in history. And it may be that she is.

I must confess that in one of my books I actually denied the existence of the Lady Doctor. The very contradictions of the many "authorities" who described her activities tended to disbelief; not one of them could agree about the slightest detail. One declared that she was the usual glamorous blonde; another a red-haired firebrand. Except that she was beautiful, there was no point of resemblance in any of the physical descriptions. In one account she was hanged by the Russians, and in another shot by the Germans—presumably in error, as she was a German agent. More moderate variants of her end were to the effect that she died in an inebriates' home or asylum; while some writers believe that she is still alive in Germany. Such a remarkable woman could only be the figment of a vivid imagination, I concluded.

It was a casual conversation with an old friend of mine, Colonel Victor K. Kaledin, the famous Russian double spy—who actually convinced the Germans that he was working for them and secured much important information—that led me to revise my previous opinion. Since then I have accumulated from many sources—including German agents of the World War period—stories of the veritable Lady Doctor.

The candidates for the personality are now reduced to two. The first was Fräulein Elsbeth Schragmuller. She was indeed a doctor—but of philosophy, not medicine; this trifling fact alone is sufficient to damn many of the popular legends. A skilled linguist, she was able to secure employment on the German Censorship in the early days of the war. Her acute intelligence caught the notice of high authority, and soon she was allocated to more active counter-espionage, and was eventually entrusted with the directorship of a famous spy school in Antwerp.

That she accomplished first-class work for German espionage cannot be doubted—indeed, full credit has been given by German Intelligence leaders.

Her career, however, was by no means thrilling or even dramatic—hers was a triumph of the brain.

The other candidate for the title—although she had no pretensions to being a doctor of anything—comes nearer to the woman spy of the legends, even if her actual exploits cannot approach their fantasies. In spite of this, the story of Anna Maria Lesser was in many ways more remarkable than any creation of a novelist's brain.

Unlike Fräulein Schragmuller, Anna's entry into espionage was accidental. She was a very feminine creature, apparently devoid of interest in practical affairs, but passionately devoted to her lover, a German officer who was employed on Intelligence work. He often took her with him on his expeditions into France—she was an admirable and disarming companion, for no one on earth would ever have suspected that this gentle, loving girl was the partner of a dangerous spy. Her lover, however, died of appendicitis. Anna, heartbroken, carried back the information he had collected in France to Berlin, where her command of its details surprised the Intelligence Officer who interrogated her. He was an understanding man, and when Anna contemplated suicide, just as Marthe Richard had done, he persuaded her that her duty lay along the road her lover had followed.

Once persuaded, she threw herself heart and soul into her new career. Her personality, as I have said, was her best disguise.

For months she studied seriously until she had a practical knowledge of military affairs. She was no expert, but she did know a machine-gun when she saw it; and, what is more, knew how to work it. Nevertheless, her first results were achieved by acute observation. One of her most useful items of information, in fact, related to the forts about Liège. She pointed out that, strong though the forts might be, there were considerable gaps between them where no defences had apparently been planned. She suggested that while the forts were being attacked, it would be possible for small bodies of men to advance between them. With the city of Liège in German hands, the forts could not hope to hold out very long.

The interesting part of this story lies in the fact that the officer to whom Anna reported was General Ludendorff, who in August, 1914, laid the firm basis of his great reputation by adopting this very plan.

Her lover gone, all thoughts of romance died with him. It seemed to Anna that nothing mattered, and she was ready to give her body as freely as her brain to the service of her country. A famous Berlin actress gave her lessons in disguise—not the fantastic disguise of the films, but the subtle alterations in her dress and deportment which would fit different

personalities. Anna continued her studies of languages until her French was almost perfect and her English very good.

She appeared next in Lorraine, and the middle-aged artillery officer whose acquaintance she made was delighted at the infectious *joie de vivre* of the schoolgirl of eighteen—for Anna had achieved a woman's ambition, and had shed a few years in her new character. There were careless moments in the French Army in the years before the war, and the artillery officer had no difficulty in taking his mistress with him on manœuvres—not actually quartered with the regiment, of course, but lodged at an adjacent town near the German frontier in Lorraine. The information that Anna gathered from this expedition was of only moderate importance, but the method adopted to close down the *affaire* is worth quoting as an example of her simple ingenuity. When she had made the fullest use of her lover's capacity for knowledge, she wrote an anonymous letter to his wife, who naturally rushed to Lorraine to rave at her faithless husband and to send his schoolgirl mistress packing. The incident is typical of Anna's methods. A spy of lesser quality would have left the man immediately she had used him. Anna rounded off the episode completely, so that she was able to part company with him without the slightest possibility of suspicion.

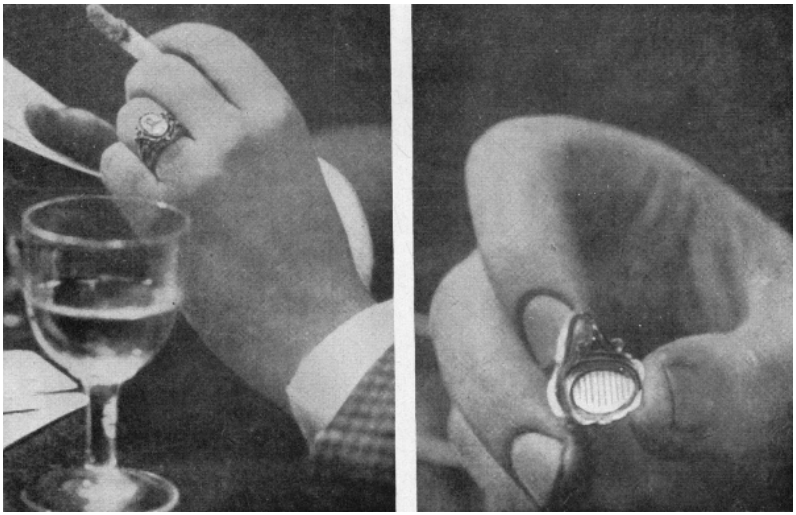
Police records show that Anna paid at least one visit to England before the war, though it can scarcely be counted among her major successes. It is, in fact, one of the mysteries of German espionage that it has always been more successful in France than in England. Although the two races are so close ethnically, the Germans persistently fail to comprehend British psychology—a failure disastrous to espionage agents.

In 1911 Fräulein Lesser was instructed to go to Cowes during the yachting week. She appeared in the easy character of a demure Swiss schoolmistress who had been saving for years for an English holiday. The man who sent Anna to Cowes made a grave blunder. Her training had been in a military school, and her questions on naval matters from the officers at Osborne or visiting Cowes were so ingenuous that the local police became suspicious, and Anna made a hurried journey back to Germany.

During the war she was continuously employed by the German Intelligence Service. There is even a suggestion that she attended the spy school at Antwerp run by Fräulein Schragmuller, but I have been unable to discover any confirmation of this statement. If she did, presumably it was in the capacity of an instructress, for it is certain that she was long past the stage of the elementary tuition in espionage which was the school's curriculum.

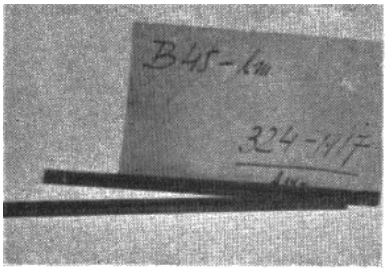
For the first months of the war Anna was employed in counter-espionage work in Belgium. Early in 1916, however, the time came for her to pay a second visit to England. By that time reports had filtered through to Germany that the British were experimenting with some new idea which would break the trench deadlock—one of their agents, in fact, did actually suggest the construction of a land ship which would crawl over barbed wire and trenches; but further investigation showed that his information was based on no more than a public-house conversation between two men, who were actually discussing Mr. H. G. Wells's famous story *The Land Ironclad*, published in 1903. Nevertheless, it was reasonably certain that every military directorate was giving the closest attention to the problem of the breaking of the trench lines, and several agents went to England to study the problem. One of them at last brought back some useful information—that some kind of hush-hush machine was being made at a Lincoln factory.

Piece by piece the story was strung together, and among the spies dispatched to England to watch the progress of this new invention was Fräulein Anna Maria Lesser. Her preparations were as thorough as ever. With the assistance of one of Sir Roger Casement's renegade Irishmen, she transformed herself into an Irishwoman, complete with pleasant brogue and the necessary background of local colour. Actually proceeding first to Ireland, she came to England and settled down in a little village near Hatfield Park. A fellow agent had already determined that it was in Hatfield Park that the new invention, whatever it was, would be tried out.



A ring designed to carry spy messages

Anna had no fixed plan, but rapidly improvised one. Her arrival happened to coincide with the calling up of the local scoutmaster, and she volunteered to take his place temporarily, to the delight of the harassed rector. Simply but most effectively Anna used her troop of Boy Scouts as spies—they believed that they were counter-spies keeping a sharp look-out for German agents! One of them, suitably ensconced in a tree, actually witnessed the trials of the first tank before King George V and Lord Kitchener. His description of the new machine was vague, but it was obvious to Anna that if it had really succeeded in doing what the boy said, then indeed a new aspect had been introduced into trench warfare. Examination of the tracks of the new invention and of the trenches it had crossed convinced her that the British had indeed made a sensational discovery.



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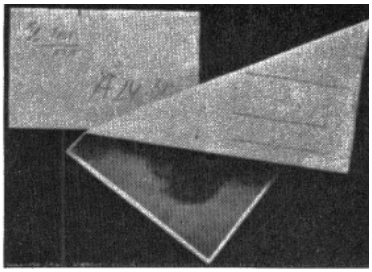

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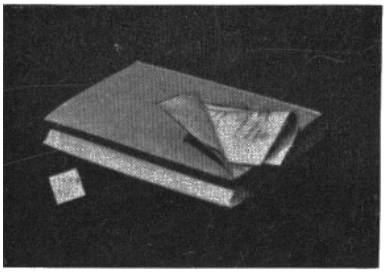

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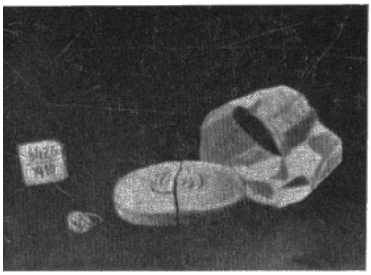

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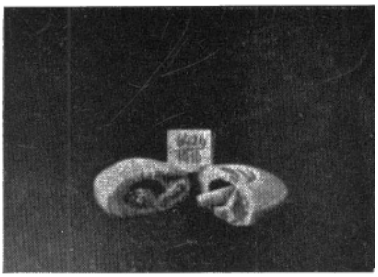


6

METHODS OF CARRYING MESSAGES
1. A split pencil
2. Drawing pin perforations round a photograph
3. Between the canvas and board of a book cover
4. In a receptacle in a tube of tooth paste
5. and 6. In a cake of soap

There is a story—and it is not entirely fictional—that when an official of the British War Office was clearing out some old files he came across one dated 1910. A Nottingham plumber had submitted a design for a land ship—

a design uncannily prophetic of the actual construction of 1916; but the highly placed staff officer who had considered his suggestion had scrawled across the drawing, “The man’s mad.”

At least it is comforting to know that the German military mind was as unreceptive as its counterpart in England. Anna’s report on her return was considered by the German Intelligence Staff. Expert opinion was sought, and it was decided that a machine of such weight and size could not possibly move. It was concluded that the trials must have been faked—maybe to set in motion frightening rumours which would eventually reach Germany. If such a land ship *did* move, it could not be heavily armoured; in which case it would be easy prey if ever it appeared on the battlefield. And, because this opinion was precisely what the German General Staff wanted to believe, Anna’s report was promptly shelved and forgotten—to be hastily unearthed on a hectic day of September, 1916.

(In this story is to be found the real basis of one of the romantic legends freely attributed to the Lady Doctor. According to this, when the tanks duly made their appearance, Anna sent to the technical officer a copy of his own report, together with a loaded revolver. Naturally his honour and reputation were so injured that he took the hint and shot himself. It is a pity to spoil such a dramatic episode, but, as a matter of fact, the Colonel who reported that the tanks could not possibly exist lived on until 1929, and then died a natural death in his bed.)

The legends about the Lady Doctor vary so much that it is very often difficult to ascertain which pertain to Fräulein Schragmuller and which to Fräulein Lesser. The truth of the matter is, I think, that everything that ever happened to a German woman spy—and a good many things which never happened—have been credited to the Lady Doctor. Usually, as is the fashion in such stories, the spy is supreme. It is pleasant to record, therefore, that at least on one occasion the Lady Doctor was outwitted by amateurs, and whether the Lady Doctor’s name was Schragmuller or Lesser does not matter a great deal on this occasion.

A spate of pupils poured out from the spy school at Antwerp, but generally their careers were ingloriously short—particularly those dispatched to France. A veteran agent eventually returned with grave news—the French were supplied with photographs of every man who ever entered the doors of the spy school. He had even stolen copies of the photographs from a French police station. A cumbrous process was now set in motion, and eventually arrested a small boy: this precocious but gallant youth was equipped with one of those small cameras disguised as a wristlet

watch; playing with his fellows haphazardly in the street outside, he was able to take a casual snap inconspicuously whenever anyone approached the door of the spy school. His activities, cleverly directed and augmented by similar efforts on the part of postmen, road-sweepers, gossiping women, servants in adjoining houses—anyone with an excuse for loitering in the vicinity—over a period of some months, upset all the deep-laid schemes of the Directors of the Academy of Espionage. The photographs of all the persons entering the spy school were posted in every police station in France. Every man or woman who answered to one of the photographs was a spy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPY IN HIGH POLITICS

I

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler more than once emphasizes his desire for the friendliest relations with England. In this he was certainly sincere—could he but have depended upon the friendly backing of England, he would by this time have been the master of Europe. It has long been obvious, however, that he never had great confidence in his own desire. In the early days of the Nazi regime, the German Secret Service chiefs were giving their instructions. They were to insert a disturbing finger into any pie in which England might be interested. It should perhaps be emphasized that the Nazi action was not a direct attack on Britain, but was designed to keep her fully occupied, so that Germany could plan ahead in Europe in the certainty that Britain would be too fully engaged to intervene.

A glance around the British Empire would appear to encourage such a scheme of operations. There was potential trouble in many lands—the inevitable growing pains of approaching statehood; the wildest groping in that blackest hour which precedes the dawn. Practically all of Britain's colonies populated by white people had long been granted the self-government which was their right; but the Empire included a medley of races, some backward, others advancing rapidly. In many of these lands dominion home rule was the objective admitted by all; the only argument raged around the rapidity of the stages by which such autonomy might be gained. Such differences of opinion were natural, even inevitable; it was not surprising that some of the fiercest spirits imagined that British solid progress was too slow, and were ready to plunge into adventure to hasten the moment when, as they imagined, paradise would settle about their own lands.

It was among people of this kind that German spies found an admirable recruiting ground. Here, indeed, were potential agents of the most dangerous type: they would have scorned to work for Germany, yet could be persuaded that any anti-British opposition which they organized was in the nature of a holy war. This was precisely what Germany wanted. There never was any question of the overthrow of British power—it is doubtful if Hitler himself would have desired such a thing—but it might be possible to take such steps

as to ensure that British attention was fully engaged, and that the small British Army was scattered to fulfil the role of supernumerary policemen in many parts of the globe. The German espionage policy of embarrassment was duly launched.

In a battle a clear-cut victory is the exception rather than the rule. Clashes between armies to-day are so colossal and involved that a general may find himself victorious on his right flank and defeated on his left. This was the fate of the Nazi pinpricking campaign against the British Empire; only in one or two places did the pin penetrate the skin and draw blood.

In Africa the campaign was almost totally unsuccessful: this was a great disappointment to the Nazi Secret Service, because conditions were very favourable. In the mandated territories which had once been German colonies, thousands of Germans still remained. Through them it was hoped to influence the native races of the colony. Unfortunately, some of Germany's own colonization schemes had not proved very popular among the natives—who may not be able to read or write, but have very long memories. Consequently, every attempt to stir up strife among the black peoples of Africa ignominiously failed.

Naturally, activity among people of German stock was more successful. It was directed by diplomatic representatives, and was disguised as cultural propaganda. Local German business houses were instructed to give sinecure jobs to Nazi officials to provide the necessary *raison d'être*: the *führer* principle was at once applied—so that a junior clerk might give orders to his own employer. Economic means of persuasion were freely used: any shopkeeper who refused to join the local Nazi party was suitably handled: his shop was quietly picketed and customers turned away. The police would protect him, of course, but his customers would be dissuaded by "moral" pressure from trading with him.

So far back as 1934 the Union Government had good cause to complain of illicit Nazi authority. A judicial inquiry revealed a miniature reign of terror among Germans who were Union subjects, many of whom had almost lost their right of free speech because of the bullying of their neighbours. The Union naturally took drastic action.

All the different Nazi movements had their counterparts in South Africa, even to the youth organizations. Except that open sedition was freely preached, these associations might have been classed as cultural. But in recent months their character changed. It is significant that the local organizer was an expert in arousing minority passions; he was a certain Dr. Lierau, who two years ago was a German consul in the Sudetenland!

The outbreak of war showed that Nazi activity in the Union was *not* really cultural—that even its diplomatic officers had been dabbling in espionage. The Government publicly unmasked an amazing plot: local Nazis were to be armed and formed into guerilla bands; vital points in the communications and industry of South Africa were to be sabotaged. The plot was actually on foot when some of its leaders were arrested. The others escaped—they had diplomatic immunity!

II

In India, however, Germany could claim a partial success. Here was Britain's thorniest problem—an enormous Empire, a medley of races on the verge of home rule, but torn by political and religious dissension among its own people. Most of the Indian leaders were, of course, utterly sincere in their demands; as we have seen, their quarrel was with the pace of the British reforms rather than their nature. But among a vast population like that of India, control by leaders is intensely difficult. German money flowed freely, and her agents spread disaffection—as has been traced on more than one occasion, disaffection against congress leaders as well as the British Raj. Mr. Gandhi himself has been seriously handicapped and embarrassed from time to time by spasmodic riots and spurious claims at moments when delicate negotiations were in progress.

Naturally the Nazis did not send Germans to India to incite discontent: the obvious method was much simpler, to invite discontented Indians to Germany to appreciate Nazi culture. It must be understood that in a backward country which begins to move forward at ever-increasing speed, you are bound to find a leaven of discontent. This particularly applies to races of other than the self-reliant Anglo-Saxon type. In few countries is there an appreciation of education for education's sake. Take a village youth in India, give him a university education, and his first claim is for a Government job—and great is his dissatisfaction if he does not get it. This state of mind is by no means peculiar to India: it is also noticeable in North Africa, and for that matter in the Balkan countries. I remarked on a visit to Ruthenia, or Sub-Carpathian Russia, some years ago, that the Czechs were not reaping a grateful reward for the remarkable missionary work they did there. For a thousand years the Ruthenes had been illiterate serfs; now they had the opportunity of learning, and hundreds of their young people were passing through Czech universities. Many of them were highly delighted with their good fortune, but others grumbled furiously because they were not immediately pitch-forked into Government appointments.

Young men of this type were invited to Germany from India, free of all expense. Some of them could not find in their country the employment they thought they deserved because they were natural failures, others because there were simply not enough highly paid intellectual jobs to go round—at the moment. The Germans handled both types cleverly, supplementing sedition with German ideas. I remember meeting one party of ten Hindu students at a German "Strength through Joy" Holiday Camp. In conversation with them, it was immediately apparent that German leaven was already beginning to work.

III

Faulty as the German judgment of foreign psychology often is, not even the Nazis dared to make any attempt to influence opinion in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, except for one feeble attempt to obtain control of a Canadian newspaper. Newfoundland, however, appeared to offer some opportunities, and two agents, backed by ample funds, were dispatched to Britain's oldest colony, at that time sorely stricken with economic problems. The expedition was a complete fiasco; poverty-stricken though the Newfoundland fishermen might be, the British King has no more loyal subjects.

Germany's greatest efforts were directed on Palestine. Here, it was argued, was an ideal field for intervention. It was not that the Nazis cared a cent about the rights or wrongs of the Arabs, but by assisting them they could do something to harm the hated Jews and to keep British eyes away from Central Europe. Unfortunately, the efforts of Germany and of other interested foreign powers were so clumsy that they were not likely to be overlooked. The British Intelligence Service is not so extensive as the German, but it is exceedingly intelligent.

In Palestine, two methods were adopted. As with India, suitable young Arabs were given free scholarships in Germany. What is more, Arab chiefs were formally invited to Nazi Congresses at Nuremberg and were given seats of honour. There they had the pleasure of listening to violent anti-Semite outbursts, by a frenzied orator who may or may not have known that the Arabs themselves were a Semitic people. This infused hate was supplemented by broadcast propaganda. I emphasize the paucity of results because the number of wireless sets in Palestine is not very large. The Germans themselves appreciated this, and sought to remedy the deficiency by marketing sets at remarkably cheap rates.

In Palestine, too, more active intervention was planned. In the guise of commercial travellers and other innocuous "cover" professions, German agents continually visited the country. Details of their activity were fully known by the British Intelligence Service, but have not yet been officially revealed. It is significant, however, that the majority of the weapons captured from Arab rebels—this applies especially to machine-guns—were of German manufacture. There was but one touch of ingenuity to the German effort in Palestine. Events were on more than one occasion rigged so as to make it appear that the Arab rebels were drawing their supplies from French Syria, the idea being, of course, to estrange France and Britain.

