



Agent IN Italy

From the ranks of the Underground comes this exciting story of espionage, with the first authentic and complete report on conditions today inside Italy.

by S.K.

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THE ROOM WITH MANY WINDOWS

Study Guide Questions and Some Writing Topics

BY S. K.

Agent
IN *Italy*



Garden City, New York 1942

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.

AGENT IN ITALY

A Memoir of a Spy in World War II

BY S. K.

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From the Book Jacket

I couldn't hear a sound, either from the corridor and offices beyond the door or from the sleeping city of Milan outside. All the rest of the world could have died.

It was stifling. Italian police stations are badly ventilated. My throat was very dry and I kept coughing. I smoked another cigarette but that made it worse. The smoke hung in the dead air.

I tried the door again. My wet palm slipped on the unclean handle. The door was still locked, of course.

I didn't know exactly what time it was because they'd taken my watch away from me. I guessed about three in the morning. I was going to be shot at six.

Thus begins this amazing; book—both a thrilling story of personal danger in Italy's underground movement, and a fully detailed, authentic report on the crumbling of Italian Fascist morale under the terror of German occupancy.

The gripping adventures experienced by S. K. during his undercover work in Italy give us a picture of methods which more than match all we have heard of German and Russian espionage work. Yet they are absolutely bona fide—the author's credentials have been carefully checked. He remains anonymous for the protection of those colleagues still carrying on the Democratic revolution.

Working with groups of fearless Italian patriots, it was S. K. who first revealed to the outside world through confidential information on Germany's flame-throwing tanks, the intention of Mussolini to move against Greece, the use of American dollars for the purchase of oil in French African ports by submarine captions, the shipping of Messerschmitts to Central America, the existence of camouflaged airports in Nicaragua

and Bolivia, the sending of Stukas to Japan, and the building of new Condors in Holland.

In addition to these sensational disclosures, agent in Italy now reveals fully detailed story of the German occupation of Italy, giving facts and figures, including an estimate of 400,000 Germans now keeping the junior Axis partner under shaky control.

Filled with tense and breathless incident, this book, the first to disclose the bitter ordeal of Italy, bring the excitement of the mystery novel to one of the most important factual documents of our day.

Reviews

The memoirs of a German anti-fascist in Italy, which is personal and exciting reading. After helping legally, some 250 men to get out of concentration camps in Germany, S. K. was quietly hustled out of the country. He went to Italy, where under the patronage of a wealthy Fascistic friend, he established himself as a woman chaser and dilettante, and under this alias pursued his work for the Underground.

He was in a key position to pick up incidental information. Stories of his always apprehensive activities, making forbidden trips, deluding the police, dodging the Gestapo.

Italy pictured today, indifferent in its nationalism, its Fascism, a weak flank, unlikely to revolt until Hitler is defeated from outside. Good reading.

KIRKUS REVIEW

An Introduction for Students

Why read a book about events which started in 1938, long before you were born?

One reason is practical. The more you read in high school, the easier college will be. With more reading in high school, you won't have to spend to spend your time and financial aid on remedial classes at the next level. The research shows that the volume of reading matters. As you read more, your vocabulary improves, and with a better vocabulary, your reading speed and your comprehension improve. With ideas and concepts and phrases in your mind, your map of the world improves, and reading gets much faster and easier.

Also, this book is about life and death, and as a citizen you will be called upon to vote on life and death situations. Your decisions will influence the country toward invading or not invading another country such as Iraq. Or deciding to intervene or not intervene in a civil war as in Syria, or how to handle Russian aggression in the Ukraine.

You may want to compare the mass mobilizations of both soldiers and civilians described in this book to the recent American strategy of sending the same small group of soldiers on repeated deployments.

As you read this book, you will see much of what you would expect from the life of a spy during World War II. He pretended to be a fool. He wanted to be known as a playboy without any interest in the details of war. He worked hard to avoid suspicion as he listened in on conversations between German and Italian military leaders.

But some of the content is unexpected. I learned a great deal from the book about how nations organize their economies for war. Germany wanted to build its war machine by reorganizing factories in conquered Europe and in Italy. Not only did Germany demand

guest workers from Italy to supply its factories, but it took over the direct management of factories in Italy. The German demand for food from its junior partner, Italy, led to hunger in Italy.

The writer explains Germany's plans for a new world economic order. Germany intended for South America, for example, to be a source of raw materials for the homeland, and sent out agents to accomplish this. Germany worked hard to obtain the food supplies, the gasoline, the munitions, the factory workers, and other resources it needed as it attacked the countries of Western Europe, and later Russia. Its other assets were a relatively weak partner in Italy and a distant ally in Japan.

S.K. also shows Hitler's fear of the economic power of the United States, an idea that writers have stressed in recent books about Nazi Germany.

Students might enjoy comparing the German efforts to what Russia, China and the United States are doing to build their supplies of natural resources in the 21st century.

Finally, who was S.K? Did a real life secret agent have time to write a book of this length and detail and energy while on holidays from spying? Was he actually able to carry a manuscript or notebooks around as the Italian secret police searched his apartment time after time?

Or is this book the effort of American and British propaganda offices, published at a time in 1942 when the war was not going well for the Allies. Germany and Italy controlled Western and Eastern Europe except for Russia, as well as parts of North Africa.

This book covers the period from 1938 to late 1941 before the United States joined World War II in December, 1941. It describes the fear of Italians that they might be drawn in as Germany decides to invade Russia. You will see that the Italians also feared that future alliance of the United States and England would turn the war against Germany and Italy.

We hope you find this window into life in a fascist state, and into the experiences of

those who resisted fascism in the underground during World War II, valuable.

Jim McCabe

Editor

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December, 2014

1. THE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS

WHAT I REMEMBER about that damned room is that it had not even one window. The only air came through a grated ventilator high up against the ceiling. There was no place to rest; the chairs were hard and uncomfortable.

One weak electric bulb on a worn brown wire hung down from the center of the high ceiling and a green glass shade concentrated the light on the shabby flat desk. Two dilapidated wooden filing cabinets with stacks of unfiled correspondence on top of them leaned against each other in a corner. A sagging swivel armchair with one of its three casters missing was just within the circle of light; there were two other chairs, both straight-backs. On the desk there was only a glass inkwell caked with dried ink. The drawers were all locked.

On one wall hung a calendar with a cheap print of high-altitude cherubs hovering over a cloud. Opposite were two large lithograph pictures, one of Benito Mussolini in a steel helmet and the other of King Victor Emmanuel II in a military cap. Near the heavy wooden door was a bulletin board with some yellowed newspaper clippings stuck to it with one thumbtack.

I couldn't hear a sound, either from the corridor and offices beyond the door or from the sleeping city of Milan outside. All the rest of the world could have died.

It was stifling. Italian police stations are badly ventilated. My throat was very dry and I kept coughing. I smoked another cigarette but that made it worse. The smoke hung in the dead air.

I tried the door again. My wet palm slipped on the unclean handle. The door was still locked of course.

I didn't know exactly what time it was because they'd taken my watch away from me. I guessed about three in the morning. I was going to be shot at six.

I was thirty-five years old. I had lived all my life in Düsseldorf, Germany.

For the nine years ending May 23, 1939,¹ I had been the Reich representative of the largest Italian silk firm, Seta S.A., which has its headquarters in Milan. As such I traveled a great deal, all over Germany and to Italy three or four times a year.

After Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938 a new wave of terror spread over Germany. The Gestapo was seizing thousands; men and women were plucked out of their offices and homes. Regular cleanups were carried out by the SA (Sturmabteilung—storm troopers) and the police. People were swept up in bunches and shipped off to concentration camps for the flimsiest reasons, or for no reason at all. The technique was to block off a street at both ends and to pile into waiting trucks all those who couldn't clear themselves. My closest friend, Hans Klar, a non-Aryan consulting engineer, was caught in such a dragnet, held in prison one day, and shipped off to Dachau.

I went to the Gestapo. I stood in line for hours among hundreds of frightened women and bewildered men—all on similar errands. There were, of course, many Jews in the crowd. I was told to come back the next day; on the third day I was told roughly that Klar's release was out of the question. There were no Düsseldorfers among the officials and clerks; it is a Gestapo principle not to have men work in their native towns.

A business acquaintance advised me to go to Gestapo headquarters in Berlin and apply there for Klar's release. On my next business trip to the capital I went to the huge building on Alexanderplatz and told my business to the black-uniformed SS guard (Schutzstaffel—Gestapo troopers) at the entrance. Another trooper led me to a small gray-walled room and went away.

I moved inside. The door closed automatically behind me. It had no lock and no

doorknob. The only furnishing of the room was a wooden bench along one wall. The light came from a single bright unshaded bulb on the ceiling. The air was lifeless and I couldn't hear a single sound. There was another door opposite the one I had come in by, and it had no lock or knob either. There was no window. I felt suddenly very hot and stifled. I made myself sit down on the bench.

A full half-hour dragged by before the second door slid open without warning, and another trooper beckoned to me. I followed him into a large receiving office where he turned me over to a higher official also in black uniform sitting behind the desk.

He asked me a lot of routine particulars about myself and filled in the answers on a form. His voice was low and bored and he hardly looked at me. After ten minutes or so of that he asked me what I wanted. I told him. He said the concentration camp department was in the other Gestapo headquarters on Prinz Albrechtstrasse; I would have to go there. I was guided out through the windowless room and so into the street again.

In Prinz Albrechtstrasse a sentry demanded my errand. I told him and he turned me over to a guard who went into a glass-enclosed booth to telephone. He came out and asked for identification. Like many Germans I carried my passport with me at all times; the government hadn't yet introduced domestic passports —brown cards for Aryans and gray for Jews. It was turned over to a second guard who handed me a form on which he had written my name, the letter K for Klar, and the exact time he took charge of me.

This trooper led me across the courtyard to the second floor of an inside building, down a long corridor of many unnumbered doors. He stopped at one, led me through, and turned me over to a man of about forty-two in civilian clothes sitting at a desk. This large room was filled with green steel filing cabinets. The official was all alone. He took my sheet of paper, glanced at a clock on the wall, and noted down the exact time. Then he nodded to the trooper who had brought me and the man went out.

Surprisingly, the official asked me to sit down. His voice was curt and military; he wore

a black suit and was clean-shaven. He smoked continuously, lighting one cigarette from the butt of another. His only sign of human feeling, except for impersonal courtesy, was the slight trembling of his hands, which I could see when he lifted his cigarette to his lips.

I told him what I wanted. He got up, went to a filing cabinet, and took out of it a single file sheet. From another cabinet he got another sheet and brought them both to his desk. He pushed a button, an SS man appeared in a side doorway, and the official read off to him a long number. I could see the large index letters on the sheets: one was marked KL and the other KLA HA—a cross-check system. Within two minutes, during which we both sat in silence, the trooper returned with a folder and went out again. Another several minutes passed while the official read the contents of the dossier.

Then he looked up and told me that Klar fell into Classification D: general cases who could be freed if there was no other charge against them. They usually had to agree to emigrate at once.

I said I didn't know what my friend could or would do.

The official said he would give me fourteen days to submit a definite plan. Then, if the Düsseldorf office and the Reichsführer SS Kanzlei (Himmler's office) approved the application, Klar would be released.

I thanked him. He wrote down on my piece of paper the exact time I was leaving his office, nodded good-by to me in an almost human way, and turned me over to the SS trooper he had summoned. We went back to the entrance, the guard noted down my exact time of arrival there and made some sort of calculation. Then he said I could leave—I had evidently taken the proper amount of time to come downstairs.

I wrote to Klar at Dachau. He answered that he would emigrate to any place for which I could get a visa, and I went back to see the official in Prinz Albrechtstrasse. Although the SS man at the gate recognized me, even remembered my name, I was taken up to the K official's office with all the regular precautions as before. To my surprise, he greeted me

by name and at once asked what plans my friend Klar had made.

I told him I had been unable to get a visa and had therefore bought Klar a ticket—for a hundred and ten British pounds—to Shanghai, where no visa was needed. The official said Klar could now be released, provided, of course, Düsseldorf and the Himmler office agreed.

I asked if my friend would be compelled to travel even if he were ill. Apparently he had not stood the trip to Dachau very well; the handwriting in his reply to me was shaky. And he was a very strong man.

The official smiled a little and said he could easily believe Klar might be “ill.” He lit another cigarette. “Look here,” he said, “I’ve been in this job for five years now. You needn’t think all of us in the Gestapo are criminals. This is a hard thing we do, and if we aren’t hard ourselves we’d get ground under too. I think you’re a discreet man. Perhaps someday you’ll remember that I acted like a human being.”

I said nothing and tried to keep all expression off my face. There was no way of knowing what to make of a speech like this from a Gestapo man in Gestapo headquarters.

The man took a sheet of paper out of his drawer and handed it across the desk to me.

It was headed: Reichsführer SS Kanzlei Himmler—Circular to All Offices: Regulations governing the transport of prisoners from cities to concentration camps.

This is what I read:

A) All prisoners are to be collected in local prisons and thence taken together to railroad stations in special prisoner trucks. Wherever possible, use freight stations to avoid attracting public attention, and make all prisoner transfers in late evening or very early morning. Guards will be in two sections: the first to supervise the boarding of the trains by prisoners; the second to supervise their distribution and arrangement in cars and compartments. The first section will form a double rank from the trucks to the train and will drive the prisoners quickly to the cars with rifle butts.

B) In the train, the second section will supervise the distribution of prisoners in cars and compartments. Prisoners will sit ten in each compartment for eight, both hands on their knees, faces toward the light. Any talking or suspicious movements are to be prevented by force. No prisoner may leave a compartment during any journey for any reason. If a prisoner is to be punished, do so where the others can see. If any of these regulations are resisted, use firearms.

C) The trains will not stop at any station; all stops must be made outside stations.

D) Debarkation of prisoners from trains is to be handled as was the embarkation, except that the prisoners are to be divided in squads according to transportation facilities to the camp. Here, too, talking and any infraction of rules is to be suppressed by force. Injuries or deaths during transfer are to be reported in writing to the camp commandant. Casualties are to be transported to the camp separately from the other prisoners.

Please acknowledge receipt of these instructions.

(Signed in an illegible scrawl) for the Reichsführer SS Kanzlei.

I handed the sheet back to the official. He said: "You understand there is no other way to transport a thousand prisoners with only three hundred SS men as guards. It is possible your friend did not fully obey the regulations."

