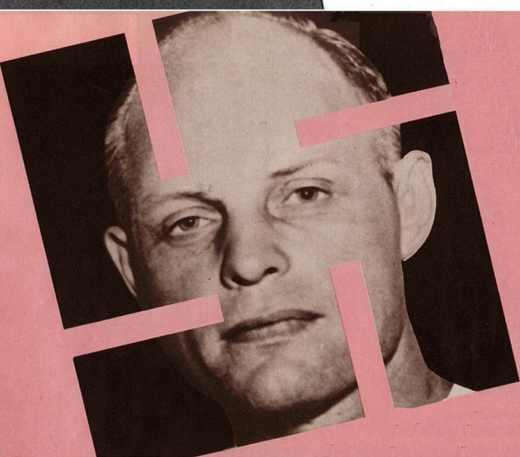


Collier's

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Hitler's Spies are Experts

By J. Edgar Hoover
and Frederick L. Collins



One who was caught: Axel Wheeler-Hill, a naturalized American working with a Nazi spy ring, wound up in jail. Not all of them do

From businesslike German schools come the professional spy and the saboteur—cunning, ruthless, superbly trained for their specific tasks. They'll be hard to stop, says Mr. Hoover, and catching them—in time—is a job in which every American can give the F.B.I. a hand

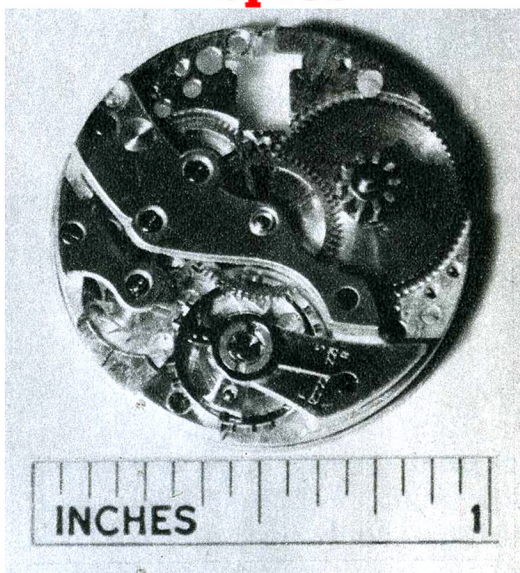
IT IS perhaps too early to hope that Hitler is burning bridges behind him, but he is blowing them up, literally—and railroads and water mains and power plants, too—in all-out training of his assassins in their job of sabotaging property and communications in the United States.

The capture and conviction of eight German saboteurs who landed on our Eastern shores from a Nazi submarine did not end the peril. They merely emphasized it. Adolf Hitler's spy factories have been training spies and saboteurs for years, and every potential saboteur is given practical tests, on carefully selected proving grounds, in the destruction of life and property.

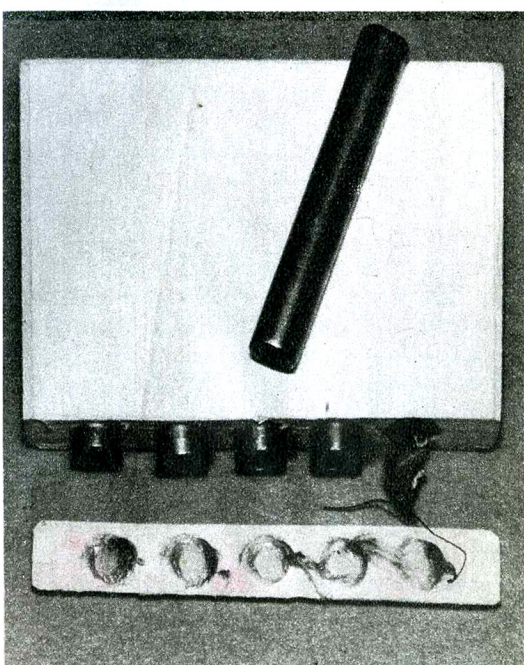
But our story concerns itself, first, with an upstanding middle-aged American, of unquestioned character and repute, who landed in Germany in 1939 to visit his mother, a resident of Mülheim, in the Ruhr.