Yet once again German psychology proved itself thoroughly unsound. Since the outbreak of war Palestine has been remarkably quiet. The Arabs might have strong opinions about the Jews, but they never had any doubts whatsoever about the relative merits of British or German overlordship. It is significant that Palestine Arabs and Jews alike have volunteered freely for service under the British crown. It will be the final blow to German hopes in the Eastern Mediterranean when an Arab-Jewish battalion first marches into action against Hitler's army.

IV

Yet the greatest potentialities of the policy of embarrassment did not lie within the British Empire. Between Japan and Britain lay a real cleavage of interests. It might be bridged by mutual agreement, but if tempers were strained the situation might become dangerous. It was the business of German agents to ensure that tempers were in fact strained.

Again Hitler held many advantages: he was, in words at any rate, the leader of the anti-Comintern Pact. He could find no phrase sufficiently vile to describe Stalin and his Bolsheviks. To Japan, Russia was an ancient and very real enemy, and accordingly Hitler was estimated at far more than his real value. As the Japanese invasion of China continued, the freedom of British opinion was irritating. Our failure to appreciate the Japanese point of view led to mutual recriminations, and active German agents in Japan were not slow to turn this to their own advantage. In an Eastern country with a teeming population it is not difficult to mobilize a mob to demonstrate outside the British Embassy; half a dozen Japanese, suitably primed with catchwords, can raise the necessary fury at short notice.

Through 1938 and 1939 diehards in the clubs of Pall Mall fumed and raged at the ineptitude of the Government. Japan was apparently allowed to

insult Britain with absolute impunity; there were angry comparisons between Mr. Chamberlain and sterner Prime Ministers of fifty years ago. Yet if Mr. Chamberlain had allowed himself to be dragged into war with Japan, he would have played directly into Hitler's hands. Britain is immensely strong, but she is not strong enough to carry on two major wars at the same time; particularly as in the East she would fight with many disadvantages, since Japan would be on her home ground, while England operated from the other side of the world. In any case, although there are many wide differences of opinion, there is no fundamental cause for war between Britain and Japan; with goodwill on both sides and with the co-operation of the United States of America, a new order of progress might easily be evolved in Eastern Asia. It would certainly be retarded by war.

In the final resort Hitler undid all his own work in an hour. The German-Russian Pact horrified public and official opinion in Japan, where the anti-Russian feeling was very real.

The Japanese are studious people of an introspective type: once they realized how they had been deceived by Hitler's rabid anti-Bolshevik protestations, they looked back on all that had happened before and after the signing of the anti-Comintern Pact. Now that the truth is known, German activity in Japan is being examined from a completely new angle, with results that may prove to be of vital importance.

v

German interest in Ireland is natural enough. Here, as in 1914, was the most acute source of embarrassment, or so the Germans argued. Although the Irish had secured the right to self-government, some of them were still dissatisfied. The injustice of "partition" was being preached, although the placing of Ulster against its will under Southern Irish rule would be a very negation of the principle for which the Irish had themselves fought.

Nevertheless, the responsible Irish leaders made the position perfectly clear. A united Ireland was their goal, but friendly relations with England were an essential condition to a prosperous Ireland. The first hesitant German approaches were hastily withdrawn, for it was obvious that they stood not the slightest chance of success.

But Ireland, it seemed, can always produce a number of malcontents, who are not prepared to await the results of gradual progress, but who are willing to sabotage the happiness of their own country. The I.R.A. (Irish Republican Army) is insignificant in its membership, but already by its

ruthless measures it has done something to poison relations between Britain and Ireland. The Irish leaders have, of course, made it quite clear that they are just as opposed to the I.R.A. as is the British Government—and they have translated their opinion into stern action. Nevertheless, the very nature of the dastardly outrages is bound to poison opinion and to besmirch the fair name of Irishmen. It is amazing that men can seriously consider that blowing up post offices and killing innocent people is ever likely to alter the ideas of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The notion is fantastic, and the impression of experts is that the outrages have hardened that opinion rather than otherwise.

Some of the poison may have been withdrawn, however, by the revelation that Hitler's hand was behind the I.R.A. People wondered where this nefarious organization got its funds—for such an extensive programme of sabotage demands considerable financial backing. Even before the war started, the secret was revealed: one sum of thirteen thousand pounds was placed at the disposal of a German agent in the United States: he in turn passed it to an American Irishman, a sympathizer with the I.R.A., and from him it recrossed the Atlantic to Ireland. The German hope was that this roundabout method would hide any suspicion of the German origin of the funds. But there is no Intelligence Service so keen as that of the great financial houses; of this, the revelations of the fortunes of the German leaders invested abroad offer ample proof.

VI

Not even Great Britain itself was immune from Nazi attention. In 1933, when Hitler achieved power, England was still floundering in the trough of the world depression, with much industrial discontent. Observers were sent from Germany to determine how the economic distress might be turned to the benefit of German ambition.

There are people who attribute all our unrest and social friction to Nazi agencies. However, we need not look for German spies everywhere, as some people look for Communist agitators, and nervous maiden ladies look for burglars under the bed: this attitude implies a loss of mental stability. It is quite true that there are and have been for many years German agents and *agents provocateurs* in our midst, but it is quite absurd to credit them with unlimited successes. I have heard it freely argued that Hitler was the instigator of the General Strike in 1926, the people who advanced the argument overlooking the fact that in 1926 Hitler was an unknown agitator whose name had scarcely been heard in this country. Even the Invergordon

"mutiny" has been laid to Hitler's door, the essential fact being again overlooked that it took place two years before Hitler achieved power. This, in any case, was not a mutiny at all, but a protest against cuts in the allowances for sailors' dependents, organized spasmodically and spontaneously as an informal strike.

So far as I know, only two of the cases of sabotage in British dockyards have been traced to German backing: generally the foreign influence is known as being that of quite another country. Successful sabotage depends generally on the complicity of the workmen: there are men who are so misguided as to believe that Russia is a heaven on earth, and that the best way to transfer that heaven to England is to damage British battleships, but not many British workmen are prepared to believe that heaven extends over Germany—or that the German brand of heaven would be welcome in England.

Such success as German espionage has achieved in Great Britain has been in influencing public opinion. Until August, 1939, there were thousands of British people who quite sincerely looked upon Hitler as the bulwark of European civilization against Bolshevism, and were prepared to exert their influence in their own country on his behalf. Naturally, many of these people are among the most fervent patriots in Britain to-day. No one likes being had, the average Britisher least of all.

VII

Although German Intelligence work is frequently clumsy, it is never so clumsy as the pictures sometimes painted in the popular press. Open bribery is seldom its policy: a recent event in Denmark provides an excellent illustration of German methods.

Early in November, 1939, it was revealed that a German advertising agency had been set up in the Dagmar Hus, the most up-to-date office buildings in Copenhagen. This was to be a centralized bureau from which advertisement contracts on behalf of German advertisers would be issued to Danish publications. The office was under the direction of a gentleman named Jensen—a name not unknown in Intelligence and propaganda circles—and it has been revealed that more than a hundred thousand pounds were placed at his disposal as a first instalment to buy advertising space.

Herr Jensen's first move was not propitious, for he made it clear in a series of interviews with editors that no publication would receive any advertising space unless it revised its editorial policy in a pro-German

direction; the more favourable it showed itself to Germany, the more advertising it would be allotted.

Again a national psychology was utterly misjudged. Denmark is a small country, living in fear of its powerful neighbour, but Danish editors and advertising agents promptly met in council, and unanimously decided that this impudent scheme must be firmly met: subsequently the principal publications carried editorial announcements indicating plainly and firmly that the policy of the newspaper was not for sale.

Similar advertising bureaux have been established in Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Chile and other South American countries, and it is planned to open them in all neutral countries. The method is not new; it was employed many years ago in Spain: in fact, at this stage, it might be as well to halt for a brief examination of German espionage activity in Spain, a country of special interest to the Reich, and one which might serve as an example of others.

VIII

German interest in Spain has always been marked. In the early stages it was legitimate enough, for German banks established important branches in Spain to supply the necessary capital for this great but comparatively undeveloped country. Right up to the time of the Great War German influence in Spain was great, due principally to the financial control the banks were able to exert, but also to Royal Family connections and the attitude of the Spanish military clique, which regarded the German Army as the most powerful instrument in the world, much to be admired.

During the World War Spain's sympathies were almost equally divided. Army and Court circles generally favoured the Germans, the ordinary people the Allies. Unfortunately, in those days the common people of Spain had but a modest voice in the conduct of affairs, and Spanish neutrality at times assumed a certain bias. By the beginning of 1915 German agents were already very active on the peninsula, spreading anti-British propaganda, and in 1916 the late Lord Northcliffe issued a public statement about the growth of German influence in Spain caused by its propaganda and espionage activity.

Our counter-spy service was able to establish that German U-boats freely used deserted sections of the Spanish coast as resting and fuel stations. The German U-boats, it appeared, were not so appreciative of the hospitality they received as they should have been, for frequently Spanish as

well as Allied ships were sunk; but Spanish protests were mild, and often the Spanish people were told nothing about the matter. Many of the country's newspapers were German controlled and by their aid public opinion was cleverly influenced.

In more dramatic fashion the saboteurs in German pay did their best to interrupt Allied activity in Spain, for as a neutral country, Spanish factories were unharmed by the scourge of war, and indeed the war saw their greatest development, with French and British backing. In the Barcelona district, especially, large numbers of factories were established on Allied capital for supplying France with necessaries of war. Here was the German agents' opportunity. From time to time an entire factory would be disorganized by a piece of ingenious sabotage.

After the Great War German influence naturally waned; the mighty military machine had been exposed as an idol with feet of clay. Republican Germany was not particularly interested in Spain, and though the German banks still continued in business, their country's finance was in such a parlous condition that they lost the greater part of their influence. Not until after the rise of Hitler did the German espionage system turn serious attention to Spain again.

The field was ripe. Spain was ruled by a Republican Government, but the world depression had caused much distress and there was serious potential opposition in the land, for the powerful military clique, allied to the Church and Landed Proprietors Parties, made no secret of their distaste for democratic rule. Within another generation, it seemed, their ancient privileges and vast wealth would have disappeared. It was only natural that Hitler should take their side, for democratic Spain was in strong sympathy with France: most of the Spanish leaders had, in fact, received their political training while in exile in France.

By propaganda and sabotage Hitler lent underground aid to the anti-Government parties. These included a variety of Fascist organizations, some of them making strange allies when eventually they combined in military revolt against the Government. I remember crossing Spain in the weeks immediately preceding the Civil War. The Spanish peasant is not well educated; in fact, the greater part of the older generation cannot read or write. It was quite a common sight in the evening to see one man in a village sitting reading a newspaper out aloud to twenty or thirty of his friends. Since some of the newspapers were German owned and others under German influence, the cumulative effect can be imagined. It has since been established that the German espionage organization, thorough as ever,

descended even to the humbler villagers who read out the news to their fellows.

The part played by the German Kondor Legion on General Franco's side during the war is now well known—Hitler at first indignantly denied that there were any Germans fighting in Spain, but later proudly boasted of the achievements of the men he had declared did not exist. His military leaders admitted that the Spanish War had provided an admirable opportunity to try out their new material under war conditions—and to reveal unsuspected deficiencies which could now be remedied. What has not yet been revealed was the extent of German underground activity behind the Spanish Government lines. In particular, German Intelligence Officers were very active in directing the spate of sabotage which so grievously dislocated the Government communications at critical times. Nor was the German propaganda machinery inactive, often working through Spanish agents.

I was interested—and amused!—at one side line of the German propaganda on which I chanced in the summer of 1936. Penetrating by subterfuge into the headquarters of a Spanish Fascist organization in a northern city, I was surprised to find on the wall a large-scale map of Gibraltar. In the course of my investigations, I discovered to my amazement that these misguided young men, under German provocation, were seriously considering an attack on the fortress of Gibraltar! Hitler's purpose in encouraging such a fantastic scheme was doubly founded. There was always the chance that it might come off, and a friendly and weak Spain controlling the Straits of Gibraltar would be a vastly different proposition from a powerful Britain. Further, if the attack failed, as it probably would, it would at least serve to weaken British power by dividing its resources. An attack on Gibraltar would lead British imperialists to suppose (so it was argued) that the entire British Empire must be garrisoned on a more substantial basis, thus denuding Britain of any possibility of an expeditionary force.

I should, of course, insist that the Spanish military leaders probably had no cognizance of this plan at all. None the less it is quite certain that thousands of young men in Spain in 1936 fondly dreamed of the day when they would march into Gibraltar, not knowing that such a scheme had never been considered by their leaders and never would be considered, but had been suggested to the youth of Spain by the insidious methods of the German espionage propaganda.

In the Spanish Civil War the side backed by Hitler won and was, naturally enough, grateful. Nevertheless I think I could have warned Hitler that his reward would have been meagre. I met General Franco just before

the outbreak of war. With many of his opinions I certainly did not agree and do not now agree, but I was quite certain of one thing, that here was no international adventurer but a *Spaniard*. Whether his methods were right or wrong, he believed that he was working for the good of Spain and he would only consider the good of Spain. I was convinced that Hitler's attempts to jockey Franco into an active military alliance would fail. Franco realizes, perhaps better than anybody else, that what Spain needs more than anything else in the world is a long period of peace.

In any case, Hitler himself removed any possibility of active help from Spain when he made his pact with Russia. He may change his mind every five minutes, but General Franco is a conservative. He had fought his civil war against Bolshevism, he had frequently declared, and he was not the type of man to change his mind suddenly now that he had won.

It is quite true, however, that German agents are still intensely active in Spain—and that Hitler has boasted that one day there will be a war front in Spain. Franco was glad enough to make use of German technical resources for the re-equipment of his sorely stricken country, and, as we have seen, German technicians and commercial representatives inevitably include a liberal proportion of paid or volunteer espionage agents or observers. But this time at least Spain is warned. To date her neutrality has been scrupulously correct, in spite of all the efforts of Hitler's agents; and there is no reason to suppose that she will risk any deviation from that path of peace which she so desperately needs and which the entire world—Hitler, perhaps, excepted—wishes her to have.

IX

The intensive German mercantile representation in Scandinavia made the recruitment of a group of spies an easy matter. The fact that these Germans were actively engaged in commerce in turn made their task easy, for their purpose was not the obtaining of secret naval or military information. Herr Hitler declared in 1938 that he no longer feared the British blockade. This was interpreted quite rightly by men who knew his psychology as an admission that the British blockade was the thing which he feared most of all. By means of commercial spies acting as Intelligence Officers to U-boats, the Nazis hoped to counter this menacing stranglehold.

In the early weeks of the war the position in the Scandinavian countries became quite impossible. The Germans had the fullest possible information about any shipping which sailed, and the number of sinkings was

abnormally high. No sooner had a merchant vessel got beyond territorial waters than a submarine appeared on its flank. Swedish and Norwegian shipping companies soon discovered that a widespread and efficient spy system was operating to direct the U-boat activities. The captain of one Swedish steamer got into conversation with the U-boat officer who sank his ship, and was amazed at the commander's intimate knowledge of all Scandinavian shipping movements.

Scandinavian Governments took urgent action: certain commercial representatives marked themselves out for early attention—they had committed an elementary fault of espionage in living above their apparent means. All docks were placed under heavy guard; companies ceased to announce details of their sailings, and deliberately advanced or retarded sailings at no notice so that Intelligence should be confounded. Clerks and workmen were warned that on no account should they talk to strangers about shipping movements, that they should be as careful with their tongues, in fact, as a soldier in the field.

X

It is now known that the Germans were on the point of invading Holland on November 11th, 1939. Hitler was deterred by several considerations—the representations of his foreign representatives that neutral opinion would react very unfavourably; the realization that Belgium would move to the help of her partner, which meant that immediate help from France and Britain was available; the fact that the Dutch water defences were likely to prove an insurmountable barrier to the German mechanized forces; and the opposition of the German Army chiefs.

The attention of the world was concentrated on the Dutch frontier not merely because of the deployment of a considerable German army. Six weeks earlier a remarkable incident had taken place—a trivial incident, apparently, but of the kind which act as pointers to bigger things.

The police at Denekamp, a Dutch village on the German frontier, arrested a local man named Jerrit Albrink, who was about to cross into Germany in his father's motor-car. Hidden in the car were a number of Dutch uniforms—soldiers', postmen's and railway guards'.

(Of course, the arrest of Albrink was not by chance: he had been under observation by the Dutch counter-espionage police for some time, for previous indications had shown that large quantities of Dutch uniforms had

already been smuggled into Germany, and it was suspected that he was concerned.)

The utility of such uniforms can well be imagined. In an orderly country like Holland a uniform always carries respect, and the man who wears it can travel anywhere. Dutch-speaking Germans in these uniforms could move about without hindrance, preparing the way for the army which was to follow.

Albrink's father was a member of the Dutch National Socialist party, and the arrested man was known to have strong pro-German feelings. He was employed by a German motor-car dealer, and his business gave him the excuse to cross the frontier daily. He had purchased the uniforms in Amsterdam from a dealer in second-hand clothes; he pretended to the dealer that they were to be used in a stage show.

The affair had important repercussions, and more arrests were made, including that of a lieutenant-colonel who was a member of the family of a leader of the Dutch Nazi party. Soon it became apparent that the police of Holland were on the track of an extensive spy system. Their investigations led them into strange situations, some of which would appear to belong to the pages of the sensational novel. In one substantial garage attached to a house which was raided was found an aeroplane, of the presence of which the authorities had been entirely unaware!

XI

It is worth while glancing back for a quarter of a century for a classic example of high intrigue mixed with espionage activity. The scene was Ireland, and the episode never ceases to reveal fresh angles.

A source of grave weakness in itself, and an obvious centre for anti-British activities, is Ireland. It has often been said that "England's extremity is Ireland's opportunity," and certainly the political distresses of that "most distressful country" have often afforded an opportunity to England's foes. During the period immediately before the Great War, certain leaders of the Ulster Volunteer Forces were speaking openly of the help they were counting on from a certain foreign protestant potentate—and it was obvious that this meant the Kaiser!

It would be absurd to regard the activities of either the Ulster Volunteers or the Nationalist Irish Volunteers of the south as the *product* of alien propaganda. That would be grossly unfair to two bodies of idealists, whose aims, however mistaken, were undoubtedly sincere. It would be no less

absurd to suppose that German emissaries neglected so splendid an opportunity of using the differences which racked Britain to further their own ends. That would be the action of fools, and their worst enemies would not call the German leaders fools.

How far they were able to influence the councils of the two volunteer armies will never be known. What is known, however, is that these forces were armed, and it was not in Britain that their arms were bought. (Forty thousand German Mauser rifles were bought in Hamburg.) What is known is that this internecine strife was fermented, by what agencies still remains unrevealed, but surely by no friendly ones. What is known, finally, is that the German High Command counted, if not on actual civil war in Britain, at any rate on disturbances in Ireland which would efficiently keep the British Empire out of the war.

In this matter they sadly misjudged the temper of the British people. This, indeed, has been the consistent weakness of the German High Command. They could not believe that the British would be concerned for the safety of Belgium, or for the pledged word they had given to defend it. (Similarly, in more recent times, they could not believe that the British would be concerned for the safety of Poland, or for the pledged word they had given to defend it.) Similarly, they could not believe that armed bodies of men threatening bloody revolution and civil war and openly talking about seeking foreign aid would suddenly turn to enthusiastic patriots the moment their country was threatened with attack.

This, however, is what happened; almost all the Ulstermen and a majority of the Southern Irish, declared themselves willing to sink their differences in the face of the common peril. The German agents, when they had recovered from their stupefaction, realized that their plans had gone sadly amiss. Another resource, however, was left to them.

In the south were a minority of *intransigeants* whom no offer of Home Rule would satisfy, who aimed at nothing less than an Irish Republic completely outside the British Empire. These saw not humanity's peril, but Ireland's opportunity. They organized their own army and prepared for the day when they might rise against the English with some hope of success.

Here was the opportunity for which the Germans were searching. Again one must not suspect the insurrectionists of wishing to sell their country to a foreign power. But they and the foreign power had a common foe, the British Government, and it was only natural that the two should co-operate. Again they needed weapons—and the weapons came.

Although the Republicans, according to their own lights, were honest, we may well speculate as to the attitude of the Germans towards them. No doubt they encouraged them with visions of the time "when Old Ireland shall be free from the centre to the sea." But how far would these visions have been realized if the Germans had won? Surely there would have been no Irish Free State as there is to-day, but a suppressed people crushed beneath a foreign yoke more repulsive to the Irish spirit than ever the rule of the English had been.

In their revolutionary activities, then, the Insurrectionists were able to count on foreign aid. Their own activities, subversive in themselves from the English point of view, were in their turn pervaded by those of the German agents—spies, purveyors of munitions, and *agents provocateurs*, aiming at overthrowing the English and the Irish Governments alike. The unselfish idealists, the would-be martyrs of Ireland, became the mere tools of German espionage.

The activities of Irish revolutionaries and German spies came to a climax at the siege of Dublin at Easter, 1916, when Irish insurrectionists—the German agents were not conspicuous in the actual fighting; no doubt they had gone home to report—seized the public buildings in the heart of the city and for several days held them heroically against the attacks of the British Army and Navy.