I sat quiet. He didn't get up or give any other indication that our interview was ended. I asked whether it was likely that the Düsseldorf Gestapo would pass Klar's release.

He explained that every local Gestapo made a memorandum covering each prisoner, of which one copy came to Prinz Al-brechtstrasse, Berlin, and another copy went to the camp where the prisoner was sent. A complete dossier on every prisoner was kept in all three places.

Prisoners were divided into several classes: Class A, those charged with high treason against the state; Class B, those charged with attacks against the security of the Reich, the Führer, or the National Socialist party; Class C, those charged with industrial espionage;

Class D, general cases not under special suspicion; Class E, those caught smuggling money or other negotiables out of the Reich. In A, B, C, and E cases, regular police dossiers were also made, witnesses heard, testimony taken, and fines levied.

Besides a number sewed on both coat and trousers every concentration-camp prisoner had to wear on the breast a cloth triangle indicating his classification. Ordinary criminals wore green triangles, homosexuals pink, religious dissidents (Bibelforscher) violet, slow-down workers black, general cases red. Jews wore two superimposed yellow triangles forming the Star of David.

If Prinz Albrechtstrasse and the Himmler office approved the release, Düsseldorf would not oppose it.

When I left the official he actually shook hands with me.

Four weeks later I telephoned him from Düsseldorf, and he said Klar would be out in a few days. The Düsseldorf branch had approved the application, and he thought the Himmler office would too.

In early September Hans Klar was shipped back home. He had lost forty pounds, and his face had a grayish color. When I met him in Düsseldorf station he kept looking furtively over his shoulder and talked only in a jerky undertone. He was like a beaten dog.

I accompanied him to the Gestapo to report; they gave him one month to leave the country. Then I took him home. The next two weeks he refused to leave his rooms; he was afraid to go into the streets. He jumped at every little noise. His eyes had a curious glassiness, and when I made a remark about it, he said all prisoners were fed saltpeter in their food in large quantities to weaken sexual desires.

Relatives and friends of other Dachau prisoners besieged his apartment begging for information. But the Gestapo had forbidden him to talk. I didn't let anyone see him.

As soon as he could nerve himself to travel, I took him to the station again. In his pocket was a steamship ticket from Genoa to Shanghai. He got on the train, and that is the last

time I ever saw him.

His release had created a sensation—he was the first man in our city to be released since the street arrests. As soon as he was safely away, I began to get telephone calls from women I knew—and many I didn't know—asking me to help them get their fathers or sons or husbands out of concentration camps. I wanted to help, though I knew it might be dangerous for me. I did nothing until business next took me to Berlin.

One afternoon about five I waited outside the Gestapo in Prinz Albrechtstrasse. When I saw my K official come out I drifted after him until we were a block or so away from the police building.

I spoke to him. He turned his head sharply and his eyes widened as if he were badly scared. “Don't talk to me here, you idiot!”

I said I had to speak to him urgently. He walked several rapid steps in irritated silence. Then he told me to meet him at nine o'clock that night in a certain little café on the Kurfurstendamm. He turned suddenly and crossed the street without looking back at me.

At exactly nine that evening I went down a few shallow steps into the coffeehouse. In front, near the window, there was a short zinc-covered bar behind which sat a pale young girl with downcast eyes. A waiter in a dirty apron bent over the counter staring at her. A number of tables were scattered around in the dimness beyond; only one, near the front, was occupied by a young couple conversing in low murmurs. I remember that their hands lay loosely clasped on the gray marble.

I selected a table in the dimmest corner and ordered an aperitif. About nine-thirty I saw my official come in, say something to the pale girl, and then stroll toward me. He looked sharply at the murmuring young couple, who were still the only customers in the place, and then sat down next to me. The waiter, without asking, brought him a small coffeepot and a demitasse. He drank one cup and smoked an entire cigarette without saying a single word. Several times he gave me long, steady stares. Finally he said:

“You mustn’t approach me on the street. We’re all watched from time to time by other Gestapo men—strangers to us. You’re known at our office now and if you’re seen with me, I can get into a lot of trouble.” He spoke slowly and carefully.

I said in a normal tone that I didn’t want to make him any trouble. I only wanted advice about getting some other prisoners released.

Again he looked at me a long time. Then he asked why I was not a registered member of the Nazi party.

I said I was not interested in politics.

He said: “You must have some interest, some motive. Otherwise why do you want to get more people out of the camps?”

“All I want to do is get some poor devils out of a terrible situation they don’t deserve.”

“There is nothing illegal in what you want to do,” he said slowly. “But if I help you, you must say nothing about it to your people.”

“My people?” I didn’t know whom he meant.

“Oh, it’s all right if you don’t want to admit it,” he said with a little wave of his hand. “But I could find out quickly enough. I could have somebody watch you for a few weeks. We’d find out everything.”

“Yes,” I said, “you’d find out that I am doing all this simply out of sympathy for innocent prisoners.”

He waved his hand again. “You don’t know how efficient our people are. However, I’ll help you. Someday times will change and then I hope you will remember that I acted like a human being.”

That was the second time he had said that to me. I said yes, I would surely remember. I added that I was surprised to hear a Gestapo man talk this way.

He kept biting his lower lip and talked in abrupt spurts, as if the words were coming out against his will. He had been an officer in World War I. After demobilization he had found

himself without money or profession or means of earning a livelihood. He looked around for some military occupation and entered the Upper Silesian Free Corps. He fought in that for a year during the agitation preceding the plebiscite to decide whether Upper Silesia should remain German or become part of Poland. And then, through Ludendorff in Munich, he got a minor police job and joined the National Socialist party.

He turned back his lapel. “You see, I wear the gold emblem. And here I am. But I’m still a human being and I am sick of this business. But I can’t get out.” He lit a fresh cigarette from the one he was smoking though it was only half gone.

He got more coffee from the waiter, leaned back in his chair, and stared hard at me. “In case you take it into your head to repeat what I’ve told you, don’t forget I can settle you like this.” He snapped his fingers. “I can send you off to Dachau.”

“I have no reason to repeat anything you say.”

He relaxed a little. “No,” he muttered, “I don’t suppose you have. Well! Whenever you have something in hand, call Prinz Albrechtstrasse and ask for the K official.”

“Not by name?”

“No, no. But here you may call me Mueller. It’s not my real name.”

I said with deliberate naiveté that I couldn’t see why he had to be so mysterious.

He leaned forward intently. “Since you’re so determined to mix yourself into this business of getting people out of the camps, you had better know enough to be careful. The more careful you are, the less trouble you will get me into.”

He outlined the organization of the Gestapo—the first of a series of lessons that gave me, I believe, a very complete knowledge of the actual inner setup of Himmler’s police organization. This was Mueller’s way of instilling caution in me.

I followed his hints on how to deal with other officials. He went on helping me, yet lived in daily terror of being “ground under,” as he called it.

2. THE MAN WITH DEAD EYES

FROM September 1938 until May 1939 I obtained the releases of two hundred and forty-two men and two women.

With time I developed a technique, especially in the matter of getting steamship tickets. Before a prisoner could be released, his relatives or friends had to show the Gestapo a steamship ticket from a European port to some country across the sea. But most of the people I helped had no money, or, if they had, were prevented from spending it out of the country by foreign exchange restrictions. Tickets could be bought only in Germany or with funds already on deposit abroad—as I had done with Klar’s passage to Shanghai.

One day a woman showed me a ticket for her brother. She had got it in Antwerp from a Jewish travel agency—for nothing. In other words, it was a forged ticket.

But it worked; the Gestapo suspected nothing. After that I got over two hundred fake steamship tickets from that fellow in Antwerp, using a simple code system to write him what I needed. He is now with the Free Belgian forces in the Near East. Thus, if I showed the Gestapo a ticket from Genoa to Shanghai, this was acceptable proof of the prisoner’s promise to emigrate. He would be released, get on the train to Genoa, but ultimately go to France instead.

I dealt directly with Mueller whenever I had prisoners whose names started with K, and I believe he dropped a word to other parallel officials to help my friends if they could. My surprise at his helpfulness wore off as months passed. He was just one of many Nazis I have met who want to be considered human beings: an outgrowth of their fear that when a day of reckoning comes, they will be as savagely murdered by an enraged people as the people are now trampled by them.

That accounted for the comparative freedom with which I could come and go in the Prinz Albrechtstrasse headquarters. That and Mueller's notion that I was connected with an underground movement. No one else had such freedom, Mueller told me. The troopers there came to know me, though they never failed to keep exact records of my times of arriving, going upstairs, leaving upstairs, departing again.

But I paid for this freedom.

Early one morning a man called on me at my home in Düsseldorf and handed me a summons from the Gestapo for three o'clock that afternoon.

Long queues of Jews and Aryans were waiting outside the building. Suddenly down the street—a frequent occurrence—came several platoons of Hitler Youth—bareheaded boys wearing brown shirts and black trousers. They were singing, their faces all turned toward the waiting lines:

“Wir wollen nicht laenger Christen sein,

Denn Jesus war ein Judenschwein;

Er war auch niemals Gottesohn—

Seine Mutter hiess Maria Kohn.

“We don't want to be Christians any more Since Jesus was a Jewish pig;

He never was the son of God—

His mother's name was Maria Kohn.”

I went inside to the black-uniformed man at the reception desk, showed my summons, and was given a sheet bearing my name and the exact time of my arrival. I wasn't kept waiting. A trooper led me to Room 143.

It was a small room containing a double desk. The moment I stepped in the older of two men, standing at his side of the desk, began to shout at me. He had a round yellow face.

“You *Schweinehid!* What do you think you are doing? Who are you to wangle these dirty swine out of concentration camps after we send them there! It's got to stop.

Understand!”

I didn't say anything.

Neither he nor the other man, who was ghastly pale and ascetic-looking, offered me a chair. The pale man never opened his lips. He sat motionless with downcast eyes. The man with the round yellow face did all the talking, using the familiar “*du*” contemptuously.

He went on: “You are exiled. You must leave the Reich within twenty-four hours—for good. Understand?”

“Yes.”

There was a moment's silence and then he leaned across the corner of the desk and asked softly: “Where will you go, you dirty bastard?”

I said I didn't know. I took my passport out of my pocket and handed it to him. “It has expired.”

He studied the passport. I said: “I don't know whether twenty-four hours is time enough to comply with all the regulations.”

The yellow-faced man was suddenly shouting again: “Don't you worry! Be back here at six o'clock tonight with your list of possessions. We'll fix your passport and arrange everything else. And by this time tomorrow you'll either be gone or down the cellar. Do you understand?” He had a peculiarly insulting manner of adding “*Verstanden*” to nearly everything he said. “And don't telephone Berlin,” he added.

I spent a busy three hours. Before I could leave Germany I had to pay a 45 per cent tax on my house, a five-story building in which I occupied one floor. It was assessed at eighty thousand marks; the tax would be thirty-six thousand marks. This was impossible to pay in cash and so I gave my agent a power of attorney embodying my consent that the state take a 5 per cent mortgage on my house for that amount.

I prepared a list of my portable possessions too.

I had one other errand. I got hold of an underground man I knew and gave him the lens of my camera to be delivered to me in Rome.

At five minutes to six I presented myself again in Room 143.

The yellow-faced man threw my passport down on the desk.

The ascetic-looking man was sitting as before, ghastly pale and speechless. The yellow-faced man pointed at the passport.

“There, it is ready for you. Where will you go?”

“Italy.”

“Why?”

“Where else can I go without a visa?”

He grunted. “Let me see your inventory.”

I handed him the list of possessions: suits, a typewriter, some artificial-silk samples, and miscellaneous clothing. He grunted again and handed it back to me. I handed him the power of attorney for my house tax and he gave me a form stating that I had paid all my taxes and debts. I signed it, he stamped it and gave it back to me. I had also to sign a declaration that I was leaving Germany of my own free will and that I would never return.

“I am taking the Munich express tomorrow afternoon.”

“Now get out!” The yellow-faced man turned to some other papers.

Just as I was turning to go the ghastly pale man raised his face for the first time. He lifted his lashless eyelids and looked at me.

His eyes were a dead oyster-gray without pupils and baleful like an angry cat's.

About four the next afternoon, as I was finishing the little packing I had to do, two plain-clothes Gestapo men came and stood around smoking while I closed my bags and locked the rooms I'd been living in.

We rode to the station together, where black-uniformed SS men took my list of possessions and checked it against my baggage. I was allowed no jewelry, no foreign

money, and only two hundred marks of German money. They found my camera without a lens, looked at it, shrugged, and corrected the list to read: one broken camera.

I rode to Munich, where I changed for the Milan express via the Brenner Pass.

Like all trains in Germany at that time, it was crowded but quiet. No one sought to make acquaintances; even friends conversed only in low tones. Most of the people sat for hours either staring out of the windows or holding party newspapers in front of their faces. We ate in silence; we slept; we rode in silence. As we neared the Brenner the next afternoon, the character of the silence changed. Conversations ceased altogether. I knew, and so did most of those on the train, that travelers often vanished at the border, into concentration camps, or were shot while “escaping.”

The train stopped and SS men came through. A burly fellow demanded my passport. He checked it carefully, then handed it to his companion. “Search him,” he said.

I was taken off the train and led into a small cell-like room in the station. There were two SS men there. I was ordered to strip; every piece of clothing I wore was examined, the lining felt, pockets emptied, and every object studied; the contents of my wallet read in detail. They found three photographs of some distant cousins; one man disappeared with them for fifteen minutes, then returned and gave them back to me. They did not find a tiny box of potassium cyanide I had been carrying with me ever since the one time I had got Klar to tell me details about Dachau.

While this was going on they took my baggage keys into another room. Evidently disappointed, the remaining SS man ordered me to get dressed and come outside with him. He said I might just as well admit my bag had a double bottom; they had radio-wave instruments that could detect it right away.

We stood there for half an hour until I was called inside to another room. On a table was a machine that looked like an X ray. The contents of my bags were strewn all over. I was ordered to pack quickly. When I didn't do it fast enough to suit the trooper, he bundled

things up anyhow and thrust them into the suitcases. I saw only a few other men treated as I was; I think we were samples.

Back on the train a few minutes later a different trooper flung my passport into my lap. After another fifteen minutes the train moved the hundred yards from the German to the Italian control buildings for inspection by the Fascist railway police, the *Milizia Ferroviaria*.