The dream of almost every naturalized American is to make a return journey to the land of his birth; to revisit the scenes of his childhood and to show his family and friends that he has "made good" in the land of his adoption. Of none is this more true than of the self-respecting, family-loving German-born. So the man (whom we will call William Stoltz) was making a pilgrimage to his aged mother's home on a mission we can all understand and respect.

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Nazi instruments of destruction. Above, a 13-jewel watch mechanism for time bomb. Below, detonators which were concealed in wooden blocks



But as he set foot on German soil for the first time in nearly twenty years, the Nazi immigration official who examined his American passport ordered him brusquely to stand to one side. Immediately, a man in civilian clothes approached and demanded Stoltz's name and destination. He gave his mother's address in Mülheim.

"You will wait there," commanded the stranger, who was an agent of the Gestapo, "to hear from us in the near future."

A few days later, Stoltz received a letter from one Doctor Gassner stating that the writer had a matter of importance to discuss with him. The "matter of importance" was, in the first instance, an effort to obtain information on plane production in the United States. Stoltz, an engineer, had worked in several aircraft plants, but could not give Gassner the information he sought. Whereupon the Herr Doktor told him that it had been decided that Stoltz should return to the United States to act as a Nazi spy. When Stoltz asked who had done the deciding, he was told only: "Our society."

Stoltz refused to obey, but when he reached his room he found that his American passport—the only evidence of his legal right to be in Nazi Germany—had been stolen. While he was gloomily analyzing the fix he was in, Doctor Gassner reappeared, with a grim person of military

bearing, who was introduced as Doctor Renken but who was in fact Major Nikolaus Adolf Fritz Ritter of the Nazi Secret Service.

Robbed of his American credentials and threatened with reprisals against his mother and other relatives in Germany, William Stoltz had no alternative. He had to obey the Nazi agents' commands. He was, therefore, taken to the German Espionage School at Hamburg and delivered into the hands of still another "doctor," the notorious Henrich Kurtz, also known as Heinrich Sorau, who had discovered and trained Lilly Carola Stein, the Mata Hari of the New York spy ring. Not all recruits for the Nazi espionage system are so brazenly kidnaped as was William Stoltz; but in the great majority of cases some form of compulsion is employed. With the younger men the approach is more subtle.

I have in mind the case of another German-born American visiting the Fatherland, who found himself assiduously cultivated by a very attractive young girl in the Foreign Office. Through her he met officers of the General Staff and other dignitaries who, according to the German caste system, would normally have treated him with contempt. Flattered, the young man, who was a machinist, began answering questions about American life in can newspapers for as many years back as the student has been absent from the country is prescribed, and examinations on American current events during those years are conducted.

After this general training, the student is taken to Stuttgart, where files are kept of all important industries and industrialists in the United States. He is expected, of course, to know the managing personnel of the organizations for which he worked, but at Stuttgart he is able to brush up on changes in that personnel, and also to get a good working knowledge of the key men in all essential industries in his own section of the country. All of this information—in fact everything taught at the espionage or the sabotage school—must be learned by heart.

Final steps consist of providing the now thoroughly qualified spy with detailed instructions on the information he is to obtain and a "cover story" of sufficient plausibility to explain his presence and assure his safety.

The German espionage authorities seem most interested in the number of our convoy ships, the strength of our fleet, the courses of transoceanic shipping, buoy markings of channels, developments in navigation engines, new protective devices against submarines, performances of new planes and, of course, production figures on all kinds of war materials. One question on every espionage agent's carefully memorized agenda is: "Where are the worst bottlenecks?"

The "cover story" is naturally a variable quantity. The need of each agent is studied and met by a fabrication of falsehoods best calculated to protect him from molestation. Social Security and Selective Service cards, printed in Germany with ink and on paper identical with that used by our own government, perfect until submitted to tests in the F.B.I. Technical Laboratory, are given the spy who poses as a U. S. citizen. If he is to pose as a refugee, driven from his home in Germany or a subjugated country by Nazi persecution,

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he is equipped with a forged passport or other official papers that a bona fide refugee would carry. In either case, the identity claimed by the agent is a wholly manufactured one and entirely false in every detail.