The whole affair had the complexity which comes from the conflict of several different motives, selfless idealism as well as cold-blooded exploitation by interested outside parties. I learn from an ex-member of the insurrectionists that the rank and file were inspired by very different motives from those of the leaders. The ranks, knowing nothing of the strength of the British armed forces, seriously hoped that this "pocket revolution" would defeat them and free Ireland. The leaders had no illusion about its success, but sought only to become martyrs whose fate would inspire their countrymen, or possibly generations yet to come, to struggle till their freedom was at length won. (And my friend, who refused to let the detachment under his command take place in any such forlorn hope, found himself regarded as a traitor and boycotted for his pains.)

Those who doubt the German influence in this episode should consider two facts. "It was quite clear," Eimar O'Duffy tells us in his novel *The Wasted Island*, a graphic account of the episode, "that Ireland was both puzzled and annoyed by the whole affair; she repudiated the insurrection and its authors with anger and disdain; and contemplated their possible punishment with indifference." If the Irish themselves had not inspired the

rebellion, who had? Secondly, it is equally clear that only one nation had profited by it; and that was not Ireland but Germany!

German activities in Ireland neither began with the Howth gun-running nor ended with the Battle of Dublin. During the early part of the war they were much aided by the services of an Irishman whose idealism and passionate devotion to his country cannot be doubted.

Sir Roger Casement deserved and received the gratitude of the whole world for exposing the atrocities practised on the natives back of the Congo region and in Putumayo, the rubber producing region of South America. For this work and for his other duties in the British Consular Service he was knighted, given the C.M.G.—be it noted, against his will. Roger Casement, as he would prefer to be called, was a man of exceptional tender-heartedness and sympathy for human suffering; those who knew him personally speak of his "kind eyes." Such a man would not seem a likely revolutionist and *agent provocateur*; but Casement's tender-heartedness and sympathy extended to victims of oppression everywhere—and he saw in Ireland an example of British oppression.

Even before the war he had joined the Irish Nationalist movement, and soon after it began he travelled by diverse routes to Germany. There he helped to organize among the prisoners of war an "Irish Brigade" to fight the British. He had no intention of inducing them to fight for Germany—far from it—but they were to be armed, equipped and fed by German money. Or they might alternatively be used to fight alongside the Turks in the hope of freeing Egypt from British rule.

In preparation for his coming, the Germans had segregated the Irish prisoners in their own camp at Limlay Lahan, in Prussia. Also they had issued to them elaborate questionnaires regarding not only their political opinions but those of the districts that they had come from.

One may imagine how the high-spirited Irish, already chafing at their imprisonment, regarded such a catechism! Their answers to the questionnaires were terse and impolite, but they all came to the same effect, that it was none of the Germans' business. Here again the Germans had shown their usual inaptitude to understand the mentality of their foes.

All the same, Casement visited the Irish camp, armed with a supply of leaflets and with a photograph of the Pope. The reception he gained from the prisoners was not encouraging: some may have disliked England, but they *detested* Germany, while others were "more English than the English." Most of them resented as an insult to their honour this attempt to win them over to the enemy. Casement, when he addressed them, was hissed, jeered at and

called a traitor; as he left the camp he was hustled and struck, and had to defend himself with his umbrella and to be protected by his German guards.

However, a group of some seventy men—Casement observed uneasily that they seemed a very poor type—elected to join the Irish Brigade. They were moved to their own barracks and given their own uniform, of greyish green with facings of the traditional Irish green and ornamented with golden harps and shamrocks, but of unmistakable German cut. They were given some sort of training with a view to active service in Ireland.

So complete was this fiasco that Casement finally used every endeavour to prevent the German General Staff from sending the Brigade to Ireland. There they could do no good, and would only be regarded as traitors; in all probability they would meet a traitor's doom—the rope. He hoped that if they fought in Egypt their example might give moral appeal to the Irish cause. Even in this he was disappointed; when he left Germany he felt that he left his followers to harsh treatment at the hands of their disillusioned captors and their disgusted countrymen.

In spite of the failure of the Brigade, and of his growing conviction that the Germans were only using him as a tool for their own imperialist ends, Casement did not lose hope. He would return to Ireland to take part in the Easter Revolution, and the Germans would supply him with the arms of which the insurrectionists were in such dire need.

On the evening of Maundy Thursday of 1916, a Kerry labourer, Michael Hussey, saw a red light gleaming about half a mile out to sea. The next day, Good Friday, a neighbouring farmer, John McCarthy, went down in the early morning to a deserted stretch of shore to visit a local Holy Well—or possibly as an unofficial coastguard employed by the British. He was amazed to find on the shore a boat of unusual type, equipped with air tanks; near by were not merely its oars but a tin box, a dagger, and three sets of footprints. On his return home he was horrified to find his young daughter playing with some Mauser pistols and their ammunition. Naturally he informed the police, and the district was searched. In a ruined earthwork some distance away they found a man hiding. He claimed to be an English author, come to Ireland to gather local colour, but he was seen to drop some papers containing an elaborate code. He was arrested and sent to London, where he confessed to the name and rank of Roger Casement.

It transpired that he, with two companions, had embarked on a submarine off Wilhelmshaven. In spite of a breakdown, which meant a transfer to a second U-boat, and in spite also of the fact that their plans miscarried and that they did not receive the expected signals at the planned

rendezvous, he had been landed, drenched and ill, on the Kerry coast. His mission was to get in touch with the revolutionists and advise them of the men and munitions to be sent from Germany.

Casement was tried in the King's Bench Division of the High Court. The object of the trial was not so much to prove his anti-British activities—they were generally admitted—as to decide whether or not they were technically treason "within the meaning" of an Act of 1351, translated from somewhat ambiguous Norman-French. The judges decided that they were, and Casement was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to death.

Now begins the most curious part of the story. A number of influential people felt a certain sympathy for Casement, who was obviously actuated by the highest motives, and signed a petition for his reprieve. Others would have done so, but found themselves mysteriously approached. They were shown a diary, undeniably in Casement's handwriting, showing that the writer had committed the most horrible of brutal and vile atrocities. "Do you really want to save such a man?" they were asked; and many of them decided they did not.

Later, when Casement had been sent to the gallows, meeting his fate with a calm air of detachment, the truth came out. The record diary was that of a brutal and sex-mad Belgian official; Casement had copied it as part of the evidence he used in revealing the exploitation of the natives.

How was such a "frame-up" engineered? It is impossible to imagine our own Government descending to such tactics. Can the German espionage agents have contrived this ingenious scheme for baulking all hopes of a reprieve? It was their intent to get Casement hung, for he knew too many of their plans, and he had obviously lost whatever sympathy with the Germans he had ever had. It is easy to understand how they might feel that he was better out of the way. "Stone dead hath no fellow" is still a watchword of Machiavellian politics. However, Casement dead became a martyr in the cause of Irish freedom, whose name might be used to inspire fresh insurrections and so undermine British solidarity from within.

On that same Good Friday, H.M.S. *Bluebell* was patrolling the Tralee coast, alert for anything from gun-running to an invasion. In the evening she sighted a vessel, the *Aud*, flying the Norwegian flag. Her captain was suspicious, however, and ordered her to follow his ship into Queenstown Harbour. At first she complied, but suddenly a cloud of smoke burst from her after-hold and she began to sink. At the same time she ran up the German flag and her crew took to the boats, to be rescued and interned. Later a diver examined the wreck of the *Aud* and found that she was laden

with rifles and ammunition. Thus of the complicity of the Germans in the Irish insurrection there can be no doubt.

XII

Casement was not the only agent to be launched by Germany on a campaign of subversion. From the other end of Europe comes a story just as dramatic—and in this case the German effort succeeded. Or did it really fail?

Side by side with the wars between the nations, there has for some years gone on a struggle within the nations between class and class. This does not usually result in fighting in the military sense, though it produces blows and occasional injuries or death. Its methods are, however, comparable to those of the blockade: "peaceful" picketing, the lock-out and the strike. Like military warfare, too, it has its Intelligence and espionage services, but consideration of "labour spies" and their activities, interesring as it would be, would take us beyond the scope of our present work.

Nevertheless, one aspect of those activities forces itself on our attention —their use as a weapon in national war. From one point of view the "class struggle" transcends political boundaries; the employers are often united in world-wide or interlocking trusts and cartels, much of the collectivism of the workers has found expression in their "Internationals." On the other hand, trade disputes in a country are of vital interest to its national rivals. What could any nation hope for at a time of crisis more than that its enemy should be crippled by a general strike?

Again, we must not fall into Colonel Blimp's habit of supposing that "unrest" among the workers is the result of enemy machinations. Certainly the sturdy loyalty and undemonstrative patriotism of the Trade Unions and Labour Movement and Co-operative Societies of Britain offer no favourable ground for such activities! It is in other countries than ours, countries where people are maddened by injustice or oppression, that the industrial saboteur may more hopefully work.

One such country was Tsarist Russia, riddled even before 1914 with subversive movements all ready to flare up into open revolution at the proper time. That day arrived in 1917, when a revolution dethroned the Tsar and placed in office the Kerensky Government. It would be too much to say that German agents produced this revolt, but certainly they were not slow in taking advantage of it.

A number of active revolutionists had fled from Russia on the outbreak of the war and had taken refuge in neutral Switzerland. Here they continued in correspondence with the Russian organizations and prepared to return when times were propitious for their plans. Among them was a younger son of a family of the minor Russian nobility, Vladimir Illytch Ulianov by name.

Vladimir Illytch was a man of astonishing gifts; he was not merely a leader of tremendous energy, but a creative thinker with an uncanny knack of reading the emotions and unconscious ideas of the people. He had foreseen the Russian revolution and made his plans for guiding it—and now that it had broken out he was exiled in Switzerland and shut off from reaching it by war conditions in the countries all around!

Driven almost frantic by the irony of his position, the exile made the most fantastic plans for journeying to Russia. One was to obtain a Swedish passport by methods that would hardly bear inspection. But he could not speak Swedish. Moreover, as his wife chaffed him, "You will fall asleep and see Mensheviks (revolutionists of another school of thought) in your dreams and you will start swearing and shout scoundrels! scoundrels! and give the whole conspiracy away."

So far we seem to have wandered from our subject, but here the element of espionage comes in. The German Intelligence was in touch with this little group of revolutionaries, and they recognized in Illytch a singularly dangerous man. If only they could get him into Russia, he might undermine the new Government and destroy the country's military strength.

A scheme was already on foot for exchanging the would-be *émigrés* with German and Austrian prisoners of war in Russia. Both the revolutionist and the German authorities were willing to use it. "Of course, in giving us permission to travel," wrote one of the party later, "the German Government was under the impression that revolution was a terrible disaster for a country and thought that by allowing *émigré*-revolutionists to pass through they would help to spread the disaster in Russia."

So on March 27th, 1917, the Bolsheviks boarded a "sealed train" unembarrassed by awkward questions about baggage and passports, and travelled through Germany. They were not allowed to speak to the German Social Democrats *en route* lest the revolutionary poison they carried should spread. So they were sent by way of Sweden to Russia.

The results of this exploit of super-espionage were far-reaching. The Germans, as one of their leaders put it, had realized that the party would destroy the military strength of Russia. They did not realize until too late that it would destroy the military strength of Germany too! But it did;

moreover, it changed the whole course of human history, as it will be realized when it is recalled that Vladimir Illytch Ulianov was no less a person than Lenin himself.

It was this action of Germany that made Bolshevik Russia possible. Now to-day it looks as if Germany is seeking to make Bolshevik Russia triumphant. The authorities of 1917 no doubt congratulated themselves on having accomplished a smart piece of work when they sent Lenin and his followers into Russia, and no doubt those of 1939 did likewise when they signed the Russo-German Pact which ushered in the present war. What must they think when they look at the map and see Russia occupying the Polish Ukraine and threatening to command the Balkans, attacking Finland and dominating the Baltic Sea? We are told that what we learn from history is that nobody ever learns anything from history—it certainly looks as if this applies to the German High Command.

CHAPTER IX

SABOTAGE

I

THE sinking of H.M.S. *Royal Oak* by a German submarine in Scapa Flow occasioned a good deal of anxious thought in responsible circles. Although, as Mr. Winston Churchill later revealed, the defences of the great anchorage were not quite complete, it was looked upon as impregnable for practical purposes. So widespread was the amazement that it was freely rumoured in Britain that the *Royal Oak* had not been torpedoed, but was sunk as a result of sabotage. It was recalled that, while the ship was being overhauled a few years earlier, arrests of saboteurs had been made. What more likely, it was asked, than that some trace of their nefarious handiwork had not been discovered?

It is now quite certain that rumour was wrong, and that the sinking of the *Royal Oak* was indeed a remarkable performance on the part of a German submarine. Nevertheless, the suspicion of sabotage was not unreasonable, for during the last war the British Navy suffered a succession of losses which, although officially classed as accidental, are firmly believed in some naval circles to this day to have been the work of saboteurs. In November, 1914, the *Bulwark*, a battleship of 15,000 tons, suddenly blew up at Sheerness—with so little warning that the band was actually playing on the quarter-deck. There were only twelve survivors out of a ship's company of nearly eight hundred, and although the Court of Inquiry decided that the disaster was the result of an internal magazine explosion, the destruction was so complete that no one was able to say how that explosion had been caused.

In May the following year the *Princess Irene*, a minelayer, was also destroyed in unusual circumstances. The explosion was of such colossal force that many casualties were caused in neighbouring ships, while on the shore houses were damaged by the blast, and a church tower five miles away collapsed! Portions of the ship were blown ten or twelve miles inland. What form of explosion, asked experts, could in a fraction of a second reach such colossal dimensions? It is true that the ship carried hundreds of mines—but how did they all explode at once?

The cruiser *Natal* was the next victim. In December, 1915, a New Year's party was being held on board, among the guests being a number of children. Lady Jellicoe, wife of the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Fleet, should have been present: fortunately for herself she was detained at the last moment. The disaster was blamed on defective Japanese ammunition, which had been supplied to the Navy as an emergency arrangement; and after the *Natal* disaster all remaining stocks of this ammunition were dumped in the sea.

The theory of sabotage was supported by the report of the salvage experts who managed to effect an examination of the sunken vessel fifteen years later. Then it was discovered that the magazines which, it had been imagined, had exploded, were actually intact. Stories have come to light of workmen who had been engaged on electrical repairs on the *Natal* only a few days before the explosion. Apparently supervision was somewhat slack, and it is declared that it would have been easy enough for a saboteur disguised as a workman to gain access to the ship.

In July, 1916, the dreadnought *Vanguard* blew up while at anchor in Scapa Flow. One second she was a proud ship, carrying herself bravely on the smooth waters, the next a sheet of flame crowned by a pall of smoke; and when the smoke had blown away and the waters were still again, there was nothing else to be seen.

Naturally, this continued series of disasters occasioned much anxious thought, particularly when it was followed by yet a fifth, when the monitor *Glatton* suddenly took fire in Dover harbour. She carried her full complement of ammunition; and the situation was highly dangerous—if she blew up, dozens of ships in Dover harbour might have sunk with her. Troops cleared the houses on the harbour front, and eventually Admiral Keyes courageously ordered the vigorously blazing vessel to be torpedoed and sunk to avoid worse disaster.

It seemed incredible to the British public that, one after another, proud ships should be destroyed without the slightest apparent reason. Internal explosion is a sufficient explanation so far as it goes, but who caused the explosion? people wanted to know. Their demand was pertinent enough, *for while five British ships so perished, not a single German warship met a like fate*. The question is to-day one of academic history, for, unless the German archives have something new to reveal, the real truth will never be known. It is sufficient to say that intense precautions are being taken during the present war against a recurrence of such a series of disasters.

II

It is no secret that modern powers threatened by war are as apprehensive of the enemy saboteur as the enemy air raider. It is, perhaps, because of the colossal destructive force of both that neither side was in a hurry to inaugurate either form of warfare. A little imagination will immediately demonstrate the enormous opportunities available to the saboteur. A modern war, particularly in its early days, depends upon rapid movements. Even when a line is established, a continuous flow of supplies is essential. A few dozen saboteurs, skilfully placed, with the necessary amount of courage and a liberal administration of luck, can be as effective as a whole division of infantry in the line. One bridge blown up may interrupt the vital communications of an army at a critical moment; half a dozen broken bridges may leave that army helpless for days. Naturally, precautions are taken, but neither side can spare troops to guard every bridge in its own country—and this is theoretically necessary. Not merely the railway bridge a few miles behind the front line is essential, but the bridge leading from a munition factory in the interior of France. If the Allies, either by bombing or by sabotage, could blow up the great railway bridge at Cologne, they would have achieved a major tactical success.

Railways are particularly susceptible to sabotage. The enemy agent, with no more than half an hour free of observation, could lay the charge necessary to blow up a bridge or to blow in a tunnel. A skilled man can so alter railway points that a collision between the next trains to come along is inevitable. The locks of canals are another obvious objective of the saboteur. One destroyed means not merely the dislocation of the canal services, but probably the flooding of an entire countryside. Telephone and telegraph wires are perhaps the easiest prey of the saboteur—it is quite impossible for their whole length to be adequately guarded. The telephone exchange is to-day as important as the railway junction or the strategic bridge. A brick thrown through the window of a telephone exchange in peace-time might do intrinsic damage to the value of a hundred pounds: the same brick thrown in the same place in war-time, half an hour before an air raid, might occasion damage of a million pounds.

It can be stated that the radio stations of all the combatant forces are well protected. We have already seen remarkable examples of the use of radio in politics of force—we can recall the seizure of the Vienna radio station just before the murder of Chancellor Dollfuss, and the attack on the Bucharest radio at the time of the murder of M. Calinescu. (I have more than once insisted that the Germans are very conservative in their underground

warfare, and the resemblance of the methods on these two occasions will not be overlooked by the keen student.)

No one would attempt to deny the important part played by radio to-day. If the B.B.C. transmitters, for example, could be put out of action by an enemy saboteur, the wildest rumours would immediately ensue, which would require the concentrated effort of the press to control. A seizure of the British radio stations on the Vienna or Bucharest pattern cannot be visualized, but it is quite certain that the possibility of attack by saboteurs has not been overlooked.

III

During the war of 1914-18 there were many attacks by saboteurs upon important objects of military importance and their supplies. These were seldom successful—for such objects are naturally adequately guarded. The greatest success of the war, in fact, was achieved by a French agent who, single-handed, blew up the great reserve dump of ammunition which the Germans had accumulated in preparation for the Battle of Verdun. Their artillery bombardment was fierce enough as it was; it might have been even more severe and much more prolonged but for this astounding exploit of a man who never returned to claim the honour for his gallant deed.

Munition factories are an obvious target for the saboteur, but here the best protection lies in the hands of the workmen themselves. In this connection the German apprehension is infinitely higher than that of the Allies. In the great armament works at Pilsen, as we have seen, many of the skilled workmen are Czechs, who continually endeavour to sabotage their own work. Armed soldiers patrol constantly up and down between the lines of machines. They could prevent anyone throwing a brick into the middle of delicate machinery—but they cannot prevent a man altering the gauge of a vital instrument by one-hundredth of an inch.

In the enormous factories at Essen and Magdeburg the armed patrol system is also employed. Here again it is not always effective, for among the employees are to be found members of the secret anti-Hitler organizations, whose brains are more efficient than bayonets, and whose resistant opposition to their temporary masters is expressed in faulty work of a kind which can seldom, if ever, be detected.

In spite of all precautions there have been many unexplained accidents at both enemy and Allied munition factories—some of them entailing huge loss of life as well as a colossal dislocation of war effort.

The Silvertown explosion in England was bad enough, but the destruction of the Quickborn munition factory in Hamburg was worse still. Both, at the time, were officially classed as accidents—it would be bad for the morale of munition workers should they imagine that saboteurs were at work in their midst. So far as it will ever be possible to ascertain, the Silvertown explosion was indeed the result of an accident—impelled by the criminal carelessness of some workmen. The Quickborn explosion, however, comes under a different category. Investigation showed that there were actually four separate explosions in different sheds some hundreds of yards apart. It is unlikely that four workmen would be careless all at the same moment.

The real truth will probably never be known, for the British Secret Service is inscrutable in its silence; but German counter-espionage officers have now revealed one casual trifle which resulted from their investigation. A portion of the mutilated body of a female worker of the Quickborn factory was found blown more than half a mile from the site: in the rags of the skirt was a pocket which enclosed a purse. Among the usual odds and ends of the woman's purse was found *a London Omnibus ticket*!

A new object of sabotage which has become an obvious target during the present generation is the oil storage tank. But although this appears so flimsy and so readily a combustible reservoir that it seems to invite the attention of the saboteur with a mere match, in actual practice the storage tank is intensely difficult to attack, and, of course, it is adequately guarded.

IV

During the war of 1914-18 it was suspected that German agents would make attempts to pollute reservoirs with bacteriological or disease germs: local patrols of over-age men were organized; their ardour was intense, but it was impossible to guarantee hundred per cent efficiency. They wore armlets with the badge "G.R." and were popularly known as "Gorgeous Wrecks." The bacteriological saboteur has the easiest possible task—he has only to throw his vital tube into the water while passing at night—a single reservoir would need a thousand guards in continuous relays. Fortunately, however, this ferocious form of warfare has not yet been employed. The Germans will presumably think more than once before they introduce it, for it is one of those terrible weapons which have a nasty habit of striking back.