These men are uniformed something like the *Alpini*, Italy's mountain troops, with gay feathers in wide-brimmed felt hats and revolvers that look as big as machine guns at their belts.

But they didn't behave like their German colleagues a few hundred feet before. They checked passports and baggage with a little politeness. They collected all our documents and we sat quietly in our places while they were taken into the control office.

At every Italian frontier post there is a file of some forty thousand names of known enemies of the regime of all nationalities. Among world-famous Italians on the list are Count Carlo Sforza and Arturo Toscanini, the musician.

Our baggage was examined, and when the passports had all been checked, a *Milizia* officer boarded the train with them and we started for the next stop three hours off, Bolzano (Bozen), in the heart of the once-Austrian Tyrol. This officer sat in a cubbyhole, making a list to be forwarded to headquarters in Rome. At Bolzano we got our papers back.

The atmosphere of the train changed. People began to talk and laugh. We were in Italy. The last swastika flags disappeared behind us—the swastika that was drawn for the Nazis in 1920 by Dr. Walter Riehl, a Viennese lawyer. But before that the swastika was the trade-mark of Dr. Ehrlich's famous magic bullet, the antisyphilis drug "606."

3. "WE'RE NOT BARBARIANS LIKE YOUR NAZIS . . ."

I GOT OFF the train in Milan around five the afternoon of May 23, 1939. I avoided the man of the Albergo (Hotel) Principe e Savoia, across the park from the station, where I had always stayed before. I had only fifteen hundred lire, the equivalent of eighty dollars.

I took a tram to an address where a Düsseldorf friend had given me the name of a cheap *pensione*. I found it on Via Ansperto in a four-story building which had once seen better times. Built in palazzo style, it had a tremendous entrance leading into a courtyard with a fountain which didn't work.

On the second floor, the door of the pensione was opened to me by a fat woman of about fifty with a lot of coal-black hair hanging about her face and a cigarette in her mouth. The smell of bad olive oil and Parmesan cheese hit me in the face. I told the landlady what I wanted and she said a room without meals would cost me three hundred and fifty lire per month. I could pay separately for my meals.

She showed me a small room down a dim corridor. It contained a bed, a table, two chairs, one closet, a little washstand and one window.

The woman stood in the doorway, dropped her cigarette ashes on the floor, and asked me how long I would stay.

I said that since I was planning to stay some time I would pay her three hundred lire a month.

She stared at me with open curiosity. We haggled back and forth; finally she shrugged and put out a dirty fat hand. I paid her three hundred lire for the first month. She dropped some more ashes on the floor and said that if I was hungry I could have some food in the dining room.

I washed, changed my shirt, and went down the corridor to a fairly large room. In the center was a large common dining table. Over the long buffet, in fake Renaissance style like all the furniture, hung pictures of Mussolini and the King. The smell of oil and cheese was stronger here, and the chianti was bad. I ate quickly, went out for a little walk, and then went to bed.

The landlady wakened me early in the morning to be sure I went to the *Questura*—the police—to report and get a residence permit. In the big hotels, like the Principe e Savoia, a commissionaire takes guests' passports to the Questura and brings them back their residence permits, *soggiorni*. Here I had to go myself.

I went to Piazza S. Fedele 2 and a guard directed me to the Ufficio degli Stranieri (Office of Foreigners). It was a room with a high ceiling and two long, narrow barred windows. A man in civilian clothes was sitting behind a disorderly desk.

On the wall behind him hung the usual pictures of Mussolini and the King and above them a poster bearing Il Duce's advice to the Italian people: "*Credere, Obbedire, Combattere*—Believe, Obey, Fight." I said I had arrived the day before and wanted a residence permit. Under the pictures was a placard bearing another of Mussolini's advices: *The police have a difficult task and must be highly regarded by the people.*

The man told me to wait. I sat down on one of the benches that lined the walls. Soon they filled up with other people. I waited an hour before my name was called out and I was shown to a small office, where sat a young man in civilian clothes with very black shiny hair and a Fascist lapel button.

He asked if I spoke Italian. I said yes. He began to question me and fill the answers into a form before him.

Why had I come to Italy? (Because I had business and intended to stay some time.) What did I intend to do? (I hoped to continue working with the Seta silk company.) Did I belong to any political organization? (No.) Did I have any relatives in Italy? (No; only

friends.)

He took a lot of the usual personal data, compared them with my passport, and then told me to go back to the waiting room. I waited another half-hour. My name was called again and this time I was led into a more elegantly furnished office with the legend on the door: *Ufficio degli Stranieri—Capo d’Ufficio* (Office of Foreigners—Chief of Office). Inside sat an older man, also in civilian clothes, studying my papers. He signed them and said:

“Report any change of address within three days. Carry this *soggiorno* with you at all times. It is your domestic [passport](#). It is good for six months.”

He handed me the permit. I thanked him and went out.

The *soggiorno* was a double sheet of paper with the heading *Reale Questura Centrale di Milano* (Royal Police Headquarters of Milan). It contained my name, the names of father and mother, my place of birth, occupation, date of arrival, purpose and length of my stay in Italy, and my address.

I went back to the pensione. The landlady told me a *Questura* agent had just been there to question her about me. She looked worried. I showed her my six months’ *soggiorno*. She relaxed and told me:

“Then it is all right. They watch all foreigners anyway. Just be careful what you say in front of our janitor—he’s the police agent for the house.”

Only with the approval of the *Questura* may a house owner in

Italy carry either Fascist party membership cards or ordinary police identification cards.

Italy employ a janitor. He is the official informer, and must report weekly to the police about everything that goes on in his building, including the tenants’ mail. The postman delivers it to him and before distributing it in the individual boxes, he examines it and reports anything that seems to him unusual. Before Italy entered the war against France there was no official mail censorship; every letter from abroad nevertheless was opened,

read, sometimes photographed, and then mailed on, by the secret censorship of the Questura. Foreign and domestic censorship became official June 10, 1940.

And it is the Questura's rule to check up on foreigners the day they arrive, question their landladies, and inspect the rooms though without formally searching them. Mine had been inspected that morning.

I sought out the janitor—a big, strong, heavy-set man with a very melancholy face and a black Tuscan cigar sticking out of his mouth. I gave him ten lire and said it was our custom in Germany to give the house man a little “drink-money” in advance. He took the cigar out of his mouth, spat accurately halfway across the courtyard, and his expression became a little brighter. He put the cigar promptly back in his mouth and I left him leaning against the doorway in the morning sunshine.

When I passed through the courtyard out into the street, I saw a man leaning against the wall reading a newspaper. As I passed him he folded the newspaper, tucked it under his arm, and strolled after me. He kept on my trail. Where the pedestrian traffic was thick and the side streets close together he walked about ten paces behind me; where the traffic was light, fifty paces. I went to the Leonardo da Vinci gallery and spent hours looking at the paintings. My shadow followed me inside and up and down the aisles of pictures. After that, I was sorry for him and went into a coffeehouse for refreshment.

I was shadowed all day every day of that week, and had to waste my time walking through art galleries, sitting in coffeehouses, looking at public buildings—all of which I had seen many times before.

But on Monday, May 29, when I came out into the street, there was only the janitor who nodded at me, cigar in mouth.

I strolled around the comer, crossed the street, turned another corner. I was not being followed.

I had managed to learn that Commendatore Luigi Venturi, my employer for nine years,

spent his mornings in the Consiglio Provinciale delle Corporazioni (Provincial Council of Corporations) in Via Mercanti. In addition to being general manager and chief owner (presidente dell' amministrazione) of Seta S.A. he was also head of the federation of silk factories—Confederazione della Seta Artificiale. As such he spent an hour or two each morning at the Milan branch of the Corporations Council. I went there to see him.

The Consiglio Provinciale is in an old palazzo in the heart of the city. I came into the magnificent Renaissance reception room where a young receptionist announced me. Like all service personnel in Italian public offices, he wore a light gray flannel suit with silver buttons decorated with the Fascist emblem. This man's suit was perfectly cut, I remember, and of course in the Italian style, with the jacket reaching far down the shank.

Venturi didn't keep me waiting. The gray-suited commissioner showed me at once into a magnificent office with some fine paintings on the walls and a genuine Renaissance desk.

Commendatore Luigi Venturi was a man of middle height with a bushy gray mustache and wonderfully benevolent eyes. He dressed smartly and always wore a white carnation in his left buttonhole. Unusual for an Italian, he had traveled considerably and spoke several languages fluently. His travels had imbued him with fundamental democratic convictions which he had never concealed from me. At this time he was fifty-eight years old.

The moment I came in he moved round from behind his desk and shook my hand in both of his. But his manner was reserved.

“In Milan nearly a week and you' haven't come to see me until now?”

I was surprised. How had he known I was here?

He made a grimace. “The Questura called for information about you.”

I felt a little uneasy.

“You could have telephoned me,” he added.

I was afraid to, I said. I knew the Questura tapped telephone wires, and my calling might have embarrassed him. “Embarrassed me? How?”

I spoke carefully. “You might have said you want nothing more to do with me. And I wouldn’t have known whether it was true, or whether you said it for the benefit of the Questura.”

His face acquired a dull flush. “I have been a member of the party for twenty years. Why should I be afraid of their police?” He looked at me sharply. “Why didn’t you come here sooner yourself?”

I said I’d been shadowed every day for a week.

He nodded. “The Questura does that with most foreigners.” “Yes, but again—I didn’t want to embarrass you.”

He looked bewildered. “They know you are connected with my company. They telephoned the day after you arrived. They even asked me why you are living in such a dismal pensione.” “I’m sorry. I was just being careful.”

“What for?” He was getting a little exasperated.

“... I have left Germany for good.”

An expression of concern came into his eyes.

Italy and Germany were friends now, I said. And I was a political outcast from my own country. That’s why I didn’t know how he would receive me.

“Oh ... I see.” He stared at me. “But we are old friends. You see I have not changed.”

I told him the story of my expulsion from Düsseldorf.

“But that’s over with. You have nothing to fear here. We’re not barbarians like your Nazis.”

“I know, but I have an idea the Düsseldorf Gestapo may still be very interested in me.”

“Impossible!” he burst out angrily. “They can’t do anything in Italy. They wouldn’t dare!”

He sat down at his desk and picked up the telephone. In a moment he was talking to an

official of the Questura. “I have a friend who has just arrived here ... I know him very well and I don’t think it will be necessary for you to shadow him ... Yes ... Thank you.” He hung up and told me: “From now on you’ll have to go through the dangerous streets of Milan without a bodyguard. They’ll shadow you from time to time—it’s the usual thing with foreigners. But—” A thought struck him. “How long will you stay in Italy? How will you live?”

My idea was to stay just long enough to accumulate passage money to take me to Cuba or Brazil, where I had friends. But I said only: “I would like to stay indefinitely.”

On July 1 he was moving to Rome, he explained; he had been called to a higher post in the Corporations Ministry.

“Look here,” he said. “Why don’t you come to Rome too? I can be more help to you there. I know you don’t have so many friends here, and in Rome we can spend some of our free time together—if you don’t mind the company of an old man.” He looked a little lonely as he said that; his wife had died only two years before and I had flown down for the funeral.

Then we both laughed and at last the tension was broken. His age was an old joke between us; he didn’t look as old as he was and he loved to fish for compliments about it.

I agreed to his Rome suggestion at once, especially since he assured me I could undertake some work for Seta there—possibly handling some special deals for him on a generous commission basis.

“Fine!” On the stationery of the Presidente del Consiglio Provinciale delle Corporazioni he wrote out a letter for me: To whom it may concern—stating that I was in the employ of Seta S.A. and under his personal protection.

I was still doubtful. I said: “Are you sure you’re not making any difficulties for yourself with the Questura?”

He looked at me steadily for a long moment. “I am a quite powerful man in Italy. They

cannot make trouble for me. I am not afraid of those certain elements in the party, and they know it.”

I changed the subject quickly. I said I was curious as to how he could drop his own work, which kept him very busy, to take an even more burdensome government post. He told me he had been asked to do so by some of the party leaders. Besides, there was a great increase in orders for the army and navy, and being on the spot he could see to it that Seta got its fair share.

We made a dinner engagement for the next evening and I left.

Notes

Italian citizens carry either Fascist party membership cards or ordinary police identification cards. [Return to text.](#)

4. LES MISERABLES UNDERGROUND

I HAD BEEN SPENDING most of my evenings in the dining room of the pensione to chat with the other roomers and to stay out of the dark streets at night. Besides, I could refurbish my Italian and at the same time get some idea of how people felt.

This was a time of big political change in Italy. On May 22— the day before I left Düsseldorf—she and Germany signed their military treaty, and Italy resounded with declarations of undying friendship with Hitler.

Only five years before Mussolini had concentrated thirty Italian divisions on the Brenner frontier to help Vienna resist the attempted Nazi *Putsch* that was begun with the murder of midget Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss. Il Duce had notified Chancellor Hitler that if the Germans marched on Austria, he would march against them. And Hitler backed down in the face of superior Italian strength.

The next year Germany had been the only European country to take Italy's side during the Abyssinian war. The Nazis had supplied Mussolini with munitions and the coal that ordinarily England would have been delivering. And in the Spanish civil war Germans and Italians fought side by side. Italy was wading into the Nazi stream.

This became obvious when Italy calmly watched Austria's doom in March 1938, while her Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg appealed in vain for help. The month before she had made a secret agreement with Hitler for a free hand in Albania if Austria was occupied by Germany without interference.

Schuschniggs' aping in miniature of Mussolini's corporative Fascist state did the Austrians no more good than Il Duce's slavish adherence to Der Führer's racial and foreign policy is helping the people of Italy.

Because of this reorientation of Italian foreign policy, people had a new interest in their northern neighbor. In the garish dining room I was asked a lot of questions about Germany, and I told them about the butter shortage, while Italy still had plenty; about the elimination of overtime pay for factory workers and how they had to drill with SA troopers in addition to their long hours in the shops.

The other roomers included a foppish young bank clerk, an assistant hotel manager and his wife, a bus company official, a bookkeeper in a men's clothing store and his wife, who was cashier in a public bath. There were also several university students.

My most attentive listener was a medical student, Mario Palcini, who had the room next to mine. He seemed about twenty-four years old, a dark Tuscan type with black hair and very lively eyes in an ascetic face. He was tall for an Italian. He drank little and smoked not at all. There was a Fascist emblem in his buttonhole.