Meticulous pains are taken to familiarize the spy with his new identity. Sometimes complete family histories are invented. A safer plan, and one that is followed whenever practicable, is to provide the agent with an actual family so securely under Nazi domination that the imposture is certain not to be discovered.

A Fabricated Family History

The arrested agent Bahr, for example, was furnished the protective background of a non-Aryan family, every member of which had been "liquidated" by the Nazi pogroms. No detail of these fake family histories is neglected; if a relative is a philatelist, the agent must memorize and chat glibly about every important stamp in the collection. He is (or so his tutors believe) prepared for *all* emergencies.

Some of this recruiting and training is done by an ostensibly private organization called the Ausland Institute, which, however, works in close affiliation with the official Ausland organization, which is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is known to have received large grants of public funds. During the prewar period and before our own entry, the institute, because of its nominally private character, was able to carry on activities abroad inconsistent with relations between nations supposedly at peace.

The Ausland Institute has many executives engaged in this recruiting and training work. So has the espionage service of the High Command. Many of the instructors are well known to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, including the three "doctors" whose acquaintance William Stoltz was forced to make in the first months of his stay in Germany.

Gassner, a ruddy-faced, sandy-haired, loose-lipped, fat young man of about thirty, is the come-on expert or contact man, who conceals his domineering nature behind the huge steins of beer and piled-up plates of heavy foods with which he regales himself.

Renken, known as Nikki Ritter during his residence in the United States, is likewise the blond, stocky type of German, but his forty-five years, many of which have been spent in the secret service, have rutted deep lines of cruelty in his hard, determined face. He is called in when it is necessary to "turn on the heat." Kurtz (or Sorau, as he was known to Lilly Stein) is one of the masterminds.

These men are still at work to wreck our war effort. Systematic recruiting of new members for their activities went on in this country for years during peacetime. One of the leaders in these activities in the United States was Walter Kappe, one-time editor of the Cincinnati *Freie Presse* and one of the founders of the Friends of New Germany, which later became the German-American Bund.

Our Number One Nazi

While Fritz Kuhn, Wilhelm Kunze and others absorbed the spotlight, Kappe, a former instructor in the sabotage school near Berlin and a real higher-up in the

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Nazi espionage regime, was generally recognized in informed circles as Number One Nazi in the United States. That he did his work well is indicated by the fact that he became propaganda director of Radio Berlin, Station DJB, upon his return to Germany and was reportedly in control of all radio equipment for Nazi propaganda, sabotage and espionage.

I emphasize the activities of these men to bring home the fact that the way has been patiently and skillfully laid for a sabotage drive in this country with which, at any time, we may be forced to cope. We should not be lulled into complacency by the fact that improved methods of law enforcement and counterespionage perfected through these same years by American Intelligence agencies, and now zealously employed by the F.B.I. and loyally co-operating state and municipal police forces, have so far prevented any foreign-directed act of sabotage such as the Black Tom disaster of the last war.

The citizen's duty is plain. Upon him depends to a great measure the internal security of the country. Without his help the F.B.I. would be sorely handicapped. The President of the United States has called upon law-enforcement agencies to report matters pertaining to sabotage and espionage to the F.B.I. The citizen should do the same whenever he has information based upon facts which cause him to become suspicious of anyone who might aid the enemy by endangering defense industries, transportation facilities or communications.

When the citizen does have suspicions like these, based on fact, he should at once notify the nearest office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. If he is uncertain how to do this, his local telephone company can put him in touch with the F.B.I. In an emergency he can call his local police headquarters, which will relay the information to the Bureau.

Often the mere appearance of our special agents or law-enforcement officers on the scene is enough to ward off the proposed sabotage, for the last words whispered into the ears of the Nazi spy or saboteur as he leaves Germany—and I have this information from many sources—are these: "Don't get the F B.I. down on you!"

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