To date the Germans have only recorded one successful piece of sabotage on the Western front, and this was presumably an accident, for a

Belgian bridge was blown up by a German agent in the first days of the war—several weeks too early. There is a much better example of a bridge which was blown up prematurely. When the Germans were retiring before the combined British-French-American drive in the autumn of 1918, they mined an important bridge over the Sambre. The idea was, of course, that the German divisions should retire over the bridge, which should then be blown up to delay the pursuit. But there was a British agent living as a Belgian peasant and operating in the district. Sabotage was not part of his especial task, but the opportunity was too tempting. Here was a bridge ready mined: by a subterfuge he drew off the guard, rammed home the plunger, and up went the bridge, leaving thousands of German troops stranded on the far side of the river, to be roped in as prisoners by British and American regiments.

V

It is, of course, appreciated that the Merchant Navy ranks second only to the Royal Navy as a vital factor of British defence. The U-boat campaign is not the only force directed by Germany against the vital lifeline of commerce to and from British shores.

The naval saboteur was seen at his best, or worst, in the United States during the last war. Captain von Rintelen, the organizing agent, has told his story frankly and factually. One of his men invented a simple contrivance, no larger than a cigar. This object was divided in two by a thin sheet of copper: in one compartment was picric acid, and in the other was sulphuric acid. When these two chemicals meet, they produce a sudden and violent flame which lasts for some moments, and is of such intensity that it will ignite any combustible object within a few yards. The function of the copper division was purely a matter of timing—the acids would eat through a thin sheet of copper to effect the necessary junction in a few hours, a thicker division would require a few days. By adjusting the gauge of the copper, therefore, it was possible to estimate the hour of the explosion, within a small margin of error.

The difficulty of preventing the use of these cigar bombs can be imagined. They were so small and inconspicuous any casual lounger on a dock could drop one into a bucket while the ship was coaling. Captain von Rintelen found his most useful assistants among disgruntled Irishmen, who imagined that they were assisting the cause of their country by exposing British (including Irish) sailors to a terrible death.

The cigar bomb was also freely employed by the Germans in an attempt to interrupt, if not to arrest, the flow of trade between Scandinavia and Britain. The timber of Norway and Sweden was essential for Britain's purpose. We could, perhaps, have managed without the newspapers which depended upon it for news print, but as pit props and for military engineering work the timber was vital. Dozens of ships were sunk by this method of delayed sabotage which even in the annals of espionage sounds mean and sneaking. Yet it was defeated by the valour of the sailors, both British and neutral, who refused to accept the dictation of the German saboteurs and defied every peril.

I once inspected a delayed action bomb: it was in some ways more ingenious than the "cigar" type. It was disguised as a lump of coal, and except in its weight it was indistinguishable from the real thing.

VI

Two years ago the French Government, on the advice of the General Staff, decided to build a new railway bridge over the River Seine. Its purpose was purely strategic: it was a kind of reserve to another bridge a few miles down the river—which, if destroyed, would seriously handicap the movement of the French Army towards the eastern frontiers. Thus there was no attempt to make the new bridge a thing of beauty: it was an uncompromising utility structure of concrete. Nevertheless, it was of importance, and a high dignitary of France went down on the appropriate day to declare the bridge open. In order to disguise the glaring plainness of its concrete austerity, the contractors hung it about with flags and bunting.

The bridge duly declared open, the flags and bunting had to be removed. One workman, moving along the bridge, found that a piece of bunting had caught on a small protrusion from the concrete. This, on examination, proved to be the end of a piece of wire. He thought little of it—only grumbled at the unskilled labour which had been engaged to work on the bridge, and which had flung all kinds of rubbish into the concrete mixer. It was so casual that it was remarkable that he mentioned it at all to the foreman of his gang. It was just as remarkable that the foreman considered so trivial a thing worthy of attention.

He did, however, and himself walked along the bridge to examine the piece of wire. He may have been either clever or suspicious, for he decided immediately to bring along an electric drill, and at some expense followed the course of the wire through the concrete. Any expenditure was repaid,

however. Firmly embedded in one of the arches of the bridge was a powerful charge—with a wire leading to the surface. In time of war all an enemy agent had to do was to come along, pass a most moderate electric current along the wire, and up would go one of the central arches of the bridge.

During the last war sabotage was one of the infants of the espionage family: it is now growing up rapidly. We have already seen something of its potentialities in Czechoslovakia and Poland. If this war is as long as some people imagine, we may find sabotage classed as one of the major weapons of warfare. Recently British railwaymen were given special warning, and any belligerent power which gets through the war without incurring severe damage by sabotage will count itself exceedingly fortunate. In the main, defence is in the hands of ordinary people—the police cannot be everywhere at once. On more than one occasion the sharp eyes of a workman have forestalled disaster.

CHAPTER X

COUNTER-ESPIONAGE

I

On September 4th, 1939, the British press published a laconic official announcement that six hundred aliens of German nationality, whose existence at large might be injurious to the safety of the State, had been interned. Except that the figure named was considerably higher, the paragraph was almost identical with that published on August 5th, 1914. Both announcements represented a resounding victory for the British counter-espionage service. The story of 1939 may not yet be told, of course—a pity, for it would thrill the most hard-hearted reader. But that of 1914 deserves study, and may point a parallel.

Then, as some of my readers will recall, England was inundated by a wave of spy-phobia. The whole country was infested with German spies; true, no one had ever seen any of these gentry, but everybody knew somebody who once had dinner with a man who had a maid who used to work for a stockbroker who employed a solicitor who once briefed a barrister who had once appeared on the same platform as Mr. Asquith—consequently on the very highest authority it was known that there were thousands of German spies at large. Actually, on August 4th, 1914, there were twenty-two German agents in Britain, and by eleven o'clock the following morning they had all been arrested.

The story leading to that arrest has been told before, but is well worth retelling; indeed, it must be considered as a classic of counter-espionage. It goes back to the funeral of King Edward VII in 1910. All the crowned heads of Europe came to London for the funeral—there were quite a number of monarchs surviving at that time. Among them was, of course, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, the dead King's nephew: although he cordially disliked his uncle, the decencies of etiquette had to be observed.

He landed at Dover with a brilliant suite of officers, and among them was a naval officer who was suspect; he was one of those attachés who in another country had somewhat overstepped his official duties. At Dover a considerable force of the men of the Special Branch of Scotland Yard was

gathered. Most of them were there to protect the person of the Kaiser, but two of them were to watch the German naval officer, a baron of high family.

As he walked in the funeral procession the officer was watched; even during the ceremony of interment at Windsor. When he returned to his hotel, a strange thing was soon noticed. Changing from his brilliant uniform into civilian attire, he emerged through the back door, the servants' entrance. It would not have mattered had he gone out through the roof; there would still have been two men of the Special Branch watching him.

They followed him to a barber's shop in the Caledonian Road; some of my American readers will not know this locality, but they must take my word when I assure them that it is not the locality a German baron would visit to get his hair cut. This in itself was curious, and suspicion was redoubled when it was discovered that the proprietor of the barber's shop was a naturalized German.

Of course he, too, was thenceforward watched, and surveillance of his mail revealed highly interesting information. This barber, Karl Ernst, proved to be the "post office" for German espionage communications. Instead of sending separate individual instructions to spies, with as many chances of discovery, the German spymaster forwarded the whole consignment to Ernst wrapped up in literature advertising shaving soaps and razors. Then in the safe security of the British post, Ernst would distribute the instructions to the active agents. The implications of the discovery are obvious: by watching Ernst's outgoing mail the British counter-espionage officers collected the names and addresses of all the German agents in the country—twenty-two in all. They could have arrested the whole lot, but the astute officer in charge of M.I.5 was far too clever for that. If he arrested this group, he argued, the Germans would send over more: let them stay where they were, suitably observed, of course, then at the right moment we would seize them and the Germans would be faced with a task of immense difficulty—the improvisation of a new organization under war-time conditions.

This decision was to prove of extreme importance. During the first weeks of the war the Germans had not a single agent at large in Britain! When their advancing armies encountered the British at Mons they were amazed, for their commanders had not received the information that the British Expeditionary Force had so much as left for France. Moreover, as we shall see, the improvisations arranged to repair the deficiency were not always happy.

This chapter need only be brief, for its subject is so close to espionage itself that examples of counter-espionage activity are necessarily scattered throughout the book. It differs from espionage, however, in that it is openly admitted as a legitimate service. Many countries will deny that they employ spies, but all of them admit to counter-spies.

The field covered is immense. The first purpose of counter-espionage is, of course, to counter the efforts of the foreign spies. It is assumed that in Germany this is the prerogative of the Gestapo, but this is not the case. The War Office and Admiralty in Berlin (and probably the Air Ministry as well, though this is unconfirmed) each maintains its own counter-espionage staff, distrusting the efforts of the gangster type of thugs who form the main body of the Gestapo. They are right: counter-espionage is a skilled profession, as keen and vital as the spy himself.

Certain precautions are elementary. Counter-espionage officers are stationed at all ports of entry, whether by land or sea: there they supplement customs and immigration officers and customs guards. The men posted at these points are usually of the detective type: a man with a photographic memory is invaluable. I once met a German counter-spy (compulsorily retired by Hitler!) who had a remarkable memory for faces. He told me that he used to study and file the English society magazines, which, of course, contain many photographs of British officers.

He described how visiting officers were watched. In peace-time, of course, there was no reason why a British officer should not spend a holiday in Germany: there was equally no reason why he should not keep his eyes open. By a code signal the passport officer would inform the waiting counter-spy that a British officer was on the train. Immediately the trail would begin; telephones would flash the news along the route, and watching agents would report if the officer's eyes strayed beyond the scenery.

The trouble with so elaborate a system is that it is obvious. I remember once spending a holiday in Germany at a nervous period. It was definitely a holiday, but by the second day I was certain that I was being watched. Evidently I had been picked up at the frontier. It was not difficult to confirm my shadowing. As I *was* on holiday, I was in the mood for comedy.

I led my trailers a pretty dance, moving repeatedly from one part of Germany to another. I never settled down for twenty-four hours. I aroused the excitement of my pursuers by going near to munition towns, but never into them. I delighted in long night journeys, with many changes. The expenditure on travelling and agent's time must have been colossal. One night I had the supreme pleasure of catching a man in my hotel bedroom,

examining my camera: I knocked him out, and handed him over to the police as a burglar. The cream of the joke lay in the fact that, hearing of my projected visit, the German Railways Office had sent me a free season ticket over all lines, so that my rail journeys cost me nothing!

Passport control is an essential feature of counter-espionage work, but postal censorship is vital. Again we are back at our old thesis—that the hardest part of the spy's task is to get his information home. Ninety per cent of the German operatives of the last war were trapped by the postal censor, who spotted their ingenious codes (sometimes over-ingenious!) or read their messages in invisible ink. Even if the spy should possess unusual cunning in his codes, the postal censor holds one trump-card—delay. A spy in England obtains information that Kiel is to be raided next Monday: he sends news ingeniously coded to some innocuous address. But the postal censor holds up *all* mail to the Continent until Tuesday!

In Britain the postal censorship staff already numbers two thousand one hundred operatives. They are thorough in their work, as I can bear witness—even the string of parcels is unravelled to ensure that no message is hidden in it. Cellophane wrappers are carefully examined—a message might be concealed in the gummed joint. I have seen the counter-spies of to-day working in unsensational fashion in the laboratory, where the application of heat, the iodine vapour bath, the ultra-violet ray, and many secret processes reveal the work of the spy. Already the postal censorship has provided the necessary evidence to condemn nearly a hundred Nazi agents to inactivity for the period of the war.

To-day, counter-espionage has its combatant side. It will deliberately spread rumours designed to find their way to the enemy via his agents. Or it will support a rumour by refusing to deny it. The "Russians passing through England" rumour of 1914 is the classic example; it was reported to Germany by her agents, and was so accepted that two divisions were detailed to watch the Belgian coast—at the critical time of the Battle of the Marne!

III

One trick employed by counter-espionage agents, though old and well known, is still amazingly effective. A man is suspected and arrested: interrogation and threats alike fail to move him. He continues to protest his innocence. And there is no real evidence against him—only suspicion. He is then kept in a prison cell under severe conditions in the hope that the ordeal will break his nerve. At an appropriate moment a fellow sufferer is

introduced into his cell, on the pretext that the prison is so crowded that two prisoners must be accommodated together.

The newcomer has suffered even more violently at the hands of their oppressors: he is outspoken, too, and does not mince his words when describing his captors. By such outburst he wins—or hopes to win—the confidence of the suspect, for he is, of course, a counter-spy placed there with that deliberate intention. In many recent cases the suspect has innocently blurted out his story to the newcomer—in more than one instance inculpating other people as well as himself.

On the other hand, the counter-spy is not always successful—he ought not to be, for everyone who engages in the treacheries of espionage ought to be well acquainted with this antique device. In one case a suspect managed to obtain his freedom by using his fellow prisoner to negotiate between himself and authority—bargaining liberty against information to be supplied. He obtained his liberty, and the information he gave was destined to have disastrous consequence to his German captive. They could not know it at the time, but they were to learn it later.

The lot of the counter-spy is sometimes hard. A jailer in the prison at Munich went along the corridor to answer the knocking at a door of a cell occupied by a suspect and the confidence trickster. Unlocking the door, he was met by the greeting "Do you mind taking away the body?" in the nonchalant voice of the suspect, and he was startled to see an inert figure upon the floor. The suspect, a man of intelligence, had in the earliest stages of the proceedings detected his would-be friend as an adversary, and in his anger had attacked him violently. Though the counter-spy was not actually dead, he was considerably the worse for wear!

IV

If the Nazis depend upon the spies they introduced in the guise of refugees, then their system has already broken down. The British counter-espionage service made a clever move. All refugees had to appear before special tribunals, which treated them as gently as they deserved—for the vast majority had nothing but antipathy for Hitler. In each court a group of refugees was gathered as observers, and a surprising scene developed at the first tribunal. A German was being interrogated: he told a pitiful story of persecution, and the court was sympathetic. Suddenly one of the other refugees asked if he could give evidence: it was startling!

He had recognized the man under examination—who had for a time been in the same concentration camp. There, however, he had occasioned suspicion among his fellow prisoners—he was over-friendly with the authorities, and was suspected of being their "planted" spy. By a neat trick the prisoners proved their point, and now one of them unmasked him before a London tribunal whose verdict might have left him free for espionage activity.

The tone of the court's questions abruptly altered, and very quickly the applicant's case collapsed. He will play no part in the underground battle of the war, but will recline in weary laziness in a British internment camp. Since this case more than one German spy has been unmasked by refugees. The fifty thousand Germans in Great Britain are in effect fifty thousand counter-spies.

The activities of counter-espionage agents will have been apparent in most of the stories told in this book. I could add others which might appear hopelessly fantastic, for in a suspicious country like a totalitarian state there is a special department of counter-espionage, whose agents spy on its own spies!

CHAPTER XI

THE MAGINOT LINE

I

In 1919 the statesmen of France turned to their greatest soldier, Marshal Foch, then at the height of his fame and influence. What was necessary for the permanent security of France, twice invaded within the last fifty years, they demanded. Foch replied, without hesitation, "The Rhine frontier!" With this in French control, no eastern enemy, however strong, could threaten the security of France.

Foch was speaking from a purely military point of view. Politically his suggestion was impossible. For this reason the French Government enjoined upon its military staff the task of devising some alternative. From 1920 to 1928 the best brains of the French Army, working under the direction of Marshal Joffre and General Guillaumat, elaborated plans for a series of fortifications without parallel in the history of the world. Ample time was available for careful planning: the French Army of occupation *was* on the Rhine, and for the moment France was secure.

In 1930 the work was begun. The French War Minister at that time, a giant, homely ex-sergeant of Engineers, was M. André Maginot, and his sponsorship of the line which bears his name ensures his niche in history.

I have twice visited the Maginot Line—the second time only a few days before the outbreak of the present war. To-day it covers the whole of the frontier from Geneva to the sea: its strongest stretches are naturally those facing Germany direct, particularly the line of frontier running from the Rhine to Luxemburg. Nevertheless, the possibility of a German stroke through Belgium or Switzerland can never be ignored, and to-day the Maginot Line extends its vast tentacles so as to protect France against any lightning stroke.

In the World War military men early lost confidence in the power of forts, following the surprisingly rapid fall of Liège and Namur to the German howitzers. Even before this, French military thought had almost abandoned consideration of fortresses. The idea of the offensive ruled all French military minds. There was the absurd tradition, as Wells calls it, that the French do not fight well behind earthworks. So low were forts rated that

the guns of Verdun were actually removed—to be hurriedly reinstated at the moment of attack!

Liège and Namur had made but a modest resistance; but the forts of Verdun took a tremendous toll of German lives before one by one they were taken by assault. Further, in spite of the colossal bombardment they endured, they remained almost intact—it was only lack of ammunition and food which caused their surrender. Engineers investigated the difference between the forts of Verdun and Liège. They found the answer—the quality of the concrete.

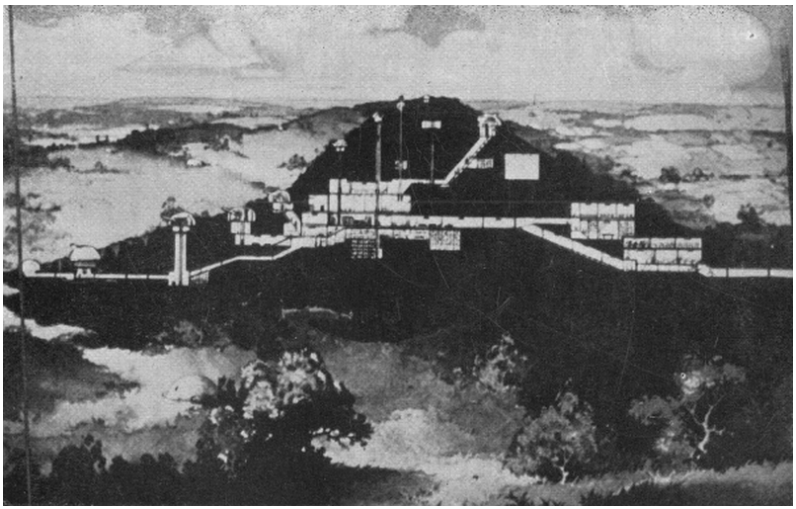
During the years in which the Maginot Line was planned, remarkable experiments were carried out in the military camp of Chalons. A specimen fort was built with coverings of concrete, steel and earth—irreverently called the "trinity" method of protection. After long experiments a casemate was evolved which withstood the fire of the heaviest land gun in Europe. To make assurance—literally—trebly sure, the thickness of the construction was then trebled.

To-day there are more than fourteen thousand forts in the Maginot Line. A large number of them are small block-houses—the "pillboxes" which the Germans used with such effect during the war of 1914-18. These are the advanced posts, permanently manned by small garrisons. Their duty is to hold the enemy at bay for twenty-four hours, so as to cover the complete manning of the line proper.

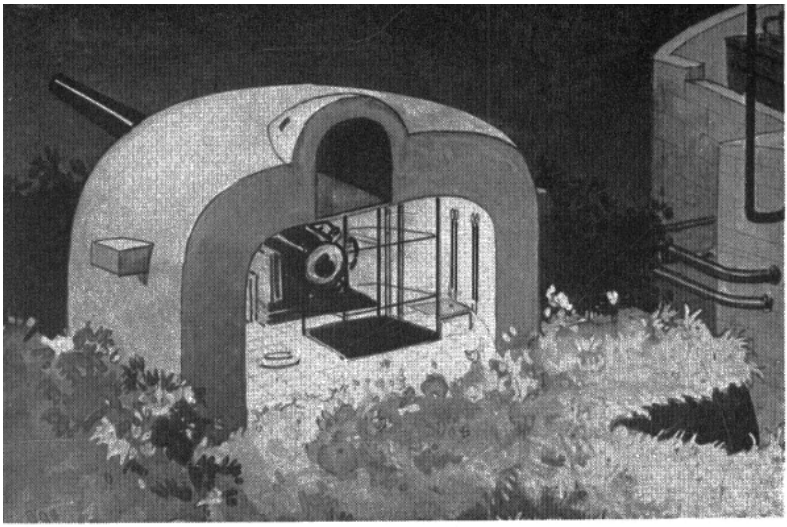
This consists of a series of immensely powerful forts. In some cases the inside of a hill has been completely scooped away: all that is visible to external view are a dozen small pimples of concrete. Down below, burrowing two hundred feet into the earth, are subways and galleries with electric railways, serving lifts and escalators, by which men and ammunition are brought to serve the guns. There are great chambers with sleeping quarters, kitchens, control-rooms. Modern battle in a fort of the Maginot Line differs vastly from the warfare which we knew twenty-five years ago. The artilleryman sees nothing; he lays his gun exactly as naval gunners do, receiving orders on a dial controlled by an observation officer. After working for his period of duty, he is relieved and walks back through the underground tunnels for refreshment and rest. It is real rest, too, differing entirely from the snatches of sleep which were all that were possible to us in the shallow dugouts of 1914-18. He cannot even hear the sound of battle.