Of all the questions that were asked, his were the most intelligent and probing. Several evenings, after the landlady, perpetual cigarette in mouth, had put out the dining-room light as a hint that bedtime had come, Palcini came into my room so that we might continue talking. With no others present, his questions became more probing.

To avoid having to answer fully, I asked a lot of questions about conditions in Italy. He replied with surprising frankness and freely criticized the regime—a serious crime in Italy even before the war.

It must have been the fourth or fifth evening that we had gone into my room to continue talking when he demanded abruptly: "Why did you leave Germany?"

"I have business here. I come to Italy every year for a few weeks."

He looked slowly around the shabby room as if he had never seen it before. "A businessman doesn't come to a place like this. Nor take a six months' soggiorno."

"So the landlady's been talking to you."

He shrugged. "She talks to everybody."

I said: “One may not get money from Germany. I have to live cheaply to make my little money last.”

He went on as if I hadn't said anything: “No loyal German would talk about food shortages in Germany as you do. Italy is Germany's ally now. You wouldn't talk that way in Germany.” He hunched forward on the edge of his chair. “You can trust me. Why did you leave Germany?”

“Oh ... I like it better here . . . it's less warlike.”

“That's still no reason to leave Germany.”

I pointed to the Fascist emblem in his buttonhole. “You're an Italian and a Fascist. Yet you're not afraid to criticize the unpleasant things in your country.”

He said slowly: “You say not every German is a Nazi. Well, not every man who wears a Fascist emblem is a Fascist.”

“But you are a Fascist,” I said. “You don't seem to be the kind of man who would advertise a conviction that he hasn't made his own.”

Palcini let out a bitter laugh. “It was your own German poet Heine who said that a baptismal certificate is the pass to good society. In Italy, the pass to study, to earning a living and a decent life, is the party emblem. Don't forget that.”

Our conversation continued cautiously, until his youthful impatience got a little the better of him. “Look here! Don't you think there are people in Italy who want to bring about real democracy and get rid of this dirty Fascism?”

I said I supposed that every government, even the most perfect, would have a few opponents.

That irritated him a little, which was my intention. “A few! I tell you—there are hundreds of thousands of us.”

“Is that so?”

So, little by little, we came to the point where he admitted belonging to an anti-Fascist

underground organization. His people had heard that the Gestapo had begun to work a little in Italy, and they were looking for someone who could explain its organization to them in detail. That was why he'd been cultivating me. He was convinced I had been ejected from Germany and therefore knew something about the Gestapo.

I did something then I have never done since. I trusted a man completely on only brief acquaintance. I told him how and why I had been ejected from Germany. I was sure the Düsseldorf Gestapo officials had refrained from sending me to a concentration camp because they were convinced I had "friends" in Prinz Albrechtstrasse. But they could and did eject me from Germany into some country where I was defenseless. My activities had certainly aroused the bitter personal vengefulness of the yellowfaced man and the ghastly pale man with dead eyes. I had heard of at least three cases of Germans in foreign countries compelled to return to the Reich only to be thrown into concentration camps. But what I feared most was what I had seen in those dead eyes—the likelihood that I might be finished off some night in a dark street by a knife or bullet, even here in Milan.

Palcini listened to this with his eyes alight. He told me a little more about his underground organization, though in very general terms. I said I would like to work with it. He suggested we have dinner out together the next evening in a near-by osteria that had a special chianti.

I got to the little osteria on Via Gonani at eight-thirty. It was Wednesday, June 7, 1939. It was a dirty place, with two tables out in the street, some brats playing in the gutter, and a long, narrow room with tables along the sides. A few of them were occupied by men in working clothes. The usual pictures of Mussolini and the King hung on the wall. The mistress of the place had a very red face from running in and out of the kitchen in the back.

Palcini arrived a little late and we began to eat. We avoided politics; Palcini chatted about his medical studies; he hoped to be a doctor someday—"But not until those dirty

bastards are gone.”

We were just finishing our meal when a man came in and promptly stepped over to our table. He was poorly dressed and kept his hat on his head. He gave us a partial look at a blue credential card half hidden in his hand and told us to come with him. Very calmly Palcini dropped money on the table for our dinners and we followed the agent out into the street. It was now about ten o'clock.

I caught Palcini's eye. There were two of us and only one detective. I jerked my head to suggest flight. Palcini shook his head violently. We got into a taxi and rode along through the dark streets. The agent sat motionless. I asked him what charge he had against us. He didn't answer.

After less than ten minutes we pulled up in a side street and got out. Palcini paid the driver (in Italy and Germany prisoners always pay the taxi). The detective unlocked the little door in a high blank wall and we climbed a flight of wooden steps to a stone-floored corridor. On the walls I saw the inevitable pictures of Mussolini and the King and beneath them the placard quoting Il Duce about the police. There was a smell of moldy paper and urine, the characteristic of Italian office buildings.

The man who had arrested us pushed me into a small office and locked the door. There was only one light in the room, falling on a battered desk and a lopsided swivel chair. The straight-back nearest me looked hard and uncomfortable. I sat down quickly because my legs got suddenly very weak. I had done nothing so far as the Questura was concerned. But Düsseldorf had a long arm. By the next day I would be on my way back to Germany to sign one of the Gestapo's declarations of “voluntary” return— and then Dachau. My work in Italy was ending before it had even begun.

I was left in that room over two hours, maybe three. I had no intention of going back to Germany. I took out of my pocket my tiny box of potassium cyanide and put it into the secret pocket under my armpit. I waited.

About one o'clock the door opened. The man who had arrested us led me down the corridor—one of those balcony-like affairs overhanging a courtyard—into a larger office. It was lined with shelves.

A man about forty, in a gray suit, sat behind a big desk and began to question me. He was clean-shaven, with small sharp eyes and violent gestures. Over and over again during the questioning he banged on the desk with his fists.

At a smaller desk was a younger man in a black suit. Several times, when the older man's Neapolitan accent got too thick for me, this second fellow came to my rescue with fluent German. For the most part, however, he took down the questions and answers on a typewriter. At least a half-hour went by in questions about my whole life.

Then the cross-examination. The older man began to bang on the desk. Why had I really come to Italy? I was no friend of the Axis.

I denied it, and he became violently angry and shouted that I had already used my short time in Italy to work against the regime.

I denied it. He repeated the accusation, and I denied it again.

At a nod from him the younger official got up and went out and came back with Palcini, who was very pale. He didn't look at me.

The older man read aloud to him the last few questions and my denials. What did Palcini have to say to that?

Palcini said I had tried to involve him in the regime; had spread vicious rumors about Germany, and had severely criticized Italian laws. I had sought contact with an underground movement of traitors to the Fascist government. He went on, repeating details of several of our conversations; all my remarks strung together in the most incriminating way. They gave him a pen and he signed his name to the typewritten record of the examination. Then the taciturn detective took him away again.

They searched me and took everything out of my pockets, including the little box of

potassium cyanide. They must have watched me through the door of that little office. Among the papers in my pocket they found Venturi's letter. The older official read it and grunted.

Then he stood up and informed me that I was guilty of high treason and would be executed at 6 a.m.

Did I have any requests? Yes. I demanded to use the telephone; Venturi would surely help me. The man shook his head and pointed to pen and ink on the desk. "You may write," he said.

I sat down to write and then realized there was nothing I could say. How explain even the simple facts to my good and unsuspecting friend? And what sense was there in writing what I felt? That I'd been trapped like an amateurish fool before I'd done anything. I stood up again. The man handed me back my pack of cigarettes, and then the taciturn detective led me back to the little room.

I heard the key turn in the lock. The room had no windows. The air was lifeless and every time I tried to smoke the cigarettes tasted flat. My head began to ache badly.

At six I would be shot. I had heard how. Palcini had explained it to me in detail one night: how the Questura disposed of annoying cases. A special version of the old Spanish *ley de fuga*—a bullet in the temple and the body left in a deserted park to be found by passersby and listed in the papers as a suicide. This could happen in Germany—worse things were happening there every night—but not in Italy. I hadn't expected a Questura officer to behave like an SS sergeant.

Another two hours went by. Then the door came open suddenly. Palcini stood in the doorway.

"It's all right now," he said in a queer voice. He handed me a small bottle of liquor. "It's all right now," he said again.

I took a drink. It was getting near six.

“What?” I said.

His lips twisted peculiarly. “You’re a cool customer.”

“Did you come here to tell me that?”

“You must understand. The underground tests its friends first.”

The official who had sentenced me was suddenly standing behind him. Yes, yes, he said, Mario was right. This was a test. He himself, he explained, was in charge of this station at night. Downstairs were the regular detention rooms and night detail. They had brought me upstairs through the side door to avoid questions. They were all underground members: Palcini, himself, the younger man, the detective who was really a factory worker.

Palcini put his hands on my shoulders. “I’m sorry we were so hard on you. But we have to be careful.”

I took another drink from the bottle. Suddenly I got bitterly angry and struck Palcini in the face with my fist. He staggered back, staring. The older man was between us then, pinning my arms down at my sides and making small soothing sounds. I got hold of myself again, but I remember I had a violent attack of shivering. We returned to the large office and they gave me back all my effects and papers.

“It was the letter from Commendatore Venturi that convinced them,” Palcini said. “Besides, you were so filled with despair. No *agent provocateur* could act the part so well.”

The others left. Palcini and I went out the side door and into the street. It was just getting light, and I kept shivering. We began to walk home. It really was the police station, on Via S. Nicalao.

In a bookstore window stood large photographs of Mussolini and Hitler on either side of copies of Hugo’s *Les Misérables*.

5. GESTAPO ORGANIZATION

AT TEN O'CLOCK the following Sunday morning Palcini left the pensione. I followed two minutes later. At La Scala I saw him get into a big Mercedes touring car with a German license plate. I got in too and the car started.

There were three other men and a girl. A broad-shouldered man with a thick neck was driving. Next to him sat a slender fellow of about forty-five with a very intelligent face who was constantly sucking a pipe. Palcini and I sat on the folding seats, and behind us were the girl wearing a tan raincoat and a man with a mustache and horn-rimmed glasses.

No one spoke to me except Palcini. He explained that the girl was a Milanese schoolteacher who had been brought along to give an innocent appearance to the excursion. We were using a German car because it commanded more respect on the roads than an Italian; no policeman would think of stopping a German car. It had been borrowed out of a garage operated by one of their co-workers. The Mercedes' owner was at Lake Como; they had only to turn back the speedometer when the car was returned to the garage.

We drove through the suburbs onto the new motor highway toward Monza. After about half an hour's drive we turned off Mussolini's prize highway a few hundred yards before Monza and proceeded up a hill to a small stone inn. It stood flush to the road with a door leading into the main oblong room. Another door led out into a sloping garden where tables were scattered at considerable distance from each other. We sat down at one of them. There were no other guests. The proprietor was an old man with a snow-white mustache and beard trimmed in rakish Garibaldi style, and he seemed to know Palcini. He brought us wine and glasses.

The man with the intelligent face began to talk about Germany and edged up to the question of how and why I had left there. I repeated what I had told Palcini.

The thick-necked fellow said brusquely that I ought to know the Gestapo intimately. Could I explain to them how it worked? Palcini suddenly looked very uncomfortable.

I ignored the thick-necked man and talked straight at the man with the intelligent face: “I don’t like this way of doing things. The other night your Signor Palcini and his friends put me through the third degree and then said it was a test. They were satisfied, they said. On top of that he invited me to meet you. The first thing I see is that you’ve got a German car. You bring me to a Godforsaken place like this. And none of you identify yourselves. You could be Gestapo people. If you are, you know all about me and you’ve made up your minds what you intend to do. If you’re underground people, as Palcini says, you ought to know better than to behave this way. You know who I am. I don’t know who you are. Now either you gentlemen talk, or let’s go back to the city.”

The man with the thick neck was enraged: that was a very dangerous way for me to talk.

No, it wasn’t, I told him. If they were Gestapo, I was done for anyway, and it made no difference how I talked. If they were really from the underground, they knew I was right.

The pipe-smoking man with the intelligent face broke in: “Of course you’re right. Will it satisfy you to hear that your camera lens is waiting for you in Rome? That’s what gave us the idea of talking to you in the first place.”

He was the shrewdest fellow of that lot. He called for a fresh bottle of wine and began to talk about the auto races in Monza. Referring to himself as an automotive engineer from a factory in Genoa, he remarked that he was glad of this opportunity to see his professional colleagues from Turin and Milan—indicating the thick-necked fellow and the quiet man with horn-rimmed glasses.

When the fresh wine came he explained that they were interested in the Gestapo because several of their cells in Milan had reported the presence of Nazi agents. He and

his friends had been told by Palcini that I was well acquainted with Gestapo methods and any warnings I might give them would be keenly appreciated.

The Genoa engineer was graceful in his acknowledgment of my maneuver, but it took the thick-necked man almost an hour of listening to my outline of the Gestapo before he stopped sulking. I don't remember the others saying anything at all.

The exact organization of the Geheime Staatspolizei—Gestapo—is something which only a select few Nazi officials know and which has never been published anywhere. Mueller had been my chief informant.

There are three circles: *Kreise*—the first of which is directed from the main office in Prinz Albrechtstrasse in Berlin and has branches all over Germany. It is the official executive organ of the secret state police for internal affairs, has its own men even in the smallest villages, and supervises local police.

The second circle, Kreis II , with headquarters at Alexanderplatz, supervises Kreis I. In its hands too is the complete domestic censorship of mail, telephone, and telegraph. All phone conversations in a foreign language are recorded, played back, and, if interesting, sent to Alexanderplatz for further disposition. Men are posted at all frontiers and travel bureaus, civil airports and big hotels.

All agents and groups abroad are directed by this second circle. Every three months inspectors go from Alexanderplatz to visit branch offices all over the world. This foreign Gestapo is quite separate from official diplomatic missions, but every legation, ministry, and embassy staff includes a Gestapo man as special liaison officer.

The third circle has a secret personnel whose identity is unknown even to other officials. They are directed, Mueller believed, by Himmler's office, the SS Reichsfuhrer Kanzlei, and their duties are to watch over and report on the first two Gestapo circles as well as all other government officials, including German diplomatic and military envoys to foreign countries.

Such Gestapo men may appear as anything from embassy counsellor to valet in a *Gauleiter's* home; from gardener to headwaiter. In the Palace Hotel at Estoril, Portugal, the room-service waiter on the third floor is a member of the Dritte Kreis.