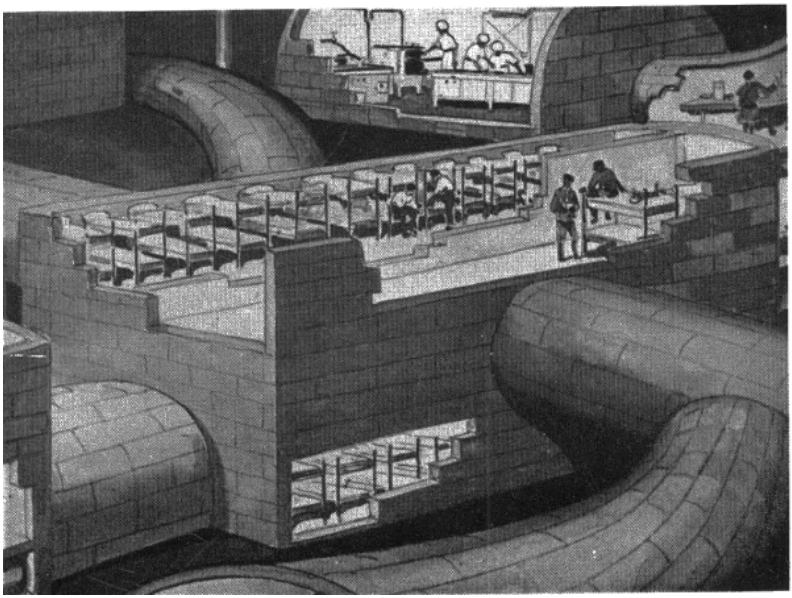
The forts are elaborately ventilated, and the defence against gas is particularly ingenious—the pressure of the atmosphere inside the fort is raised slightly so that no gas can penetrate.

The forts cover one another by the arc of their fire, and smaller block-houses in between ensure a colossal fire-power which can be directed on any approaching enemy. All the forts have vast defences of barbed wire entanglements and "asparagus." This "asparagus" is the soldier's argot describing the protection of the forts against tanks: it consists of rows of steel rails driven into the ground, their points upwards. They are planted at different levels, from two to four feet, so that the tank goes up and down like a see-saw as it moves over them. The points of the rails tear off the caterpillar tracks and leave the machine a helpless victim to the armour-piercing shells fired by anti-tank guns which are installed every few hundred yards along the Maginot Line.



A FORT OF THE MAGINOT LINE
"The inside of a hill has been scooped away!"





THE MAGINOT LINE
(Above): A casemate
(Below): Sleeping quarters, 200 feet underground

Should the tank cross the first obstacle, its peril is not over. Here and there along the line are tank traps: the tank surges boldly forward: all of a sudden the ground gives way beneath its track and it finds itself plunging

into a great pit lined with concrete, from which there is no escape. Or it may meet its fate on a concealed land mine. Or it may face a second line of steel rails called by the French *asparagus farci*. These rails look exactly like the first row—but are very different, for their points are charged with detonators, and the moment they are touched by a tank a land mine underneath explodes.

The Maginot Line, for the last six years—ever since the advent of Hitler—has always been manned on a permanent footing by professional troops. These have been christened *écrevisses de rempart*—the shell-fish of the forts: shell-fish cling tightly, and it is certain that the men of the Maginot Line will hold on to the last.

II

Naturally, from the very first the Germans were more than interested in the Maginot Line. Even in pre-Hitler days the French made arrests from time to time, and since 1933 the number has considerably increased. It was not difficult for German agents to locate the sites of the forts, for many of them can be seen by the roadside, although they are ingeniously camouflaged, the concrete being dyed green or brown to blend with the surrounding countryside. German agents were, however, instructed to concentrate on (*a*) the armaments of the fort, (*b*) the mechanical contrivances, such as the device for raising the air pressure to keep out gas, (*c*) the concrete used. The last does not sound nearly so exciting as the first two, but actually was the most important of all. The Germans are an ingenious race, and would have no difficulty in inventing mechanical devices themselves, but they have never understood concrete as the French do and it was considered vital to gain its secrets.

It did not appear to be a difficult task; although under strict military supervision, some sixty thousand labourers were employed on the actual work of building the line. Despite all precautions, it was not impossible for the Germans to introduce agents amongst those sixty thousand—certainly it was not impossible, for seven were arrested in the first year of work. Yet in spite of all efforts—a vast expenditure of money and the loss of some of their finest operatives—the Germans utterly failed to discover the simple secret of the French concrete. *This failure may cost them the war.*

Their own Siegfried Line differs from the Maginot Line in that it was hurriedly constructed. Yet German engineering ability is high, and the Siegfried Line might have passed as first class—but for its concrete. For

best results concrete should not be hurried. The Germans had no time to wait, and they completed their forts by using the "freezing" method of fixing concrete—which does not depend upon freezing at all, but in rapid electrical drying. They are discovering to-day that it can be disastrous, not only affecting the strength of the fort, but the health of the garrisons.

I am not going to pretend that life in the Maginot Line is pleasant. I found even the echoes getting on my nerves—the tramp of heavy boots started off a thousand unending echoes. In the winter, too, the concrete tends to sweat, which gives an unpleasant atmosphere to the excavated forts. Despite the high morale of the men, their health began to be affected. French doctors discovered a new illness, *bétonite*—a disease which might appropriately be called "Concreteitis." There was only one remedy for it, work—anything to take a man's mind off his surroundings. In order to ease the strain it was arranged that every man on duty should have a few hours in the open air every day. The smallest possible number of men actually slept inside the fort. Outside its entrances—maybe half a mile away on the other side of the hill—ingenious barracks were run up—folding houses which could be collapsed in a few hours. These were the precautions in peace-time: in war, of course, there is an invigorating urge which belittles such inconveniences, which would now be classed as petty.

If conditions in the Maginot Line, carefully prepared and constructed, can be unpleasant, imagine the situation on the other side of the Rhine. The over-hasty electrical drying of the concrete has led to appalling results. Every ton of concrete contains over a hundred pounds of water, which over a considerable period must permeate to the surface of the concrete.

I have seen Siegfried fortifications with great cracks in the walls: I was even more interested to observe the effect of the appalling sweating of the concrete on the men—their nerves and physical health alike affected.

The more obvious this became, the more determined were the Germans to achieve the secret of the French concrete. Such a secret was even more vital to the Germans than the French: not only the German forts, but their tank protection, too, is largely of concrete. The Germans had no steel to spare for the hundreds of miles of "asparagus." They have substituted little humps of concrete—"dragon's teeth"—and are wondering whether "frozen" concrete can be blasted by heavy shells or will collapse beneath the weight of the enormous French seventy-ton tanks.

During 1938 and 1939 a considerable portion of the vast resources of the German professional espionage system was directed against the secrets of the Maginot Line, and especially the construction of its concrete. There was

every chance of success. Over a hundred miles of the line ran through Alsace: another hundred miles through Lorraine. Now in Alsace, and to a smaller degree in Lorraine, there are tens of thousands of Germans—not Alsatians, but true Germans, descendants of those who came hither as settlers during the German occupation between 1871 and 1918. Many of these Germans are loyal to France, appreciating its democratic ideas, but there are some to whom the call of blood is stronger; and it was from among these men that Germany recruited her agents for espionage on the Maginot Line.

Fortunately they were few, and these few were not very clever. Their activities were, however, sufficiently dangerous to instigate extraordinary precautions in the Maginot Line area.

"What is to prevent me taking a photograph of the forts on this hill?" I asked a French officer in August, 1939.

"Try it and see!" he smiled.

I dismounted from the car and walked to the side of the road, surveying a peaceful but deserted countryside. Half a mile away on the other side of the valley was a hill, its summit broken by the mushroom-like cupolas which betrayed the site of a great fort. There was no sign of any guard—not a living person within sight. Boldly I produced my camera and began to focus it on the hill opposite. Thirty seconds later, appearing from nowhere, a soldier was beside me. Very politely he called my attention to the notice which I ought to have read some kilometres back—that photography was forbidden within the fortified zone. If I had not heeded his polite warning—well, it was obvious that he was prepared for any emergency.

III

On October 12th, 1939, six weeks after the outbreak of war, the War Office in Paris made the startling announcement that Dr. Roos, an Alsatian autonomist leader, had been condemned to death for selling or transmitting military secrets to Germany.

I have met many of the autonomist movements of Alsace: most of their members were perfectly genuine and innocent of treacherous intent. There has always been a strong autonomist party in Alsace, for many people of the province proudly proclaim that they are neither French nor German, but Alsatian. After Alsace was seized by Germany in 1871, the Alsatians never ceased to protest against their transfer against their will, like a flock of sheep, from one country to the other. As the years passed and it seemed too

much to hope that they would ever return to the French fold, the passive resistance gradually changed, and the predominant Alsatian demand was for an autonomous charter within the German Empire.

This was never granted, and the mass of Alsatian people never pretended to accept German authority as final: so much so, in fact, that when German troops marched into Alsace in August, 1914, they were instructed to behave as if they were entering enemy territory. Yet, soon after France had recovered her lost province, the Alsatian autonomists again raised their heads. They were of two classes—Alsatians who genuinely believed that their culture and progress deserved an independent political life, and descendants of the three hundred thousand German immigrants who had been planted in the province during the years of German rule.

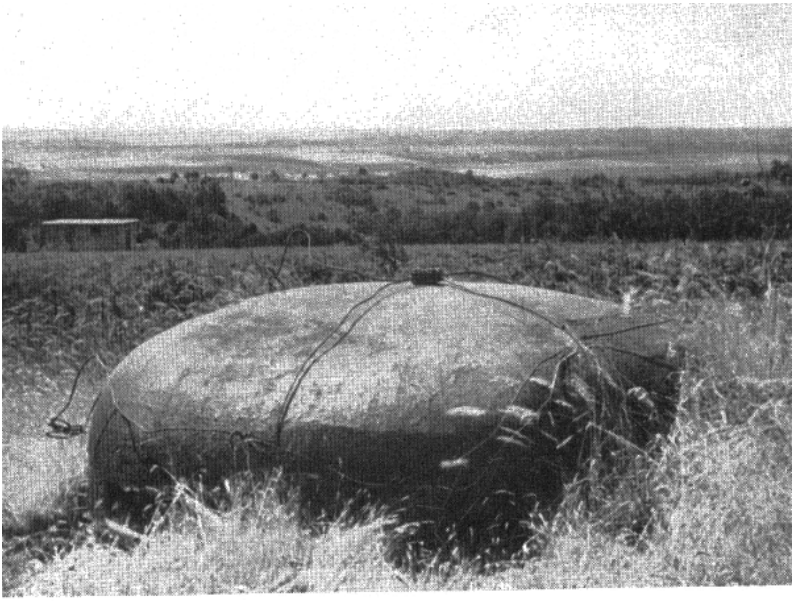
It can be imagined that Hitler's Intelligence chiefs have not been slow to take advantage of the autonomist forces of Alsace. The German interest had two fundamental purposes—autonomist activity would embarrass France, and at the same time would form a recruiting ground for active spies. Thus a local branch of the autonomist party might include five hundred people who were purely concerned with political aims—and five who were German agents. It has been proved that considerable funds were supplied to the autonomist movements from Germany—not directly, of course, but in the form of subscriptions from certain influential members. To-day thousands of Alsatian citizens are gnashing their teeth at the revelation that they have associated with parties financed by and for the advantage of the man they hate most in the world.

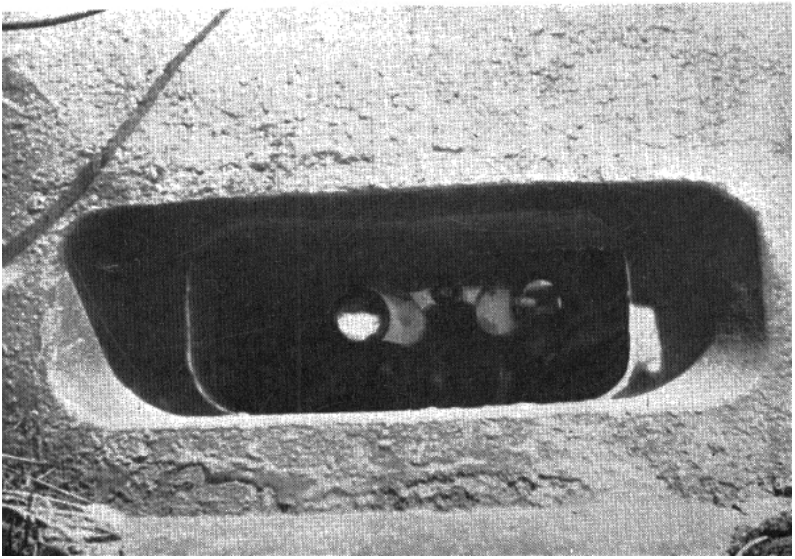
From the days when the construction of the Maginot Line first commenced, the Germans were able to plant labourers among the gangs from the ranks of local men. Indeed, it seemed as if the French went right out of their way to assist their potential enemies. I remember encountering one labour gang in the Maginot Line in 1933. It included Russians, Poles, Czechs, Swiss, Italians—and even Germans from the other side of the Rhine. But when I pointed out this anomaly to a French senior officer, he merely smiled! We have already seen that one of the principal objects of the Germans was to discover the secret of the French concrete, but by ingenious measures and strict supervision the French were able to defeat this purpose—each man only took part in a single process. Renegade Alsatian autonomists were also employed to penetrate the very entrails of the great fortresses bordering the Rhine valley. Alsatians are naturally conscripted into the French Army. No great numbers of the conscript soldiers of France have ever seen the interior of the Maginot Line, which is manned by a professional corps of specialists. There was nothing to hinder an Alsatian in

German pay from volunteering for service among the fortress troops, and at first sight there was no reason why he should not be accepted.

The French system of local reserves also afforded opportunities to the German Intelligence Staff. Every Frenchman, after his two years' service in the army, is kept on the active reserve, and at times of mobilization proceeds immediately to his depot. The manning of the Maginot Line does not depend on any cumbrous plans of mobilization, however; in these days of rapid movement it might easily have happened that battle might be raging about the Maginot Line fortresses within a few hours of the opening of hostilities. Now, although the forts of the Maginot Line are manned by professional soldiers always on duty, it is essential that the intervening ground should be occupied by infantry forces, for whom trenches and field defences have been constructed. Garrisons are always available along the frontier for this service, and their immediate reserves are the local men. An Alsatian villager who is mobilized does not have to proceed by rail to his depot and there wait till he can be transported to join his regiment—he merely walks to the police station of his village, where his uniform and rifle await him, and literally within a few minutes of the summons he can turn from civilian to soldier, and can actually take his place in the line which runs close by his home.

The vast majority of the Alsatians are completely loyal to France—even those whose political views turn towards Germany; but it is obvious that among such a large population, including three hundred thousand of direct German descent, Hitler's agents should have had little difficulty in finding the necessary traitors. What should have been equally obvious to them, however, was that the French were quite aware of this potential danger, and took adequate steps to counter it.





(Above): “Pimples of concrete”
(Below): Eyes in the Maginot Line. They look for spies in peace-time, enemies in war-time

Inside the Maginot Line

“Shell-fish” entering a fort

IV

During one period of three months in 1938 no fewer than seven spies or groups of spies were arrested by the French in the vicinity of the Maginot

Line, and two of these cases were those of Alsatian soldiers in the French Army. Nevertheless, the most astounding story of espionage in the Maginot Line centres about an officer who was not an Alsatian at all, but who was trapped by a variation of an ancient device to betray his country's vital secrets.

This Captain Martigny[1] was an Engineer officer stationed at Belfort. He had been actively engaged in the construction of the forts of the Maginot Line. Now Captain Martigny was a man fond of the good things of life: keen on his work, he liked lively evenings, and he found them difficult to obtain in Belfort, which, like many other frontier fortress towns, is extraordinarily dull. There was, however, one club which boasted some of the attractions of a minor casino, and to this club Captain Martigny was a frequent visitor.

It was here that a wine merchant named Friendmann made his acquaintance. Friendmann could talk convincingly and interestingly about the wines of France. Belfort was his centre of operations, and he frequently travelled in the district round about. He moved slowly, and not until he had become a familiar sight at the gambling club did he first address a word to Captain Martigny.

Long before this, however, he had been studying his prey, making inquiries about his financial position—a favourite approach of the blackmailing spy. He noticed that Captain Martigny in his boredom gambled freely, risking sums which he could scarcely afford from his moderate army pay.

Friendmann's plan was interesting and remarkably cunning. In one of his journeys he made a dash to Berlin, where the Foreign Office arranged an interview with a prominent financier. Returning to France, Friendmann bought hundreds of shares of a certain mining company—bought them with the certain knowledge that very soon these shares would slump heavily.

Naturally he did not talk to Captain Martigny along these lines. Instead he talked optimistically and in confidence about the wonderful bargain he had made. The cleverness and originality of his scheme lay in the fact that he did not attempt to sell his shares to Martigny, and had no part in the officer's financial transactions. He knew that his insidious whisperings had their effect, and was in due course informed that Captain Martigny had made a large investment in these shares, which according to Friendmann would soon rise to fabulous values—but which in fact within a few weeks slumped to worthlessness. At this point Friendmann disappeared from the scheme: although he was able to complain quite truthfully that he himself had lost heavily, he was naturally regarded with some acerbity by the unfortunate

Captain. Before Friendmann left, however, he was able to arrange for a second agent, Kiauss, to be sent to his assistance by the Director of Intelligence who was working from Frankfurt. Kiauss was a man of likeable personality, full of sympathy over Martigny's unfortunate financial disaster. Very soon he was in a position to whisper that the disaster might be retrieved; that even if Martigny had no money, there was always the possibility of making some. The harassed Captain, already being pressed by his creditors, listened to the insidious suggestions, and some of the details of the Maginot Line were passed over in return for a considerable reward.

Kiauss, the senior partner in the conspiracy, remained in Belfort, skilfully playing the valuable fish he had landed. There came the day, however, when Friendmann returned to discover that his plan had been entirely successful. Although a German, his ideas in undertaking espionage work were purely mercenary, and he returned to demand a larger payment than the moderate sum he had received for his services. This was refused, and a bitter quarrel developed. The master spy, to protect his secrets, arranged to have Friendmann arrested, but he managed to slip the noose and returned to France—to Paris, in fact, where he marched boldly into the Sûreté Nationale, and for a considerable monetary consideration betrayed the whole scheme.

Kiauss was arrested quietly with incriminating evidence in his possession. The case against Martigny was more difficult—the evidence of a paid informer is not always considered reliable. The unfortunate Kiauss was, however, ordered to write a letter to Martigny asking for certain details of information about the Maginot Line. The information duly arrived, with the usual demand for money; but this time Martigny's reward was five years' penal servitude—which must on the whole be classed as remarkably light punishment for so grave an offence.

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[1] The name is fictitious to avoid distress to the family of the officer concerned.—B.N.

V

From 1931 to 1933, when the fortifications were in their early stages, there were seventy-four espionage trials in connection with the Maginot Line. The German system was directed from Trier. Although most of the evidence was heard *in camera*, it became apparent that most of the spying

was amateurish—most of the suspects had been snooping about, hoping to capitalize any information they fished up. But two of the cases were serious, and the men received stiff sentences.

A later case concerned a Strasbourg firm which had been allocated a contract in connection with the constructional work. Its directors at last attracted attention—they asked too many questions of their own workmen! At last they were arrested when returning from a visit to Germany, and the incriminating papers—and money—in their possession ensured a long absence from Strasbourg.

One morning the commander of a fort received a telephone communication from his commander: two distinguished military officers from a friendly power were on their way, and were to be shown the fort. They arrived, presented their credentials, and were duly conducted around the fort.

An hour later two other officers arrived; they apologized for being late—their car had had a breakdown. They presented *their* credentials—and were promptly arrested.

Only to be released, for they were the genuine visitors: and a stern chase of the impostors was made. They were not caught, but the French command was not perturbed. Not many of the vital secrets of the Maginot Line are available to the casual visitor!

And, even if *all* the secrets of the forts were known, the Germans are no nearer to capturing them, as Hitler may one day discover to his cost—or rather, to the cost of the unfortunate troops detailed to the attack.

CHAPTER XII

GERMAN ESPIONAGE IN THE WORLD WAR

I

THE conservatism of German methods makes profitable a brief and superficial study of some others of their espionage activities during the World War. From a mass of available material, I have selected authenticated cases which can be classed as typical, and which have some feature of special interest.

The war of 1939 presents one startling contrast with the war of 1914, in the complete absence of spy-phobia. The weeks following the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 were amazing. Everybody could tell sensational stories of German spies. Cabinet Ministers had been found signalling up chimneys to Zeppelins: Germans disguised as old ladies had been caught in the act of setting fire to waterworks: concrete tennis-courts had been laid years previously ready to mount heavy guns.

Such hysteria has been killed by education. The public to-day is considerably better informed than it was in 1914. Hardy experimenters have attempted to signal up chimneys and have achieved nothing but soot. And ex-soldiers find the greatest joy in the concrete tennis-courts: the idea of a general planning the site of his battle years ahead scarcely agrees with the mentality of the generals he knew.

The phobia was a colossal nuisance to the authorities. The harassed police were obliged to investigate every case reported, for there was always the chance that there might at least be a basis of truth in one of them.

We have seen how the smallest piece of information might eventually be of use to an enemy; for that reason the police found it necessary to look into even the most incredible rumours and things known “for a fact.” This vigilance by the well-meaning but interfering citizens had some curious results, which were not without their humour.

A friend of mine who is now retired from the C.I.D. told me one very amusing story of a well-meaning woman who rushed into his police station at two o’clock in the morning. She had seen a spy at work—actually seen him. There was no doubt of it at all. Yes, with her own eyes. The station sergeant, having calmed the lady down a little, took her into the C.I.D. office

where my friend was writing a report. She repeated her story again, even more enthusiastically, when she learnt that the man in plain-clothes was a detective inspector of the famous Criminal Investigation Department! My friend naturally asked her many questions, at which she became most impatient. All this time, she claimed, she was convinced the man was signalling out to the river. "Signalling to the enemy" was the favourite theory of the alarmists who plagued the police. A moment's thought will show that no spy worth his pay would resort to anything so crude and certain to be spotted.