There was a fourth circle too working out of Alexanderplatz which had just then been expanded. Its duties were to direct the so-called fifth columns in all the countries of the world, and to work in collaboration with the world-wide military espionage division of the General Staff headed by the notorious Colonel Nicolai.

The SS men—black-uniformed troopers of the Gestapo—are trained in various camps, the officers in special Führer schools. Most of these training posts are near concentration camps, especially Dachau. Prisoners whose releases I had obtained often told me they could watch SS men in training from behind their barbed wire. SS troopers and officers are selected for moral and physical suitability, including pure Aryan family trees back to the eighteenth century. They remain in training for two years, and those distinguishing themselves for toughness and brutality are transferred to the special death's-head corps which, among other special duties, acts as Hitler's personal bodyguard.

In addition, the SS has its own flying group, the SSFK—Schutzstaffel Flieger Korps—of forty thousand pilots, which trains outside Berlin, with its own landing fields throughout Germany separate from military and civil airports. The SS also has several armored and motorized divisions, completely equipped except for long-range artillery.

These two hundred-odd thousand SS men are the Nazi party's army for use in the event of a German revolt. Besides being trained for ordinary police work, they are also adept at street fighting and the suppression by force of popular uprisings.

Concentration camps are under control of Prinz Albrechtstrasse. Each camp has its commandant and guards, all SS troopers. Discipline in the camps is on a summary basis; guards are instructed to use their weapons at their own discretion. In extreme cases of so-called insubordination, regulations prescribe hanging a man by his handcuffed hands

behind his back with his toes just off the ground. A strong man can stay alive under this treatment for an hour at most; unconsciousness usually comes in twenty minutes.

There is no form of legal proceeding for those in concentration camps. Hitler's and Himmler's offices have the power of pardon, but it is rarely used. For this reason prisoners often invent ordinary crimes in order to win criminal trials and transfers to jails and penitentiaries.

After they had asked a number of questions, I emphasized to the underground committee that the Gestapo can credit at least 50 per cent of its success to the *agent provocateur* system in catching the people it is after. And that it had developed a new weapon—the deliberately misleading rumor. I had seen dozens of people arrested for reacting too joyfully in public to whispers which later proved unfounded. Rumors are a trap for the unwary.

The pipe-smoking man inquired if I would give them further information about the Gestapo as they required it.

I said I would if I could, but added that I was moving to Rome.

“We will put you in touch with one of our best men who lives there. We would appreciate your repeating to him what you have told us—and warning him if you should see any Gestapo agents you recognize.”

I agreed, in exchange for their promise to help me should I ever need the kind of help they could offer.

Our conference was ended; it had taken about three hours. These men referred to themselves as the Matteotti underground, because a great number of them were followers of the great socialist leader who would have ruled Italy in 1922 if Mussolini had not “marched” on Rome and later had Giacomo Matteotti killed. At the time that was all I knew about their organization.

We began to drive back to the city. We had no sooner reached the motor highway than a

motorcycle policeman roared up from behind and signaled us to stop. Swiftly the chief told me to act as if I were the owner, to speak only in broken Italian, to behave rudely like a Prussian, and threaten to refer everything to the German Embassy in Rome.

We slowed to a stop; the policeman pulled up beside us. I began to bark as instructed, but the policeman only wanted to hand us our lady companion's coat, which she had decided not to wear and had hung over the side. It had fallen off without our noticing it.

We gave the policeman some cigarettes, thanked him very heartily, and drove back to the city, where we separated.

I never saw any of those men again, except Palcini.

6. ITALY THAT SUMMER (1939)

I DINED OFTEN with Venturi, but told him nothing of my adventure with the underground. We discussed business chiefly: whom he would appoint in my place in Germany, what special deals I would handle for him in Rome, how we could be of mutual assistance in numerous other ways.

He planned to take a large house in Rome—he had a high social position to maintain—and invited me to occupy a suite of rooms. But I declined. I insisted it might be harmful to him. He snorted, but didn't press the point.

I would have to make my living in Italy for an indefinite time. It has always been my way to form a picture for myself out of the facts of economic and daily life. Of course I knew the country well as a visitor. I spoke the language and I got along well with the run of people, for I feel very sympathetic with Italians. But now I wanted specific facts, not impressions, and so I spent considerable time with executives of Seta and other businessmen to gather an idea of the situation.

Most of the men I talked with were worried. In four years Italy had gone through two wars, the Abyssinian and the Spanish, and neither had turned out a good investment of either blood or money. And now these men were not certain Italy would remain at peace. If she did, they expected poor business conditions for a time. But if she were again embroiled in war they expected people to spend money freely.

Prices were static for the most part, showing a slight tendency to rise only here and there. Shortages in coffee and coal were looming. English products had of course disappeared from the market since the League of Nations sanctions against Italy during the Abyssinian war. Gasoline had jumped 50 per cent in price since 1935: from three lire

per liter to four and a half.

If anything, the general opinion among business leaders I talked to was that Italy would be pulled into war again, and so they expected better business conditions that winter.

I was inclined to agree with them. If we were correct, it would be a good situation for me. People would be spending, and I might expect that any negotiations I undertook for Venturi would be profitable.

This was a selfish view, of course, for actually, as compared with 1935, Italy's last year of peace, the picture looked gloomy to me.

Taxes had gone up 20 per cent since then, the cost of living eighteen, though wages hadn't been raised a centesimo. The government was saddling itself with ever-bigger deficits because of the sums invested in stringing roads and public buildings across the expanses of Abyssinia and Albania, and because Germany was buying so much of Italy's products without paying for them —through the same kind of clearing agreement which had sucked central European countries into German power. To raise extra money the regime was resorting to capital levies and forced loans; many contractors undertaking work in the conquered territories were compelled for the first time to take their payment part in cash and part in government bonds. Or, if they borrowed against their German bills, they might get only 70 per cent in cash and the rest in bonds.

In an area which is only one thirty-second of Europe, Italy must support the fourth largest population—over forty-two million. Only Germany, England, and European Russia have larger populations.

Despite this crowding—a hundred and thirty-five persons per square kilometer—Mussolini's policy ever since his accession to rule has been to drive up the birth rate to provide explosive power for his empire building. In addition to his own exhortations, often in very bad taste, he has resorted to such extreme measures as forbidding promotion to all unmarried government and Fascist party employees over twenty-five

unless they are physically incapacitated.

Workers, white-collar employees, and higher officials get children allowances ranging from fifty to a hundred and fifty lire per month for each child under fourteen. Families with multitudinous children have some of their taxes remitted; families with twelve children, no great rarity in Catholic Italy, have all their taxes remitted. School tuition fees, too, are remitted—the free elementary schools of six grades take children up to the twelfth year; after that there are lyceums (high schools) and business schools which are very expensive.

Another device of Mussolini's was to forbid emigration and so keep over a million Italians a year at home. Returning emigrants in the preceding twelve years totaled a million and a quarter and all this added up to forty-two million, five hundred thousand. Half of them are peasants, for agricultural Italy is one of the great food exporters of Europe. Of the rest, twelve million are factory workers, four million white-collar employees, another four million government employees, three million in merchandising and services, and a million aristocracy, large landowners and industrialists.

Italy's exports have been chiefly in real and artificial silk, in which she ranked close to the United States. All the time I represented Seta in the Reich my chief competitors were American firms. She also exported hemp, quicksilver, marble, alabaster, wines, olive oil, vegetables, dried and fresh fruits. In 1939 she exported fourteen billion lire worth of such products; her imports of raw materials and some basic food staples totaled twenty billion. The difference was made up by remittances from Italians living abroad, tourist income of about three and a half billion lire, and domestic loans.

But by the summer of 1939 tourism of the old style had fallen off to nothing. I saw great hotels standing empty, for the only travelers in quantity were German knapsack and Strength-Through-Joy excursionists, and they spent only coppers. The usual influx of British, Americans, and French had been scared away by Mussolini's wars.

My own business activity, I knew, would have to be with the luxury class, for the average income of Italians that year was only twenty-three hundred lire as against fifty-two hundred for the French and fifty-five hundred for the Germans. Yet the peasants forming half the population averaged only sixteen hundred lire *per family*.

I think it is one of the astonishing and revealing facts about Italy that the peasantry still lives in a state of feudalism—not theoretical feudalism or feudalism by analogy. A man working a field hardly large enough to produce his bare necessities must work three fourteen-hour days out of every week for his landlord. I have always considered this one of the most important facts keeping Italy fifty years behind the rest of western Europe in political and economic evolution.

But factory workers were not much better off. I made a tour of Milan stores. A ready-made man's suit cost four hundred lire, shoes a hundred and fifty. Yet unskilled laborers in the Seta factory—and that was better than most—were getting only a little over four hundred lire per month. A city family of white-collar workers might have a monthly income slightly above the average; a stenographer might get a hundred and sixty to three hundred lire per month, a high official two thousand. Yet a two-room apartment with kitchen but no bath would cost from two to three hundred lire a month, with an additional ninety to a hundred for gas and light. This would be in the older stone-floored buildings, where rents had been frozen since 1935. In newer buildings, with modern facilities, rents were much higher. Only telephones were still cheap: forty lire a month for unlimited service.

No wonder the children didn't get enough to eat. I always hated to see them on the streets; they all look peaked. And it wasn't only my imagination. A medical survey revealed that in 1939 thirty-five out of every hundred Roman school children under fourteen were seriously undernourished. And this despite the fact that the lira then had a comparatively high purchasing power: it was quoted at nineteen-eighty to the dollar by

the official exchange, Istituto di Cambio Valuta, twenty-four lire for the tourist dollar, and twenty-six lire on the Black Bourse.

The core of the Italian social structure is close-knit family life. So much so that the Anarchist leaders I came to know later—no respecters of established social institutions of any kind—told me they would make the family the key unit of their otherwise institutionless Utopia. The husband and father is master; the wife is housekeeper and has no personal freedom whatsoever. Young girls may not mix freely with young men and their chastity is fanatically guarded.

In the wealthier classes there is, of course, the same sort of freedom after marriage which women of the upper classes enjoy almost everywhere. As in France, the *mariage de convenance* has resulted in the institution of the recognized lover for the wife—the *amante*. The husband often approves the *cnnante* and depends on him to carry out certain social obligations of the house. The poorer classes cannot afford *ménages à trois*.

To me, coming from Germany where food shortages were already commonplace, Italy seemed extraordinarily well off. There was still plenty of spaghetti, though Italy had usually had to import 40 per cent of the white flour she needed for twice-a-day consumption of this staple. I did miss meat, for Germans eat more per person—fifty kilos a year—than any other nation in Europe, while the Italians eat only eighteen. I suppose it's a matter of climate, and in any case there is little cattle-raising in Italy. Sugar too is little used, only about a third as much per person as in Germany and France. But olive oil has always been a prime necessity for cooking and condiment. When I arrived in Milan it was still plentiful.

The chief diversion of urban Italians is going to the movies; every family goes often. In the summer of 1939 theater admissions ranged from one to six lire in the second- and third-run houses, and from four to sixteen in the best.

Because of the Italian passion for films Mussolini a few years ago built his Roman

Hollywood—Cina Città—with the most modern American and German equipment. Various companies rented the studios from the government and made films for Italian audiences. But most of them were very poor. Too, Italy has always been the poorest foreign film market in western Europe; she could pay only the lowest rentals for American, British, French and German films and hence always got them last.

Radio sets are few in Italy, though there are many government-owned stations. The programs were on a comparatively high level, the chief ingredient being opera broadcasts from La Scala in Milan and the Royal Opera in Rome. But few people ever listened to the poorly prepared and boring news and inspirational programs of the Propaganda Ministry.

One reason is that everyone is supposed to stand up while listening to the High Command broadcasts. A man living immediately above a restaurant I later patronized around the corner from my pensione in Rome took advantage of this to revenge himself on his landlord, the restaurant owner, for not lowering his rent. Every day at one—the most important official program—he would put his radio on the window sill directly above the sidewalk tables filled with customers and let the official communique blast into the street. Everyone had to stand up and listen solemnly for ten or fifteen minutes. After one week of that the landlord

not only lowered the man's rent—he threw him out altogether.

Radio listening is largely concentrated in the cities; few can afford to buy even the cheapest sets. A radio costing eight to ten dollars in the United States costs twenty-five dollars in Italy—the equivalent of five hundred lire—or two thirds of the possible income of a family including a factory-working father, a stenographer daughter, a son in the army, and a housekeeper mother. This contrasts with the same radio taking only one thirtieth of the monthly income of a similar American family. And there is a ten-lire monthly tax to pay besides.

Literature, like films and the press, is under censorship, but only to prevent political

heresies. Italy knows nothing of Hitler's fight against expressionists and surrealists; the Fascist party has no official artistic credo. In fact, the best-known painter and sculptor, Marinetti, is a futurist of the first water. Paper-bound books are published in quantity; detective novels at ten lire, better books at forty-five to a hundred. Italy has few magazines; the best is the weekly *Illustrazione* with a circulation of a hundred thousand. Well-to-do women read the American *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*; poor women have no time to read.

When I arrived in Milan the press still had a certain amount of freedom in its comment on Germany—a reflection of Il Duce's conviction that he could outsmart Hitler, and the belief in Fascist circles that Mussolini was the only man in the world who impressed Hitler and whom the Führer permitted to speak with absolute freedom. Nevertheless, many Fascists regarded Germany as Italy's natural enemy; an opinion that was widespread among the people unaware of inner political developments.

Italians have always had a feeling of kinship with other Latin peoples—the Spanish and the French. With the new pro-German orientation it was difficult to break the pro-Latin feeling and turn the French into enemies. This was all the more awkward because enthusiasm for the Spanish war had been whipped up on the basis of helping a fellow Latin nation.

That wasn't the only point on which Germans and Italians were out of sympathy. Germans are fanatically industrious. Italians are not. They take it easy. From one to four all business comes to a standstill. Everything sleeps. You can't buy even a little piece of bread. Traffic policemen disappear from their posts; there is no traffic. The streets are deserted. Official office hours in winter are from nine to one and from three to six. But actually this meant from ten to twelve and from four to seven. In summer these hours are reduced to one session from nine to three.

Prior to the Abyssinian war the eight-hour day prevailed in factories. During that war it

rose to ten hours and today it's twelve—all without any corresponding increase in wages. Venturi told me he would gladly have paid more, but the Corporations Ministry would have stopped him. Besides, he was an exception.

But unemployment was widespread; the government employment offices were crammed every day. The doorways of these offices were flanked by flamboyant posters calling for colonists for Abyssinia and Libya. Thousands of families were simply ordered to go; others went out of hunger and despair.

Unhappily they couldn't eat the buildings and boulevards which Fascism, like every dictatorship, has favored. Whole new quarters were shooting up in Milan practically overnight, and businessmen told me it was the same in other cities. I saw Rome myself later. Government agencies were being housed in new structures of unheard-of luxury and spaciousness, with magnificent interior furnishings and decorations. The sports center in the Forum Mussolini in Rome is an impressive example—Carrara marble benches and hundreds of marble statues.

Mussolini was the first dictator in Europe to build roads, and he has crisscrossed Italy with wonderful concrete highways on which it's a delight to drive, though there are few enough automobiles in Italy to run on them. There are watchmen and caretakers every five kilometers and tolls have to be paid on all of them. But the receipts never paid for the roads and they continue to contribute to the annual budget deficit.

The year 1939 was a good year for the construction business.

The regime was laying out new highways, erecting more public buildings, preparing for the 1942 World's Fair, and planning a subway for Rome; the tunnels were excavated and the tracks laid. Private enterprise was building modern apartments and homes, mostly financed with 25 per cent direct investment by the contractors, 50 per cent on mortgages, and 25 per cent on longterm loans from the government.

However, this is facade, and facade only, for the real poverty of the mass of Italian

people is indescribable. Begging is forbidden by law, yet I was continually accosted by people in miserable tatters. In Trastevere, the workers' suburb of Rome, the children go barefoot even in winter and are dressed only in castoffs. Though Fascism talks a lot about its social consciousness, it has actually done nothing for the great mass of people. They are poor.

But businessmen and government officials have ways of enriching themselves in devious ways. A fortune may be made in a short time. Everything and everybody is to be bought. The principle is so widely recognized that no one thinks anything of it.

It is understood, for example, that a government official awarding a contract must personally get a kickback from the recipient of the award. Venturi told me that in his company's tax reports he listed such payments to officials as "order expenses," which the tax inspectors allowed. The only question they ever asked was whether he had really paid out the amounts listed. On seeing his records, they invariably approved the entries.

Manufacturers, of course, sought a way to recoup such overhead expenses, and in 1939 a scandal broke out in the Air Ministry.

It was discovered that airplane manufacturers were being paid 100 per cent for delivering only 90 per cent. The 10 per cent was being divided between the manufacturers and the official awarding the orders.

This procedure had developed because the government, fixing the prices it would pay, made them too low to allow the producers a decent profit. To avoid discovery, planes were flown from airfield to airfield so that the total, added up, would come out what it was supposed to be. Even Mussolini was fooled and believed his air force to be bigger than it really was.

The conspiracy was discovered and the defaulting companies, chiefly Breda, promised to make up the missing 10 per cent. But they never did. The then air minister, General della Valle, hushed up the whole thing.

But Il Duce could not be fooled again. He and everybody else now knew that arms deliveries were 10 per cent short.

This, then, was the Italy I saw: tired but not exhausted; apprehensive and growing cynical but not alarmed; poor but not destitute—but, above all, still her own master.

I helped Venturi get ready to move and saw him off on the Rome rapido. A few days later, during the first week in July, I bundled up my own effects, told the Questura where I was going, and went to Rome too.

7. ESPIONAGE

IN ROME I went to live in a better-class section of the city. I took a room in a pensione on the third floor of a five-story remodeled palazzo at Via Emilia 38. It cost me four hundred lire per month, including a cup of so-called coffee in the morning but without meals. The other roomers were chiefly clerks and minor government officials. Unlike the place in Milan, this had an elevator. My room overlooked the central courtyard and had a double bed, two wardrobes, a big table, two leather armchairs, and a washstand. It was not wonderful but at least it did not smell of cheap olive oil and cheese and the floors were all marble. And there was a telephone on the wall in the corridor.

Only one block away lay the Corso, all-important hub of Rome's social life. It consists of a bare seven hundred feet of the last straight stretch of Via Vittorio Veneto running from Via Ludovisi and the Excelsior bar up to Porta Pinciana, a gate through the old city wall leading to Villa Borghese and Pincio Park off to the left.

What Friedrichstrasse and Kurfuerstendamm are to Berlin, what the Kaerntnerring was to Vienna and the Rue de la Paix to Paris, Via Veneto is to Rome. At one end is the Golden Gate coffeehouse near the old wall, and between it and Via Ludovisi are the other bars which are the foundation of the Corso's fame—Rosati, Venchi, and Zeppa. Further down, at the lower turn of Veneto, stand the American Embassy and the orientally splendid building of the Corporations Ministry and the remodeled hotel housing the Propaganda Ministry. And there are the finest hotels of Rome: the Excelsior, Ambasciatori, Regina, Flora, Imperiale, and Majestic.

In the Venchi the younger set centers, congregating at the long bar at one side or the counters for chocolates on the other side to flirt from twelve to two and from five to seven

to discuss politics, social intrigue, politics, literature, politics, and politics— for politics is a topic of discussion in Italy to a degree not known in countries with a free press.

The Venchi, which has an extraordinarily pretty cashier, is the only one of the Corso's establishments that has no tables outside. All the rest have tables on the sidewalk, where people sit for hours, greeting friends, gossiping, commenting on passersby.

All of Rome that matters must show itself at least once every twenty-four hours on the Corso. Mussolini's sons and their wives never missed whenever they were in town. Officers, officials, actors and actresses, aristocrats with their beautifully dressed and heavily jeweled women, fill the sidewalks and the tables. Here the ruling class of Italy comes to relax. Rome is a government town and its social life is constructed around the government.

For this reason I knew the Corso would be important for me. Here I could stroll daily, sure to meet people of importance without seeming to seek them out. Here politics, personal and professional intrigue, and gossip are the normal topics of talk. Here rumors begin; here rumors can be tracked down and verified or exploded.

I had arrived in Rome in the evening. The first thing next morning I set out for the Reale Questura Centrale (Royal Police Headquarters) on the Piazza Collegio Romano. On the way, in the courtyard of my ex-palazzo, I found the janitor leaning against the wall. He was a fat old man who kept in his mouth not an evil cigar but an evil pipe. I gave him ten lire drink-money. He took his pipe out of his mouth, spat—not quite as well as his colleague in Milan—thanked me, and resumed his leaning.

At the Questura I showed my soggiorno and reported my new address. A clerk asked me a few personal questions from a form; I signed it and left. When I returned home some hours later the landlady told me the usual detective had been there to question her about me.

Signora Giovanna Zarra was a widow and always wore black; she had a frank look in her

good Roman face and must have been near sixty. A devout Catholic, she discharged her duty to her fellow man by taking a great personal interest in all her boarders. Like the vast majority of Italians, she disliked Fascism, and her comments about the detective were not friendly.

He had asked, incidentally, if I owned a typewriter; she said she thought not. So few private people in Italy own typewriters that a man who brings one from a foreign country is noteworthy. Besides, they may be used for mimeographing seditious leaflets. I didn't want to be noteworthy, so I gave her my machine for safekeeping. She promised to say nothing about it and seemed glad of a chance to obstruct the police.

In the morning when I went out a man was leaning against the wall reading a newspaper. The janitor was smoking his pipe near by. I strolled down the street. No doubt the janitor, a party warden like all janitors, identified me for the Questura man, who folded his paper and came after me.

This went on for three days, and I was forced to waste them all. The weather was hot, and I led my shadow on long walks through the Villa Borghese, Rome's huge central park, commonly called the Pincio. I stayed away from Venturi. The Questura, of course, knew of my former connection with him; but they did not know to what extent our business association had become a personal friendship. My running to him the moment I arrived in Rome would have been stupid.

I was now used to being shadowed. Questura detectives seem to be all alike. They wait before the door, reading a newspaper or peering over its edge. As soon as their quarry appears, they let him pass, then very unobtrusively, which means very obtrusively, fold their paper and stroll after.

I got so used to being shadowed that I could tell without turning if I were being followed. And I learned that with this kind of political surveillance it was wise to be careful. I developed a technique of being followed: never letting the shadow know I knew

he was there, yet being careful not to overdo the apparent innocence. Some shadows are smart and so overdone casualness is dangerous. I learned never to try to elude them except when desperately necessary and that, too, as innocently as possible. In every large Italian city there are Questura agents on all populous corners to watch pedestrians.

In addition to the Questura watch over the people, there is separate surveillance by the Fascist party home-espionage network, exactly as in Germany. Every house has its warden, every street its leader, and every quarter its district secretary. Each week—since the start of the war twice weekly—every warden reports on what he has seen and heard.

I once attended such a meeting in Rome, and I remember one report not at all remarkable for its detail. The agent reporting was the party house warden. . . . He lived at Via Po 130. . . . There was a new tenant in his house, a man from Milan named Francesco, who almost every evening received two male visitors. . . . They came at eight and stayed till eleven. . . . He had overheard them talking about an illegal oil shipment via Naples. . . . Francesco had also offered to sell real coffee to him at a hundred and fifty lire per kilo. . . . That is the kind of information they turn in.

These reports are collected and condensed in district headquarters and forwarded for sifting and collecting to the *Direttorio Nazionale del Partito Nazionale Fascista* at Corso Vittorio Emanuele 116.

In theory this home-espionage system is infallible; it does, in fact, snare many of the unlucky, the unwary, and the betrayed. It seemed to me that the Italian dictatorship was softened somewhat by native carelessness, friends in high places, and corruption. The seal of this native carelessness lies even on their propaganda. I often saw posters so badly printed that they were illegible. Once I saw a poster next to the fashionable motion-picture theater on the Piazza Barberini at the foot of the curve of Via Veneto which had only the top half, its lower part and punch line missing.

After three days I found myself a free man again and went to see Venturi in the

Ministero delle Corporazioni on the lower curve of the Veneto climbing upward from the Piazza Barberini.

This grandiose building, built in 1932, is more a monument than an office structure: an unintentional memorial to the freedom and prosperity of Italy's poverty-stricken voiceless workers. The entrance hall is two hundred feet square; its floor and walls are of varicolored marbles. A twenty-foot-wide staircase of pure black marble leads up to a painted Venetian-glass window at least fifty feet high portraying a voluptuous woman handing a *carta di lavoro* (work card) to a worker in rolled-up sleeves and blue trousers; other figures representing various industries fill out the scene. Right under the window the staircase branches right and left. I took the one to the right leading to Venturi's office, passing many sets of double doors which open and close electrically in response to push buttons.

This building is the heart of Mussolini's so-called corporative state in which each field of activity is organized into a corporation consisting of a confederation of employers and a confederation of employees. These in turn are made up of more specialized groupings of workers and employers called syndicates and federations respectively.

Control over all the corporations resides in the Ministry of Corporations, which has seven major sections: Professionals and Artists, Industry and Handicrafts (of which Venturi was chief), Commerce, Sea and Air Transport, Land Transport and Inland Waterways, Agriculture, and Banking.

Full authority is exercised by the Minister of Corporations appointed directly by Mussolini. The corporations themselves have no independent rights of decision or recommendation to the ministry. The most they may do is submit petitions. It is a system of rigid control from the top.

Each corporation in turn maintains control over the individual enterprises grouped under it by means of twice-yearly inspections by accountants, chiefly to see that no

manufacturer sells his goods at more than 30 per cent over his costs. In the event of violation of this or any other of the numerous regulations the corporation may take over a company for any length of time and install its own man to reorganize it, straighten out the books, or do whatever else is necessary to bring the company into conformity with the law. This "trustee," however, is not a trustee for the government, but for the company stockholders. Once reorganized, the company is turned back to the owners; profits accruing during the trusteeship go to the stockholders.

The corporations are also, at least in theory, concerned with the welfare of the workers. Inspectors of health and working conditions visit member enterprises at frequent intervals; they are all said to be grafters and the *ispettore* jobs are a widely recognized means of distributing largesse among faithful party members. Furthermore, in each plant one of the workers is appointed a sort of guardian and spokesman for the working personnel. In practice, these men are helpless; their jobs are purely honorary. Strikes are forbidden by law; workers may not go from job to job, especially in wartime, and wages are fixed by the corporations.

Every enterprise must belong to its corporation and pay annual dues graded according to the number of employees. Other than this and the twice-yearly inspection there is little control. Neither retail nor wholesale prices are fixed (with some few minor exceptions); nor does the 30 per cent gross-profit rule result in fixed prices, because it is recognized that costs are not uniform from plant to plant.

Until Italy entered the war there was no regulation of raw material purchases by manufacturers and hence there was free competition in selling, with the usual rewards of greater profits to the shrewd, the aggressive, and the able. Now, of course, everything is rationed.

The theoretical sovereign power in Italy is the Senate, composed of representatives of the corporations, the military, aristocracy, and others named to it as a reward for political

services; and the elective Camera dei Deputati, composed of representatives of the syndicates and federations. The total membership exceeds six hundred. The total power is nil because every man is appointed, or in effect chosen, by Mussolini. In twenty years of Fascism, the Italian legislature has never performed a single original act.

The corporative state has neither destroyed nor undermined the finance-capital nature of Italy's economy. There is no socialism in it; or anything else except a strengthening of the capitalist structure, though in somewhat primitive form as compared with the more complex industrial and financial communities of the British Empire, the United States, and Germany before the impact of Hitler's stateism.

Mussolini created nothing; he took only what he found and pressed it into a slightly different shape. He stripped the labor unions of the right to strike and the power to bargain. He expanded already-existing trade associations to cover all business enterprises, turned them into federations and syndicates, and grouped them under his corporations. Profits still go to private investors; the Corporations Ministry is in reality an agency for the protection of investors' interests. There is a slight degree of balance by indirect price control as a measure of consumer protection and anti-inflation insurance.

In other words, the corporative state is just a high-sounding label for a rigid capitalist economy operated on the leader principle: that all power resides in the leader—Mussolini—though he may delegate some of it here and there. Accountability is not from the top down, as in a political democracy, but from the bottom up.

Venturi, as head of one of these seven divisions in the ministry, occupied a smartly and expensively modern office. He welcomed me warmly. Then his first words were: "I suppose you have been here several days—and shadowed again?" and before I could stop him he had picked up the phone and asked for the Questura. He told them that I, an employee of his, had arrived in Rome and if they wanted to know anything about me, they had only to call him, Venturi. He listened to a long reply, thanked the man, and hung up.