My friend put on his coat and, accompanied by a constable and the woman, went round to the road where the light had flashed. They waited . . . and then it showed again. This time it did not flash, but concentrated a steady beam on to the roof.

The constable looked at my C.I.D. friend.

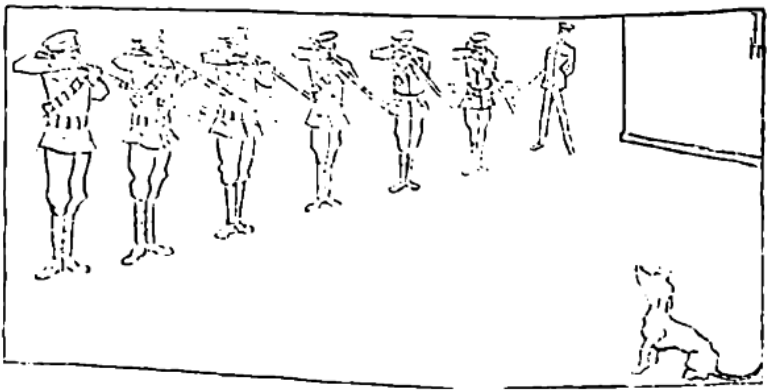
"Why . . ." the constable began.

"Come on," my friend said, and walked towards the house.

The lady informer hurried with them. She knew she hadn't been wrong; and now the detective's manner had proved that she wasn't wrong.

They knocked on the door, and after a few minutes it was opened.

"What the hell do you think you're doing, Jones," the C.I.D. man asked, "flashing a torch on the window like that?"



SPY-PHOBIA—A GERMAN CARTOON

1. A German dachshund! He was seen signalling to a zeppelin with his tail!

2. Damned German spy!

3. Fire!

WALLS HAVE EARS
In Germany In Britain ("Beware! The enemy is listening!")
(Note the different angle of the propaganda appeal)

Jones, a forlorn figure in trousers and shirt, scratched his head.

"I'm sorry, sir," he replied. "I never thought of that."

"That's obvious," said my friend sharply. "But why did you do it?"

"Well, sir, I'm due on duty at three, and—and, well, I've lost my front stud!"

And this was the explanation of *that* spy scare! Jones was a plain-clothes C.I.D. man, and when he had got up to go on early turn had dropped his stud when he had opened a bedroom window!

But the enthusiastic patriot who had brought the information did not believe the story. She went home firmly convinced that in Jones the Metropolitan Police had a spy in their midst. I do not suppose that her story lost anything in the telling as it was constantly repeated. This epidemic of spy hysteria was welcomed by the Germans, and was sometimes fostered by them. It had the obvious merit of engaging the attentions of the police on matters of no importance while the Germans worked elsewhere.

It must not be thought, however, that the British counter-espionage service dismissed the spy menace with contempt. On the contrary, they well appreciated its reality. One of their first problems was found in the quarter of a million refugees who sought refuge in England after a desperate flight from Belgium. Here was a heaven-sent opportunity for the Germans. Few of the refugees had passports, many had no sort of identification papers at all.

Small wonder that the Germans managed to smuggle more than an occasional spy among them.

The first counter-measure lay in the very efficient censorship system which was imposed. All letters, post cards, packets, newspapers, periodicals, cables and telegrams were examined. The extent of this vast censorship system can be imagined when I mention that over sixty different languages had to be translated by the censors.

II

It is not a pretty subject, but brothels have always played a part in espionage activity, and during the World War these were carefully watched by military as well as by medical authorities. It is almost impossible to prevent the soldier from talking "shop," and at moments of relaxation he has an especial tendency to confidences.

The girls of the brothels enlisted as spies were thus particularly dangerous. They were taught to recognize badges and shoulder numerals, to engage their "friend" in conversation, show an interest in his work: they might learn, for example, the particular sector in which the soldier's unit was situated. It is extraordinary how much of this apparently trivial information a soldier can reveal to a girl who is giving him a few minutes' happiness and forgetfulness, and who, if she is clever and experienced, can even make him believe that he is the one man she has ever cared for. And a man who has had a long spell in the line is glad enough to talk to someone who is sympathetic and interested in *him*.

The talkative habits of the troops occasioned much anxiety to the French authorities. Then an officer had a brilliant idea—in every brothel a number of girls were enlisted as volunteer counter-spies. This was a decisive move—in Amiens alone it led to three arrests in a single week.

As a striking contrast to the common brothel, there is the gay, glamorous, expensive luxury hotel situated reasonably near the fighting areas. A typical hotel of this kind was a famous hostelry at Warsaw, a veritable hot-bed of espionage activity during 1914-15.

To Russian officers on short leave it was home. Although a certain decorum was formally insisted on in the public rooms (I have never discovered the reason for this humbug, since what happened elsewhere was open gossip all over the world), you could find every form of vicarious amusement and vice in the so-called private rooms and suites. There were the beautiful and (if times were good) expensive courtesans whose "other

trade" was precisely that which their poorer sisters practised in the less glamorous and luxurious brothels in France. Officers who went to the hotel for their short leave knew they could have "a good time" there, and those good times led, of course, to every kind of excess and recklessness. Information was disclosed by Russian officers, many of them holding high staff posts, with such amazing freedom and carelessness as to make the French brothels models of discretion.

The men and women who ran the hectic parties upstairs, where one might indulge in the heaviest drinking, homo-sexuality, free (in the moral sense) love and any other vice that appealed to the most degraded taste, took good care that they and their assistants kept their wits clear. The Russian officers, besotted and half drugged by all manner of excesses, blurted out valuable secrets and were too stupid to realize that their pockets had been picked for whatever documents they might contain.

But apart from the "good time" customers, the hotel was also used as a rendezvous by officers of high rank. Here there were held numerous discussions, from which an alert espionage agent could (and did) gather important information.

One of the more or less permanent women residents of the hotel is worthy of notice because she, of all her sisters, worked out something new. At first this pretty, attractive German girl, who passed for a Pole, gained her information by means of the so-called oldest profession in the world. Then after a while she found the competition too fierce, and she found, too, that the slow-witted Russian staff were beginning to realize that many of their well-laid plans were being broadcast in the hotel. Accordingly she reformed, or so she said. New officers coming back from the line who had not previously known her fell victims to her purity campaign. She became almost maternal, asking them to tell her their troubles, their worries, their problems. Even some of those officers who had known her in those earlier hectic days found solace and peace against a bosom now maternal rather than seductive. She encouraged their confidences, inspired them and told them of the advantages of the higher life.

They must write to her, she said. They had given her the one love she had always wanted, something so pure and great that beside it the other life was so much dross. They must write to her and let her know everything. And they must tell her where they were and what they were doing, so that she could think of them night and day. She had a large-scale map in her room, and first this man and then that man would show her where his regiment was and where he thought it was likely to be in the near future.

It was not only the girls of the brothels and the refugees who collected information. Children were also used, and many a soldier has innocently told a wide-eyed child something which has been sent back to the Germans. I remember one such child at Bretencourt, near Arras, who collected as many army cap badges and numerals as he could. When his uncle was arrested—he was a Belgian refugee—it was found that these badges had been given to the *estaminet* and brothel girls so that they could learn how to distinguish the various units.

One of the most daring of the war-time spy ruses was that of German agents in Paris, masquerading as British officers. They were, of course, open to the danger, when wearing the badges of, say, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, of meeting an officer of the same regiment; but even so, an ingenious spy could make some excuse—each regiment had many battalions. These spies always carried the badges of several units, so that, if necessary, they could effect a quick change.

III

Some of the most dangerous of the minor espionage agents were found among refugees or residents in the actual war areas. Like the girls in the brothels and the *estaminets*, the information they passed on was small stuff—news of the passage of units, and so on—and their pay was correspondingly small.

But the Allied counter-espionage officers soon realized that the collective danger of these people was great. The system of control of those living or staying in the war zone was both comprehensive and widespread. All civilian correspondence was heavily censored and there was the strictest supervision of passes. The normal population of a town only a mile or so behind the war zone was now considerably swollen by the influx of so many Belgian and French refugees. Most of these, of course, like the refugees to-day, were trustworthy and grateful; a few were spies.

The British zone was divided into four main areas. Each area had some twenty police stations, each of which would cover the administration of about fifty square miles. The police control would also be split up into about ten "communes." This meant that the zone was divided into eight hundred communes, each covering an area of about five miles.

Each commune was watched by the Intelligence police. The population of the communes varied, but might be as high in some as four or five thousand (there were nearly four million people living permanently in the

war areas in France and Flanders during the war). Responsible to the Intelligence police were civilians, priests, the local mayors, trusted tradesmen, and these people would report to the police anything suspicious. It should be emphasized that there was nothing secret about this. These civilian vigilance men were not *agents provocateurs* or spies; but, familiar with the town as they were, with their ears listening-in to every piece of gossip, they were in an ideal position to report any suspicious change in the normal life of the town.

IV

Mata Hari is not the only spy whose reputation has been made after death by unpaid publicity agents who insist that espionage must always be dramatic. A perusal of this book may perhaps have given the reader an exaggerated valuation of German underground activity. Let us glance at some of the agents operating in Britain during the World War—we shall see that they are rather a poor lot.

We have seen that the whole German spy organization was arrested on the first day of war, and the Germans had to begin afresh, to improvise a new system. The first agent to be dispatched was Carl Lody, in search of naval information.

He came to Scotland early in September, 1914, ostensibly an American named Inglis. He spoke English fluently with a convincing American accent. He had been a courier in the Hamburg-Amerika line, and was a reserve lieutenant in the German Navy. From the outset he made the most amateurish blunders. Even in September, 1914, a rigid censorship was in being, and one of Lody's first blunders was to send a telegram to an address in Sweden. The name of the man to whom that telegram was sent was Adolph Burchard, who was already well known to the British counter-espionage.

A minor error attracted immediate attention to the telegram. After an apparently innocuous message, Lody cabled his pleasure at German defeats. You don't cable patriotic sentiments at eightpence a word—not from Scotland, anyway!

The telegraph clerk called attention to this idiosyncrasy. It was decided that the apparently neutral and innocent Mr. Inglis should be watched. He was seen to visit various districts in Scotland, living first in an hotel and then in lodgings, and touring the surrounding country on a bicycle. He rode along the banks of the Firth of Forth, glanced at the naval activity at Rosyth,

and took a further interest in matters that did not concern him or any other neutral civilian at Maryhill and Hamilton Barracks.

He seems to have made no attempt to cover his tracks, and he asked his questions openly enough. If these were German espionage tactics, then they were crude indeed. Meanwhile, he wrote several letters to his friend Burchard in Sweden. Only one of these letters was allowed to leave the country—and that contained the news of that classic rumour of the vast Russian army marching through England!

His next move was his last. He visited Ireland, and was apparently going to the naval station then known as Queenstown when Scotland Yard decided they had had enough of the innocent Mr. Inglis. On their instructions the Royal Irish Constabulary arrested him, and a month later, on October 30th, he was tried by court martial in London.

When he was searched the police found a forged passport, copies of his letters and cables to Sweden, and cover addresses in other parts of Germany and Europe. There was even a note-book containing details of the information he had been gaining during his brief stay in Britain. No spy so completely condemned himself. Lody put forward no defence. He had acted as a patriot. He had failed, and he had no fear of the inevitable consequences. Everyone who was at the court martial was impressed by his calm courage and his courtesy while he waited for the inevitable verdict.

After his conviction he spent five days in the tower of London, and here again he impressed everyone by his courage. He faced the firing party with the same dignity and sang-froid. As he was about to be tied to the fatal chair, he turned to the Provost Marshal and said:

"I suppose you wouldn't like to shake hands with a spy?"

"No," the officer replied, "but I shall be glad to shake hands with a brave man."

V

Equally brave, but more skilled at his work, was the German naval spy, Muller. He had been a world-wide traveller, spoke several languages fluently and had a considerable technical knowledge of naval matters.

It was the alertness of the postal censorship department which caught him. Officials observed that among the English papers being posted to Holland were some which contained advertisements marked in pencil.

Were these codes? They were forwarded to the decoding experts, then to the laboratory for secret ink tests.

A newspaper which contained a marked advertisement was found to have a message written in invisible ink in the margin. The message was cryptic enough and merely said that "C" had gone north and was sending "from 201." The paper had been posted from Deptford in London.

There could be no doubt that this was espionage; there was no other reason why anyone should use secret ink. Scotland Yard detectives got to work. They were prepared to inquire into every house in London numbered 201.

At Deptford, the local division of the Metropolitan Police were asked how many roads or streets in their division reached the number 201. No street, was the answer, reached that number except Deptford High Street. There No. 201 was occupied by one Peter Hahn, a baker. Interviewed by the police, he denied that he knew anything about the matter, or that he had either sent papers to Holland or written on them in secret ink. An examination of his premises, however, revealed the most conclusive and damaging evidence in the shape of a ball-pointed pen and a supply of invisible ink. He was arrested while the police made further inquiries.

Despite the evidence of the pen and the ink, Hahn refused to tell, but his neighbours described a visitor to the Hahn household. A very distinguished-looking visitor, too, by all accounts, and not at all the type of man one would expect to see at a baker's shop in Deptford High Street. The man was said to be tall, dark and, to the good citizens of Deptford, "Russian."

With their usual efficiency, the Metropolitan Police searched the registers of numerous boarding-houses, and interviewed landlady after landlady until they found, in Bloomsbury, one who had a guest resembling the police description. His name, the landlady said, was Muller, and he claimed to be a Russian. He had gone north, on business. The police recalled that the mysterious "C" had also gone north and turned their activities in that direction. "North" turned out to be Newcastle upon Tyne, where Muller was arrested.

The Special Branch of Scotland Yard eventually built up a conclusive chain of evidence against Muller, and he was shot in the Tower of London. Hahn received a seven years' sentence. He had been driven to espionage merely because he had been short of money, and from being a bankrupt in a few months he was comparatively prosperous.

Muller's story does not end with his death in the Tower of London. The British Intelligence Service kept his fate a secret, and sent out false

information to Germany by means of the newspaper code. Meanwhile Muller's salary continued to come from Germany! This went on for some time until the Germans, furious at the incorrect information, dismissed their brilliant spy! By this time the British had received about four hundred pounds as "salary" from Germany. With the money the Special Branch bought a car for the use of counter-espionage officers. They christened it "The Muller."

VI

Another spy who came to England posing as an American was Reginald Rowland, who claimed to be the representative of a piano manufacturing concern. The nature of his activities, however, became known and the British Secret Service men in Holland sent a warning to London that he should be watched.

A day or so after he had arrived in England he visited a widow, Elizabeth Wertheim. She was an attractive, sophisticated woman of the world and there was nothing unusual in the fact that she and Rowland were engaged in some sort of an *affaire*. There was obviously no shortage of money; they stayed at expensive hotels in London, wined and dined at the best restaurants and visited the theatre. Removed to Southsea, they lived in the same extravagant manner, making many motor drives along the coast and into the surrounding country. Meanwhile, the Special Branch were watching them, especially when they showed an undue interest in naval and aerial activity at Portsmouth and Gosport, where there was a famous flying school.

Having exhausted the delights of the south coast, the couple separated. The man returned to his hotel in London, and the woman went to Scotland. She, like the unfortunate Lody, was very interested in Maryhill Barracks, and in the officers stationed there. She visited several places, and tried to make the acquaintance of naval and military officers. She continued to write to her friend Rowland and Rowland continued to write to Rotterdam, to an address well known to the postal censorship people, a cover address for the German Secret Service.

Finally Rowland was entrapped by tests for invisible ink. As I have said, spies do not carry invisible ink labelled as such. He carried his in the guise of a tin of talcum powder.

Having put the man in jail, the police arrested his friend Elizabeth. She refused to say anything, but Rowland, whose real name was Breeckow, broke down in Brixton Prison and confessed.

The story of Robert Rosenthal's downfall again illustrates the unforeseen human factor. Rosenthal was nearly twenty-three when he took up espionage work for Germany. He had been a crook for several years, and is said to have been released from prison on condition that he became a spy. From Denmark he wrote to a friend in Germany and said, quite openly, that he was going to England as a spy under the cover of a traveller for a patent gas lighter.

But that letter never reached Germany. Some chance failing caused the Danish postal sorter to throw the letter into the wrong mail-bag so that instead of going to Germany it went to England. The censor was naturally astonished to receive so frank a statement! The chances of a letter being wrongly sorted are so remote as to be negligible, yet one of those remote chances cost a German spy his life. The letter had taken several weeks to reach England, however, and the Special Branch were afraid that the man might have slipped them, until after a most exhaustive search of the landing records at the ports they found a man who was registered as a traveller for a patent gas lighter.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate Rosenthal, thinking his letter had been safely delivered in Germany, was in Scotland, which was a magnet to spies in Great Britain. Inquiries proved that, like his predecessors, he was interested in the naval centres. For a while the Special Branch men lost track of him, but at last they picked up the trail at Newcastle upon Tyne, the scene of Muller's downfall. Rosenthal was just about to leave the country: unable to understand how he had been unmasked, he was taken off the boat just one hour before she sailed.

He was brought back to London, still ignorant of the circumstances that had led to his arrest. The detectives with him led him to believe that he had merely been arrested on some technicality concerned with his passport or with his aliens' registration formalities.

At Scotland Yard he flatly denied that he was a German spy. He was asked to give an example of his handwriting. He did so willingly enough, not knowing that he was writing his own death warrant. The writing was, of course, precisely the same as that in the letter which had come to England instead of to Germany. There could be no further denial. He claimed, however, to be a German soldier, but elementary tests soon proved that he knew nothing of military life and he was condemned as a spy.

One of the most remarkable spies of the Great War was a man who has received so little publicity that he is virtually unknown. This was Wassmuss, who was, in fact, known as the "German Lawrence." When the war of 1914-18 broke out he was the German representative at Bushire, in Southern Persia, and it is no exaggeration to say that he was virtually master of all that part of the country. His influence among the natives was remarkable, and similar to that exercised by Colonel Lawrence in Arabia.

Persia, although taking no active part in the war—she had troubles enough of her own—was important both to Britain and Germany because of her oilfields. Nominally, a local army officered by Swedes kept control in the country, but Britain soon realized that Wassmuss was the uncrowned king of Southern Persia, and that official decrees meant nothing to him.

The British authorities regarded his activities as a violation of the neutrality agreement, and he was arrested. But not for long. Having tired out his guards by the simple expedient of making them follow him up and down the stairs while he went to examine his (alleged) sick pony, he escaped when, too exhausted to watch him, they had fallen asleep.

That was an expensive escape for the British authorities. Wassmuss took with him about a hundred and forty thousand marks in gold—part of indemnity paid to Germany by France after the 1870 war. It had been kept in Berlin, but a substantial sum had been sent to Persia on the outbreak of war in 1914. Having escaped, the German Lawrence took to the hills, rallied hundreds of tribesmen, made many of them espionage agents, and established a vast spy system in the Persian Gulf.

His chief task was to antagonize the natives so that they should regard the British soldiers as hostile invaders. To avoid any chance of losing influence he married the daughter of one of the most powerful of the Persian tribal chiefs. He not only paid for his wedding—a thing which astonished as well as delighted the chief—but he entertained on a lavish scale; his store of gold represented a colossal fortune in the backwoods of Persia.

Thus established in the local goodwill, he organized an espionage system which gradually extended to India, Mesopotamia, Suez, Palestine, and even to East Africa.

Arab dhows ran arms to already truculent natives; or carried reams of propaganda, and an overwhelming amount of information was gathered by Wassmuss. His staff was but small, yet there was scarcely a movement of British troops or ships which did not reach him, and which was not translated or decoded and sent to the German Commander of the Turkish Army by ingenious communications.

This remarkable man is freely acknowledged to have influenced the course of the war in Mesopotamia, and all the British officials who suffered from his activities pay him the highest compliments. It is not improbable that, but for his action, Turkey might have been knocked out of the war in 1917—an event which would have had far-reaching consequences.

At length his influence waned. His vast espionage system was become a boomerang. If it could bring him news of British movements, it could also bring news of British successes, not only in the East, but also on the Western Front. The wily Persians, anxious to know which side their bread was to be buttered, realized that all was not well with their German friends.

Despite the most incredible lies, including a story still told in the East to-day—Wassmuss's report to the Persians that the King of England had been executed—his influence continued to wane. He was not helped by the fact that Berlin no longer supplied him with the money for his lavish entertainments. He found himself in debt to the tribesmen and the chiefs, who now believed that the British star was on the ascendant. Finally, helped by his father-in-law, he escaped, and not even his enemies begrudged him his freedom.

VIII

If Wassmuss's story is remarkable, what can we say of that arch-spy, traveller, Buddhist monk, charlatan, and ex-Member of Parliament, Ignatius Timotheus Trebitsch Lincoln? The last reports of his espionage activities gave him as operating for the Chinese, but it would be unlike Lincoln if he were not bargaining with the Japs as well.

In many corners of Europe I have heard strange stories about Trebitsch Lincoln. He has been the master hand behind several assassinations and revolutions in Europe. He was a Jew, born in Hungary of parents who, if not wealthy, were at least comfortably off. His father allowed him to travel, and after a visit to London he was baptized as a Christian in Germany. Religion, either sincerely or for some ulterior motive, seems to have been his abiding passion about this time, for he went to Canada, where he actually became a Methodist preacher!