“They are not so agreeable here as in Milan,” he said. “You will have to put up with occasional surveillance. It is what that jackass calls ‘regulations.’ ” He smiled a little. “If you are not doing anything wrong, this surveillance should not discommode you.”

I thanked him and said I would make every effort not to be discommoded.

We chatted a while—nothing unusual in Italy where at least half of every businessman’s and official’s working day is consumed by purely social visitors.

A few evenings later Venturi invited me to the palazzo he had rented on the expensive Corso Umberto on which stand the Foreign Office, the homes of many old Roman families, and, at the end, the Palazzo Venezia. At the head of the traditional wide staircase to the second floor there was an enormous salon at least sixty feet long with Venetian mirrors in hand-carved gold frames reaching from ceiling to floor. Light came from several glittering Venetian chandeliers and on one wall was Venturi’s most prized possession, *Descent from the Cross*, by a pupil of Da Vinci. Over the fireplace of Carrara marble hung a portrait of Venturi.

It was not a formal reception. As I recall, there were about fifty people present, Venturi’s closer friends and associates who had gathered to signalize his presence in Rome and his accession to a new government post. I found that I knew about a dozen of them already from my visits to Rome in previous years. Venturi introduced me to many of the rest: men in uniform from the War and Navy ministries, men in white ties from the corporations, Interior and War offices, and a few men in the sleek uniforms and black shirts of the Fascist party.

I remember that plump, stupid Bruno Mussolini, wearing mufti, and his pert, over-made-up wife, came and stayed about an hour. Some of the women were extremely handsome. A number of bridge and poker games started in the large library, where stood an enormous semicircular desk with an inlaid surface depicting scenes from the life of Christ. Against one wall was a large bookcase of the same sixteenth-century

workmanship. In the dining room, all paneled in black wood, the liveried servants were busy behind the buffet tables. In the black-leather-furnished smoking room men were talking the inevitable politics and strategy.

There I found an old acquaintance, Luigi Marotti, whom I had first met when he had been Venturi's private secretary in Milan in the early thirties. Beginning his career as a d'Annunzio legionnaire in the Fiume coup of 1919 at the age of seventeen, he worked for Seta S.A. until the Abyssinian war, when he had become a pilot. After that, as a good fighting Fascist, he went to Spain as a volunteer for Franco, had been wounded twice, ending with a long hospitalization in Burgos. Fascism had rewarded him on his return by appointing him *Federate* of the province of Ravenna. His duties were to run the party and to supervise the government prefect.

He had an official car now, he said, and drove to Rome at least twice a month. Jokingly he invited me for a drive with him the next Sunday. I begged off. I had once ridden with him years before and he had the Latin's usual passion for reckless speed.

I was interested in the fighting in Spain and Marotti was full of what he had seen. He said the German Condor Legion had experimented with small bombing planes that dived and that they were a great success.

I said I didn't understand what a dive bomber was; how could a plane plummet downward without plummeting right on into the ground?

He laughed tolerantly and explained that flaps on the wings and a special device on the tail retarded speed, and that the Germans had sent many of them to Spain to test their low-altitude bombing efficiency under real fighting conditions.

How could Germany send planes to Spain when she had so few herself? I wondered.

This was not true, he replied with a touch of self-importance. Only a few weeks before he had attended a banquet given in Rome to General Erhard Milch of the Luftwaffe and had been seated next to Lieutenant General Hofmann von Waldau, German air attache in

Rome, who had given him the following figures on the Luftwaffe as of May 1939, one year and three months after the Austrian Anschluss and three months before the beginning of World War II :

Nine thousand first-line planes, two hundred thirty thousand officers and men, plus ninety thousand trained men of the NSFK (National Socialist Flying Corps). The flight districts of Germany were Berlin, Braunschweig, Mannheim, and Vienna, with nine hundred airfields. There were twenty-nine airplane companies with fifty-one plants employing two hundred forty thousand workers. The chief plane types of the Luftwaffe were the Messerschmitt 109F with a speed of 316 mph, Heinkel 112 with 310 mph, the Junkers 87, and the Heinkel HE 118.

I expressed surprise that Von Waldau should have talked so frankly. Marotti laughed pridefully. The Germans were anxious for their new ally to know how strong she was and besides he, Marotti, was not only a district governor and Fascist leader, but also a relative of the Italian Air Minister General della Valle. But of course the figures were extremely confidential.

Later, when secret information became the goal of so many of my conversations, I analyzed this one with Marotti. My part in it had been very innocent, yet he had revealed valuable information. The innocent line of questioning formed a model I would often employ later.

This banquet to Milch was the first overt sign of German penetration of Italy, for he came on May 25, 1939, as a result of the Axis treaty of May 22 which provided for the exchange of military missions between the two countries. Milch is a brilliant airforce organizer and had for some years already been Goering's right-hand man. But Milch is a Jew according to Nazi racial laws; he has some Jewish blood. When informed of his favorite's racial background Goering paraphrased the famous remark of Karl Lueger, Vienna's mayor of the nineties: "I am the one to decide who is a Jew!" and added calmly:

“Milch is an Aryan.”

A few weeks later Venturi introduced me into the Circolo della Caccia (Hunt Club), the finest club in Italy. I held a guest card and paid sixty lire per month.

The Caccia occupies its own spacious building on the Piazza Borghese off the Corso Umberto near the Cavour Bridge over the Tiber. It has the typical grandiose stairway of marble and its servants are liveried in maroon. All the armchairs in the gaming and lounge rooms are upholstered in velvet. Only the smoking room is furnished in so-called English style with black leather furniture. The wonderfully managed cuisine is under the temperamental direction of Luigi, one of Italy's most famous chefs; his salary is higher than a cabinet minister's. The outstanding piece of decoration is a seventeenth-century Gobelin tapestry of a falcon hunt hanging in the otherwise modernly furnished grand hall.

The membership includes old aristocracy, high officers, government and party leaders. Foreign Minister Count Galeazzo Ciano gave most of his political dinners there. Starace, Tassinari, Badoglio were often there. These men made laws and rules for the rest of Italy and came to the Caccia to flout them in friendly surroundings.

In every public place in Italy there are two placards. One says: *Qui non si parla di politica et alta strategia*—Here one does not talk about politics and high strategy. The other bears the face of a steel-helmeted soldier with a finger to his lips, and the words: *Tace, tace, tace!*—Be silent, be silent, be silent!

These two placards are very largely ignored except under the very noses of the Questura. Everybody talks politics.

The spirit of these two placards is especially flouted in the Caccia, where men gather every evening to discuss political events, criticize the government and, as happened later, to hatch a plot against the regime.

Poker is the favorite game at the Caccia, though prohibited by law as a game of chance.

Ciano himself played often—always for extraordinarily high stakes and always losing. I played little myself; I couldn't afford it.

This is where I made the acquaintance of Grand Ufficiale Count Roberto Pinelli, who held a post in the State Undersecretariat of the Ministry of War, a permanent post not subject to changes dictated by inner Fascist politics.

He was then in his middle forties, with a little black mustache which he would stroke thoughtfully while talking. Of a top-ranking aristocratic family, he was personally very elegant and fastidious. He had studied in Heidelberg, spoke German perfectly, and had a clear grasp of Germany's domestic problems. But he was no Germanophile.

He played little poker either. We became very friendly on discovering a mutual enthusiasm for the writings of Thomas More. He invited me to dine with him the next evening in his villa on the Monte Mario, where much of Rome's super-suburban elegance is concentrated on the heights overlooking the Tiber.

He was a widower and occupied the twenty-room house alone with his sixteen-year-old son. He took special pleasure in showing me all through the place; its furnishings revealed him to be a man of taste, with a leaning toward Renaissance furniture. One wall of the entrance hall was completely covered by a seventeenth-century Gobelin tapestry of the birth of Venus from her shell. The baroque chairs were from a cloister refectory. His father had been a counsellor in the Italian Embassy in Paris before World War I and had bought the chairs when the French government had auctioned off so much church property. A carved wooden staircase led up to a gallery on which the family rooms opened; bedrooms were on the third floor. The smoking room was furnished in old English style and the dining room in old Tuscan with ebony chairs of the sixteenth century upholstered in genuine Gobelin. From here three huge french windows led out onto a terrace. His walls were hung with numerous examples of the early Florentines and he was proud of a tureen made by one of Cellini's tempestuous pupils. The household,

besides himself and the boy, consisted of a butler, gardener and wife, two maids, and a cook.

His outstanding personal foible was shoes. In one of his closets I saw on a subsequent occasion over a hundred and fifty pairs. He wore different shoes every day and always bought at least one pair of the newest style or fad.

He was in every way a delightful man and companion, alert, tolerant, intelligent, and shrewd. Like every Italian he was sentimental, sometimes to the point of morbidity. On the wall of his dining room hung a large oil portrait of a beautiful woman, tall and slender with reddish-brown hair. Her features were softer than those of most Roman women. It was Pinelli's wife. I remarked that she looked almost Viennese. He said she was Venetian.

Then he took me to the last room in the house, that which had been his dead wife's. It had been touched only for cleaning since she had died five years before.

Standing in the eerie dimness, I felt as if Pinelli and I were characters in a novel. Yet he was a serious and sincere man; his devotion to the memory of his wife was genuine.

My favorite place in the house became the terrace, sixty by thirty feet and bordered by flowers. There were a number of small tables, large striped sun umbrellas, and a portable bar. Immediately below wound the Via Trionfale, and we could see most of Rome spread over its seven hills, and in the evenings we could often hear the Angelus being tolled by the bells of the Vatican a couple of kilometers away.

That first evening we talked about Renaissance painting and furniture, his absorbing interests. That led us afield into history, books, foreign cities, music. For the first time since Klar had been sent to concentration camp I could talk like one civilized being to another. This was possible with Pinelli though in his lapel he wore the founder emblem of the Fascist party—a tipped square with the fasces diagonally across it—which meant he had been a member since 1919. But for a veteran Fascist he had moved considerably away, I was to learn, from the then-current policy of alliance with Germany. And when he

discussed politics, diplomatically and circumspectly, I caught hints of his underlying hope that Fascism could and would eventually lead to the spiritual consolidation of Italy and the adoption of democratic principles. Of course he was very guarded in his remarks, but he knew perfectly how to convey his meaning by adroit choice of words and significant pauses.

One afternoon in early August I was sitting in the Cafe Aragno on the Corso Umberto, a popular gathering place of senators and deputies, Foreign Office employees and newspapermen. A man I had known quite well in Berlin came in. His name was Richard Sprago and he was a citizen of a great democratic nation. We had become very friendly in Berlin, where he had lived in 1935 and 1936 in order to perfect his German, for he was a studious linguist.

He was a tall, blond fellow with horn-rimmed glasses and a very intent look. The pipe he was smoking was the same he had always had in Berlin—a curved ivory stem with the leering face of an old woman carved on the bowl. He told me that for the past two years he had been attached to his country's legation in Rome.

“I suppose you're in Rome on business,” he said.

“In a way.”

“I'm surprised you haven't got into serious trouble with the Nazis—the way you feel about them.”

“That's why I'm not going back to Germany this time. I am working here now.”

His blue eyes rested on me studiously. “I see.”

We began to talk politics, in general the Axis treaty of alliance of May 22, between Germany and Italy. And in particular about paragraph three which bound each signatory to go to war to aid the other. At this time Germany's propaganda about Danzig was getting up full steam; the threat of war against Poland made it sinister. Sprago said he was unable to see how Italy could help Germany very much in a Polish war.

I said Italy was not going to help Germany at all. That had been settled at the meeting of Hitler and Mussolini.

“What meeting?” Sprago asked in surprise.

“The first of July at the Brenner Pass.”

He stared at me. “How do you know about that?”

“Didn’t you know about it?”

He took a long time to relight his pipe. “What happened there?”

I told him what I had learned from one of the guarded narratives of Pinelli, who was a member of Mussolini’s staff, at the meeting of the two dictators: that Mussolini, though an independent and equal Axis partner, had told Hitler that Italy was not ready for a third war on top of the Abyssinian and Spanish conflicts, and that therefore he was ready to promote a “Munich” peace over the Polish question. Hitler had rejected the Munich idea, whereupon Mussolini had countered with another proposal: to forestall a two-front war by neutralizing Russia with a Russo-German mutual non-aggression pact. Mussolini had begun to urge this idea on Colonel-General Hermann Goering when the latter had visited Rome; on Il Duce’s instructions Ciano had urged it on Von Ribbentrop at their meeting in Milan, later in Berlin, and finally in Salzburg. He believed Russia would accept such a pact because she was still angry at France and Britain for having been ignored at Munich. Mussolini’s insistent advice infuriated Hitler, who at once contemptuously released Mussolini from the war clause of the Axis treaty.

Sprago said: “Not a word of that meeting has been published.”

“Of course not. But surely you don’t depend on newspapers for your information.”

Again he took a long time to relight his pipe; the thing was forever going out. He said: “It is impossible for us to find reliable people. Our information comes only from the government offices, the Propaganda Ministry, and the newspapers. We hear rumors, of course, but we have no way of finding out if they are true or false. We are in a very silly

position.” He stopped and then added slowly: “I suppose quite a number of people in the government know about this secret meeting of Hitler and Mussolini.”

“Not many.”

“Where did you hear about it?”

“ . . . I heard it.”

He blew out a great cloud of smoke. “I suppose you hear other things too.”

“Yes.”

“Are you positive your information is correct?”

“Yes.”

“I suppose you and I will be seeing each other more or less frequently—socially. If you should hear anything else of interest to us—”

“I’d be very glad to . . .”

We left it at that.

8. THE ITALIAN UNDERGROUND

ON THE PIAZZA COLONNA, across the street from the Palazzo Chigi housing the Foreign Office, is an arcade, a huge covered bazaar in which there are two bars—as coffeehouses are called in Italy—a number of stores, and a motion-picture theater. One of these two coffeehouses was the favorite meeting place of German émigrés, and I spent many mornings there to refresh old acquaintanceships or make new ones. I went there the morning after seeing Sprago.

Unofficial dean of the émigré corps was the bitterly anti-Nazi Franz Kerbel of Czech origin but legally a German. For twenty years he had had one of the finest jewelry establishments in Rome. He was, in fact, the favorite jeweler of government and party people and had the special sympathy of Countess Edda (Mussolini) Ciano though he was no longer a young man. Business was good, and Kerbel had an open hand for all émigrés of whose anti-Nazism he was convinced.