From Methodism he turned to the Church of England, and returned to London. Once there he saw the gentleman who was then the Archbishop of Canterbury, and persuaded that eminent divine that he, Trebitsch Lincoln, was an ideal curate for a small country town in Kent. What is more, for a time he satisfied his parishioners.

He married a Hungarian Jewess and they had one son. Meanwhile he saw golden opportunities for his talents in politics. His father-in-law died and left Mrs. Lincoln money, whereupon Lincoln himself abandoned the Church of England; before his retirement he prophesied to a fellow cleric that within seven years he would be an M.P., and in just over six years he was returned as a Liberal member for Darlington, after a close and remarkable election.

So far there had been nothing to suggest that Trebitsch Lincoln was not reasonably honest. He may have been an opportunist perhaps, but he would not be the first Member of Parliament who was that.

When war broke out in 1914, Lincoln promptly applied to the Admiralty and the War Office for work as an Intelligence Officer; indeed, this application was so pressing that some slight suspicion was aroused, but his backing was so formidable that eventually he was given a post as Hungarian Censor in the post office.

The secrets of Britain's counter-espionage methods are secrets indeed, but I should not be surprised if Lincoln were deliberately given that post to trap him. This should be noted by those who are amazed at the ineptitude of putting a man, Hungarian born, and already suspected of sympathy with the Central Powers, in such a responsible position. The fact is that he was carefully watched. Very soon suspicion became certainty. Yet the police had to move warily—they could not make a mistake with the man who had been a Member of Parliament, and who had influential friends.

Lincoln was eventually summoned by Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, Chief of the Admiralty Service, and one of the most acute minds in Britain during the war of 1914-18. Admiral Hall asked to see his passport, glanced at it and at once handed it back.

"I see that it is still valid for three days. Good morning."

Why such leniency was shown to him I do not know, and perhaps Lincoln did not know either. But he was astute enough to take a hint, and in a few hours he was in a ship sailing for the United States.

In America this amazing ex-clergyman again began work as a German spy, and at the same time attempted to sell Germany's secrets to America! The Americans, however, soon decided that Lincoln's information was poor stuff. Then he was arrested—not for espionage, but for forgery committed in England—and sent to prison until he could be extradited. However, he was not to be so easily disposed of as that. Once again he tried to persuade the authorities that he had valuable secrets of German espionage activities in the

United States, and, always in the care of a Federal Agent, named Johnson, was taken before several officials.

Johnson and Trebitsch Lincoln got on familiar terms, as men do when thrown in one another's company. On their way back to jail Lincoln one day suggested a cup of coffee. The Federal Agent agreed. Having got his coffee, Lincoln then wished to go to the lavatory. He went to the lavatory and escaped out of a window, leaving Johnson with both coffees—for which he had to pay!

Lincoln eluded capture and hid for a time with a German family, but became too reckless. Once again he was arrested, and this time the Americans took no chances, but sent him back to England almost immediately. While he was awaiting his trial in Brixton Prison, he met Sir Roger Casement. We do not know if they had any conversation, but the comments of two such men would have been interesting to listen to.

Lincoln was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for forgery, and was released nine months after the Armistice. He next appeared in Germany, trying to organize a revolution, in association with another political plotter, Colonel Bauer. The *putsch* failed, and Lincoln and his companion fled to Budapest.

Here the two men planned another vast scheme for the overthrow of the German Government. It was a scheme that might well have succeeded, but for the fact that Trebitsch Lincoln revealed to the French the entire plot! As Hungarian affairs were then a matter of the utmost concern to France, we can be sure that Lincoln had sold to the highest bidder. He then planned and assisted in the organization of several attempted revolts in Europe before he turned for fresh fields to conquer in China. At that time China was torn with revolutions, and Lincoln saw this as the raw material of his trade as a pedlar of other men's lives and secrets. He was appointed military adviser (or to quote his own description, Chief Adviser) to a Chinese dictator, Marshal Wu-pei-fu.

This is perhaps the most bizarre incident in his bizarre career. When he landed he knew nothing of the language and its myriad dialects. Nevertheless, he made a success of his job. Having organized the Dictator's army, he went to Europe to buy arms and to act as a propaganda spy for China, or that part of China ruled over by his master. Here he saw a great opportunity to strike a blow against the English whom he hated so bitterly, for real trouble in the Orient would be a blow to them. He tried to get Germany to interest herself in his plans, and succeeded in getting German

Army officers to go to China and train the troops, for Germany, of course, was as interested as Lincoln in embarrassing Britain in China.

The consequences of Lincoln's mission to Europe were tragic. Terrible fighting and bloodshed followed, and at one time it seemed as if the conflict would spread to include Russia, already angered by German intervention. Then, when matters were serious, the Dictator, flushed by the success of his German-trained soldiers, tried to take Shanghai. His attempt was made against Lincoln's advice, for the astute spy knew the sort of opposition they would meet there. The attempt was badly beaten, but Lincoln escaped—with a great deal of the Dictator's money in his possession.

His next adventure was the adoption of Buddhism in Colombo. Here he heard that his son, whom he had not seen for years, was to be hanged for murder in England. At once he set out for Britain, but the authorities would not change their decision, and declined to admit him into the country. They knew him to be a dangerous man, and not even for the sake of a son who was to be hanged would they lift their ban. This left Lincoln with an even more bitter hatred of England in his heart.

He returned to his Buddhist devotions and adopted a Chinese name, Chao Kung. He later set out on what he termed a spiritual mission, and tried to land at Antwerp; but every Secret Service bureau knew that wherever he went there was trouble. Either he had come to spy for some country, or else he had come to sell information, probably worthless, or already sold elsewhere. He was not allowed in Belgium accordingly. Eventually he went to Germany and offered his services. But the Germans, too, remembered his previous exploits in their country, and put him beyond their frontiers.

By this time he had collected a group of people whom he called converts, but now these were deported from Belgium to China. He then became interested in the Black Dragon society, the murder club of Japan, and with some of its members he evolved a plot against Britain. In order to pursue it he went to Canada, where the authorities, possibly on the advice of the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, allowed him and his disciples to stay. Then he made another attempt to reach England.

This attempt was successful, but it landed him in Walton Jail in Liverpool. As soon as the ship docked there he was detained for a few days before the police sent him on his travels again.

A wandering Jew indeed, Trebitsch Lincoln was the epitome of the international espionage tradesman. Yet maybe the most piquant item in his amazing career comes from Germany. We have seen that he was implicated in an abortive rising there in 1920, popularly called the Kapp *putsch*. An

obscure society in Munich sent their leader by air to Berlin to support the revolt, but Lincoln was able to warn him that the *putsch* had failed, so that he could make his escape. The leader's name was Adolf Hitler!

In spite of his many changes of character, Lincoln always remained a Jew, and when in the passing years he observed the great evil brought upon his race by the man he had saved, it was then he sought solace in the mysteries of Buddhism, praying eternally for forgiveness.

IX

A German agent who gave the French counter-espionage a great deal of trouble was Constantine Coudoyanis, a remarkable rolling stone who was associated with that semi-legendary character, the Lady Doctor. He was a Greek by birth, a first-class linguist and quite unscrupulous. He had been an officer in his country's army, and Greece had wisely decided that she had no further use for his services.

It was arranged by his German employers that his cover should be that of his last civilian occupation, a dope pedlar. True, if he were caught, he would go to prison, but the sentence would not be nearly so heavy as that given a spy. This cover, however, he changed twice in rapid succession. First he was to be a fruit salesman, until it was remembered that the supply and export of fruit was difficult in war-time, then it was decided that he should become a journalist. This profession he was quite fitted to undertake; it was arranged that an editor in Salonika should publish several of his articles on his impressions of the war areas. That editor later sent him more commissions, always in writing and in the usual business style. On the margins of these business letters Coudoyanis smeared a liquid, dried the paper before the fire and saw his instructions appear which had been written in invisible ink.

He was a very successful agent: yet he had his failings. But he had one great weakness: like many Greeks he was very passionate, and he felt sexual abstinence keenly. For this reason his instructions during his period of training had not been quite so rigid as those of the other pupils, but they had insisted that his sex life must be confined to prostitutes in brothels outside the war area. In Paris, of course, where he spent most of his time posing as a journalist, there was no lack of opportunities for that sort of thing.

Brothels and prostitutes were not in Coudoyanis' line. However, he tried to follow out his employer's instructions, but his passionate nature demanded something more responsive than the simulated love of a paid

lover. Nevertheless, he succeeded in keeping to the rules until he met Regina, a *demi-mondaine* who was all that appealed to his nature, flamboyant, attractive, passionate . . . and willing. With her not merely acquiescent but apparently eager for liaison, Coudoyanis could resist no longer. This was the end of bought love in the Paris brothels: soon Regina was his mistress and living with him in his flat in the Boulevard Haussmann. His frequent absences from home were explained by his profession as a journalist, and those absences were made agreeable by the passionate welcome that awaited his return. Coudoyanis, of course, had no idea that Regina was a French counter-spy!

After some months the authorities in Berlin decided to transfer the Greek elsewhere, and sent the Lady Doctor to Paris to arrange the details. Knowing what her attitude would be towards his *ménage*, Coudoyanis sent Regina away for a few days, and was alone when the Lady Doctor called at his flat. The experienced agent was not deceived; probably no woman would fail to notice that another of her sex had lived in a place for several months. She was quite certain that this was no man's apartment. Still, she made no immediate move. She felt there might be no need for alarm; it would be quite natural for the Greek to hide from her the fact that he was keeping a woman in his flat.

Some weeks later, however, the Lady Doctor learned casually that her presence in Paris was known to the French authorities. She felt certain that the only person who knew she was in that city was Coudoyanis. Further evidence of leakage, possibly of treachery, was shortly forthcoming when one day, posing herself as another *fille de joie*, she met Regina by chance. This meeting took place in a flat used by women agents, mostly of the *demi-mondaine* class. One of the girls asked Regina how her Greek "sweetheart" was, and Regina replied that he had gone on a conducted tour to Rheims.

Here was evidence of folly, if not of treachery, for it was true that Coudoyanis was at that time at Rheims, on a conducted tour with a party of newspaper men. Tense with excitement and anxiety, the Lady Doctor listened, silently. Then the truth came out. Regina, it seemed, had returned to the flat one day and had seen her Greek washing his socks. That at once made her suspicious; no man would wash his own socks while there was a woman there to do it for him.

It was, moreover, obvious to her experienced eye that he was washing his socks, not to clean them, but to extract some secret ink from them. She had of course reported him to the authorities, and it was hoped through him to trap the Lady Doctor. Little did she know that not two feet away from her

the Lady Doctor herself was listening to this dramatic unfolding of plans—artless spilling of the beans. Regina had learned that the Greek had been in touch with the Lady Doctor, for a knowledge of whose whereabouts the French Government would pay her a thousand francs.

Anna herself asked the next question. “How do you propose to make him betray this—er—Lady Doctor?” she asked.

“By ruining him,” Regina replied, going on to explain that the Greek was infatuated with her, that she was running up the most colossal bills and other expenses, which Coudoyanis would be unable to meet. Then she meant to tempt him, telling him that those alarming bills could be paid if only he would betray his accomplice.

The Lady Doctor moved swiftly. There were two facts to face. First, the Greek had failed, therefore he must die. If not consciously a traitor, he would be made one through his own foolishness, in having lived with a woman he had picked up casually in a café, a woman who was so obviously a *demi-mondaine* . . . the very type used by the French as spies and against whom he had been warned during his training. The second fact was that if she did not act quickly her own career was near its end.

She sent Coudoyanis a note, telling him to go in his capacity of a journalist to the forthcoming funeral of a senator. Enclosed in the note was a letter he was to give to a man in a morning coat and a top hat, who would be present at the funeral and would speak to him.

The Greek, who had by now made up his mind to betray Anna, went to the funeral, only to find *three* men in morning dress and wearing top hats! They crowded round him, almost hustled him, and would not leave him. For a moment he tried to make up his mind to which of the three men he should hand his letter, then he realized that this was a trap and if he was arrested the letter would brand him. Desperately he tried to throw it away, but this was impossible while the three men were crowded so close to him. Wondering how he had been trapped and not knowing that Anna had employed one of those pests who sell to either side to report to the French Intelligence Department, he stood by the graveside. At last he saw his chance. Many people were jostling and crowding round the graveside, and for a moment his three acquaintances had drifted aside. He flung the note into the grave.

It might have been a last mourning tribute, but his three shadowers, who had certainly seen the white paper fall into the deep grave, must have known that it was nothing of the kind. As Coudoyanis walked away from the grave he realized with a growing anxiety that only two men were now following him. He realized, too, that the third, with all the might of the law of France

behind him, would be standing on the coffin, searching the grave for a piece of white paper. . . .

The note was found and the Greek was arrested, was court martialled and sentenced to death. This, however, was only part of what the French Secret Service men wanted. They wanted the Lady Doctor, but were ignorant of the grim fact that it was she who had given him away! Before he was taken in front of a firing party they wanted him to speak. There appeared that side of French nature which contrasts so deeply with the bland, cultured face the world knows. They tried the water starvation method. The Greek was fed with salt food; water and even wine were brought to him, but taken away before he could touch them to his lips.

Two days later he talked; the torture had been too severe. His brain was so far gone that his confessions were useless. The artistic Frenchmen for once had used too heavy a hand on their canvas. They tried to revive him with cocaine, but they were too late.

X

The life of a spy is hazardous, and his death is definitely dishonourable. His humiliating end is not due to the criminality of his actions, for, as we have seen, many of the most successful spies are patriots akin to soldiers on the battlefield, and it seems at first sight absurd that they should be allotted the fate of a murderer. But such a terrible retribution comes to the spy who fails, not so much as a punishment, but as a deterrent—*pour encourager les autres*.

Not all German spies have met their fate with the calm courage of Lody and Muller. The two spies Janssen and Roos, who made the disastrous mistake of believing that British sailors smoked thousands of cigars, were, however, of the same calibre. Janssen died bravely enough, but when, ten minutes later, Roos was led into the miniature rifle range at the Tower of London which served as the execution shed, his ordeal was appalling; for he had to seat himself in the chair from which the bloody body of his companion had just been removed. However, he smoked a last cigarette calmly, then threw it away and bade them fasten the bandage round his eyes. Another execution in the same place of death took on a vastly different character. The spy Breeckow was facing his doom bravely enough, as was made clear when at the last moment he produced a lady's silk handkerchief and asked that it might be used to bandage his eyes. Unfortunately, the handkerchief was not quite long enough, and moments passed while an

ordinary handkerchief was tied to it to complete the cordon, a nerve-racking ordeal.

Then followed an eerie scene. The soldiers took aim and the command "Fire!" was given. A second before the triggers were pressed, the white-shirted figure tied to the chair moved convulsively, and when doctors examined the body they found that Breeckow had died of heart failure just before the bullets struck!

Other German spies than Lody have excited admiration among those whose melancholy duty it was to execute them. One such brave fellow was Fernando Burchman, who, after his condemnation, thanked the judges for the fair trial they had given him. While awaiting his doom, he asked that his violin might be brought to him. His request was granted, and the prison walls at Brixton echoed with strange, eerie music of incredible sadness; Burchman would improvise by the hour, producing music which deserved to have been preserved. When the time came for him to be led out to death he kissed his violin. "Good-bye, I shall not want you any more," he said. He refused to have his eyes bandaged, and sat erect in the chair, smiling cheerfully at the firing party and their rifles.

In contrast to him was Robert Rosenthal. The authorities expected trouble, for he had revealed his cowardice a dozen times since his capture. When they told him his time had come, he turned hysterical, struggled wildly, and had to be bodily carried to the miniature rifle range. The sight of the fatal chair completed his unnerving. He cursed God and man, and continued to struggle while he was tied to the chair. So fierce was his fanatical strength that he tore one arm free and was ripping the bandage away from his eyes when the merciful bullets brought him peace.

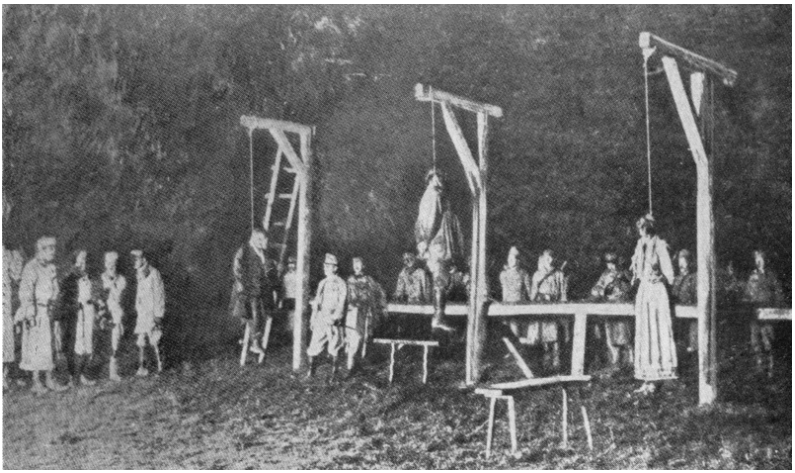
Although many women were condemned as spies in Britain during the war, not one was shot. Our sentimental ideas differed considerably from those of France, the home of chivalry. The French view is that sanity overrules sentiment in espionage. If you catch a woman spying, you execute her.

One woman who was condemned to a long term of imprisonment revealed a foible which one would scarcely have expected of an experienced spy. She begged that she might have her two pet canaries in the cell with her! Again the request was granted, and the lady's monotonous life was comforted by the company of her two feathered friends.

I have one photograph which I often look at: but I never look at it for long. It shows a Russian spy whom the Germans captured and sentenced to death. Before he died he asked if he might smoke one last cigarette, and the

photograph was taken while he smoked it. It does not do to look too long at his eyes—the eyes of a man who knows that in five minutes he will be dead. Too lengthy a gaze means that those despairing eyes will haunt you through sleepless nights.

THE LAST CIGARETTE
"It does not do to look too long at his eyes"



THE END OF THE SPY
Russian spies, including a woman, hung in primitive fashion by the Germans

To the mercenary spy the end can only come as a terror; the patriot can at least console himself with the reflection that he had done his duty. The words used by Carl Lody in his last letter expressed the highest ideal of the finest characters in espionage: “A hero’s death on the battlefield is certainly finer, but such is not to be my lot, and I die here in the enemy’s country silent and unknown, but the consciousness that I die in the service of the Fatherland makes death easy.”

CHAPTER XIII

A MISCELLANY OF ESPIONAGE

I

ONE of the greatest round-ups of modern spies followed the death of an armament manufacturer in Finland. There seemed nothing to suggest that he died from anything but natural causes, and the doctor gave a certificate to that effect. It is true that the man had declared that he had been poisoned, but that is a delusion common to many a dying man. Nevertheless, the fact was reported to the police, but they took no action. No suspicion might have been aroused but for a woman's careless vanity. The armament chief had employed a pretty maid, Jenny Antilla, and he had scarcely been buried when Jenny began to spend more money in a week than she had ever earned in a year. This naturally led to gossip. At first it was thought that the armament chief had left her money for "services rendered" during his life; then someone dropped a hint to the police, reminding them that Jenny's employer had sworn he had been poisoned.

At this stage espionage was not suspected. The first idea of the police was that the girl might have poisoned him for his money. The body was accordingly exhumed. An examination revealed arsenic in the stomach and showed that the munitions manufacturer had, in fact, been poisoned. Jenny was arrested just as she was about to leave for France.

From her luggage it seemed that the money she had spent so freely had been stolen from some of her late employer's possessions. At first Jenny denied everything, but the Finnish police examined her and gradually, under that relentless gruelling ordeal, she confessed that she had poisoned her employer. When she was pressed for her motive, further confessions followed. When the police had finished with her they knew that this pretty, innocent-looking domestic servant was the key to a great espionage organization, with tentacles not only in Europe, but in many parts of the outside world as well.

One of the first people to be arrested was Marie Louise Schule, the same Marie Louise whom Baillie Stewart had known and afterwards denied knowing. She was arrested and later sent to prison for ten years. Further action followed in London and Paris, where counter-espionage officers

examined the evidence. More arrests were made; spies who had been under observation for more than a year were seized. Gradually but surely a vast network was laid round a dangerous set of spies, whose co-ordinated activities in Germany, France, Russia, Great Britain, India, Ireland, Africa, Egypt, and the Balkans were revealed.

It took three years to collect this evidence, three years of patient watching, checking and working. So was revealed, in the heart of Paris, the centre of a vast espionage organization. It was not a national concern, but was in business to sell to the highest bidder. Its chief customer seemed to be Soviet Russia, but a close second was Germany; and Germans, moreover, had certainly played a leading part in building up the organization.

Among the many arrests made was that of a remarkable woman, Lydia Stahl, a Russian. The French police had long suspected her of espionage. Ostensibly she was a university research worker, who moved in Parisian literary and artistic circles. She spoke many languages, and by their means had gained an introduction to Professor Louis Martin, an interpreter at the French Ministry of Marine. There had been a serious leakage of secrets from the Ministry, and it now seemed as if they had found their way via the Professor to Lydia, with whom he was apparently infatuated. He, too, was arrested.

Lydia, who had been married to a German, proved to be the chief of this amazing espionage concern. Although she was nearly fifty, she was still extremely attractive to men, and the Professor had apparently been unable to resist any of her requests. The police soon realized that they were confronted with an outstandingly clever and cunning woman. She was not only an unusually gifted linguist—she was said to be able to speak a dozen languages—but she had also taken a degree in science at the Paris University, received a diploma for mathematics and chemistry and was a graduate of Columbia University in America. She was also a writer, a talented artist, a masseuse and a physical culture expert.

These numerous qualifications not only helped her directly in her espionage activities, but they also enabled her to hide them. Although the police traced her movements over a period of years, proved her to be a liar and found that the housemaid Jenny's evidence was true, they could not, at the outset, find any direct proof that Lydia was a spy; although in her apartment they found papers containing secrets of the Ministry of Marine, it was just possible that the Professor had left them there or even carelessly kept them there, since it was his mistress's apartment. Before one convicts for espionage one must be certain of his facts.

Nevertheless, the French were patient. They had already spent over three years in collecting the available evidence, and a month or so more could make little difference. Lydia was sent back to jail while two more of the suspects were examined. These were Americans, Robert Gordon Switz and his wife, Tilley.

The parents of Switz were naturalized Americans. His father had been a Russian and his mother a Canadian. He and his wife—herself the daughter born in America of an English father and a Swiss mother—had travelled all over Europe and for some months had lived in London. He was a flying man, who explained his present activities by the fact that he was travelling on behalf of a firm which made aircraft instruments. He had money, however, apart from his salary and whatever commission he might earn; moreover it soon transpired that he had never sold anything in Europe!

Once again the French police had little definite evidence. Both Switz and his wife had been reported to the authorities as people who had consorted with spies and whose movements were suspicious. Further, Switz had been warned by telephone that he ought to leave Paris, and the French police had overheard that conversation. Yet although it was a suspicious remark, it was not conclusive. The police seemed to be facing a deadlock. They had arrested many people, they collected an enormous amount of information, and everyone in their charge was a definite suspect. But there was little direct evidence of the type necessary to convict people of espionage.

Nevertheless, they were certain that they had in their possession both the evidence and the people. One day the links in the chain would be complete. Then they made a characteristic Gallic move. The French police are a strange mixture of extreme sentimentality and stern severity. They can be ruthless when the occasion demands, yet their hearts are often softened by a crime of passion.

They adopted subtle methods with the young American and his wife. Spies they might be, but the French officials were perhaps touched by the obvious fact that the young man and his wife were passionately in love with each other. Yet although official sentiment might be stirred, the main purpose was never overlooked. Was there some way in which the young wife's infatuation might be used as a means to the unravelling of the tangled skein? Mr. and Mrs. Switz, so obviously devoted, were very highly strung—separation might bring the desired results. The prisoners were, therefore, taken back to their cells after their examination, but were allowed to write to each other as often as they wished; indeed a police officer was specially detailed to act as postman for their numerous passionate love-letters. There

was seen the astonishing spectacle of a French police officer travelling from one prison to another in Paris for the convenience of two people accused of espionage! The scene was reminiscent of a stage comedy, but it was in fact a typical example of Gallic shrewdness and imagination. Meanwhile, Switz and his wife were being questioned, politely and gently, by the detectives. How could they explain the presence of this document in their flat? Who could have brought that document? Switz denied all knowledge of any documents. He went further than that—he assumed the offensive and accused the French police of deliberately planting the documents.

Yet the police were patient. More damning evidence was produced; finger-prints were checked and found to tally with those on certain documents.

At the same time the wretched Jenny, away in Finland, was making more confessions, and gradually the French police built up an unanswerable case against the young American and his wife. Then they acted. Hints had already been subtly conveyed to the young couple that if they turned State evidence, confessed and gave evidence against the other plotters, they could have their freedom . . . they could be together again . . . their long separation could be over whenever they wished. Only a Frenchman could have carried this plan through with the necessary conviction.

The revelations which followed were even more remarkable than the evidence which had been so patiently collected over a period of years. More arrests were made that night, and all was set for the greatest spy trial of modern times. Among the prisoners was, of course, Lydia Stahl. There can never have been a trial in which prisoners faced judges with greater confidence; the only exceptions being the Americans. The others, unaware of the success of the subtle plan of the French police, were quite certain that the missing links in the chain of evidence could not possibly be found.

As the story was unfolded in the court, confidence gave place to alarm. Someone had talked, and it soon became obvious that it was Switz and his wife who had revealed all the secrets of the gang. Very soon it was all over, and even the clever Lydia Stahl had confessed. Her lover, the interpreter at the Ministry of Marine, was one of those who did not confess. Despite the most gruelling examination—and an examination in a French court has to be heard to be believed—and despite an impassioned appeal by the Judge to the man's patriotism, he strongly maintained that he was innocent. But he was found guilty and, like his mistress, received a sentence of five years.

Other heavy sentences were inflicted. Switz's own explanation of his share in the conspiracy is interesting. He confessed that he took up

espionage in the first place because he had too much money and too much time. Later he was attracted by the Soviet experiment, "from its humanitarian point of view." He worked for the Soviets in America before he went to Moscow "to be initiated into the movement." Up to this stage he had been unmarried, but then he met his wife and very soon she, too (he said), was attracted by the great ideal of Communism. Switz went on to say how he was disillusioned, not by the Cause, but by the men who were concerned with it. Nevertheless, he went on until he was arrested, trapped, he alleged, by a false telephone call warning him to leave Paris. He then explained that, having seen the type of men who were doing the vital work of the Soviets abroad, he decided to confess, not only with the idea of helping France, but also with the idea of "ridding Moscow of men who were nothing but bloodsuckers."

One other interesting feature emerged from the trial of this international gang. It sold information on a large scale to the Russians, *who resold it to Germany*.

I have never known a *cause célèbre* of espionage which did not have an intriguing sequel. When the Russians announced details of the "puppet" government of Finland, one name was immediately familiar: the "Minister for Defence" was called Axel Antilla. A prominent British newspaper alleged that he was the husband of that Jenny Antilla whose revelations had begun the unmasking of the whole complicated affair!

Axel Antilla was in good company. His chief, the "Prime Minister" Kuissinen, is also a notorious person. So far back as 1921 he came into conflict with the Swedish police, and hurriedly left for Russia. There, apparently as a reward for his espionage activities, he was made "Commissar for Scandinavia." If these cronies are anything more than puppets dangling from Stalin's fingers, there will be lively times in Finland should they ever gain control!

II

Writers of fiction have certainly worked the "death ray" hard, though with some justification, for when it is finally developed it will be the most dramatic invention in the history of the world—indeed, it might conceivably lead to the disappearance of war itself.

It is no idle dream: already there are a dozen rays capable of remarkable performances. Some years ago a friend of mine was motoring in Germany: all of a sudden his car stopped, he got out and made the usual examination

for engine defects, but could find nothing wrong. Looking about him, he saw that there were half a dozen cars on the road—and half a dozen drivers anxiously raising bonnets. For ten minutes all motor traffic on the road was halted; then, failing to discover any mechanical defects, my friend pressed home the self-starter, hoped for the best, and got it. A minute later every car on the road was speeding onwards.

Shortly afterwards the Germans allowed to leak out what could no longer be concealed, that they had a ray which would interfere with machinery. The possibilities of such a ray were widely discussed, and were more seriously taken in Germany than in any other country. I, myself, am no mechanic, but I consulted a friend who is a well-known scientist.

He smiled at the picture I painted to him, of our aeroplanes approaching Germany in war-time, and every one being forced to descend through induced interference with the ignition or other delicate parts of the engine. When I had completed my flight of imagination, he was able to dispel my fears rapidly.

"It is quite true all that you say, Newman; we know about this ray with which the Germans are experimenting; I might even suggest that we are experimenting along similar lines ourselves. It may prove that this ray has hidden possibilities, but definitely not in the way you suggest. It can, by induction, paralyse a magneto, a dynamo, or other apparatus, but—and this is the whole point—these things are easily protected. A mere sheet of metal, not any metal, but a certain alloy of aluminium and copper, of very moderate thickness, will entirely neutralize the power of the ray. So, before you get over-anxious about our prospects in war-time, go and have a look at one of our modern aeroplanes, especially at the essential parts of the engine: then you will not have any sleepless nights—you will find they are already protected. There is another great objection to the use of this ray, too: the mechanism required to produce it is extremely cumbersome, and needs a powerful and complicated apparatus: its range is comparatively limited, and it would be a physical impossibility to erect a series of stations that would cover, shall we say, the whole of Germany's western frontier; tens of thousands of them would be necessary."

At least here was something definite. I knew quite well that the Germans could not build tens of thousands of anything without our intimate knowledge.

Since then vigorous efforts have been made in many countries towards the perfection of rays with warlike possibilities. Marconi's experiments were of the same type as those in Germany. American, British and French

inventors have been working on parallel lines, for it is seldom that any major invention is the product of one man's mind. The march of science is so organized that generally a number of investigators reach similar conclusions at about the same time. One thing is quite certain, that every inventive faculty will be stimulated by the outbreak of war. Consider the effect of the World War of 1914-18 on aviation, which made a more rapid advance during four years of war than it might have done in forty years of peace. In war-time money is scattered freely, and even human life is available for experimental purposes. Heaven forbid that the present war should last four years, but if it did I am certain that by that time the ray will have made a bold advance, far beyond the imagination of fiction writers. Screening against induced magnetism may be possible, but other forms of long-distance radiation may not be so easily countered. It may be that we shall even see the invention of that mecca of military scientists—the death ray.

Here again is no mere figment of fiction, though its progress has been grossly exaggerated. A British scientist has, it is true, produced a somewhat cumbrous apparatus which will kill mice at a distance of a few yards, an extraordinarily complicated and expensive method of killing a mouse, yet all scientific marvels have unpromising beginnings. The thought of the death ray induces a picture of horror by its wholesale slaughter, yet it may be that the world will be better off when it comes. In the meantime the efforts of the investigating scientists are being well watched by foreign espionage agents. I remember talking to one of them who had been detailed to hang about a certain laboratory in Switzerland. He confessed to me his nervousness—that he himself might be the first victim of the perfected death ray!

The anti-aircraft ray made an early appearance in espionage records. In 1915 a lady named Eva de Bournonville came to England as a German agent. She was well qualified: a cosmopolitan, speaking several languages, she had last been employed as a governess at several legations on the Continent, and could produce influential diplomatic references. All she needed, in fact, was a touch of the spy's flair.

Before sending a woman to spy out details of Britain's anti-aircraft defences, the Germans might have taken the trouble to give her some elementary instruction on artillery subjects. She was woefully ignorant, and ingenuous questions soon attracted attention. The counter-espionage officer allotted to her case handled her subtly. Taking a room in the same Bloomsbury hotel, he struck up an acquaintance, and at the right moment began to hint at information "from a very high source." Pressed, there was no reason why his charming companion should not be told. He gave her a graphic description of a new search-light which broadcast in its beams a

mysterious ray which would bring down German aircraft at ten thousand feet. The gullible Eva swallowed the story intact and passed it on urgently to her cover address in Copenhagen, written in "invisible" ink. Here was ample proof that she was spying, and she was sentenced to penal servitude for life. If she could only have persuaded her employer that her description of the ray was accurate, she would have deserved a decoration!

III

These "death rays," rays for interfering with magnetos and bringing down aeroplanes, may sound the purest fantasy, but we must not blind ourselves to the possibilities of "secret weapons." Wars have been won, and the whole history of the world altered, more than once by some new technical development which the enemy could not counter in time. Of these the Trojan Horse is perhaps the most spectacular, but the discovery of iron may have been the more far-reaching—its unconquerable nature is even mentioned in the Bible! Others are the use of the horse and the Parthian composite bow, and in more modern times explosives and the tank. It was the technical invention of the *corvus* (a maritime drawbridge which could be dropped from ship to ship and so turn a sea-battle into a hand-to-hand "land" combat) which broke the naval power of Carthage and made Rome undisputed mistress of the world.

The 1914 war introduced three military novelties, the spectacular but rather futile flame-thrower, poison gas, and the tank. It goes without saying that espionage activities crystallized round them, and it is equally certain that similar activities crystallize round the various secret weapons of which every country is to-day making vague but impressive boasts.

Let a curious episode illustrate the importance which is attached to these embryo weapons of the future. The reader may not know that in many countries, Britain and the U.S.A. among them, are societies for experimenting with the potentialities of super-power, long-distance rockets. The experimenters have in mind the idea of flying through space to the other planets—an idea which sounds as fantastic to us as, say, aviation did fifty years ago.

The possibilities of such super-rockets for reaching the moon may be doubted. What we cannot dismiss is their potentialities as destructive weapons more drastic than artillery and aviation combined. The successes attained by the various national "interplanetary societies" is therefore of vital interest to the espionage systems of their own and other lands.

Some time ago the little journal published by the British group of enthusiasts mentioned a report from a German source which had been published some years before. This report declared that in the course of experiments in the Island of Rügen the Germans had fired a man-carrying rocket. The passenger had been carried six miles into the air before the rocket began to lose height, and eventually he descended by parachute, a little singed but otherwise unhurt. It went on to say that "further experiments will be carried out by the German War Ministry, who have purchased the complete plans of the rocket!"

Then a significant thing happened. This story had been mentioned in an obscure specialist journal with a very moderate circulation, but the forces of the gigantic German propaganda machine were mobilized to deny it! Knowledgeable people immediately interpreted this as meaning that the report was true.

With this very significant denial we may couple the no less significant fact that news of the German experiments in rocketry were suddenly cut off. Until then their work had been occasionally reported in the press and had been described in some detail in their memoirs and in friendly correspondence with the rocketeers of other lands. Then, all of a sudden, the accounts of their work ceased.

Now why was this? Had the funds of the experimenters given out? Had their results been so disappointing that they had lost heart and abandoned them? *Or had they been so good that the Nazi Intelligence Department desired to keep them secret?* Whatever the reason, the facts are plain: the war rocket is a potential weapon which any nation would desire to monopolize; the German experimenters had obtained encouraging results; and the accounts of their work have ceased. . . .

Rockets, or aerial torpedoes, are not likely to cause any headaches in the British War Office. It may indeed happen that the Germans will develop long range rockets. But their control is certain to be rudimentary. Discharged from German soil, the difficulty will not be in hitting London, but in hitting the British Isles!

Rockets are not the only weapon which the future may provide. Though it may seem something of a diversion from our subject, this question is so interesting that we may glance at a few of its possibilities. First, as elsewhere, we must discourage the idea of expecting anything too sensational. New inventions usually begin quietly and inconspicuously, and often they are disappointing at first. A technical development that may win some future war may be a small improvement in some existing method of

fighting. The "scientifiction" stories are full of dramatic "rays" and the like, but not one, so a student of this class of literature informs me, ever glanced at the possibilities of Hitler's latest weapon, the magnetic mine. If this is his "secret weapon," then at least it is no surprise, for magnetic mines were in use during the last war. The Germans have merely made technical improvements on the old pattern.

On land, invention is likely to centre round methods of attacking and defending fortifications like the Siegfried and Maginot Lines. Among them surely will be bigger, speedier, better armed and armoured tanks, equipped with ingenious gadgets for smashing or evading the present tank traps—swimming tanks, flying tanks, leaping tanks, with equipments like glorified pogo-sticks, or burrowing tanks that will dig their way under the defences and come out on the other side. There may be more effective tank traps, too; H. G. Wells has suggested jets of fire for melting them, and "slime pits" which probably would be as unpleasant as they sound! The tanks of the future will probably be gas-proof and carry supplies of compressed air like a submarine.

At sea the next advance may well be in combating submarines and mines. The possibilities of infra-red rays in penetrating mists opaque to ordinary light are suggestive here—may we not have rays which will enable us to see through the water of the ocean as clearly as through air. . . .

These ideas, however, are likely to be of less importance than methods for combating air-raids. Already air-mines have been suggested, small balloons that will drift at any desired height, carrying a charge of explosives that would bring down any plane which chanced to touch them. Another more fantastic suggestion is a tightly coiled spring, armed with sharp teeth and also balloon-carried, that would wind itself round any raiding plane or other object it happened to touch.

IV

It may seem absurd to talk of animals being used as spies. As a matter of fact, however, they were frequently used by agents on both sides during the World War. When the British took over the Somme front in the early months of 1916, they found that the French had not made a continuous series of trenches, but had depended rather upon strong posts situated at intervals of a few hundred yards. More than one British agent made a daring reconnaissance behind the German lines before the trenches were made continuous.

Soon after the British troops moved in, there floated round the units of one division stories of a “ghost dog” which jumped over trenches in the middle of the night. It soon transpired that the dog was not a ghost but a reality, and many unsuccessful attempts were made to catch it. It was at first assumed that the dog was a local animal, that it had perhaps belonged to some farmer whose house was now in ruins, and that it refused to leave the vicinity of its former home.

But one night the dog was heard howling round the ruins of a cottage behind the British lines which had that day been struck by a German shell. The cottage was examined, and in the cellar was found the dead body of a German non-commissioned officer. The situation was now clear: this gallant man had volunteered to penetrate and remain behind the British lines, where even from the limited viewpoint of the cottage he could pick up invaluable information. The dog had obviously been used for bringing provisions to him and carrying away his information, and now when the German had had the ill-fortune to be killed by one of his own shells, the unhappy animal was bewailing his master.

Naturally, the British were more than ever determined to capture the dog —might be able to use him to take back false information. A scene of comedy was played: the next night half a dozen British Intelligence Officers, with strings of degrees and command of a dozen languages between them, were busy chasing about with pig-nets trying to catch the dog, and only succeeding in catching one another. The following night the comedy was repeated, for the dog obviously sensed that something was wrong and, although he could not be caught, remained in the vicinity of the cottage, where his frenzied howlings caused great concern to the animal-loving British soldiers.

Then the batman of one Intelligence Officer returned from leave and heard of the unusual situation. He was a Lancashire man and knew something about dogs.

“Leave it to me!” he said.

“Very well,” his master agreed. “You can take all the pig-nets and men you like with you.”

“I don’t need no nets or men,” said the Lancashire man. “In t’ mornin’ I’ll have t’ dog for thee!”

Sure enough in the morning he had the dog for them. He did not take the pig-nets—he took a lady dog.

On consideration the British decided not to attempt to use the gallant dog to betray his own cause; even in Intelligence work it seems that there are ethical standards, and this scarcely seemed like playing the game. Instead Fritz was adopted by a British battery until, only a few weeks before the end of the war, he met the same end as his original master, for he was killed by a German shell.

Pigeons, of course, have been a boon to many a hundred spies. During the World War they were used in very large numbers by the British and French Intelligence Services. Baskets containing two or three pigeons were dropped by parachute from aeroplanes behind the German lines, or, when the wind was favourable, were even floated over attached to small balloons. Inside the basket was a letter addressed to whoever might find it—there was always the chance that the finder might be a German, but the odds were in favour of its being picked up by a Belgian or French peasant.

The finder was asked to answer a whole list of questions of great military importance, details of German troops in the neighbourhood, where they had come from, their morals, and so on. If he could not answer the questions himself, he was instructed to consult the local schoolmaster, mayor, priest, or other notables, who would no doubt be willing to help. They generally were, and invaluable data came back to Allied lofts strapped to the legs of racing pigeons which had made such a precarious double journey over the field of battle.

Perhaps the most ingenious use of pigeons was made by the British. They arranged for an agent in Germany to release a pigeon which had a small automatic camera strapped to its chest. As the pigeon flew back towards its loft behind the British lines, the camera clicked automatically every few seconds. This method, fantastic though it may seem, did actually produce results in the way of photographs. Unfortunately, no one was able to identify the subject of the photographs, so they were of no value and the method was abandoned.

The dog Fritz was not the only one of his kind to engage in espionage activity. A Belgian shepherd, anxious to do his patriotic duty, volunteered to get information over to Allied agents in Holland. He had a dog which was a remarkable jumper, and he trained it to jump over the terrible barricade of death—the wire fence with its fifty thousand volt current—which ran the whole length of the Belgian frontier. Every night the dog jumped over this terrible obstacle into Holland, carrying a report tied to his collar.

The French peasants in the territory behind the German lines were even able to make use of timid sheep as Intelligence assistants. One farmer had

three fields about two miles behind the German line: on clear days the French observer from an observation balloon could easily see the field through his glasses; on other occasions a French aeroplane was sent flying low in that direction. The farmer used to divide up his flock of sheep, and all the French observer had to do was to count the numbers in the different fields—these would give the numbers of the German divisions ensconced in this particular sector of the front.

V

This book has covered a lot of ground in desultory fashion, and yet it has done no more than touch the fringe of its subject. I have tried to avoid the sensational approach common to many accounts of espionage activity, but it must be apparent that the widespread ramifications of the German Secret Service are no figment of fiction.

There is no suggestion that the Nazis are the only people who use spies; on the other hand, they themselves hold the British Secret Service in wholesome respect. The only charge to be brought against them is that they have lowered the ethics of espionage to even baser depths, and have never been deterred by any consequence of human misery.

Hundreds of millions of ordinary people in all parts of the world would be glad to see the end of the dirty business of espionage. If they did but know it, the power is in their own hands. Spies thrive on international conflict, which only the people themselves can effectively prevent. Yet the abolition of war would not see the end of spying; even if we can envisage so vast an advance of human thought and corporate power that war was at long last outlawed, we should still have to face another generation of espionage. For the spy is born of fear and apprehension: to sound his final doom, we have to abolish not only war but the apprehension of war. The task is difficult enough, but the human race commits suicide if it ever admits that it is impossible.

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TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Some illustrations were moved to facilitate page layout.

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[The end of *Secrets of German Espionage* by Bernard Newman]