Before long he arrived for his usual midmorning breakfast, cigar in mouth as always, ignoring the ashes that sprinkled his clothes, the tablecloth, and the floor. He was then about forty-eight years old, big and strong and heavy-set with very thick dark blond hair and an expression of the greatest friendliness.

He would be particularly useful to me because he had personal relationships with so many men and women prominent in society or in important posts. This was a result of shrewdly extended credit and the fact that when he sold a piece of jewelry to a man the name of its ultimate recipient was not to be learned. He came over to my table and I arranged to dine with him.

We met that evening in his more secluded *ristorante*, where they knew how to prepare

his pork and sauerkraut with dumplings in proper Prague style.

I told him I had an idea how we could do some practical anti-Axis work. There was a lot of important political information to be gathered by men such as he and I—if there were any point in so doing.

He said: “Three or four people working cleverly together here in Rome might be very valuable to one of the anti-Axis powers. But it is dangerous.” He was letting his coffee cool and his friendly eyes were resting on me noncommittally.

I hinted broadly that I knew how to insure the information reaching an important anti-Axis power.

He was silently thoughtful a long time before he said: “If that’s true, it would be more than satisfactory. From time to time I have passed information to journalists from democratic countries. They’ve sent their stories out through Switzerland to get around the Italian censors, and the information was printed in their papers. But it is not too satisfactory. There are so many technicalities in newspaper making.”

I said I could promise that information would be properly evaluated.

He puffed on his cigar for several seconds, as if waiting for me to go on. I said: “You understand there is no money to be made in this.”

He raised his bushy eyebrows. “No? Why not?”

“Do you want money for it?”

He shook his head slowly from side to side without saying anything.

“Neither do I.”

Presently he said: “There’s a girl in Rome you must meet. She has the finest possible connections with the Propaganda Ministry. . . . And she’s very good-looking.”

“That helps.”

A half inch of cigar ash fell on his vest but he paid no attention. “I’ll have her here for some more *Schweimbraten mit Sauerkraut und Knodel* two nights from now. Meet us at

eight o'clock.”

Kerbel had not exaggerated when he said Ingrid Soederberg was very good-looking. Swedish, about twenty-eight years old, she had already been in Rome for two years as correspondent of the Stockholm *Aftonbladet*. She was a bitter hater of the German dictatorship, but remained at her post even after Goebbels had secretly bought control of the *Aftonbladet* early in 1939 and turned it into a Nazi mouthpiece. She was charming, and her ash-blonde hair and light blue eyes certainly had powerful attraction for Italian men.

As I was soon to discover, she used her good looks in a coolly calculating and intelligent way to obtain or confirm information from her friends in the Propaganda Ministry. Her husband, she said, was an official of a co-operative society in Stockholm and came to Rome only three or four weeks a year.

She too was dissatisfied with the procedure she and Kerbel had been following: of giving information to her free-press colleagues. It was dangerous for her; but, more important, it was impossible to be sure that the information would be properly followed up by the intelligence and counterespionage services of the anti-Axis countries.

These two, Kerbel and Soederberg, were deliberate and open collaborators of mine. That means: we were aware of what we were doing, though I never went into detail about my connections. I acquired only one more collaborator of this type.

In addition, I had Commendatore Venturi and Count Pinelli as sources of information or, as more often happened, confirmation. Neither one ever suspected that I became an espionage agent. I will have something to say later about the attitude of these men and of the underground toward their own government and the future of their country. This attitude is the vital key to Italy's fate.

First by accident, afterward by means of scrupulously careful scheming, I moved in the most important circles in Italy: the government and party leaders embracing ministries,

army, navy, and the party itself. Through Kerbel and Soederberg I had lines running into sectors where I did not move myself. Much of our attention necessarily would be fixed on Germans. Therefore, paradoxically, it was an advantage to be in Rome, not Berlin.

The German character has a tendency to become arrogant and boastful when it is on top. And conditions in Italy were developing toward that point; Germans in Italy today feel themselves the real rulers of the country. All of them, from Ambassador von Mackensen down to the German cleaning woman in the embassy. Germans in Italy have something of the air of the proverbial English tourists in France, who talk insultingly about the French in their own language and are only mildly surprised if they are understood. Really, their expressions say, what does it matter if they do understand? They are only foreigners.

By adroit conversational maneuvers it is possible to make these “Allies” talk freely—to encourage their boastfulness by a mixture of admiration and provocation. This is more or less true of all human beings; the special problem was that my efforts had had to be directed at people whose talk had authority.

So I developed a special character for use among the highly placed people I was meeting. After all, I had none of the assets of a Mata Hari. So I played the role of a man who understands nothing at all of politics, of armies, navies, or airplanes; in short, a political idiot—the old reporters’ trick. My incredible ignorance provoked people—Italians as well as Germans—into giving me detailed explanations of matters I wanted to know, delivered either in exasperation or in the soothing, well-spaced tones of a man explaining something to a cretin. To carry this off I had to plan every conversation in the greatest detail, word for word, even to facial expressions. Once, faced with an extremely risky assignment, I spent most of three days in bed in order to map out a certain conversation in such a way that it would go, in all innocence, exactly as I wanted it to.

Thus, except with Venturi and Pinelli, I acquired the reputation of being a woman-chaser with not the dimmest idea of international events. People even marveled to my

face that I was able to earn a living.

With my two closest friends, of course, I neither could nor wanted to play the fool. I respected their intelligence too much and Venturi knew me too well.

Palcini had given me a letter of introduction to the underground's contact man in Rome. The envelope was addressed to Carlo Bellini, at one of the ministries. One of the first days I was sure I was not being shadowed I went there and was shown into a small private office occupied by a man about forty-five years old, of middle height, clean-shaven, and slightly gray at the temples. I handed him the letter. He read it.

"I have been expecting you," he said. He lighted a match and set fire to the letter, catching the ashes in an envelope. When it was completely burned he went into the adjoining lavatory. I heard the toilet flush. He came back without the envelope.

I told him where I was staying and we arranged to have dinner together the same evening. During our meal we talked only generalities, but when we were having fruit and coffee he asked:

"Why did you leave Germany?"

"For business reasons, and for the reasons I told Palcini."

With deceptive candor he said: "It's extraordinary that a plain businessman should interest himself in getting prisoners released."

I shrugged.

He got up, went into another room, then brought a small flannel-wrapped object and handed it to me. It was the camera lens I had sent via underground from Düsseldorf to Rome. It struck me funny. "Everybody in Italy seems to know about this lens."

Bellini sat down again. "I asked the messenger to bring it here this afternoon because you were coming for dinner. I suppose you know that's what focused our attention on you in the first place."

So I had been told in Milan, I said. But why? Camera lenses couldn't be so rare, even if it was illegal to own a camera.

"Because it came via the underground." Bellini was picking his words. I said nothing. He went on: "How did you come to know so much about the Gestapo?"

He was conducting his own test. I said: "It began with the arrest of my best friend."

"And after that?"

"People simply came to me because they needed help."

He was silent for several seconds. Then: "You will understand that we have friends in Düsseldorf. And we have been able to learn in the Questura what you reported to them in getting your soggiorno. You helped two hundred and forty-two people out of camps."

"That's right. So I told Palcini."

Bellini leaned forward a bit. "There's something else you didn't tell him. Many of the people you helped were prominent businessmen, lawyers, a doctor or two, schoolteachers, and so forth. But you also helped several factory workers, a night watchman in a warehouse, a railroad switchman, several truckmen. You are a businessman. I can understand how you would help the professional people—your friends and connections. But how did you come to help those workers? And how did they come to you?"

"They simply came. I got a reputation for helping, that's all."

Bellini said reflectively: "Don't you think it's odd that a man like you should be helping factory workers and truck drivers?"

They were human beings too, I said.

"You sent your camera lens by an underground man. How did you come to know him?"

"He was a relative of one of my friends."

Bellini's lips smiled. "You don't want to talk about your connections in Germany, do you?"

"No."

He adopted an expansive mood. “Of course the underground in Germany is not strong, is it?”

I said I didn’t think so.

He sighed. It was clear that he had arrived at much the same conclusion as had Mueller: that I had not worked on my own. He never probed again in this way.

Thereafter I saw Bellini frequently. I began to learn something about Italy’s anti-regime underground movements.

It consisted of two large groups, one the so-called Matteotti group and the other the Communist-Anarchist.

The Matteotti is in fact a people’s front, for it embraces political persuasions ranging from social democrats on the left over to and including the aristocracy on the right. Its philosophical rallying point was originally the principles advocated by the socialist Giacomo Matteotti, Mussolini’s biggest rival and who was therefore assassinated by the Fascists after the march on Rome. It is no longer a movement *for* any set of principles as much as *against* the regime. This unity was quite far along by the time I arrived in Italy and its membership of three hundred thousand reached into Fascist circles, into the Questura, and especially into the student body of Italy—supposedly the nucleus of Fascism. Its leadership is responsible and must be taken seriously.

The smaller group had grown out of a union of Communists and Anarchists. The Stalinists are strongest among the workers in Lombardy, with a small admixture of students and teachers. The Anarchists, who yearn for a “stateless” state, have their chief strength in the south, especially Sicily. They are largely fanatics, fond of the knife as a weapon of argument. The Communists were always having trouble settling the blood feuds that broke out among their allies. The combined party contains quite a few nuts and therefore is not as responsible an organization as the Matteotti. In 1939 it numbered perhaps a hundred thousand and was organized on the cell system.

From Bellini I got a picture of the Matteotti organization.

For administrative purposes they divided Italy into three regions: the first embracing Italy's northern industrial nexus, from the Italo-French, German, and old Yugoslav frontiers to the line Genoa-Padua-Venice with headquarters in Milan. The second region continues south to the line Rome-Chieti-Pescara with headquarters in Rome; and the third all of southern Italy with a branch in Cagliari, in Sardinia, and headquarters in Naples. The branch in Tripoli is under the jurisdiction of the second region.

Main headquarters of the whole movement are in Rome, which is also headquarters of the second region, center for the leading action committee and springboard for the colonial underground movement.

The organization is headed by the Circolo Primo (First Circle), consisting of six men. The First Circle lays down general policy and strategy. It gives its orders to the Circolo Secondo (Second Circle), which is the action committee. It is Second's task to work out and execute the tasks assigned to it by First. It in turn controls the Circolo Terzo (Third Circle), the organization of cells in every factory and town.

In actual procedure the First Circle gives Second a definite assignment: to organize an illegal strike in Turin, for example. Instructions are conveyed through contact men changed at frequent intervals, for Second is not permitted to know the identity of the members of First.

I cannot disclose the actual methods of communication between the Circles, for they are still actively at work. Bellini was a member of the Rome Second Circle, and I often witnessed the transmission of assignments from First to him. There are also ways in which Second can call on First for help or advice in an emergency.

The Third Circle is made up of small cells in factories, villages, business and government organizations. It keeps in contact with

Second through organizers and propaganda agents, who are moved from cell to cell at

the direction of Second. These agents are changed at intervals and are the means by which Second sends instructions, money, weapons, sabotage material, etc., to Third. While the members of Second are chosen by First from the ranks of Third, I do not know of any possibility of advancement from Second to First.

The propaganda agents are trained by Second and their duties include organizing new cells, distributing newspapers, handbills, pamphlets, and so on. It is necessary for them to move around from factory to factory and from city to city. Under war conditions such changes of jobs were forbidden by law, and it fell to me ultimately to help solve this difficulty.

Bellini told me the underground has always refused to connect itself with any anti-Fascist organization abroad. The movement did not trust people who sat far away in safety. Foreign groups were regarded by Bellini and other Matteotti leaders as nothing but the paid handymen of foreign powers seeking to use Italy for purposes of their own. Bellini, like most of the underground leaders a fanatic on the subject of Italian freedom, believed that the transformation of Italy into a democratic sovereign state could happen only from inside, as the result of long and dangerous work. The only contacts abroad of the Matteotti underground are agents who are chiefly couriers or observers and news gatherers. After the triumph of the underground movement in Italy, Bellini assured me, none of those people who sat far away in safety would be taken into collaboration in Italian reconstruction.

The Matteotti underground publishes a thrice-weekly newspaper, *L'Italia Libera* (Free Italy). With handbills, posters, and other matter, it is printed in print shops, changed with each issue to another city. The editorial board consists of members of the Circolo Secondo from all three regions. The Communist-Anarchist group has no newspaper, but issues handbills at regular intervals.

The Matteotti underground uses three short-wave transmitters, but only for

interregional communication, not for propaganda broadcasts. I do not want to reveal, until after the war, any of their other means of communication or of safeguarding themselves against government espionage and *agents provocateurs*. The test that was used on me may give an idea, however.

Penetration of the regime has gone so far that one of the largest party organizations has become virtually a branch of the underground. It was long, slow work, Bellini said, but as early as May 1939 it had gone so far that the underground practically controlled the national headquarters of the organization, as well as having its members liberally peppered throughout Italy. It would be unfair to reveal which Fascist organization this is, as it will have a key role when the regime falls.

Although opposition to Mussolini did not die with Matteotti, the underground movement was dormant until 1935. The Abyssinian war gave impetus to the latent forces which have since been coalescing into formidable organizations.

I said to Bellini: “Your use of the word *circolo* interests me. Italians use it usually for clubs, don’t they? Like the Circolo della Caccia, for instance. It means ‘circle,’ a small group. But in Germany the word *Kreis* (circle) is used in the army to denote military districts. And in the Gestapo it is used to denote various layers of the organization on a large scale. Your use of *circolo* in a non-Italian sense makes me think there’s a German organizer somewhere in your Circolo Primo. Detailed organization is a German, not an Italian, forte.”

Bellini chuckled and said nothing.

I asked him why the two great undergrounds had not united.

He said the subject had been much discussed, that meetings of leaders had been attempted, and that the Matteotti had always wanted union. But the Communist-Anarchist group, especially the Communists who were strong among the Naples harbor workers, had obstructed it for fear of losing their identity in a larger organization. Also the

Matteotti people were too conservative and withheld concessions they could easily have given. I urged Bellini that another attempt ought to be made; I offered to help in the negotiations.

Soon it was apparent that Bellini had reached the unaided conclusion I had come from the German underground. The hint came in a conversation with Pinelli.

We were sitting on his terrace after dinner. After a lull in the conversation he said: “I find it hard to believe there is not a strong underground movement in Germany.” He didn’t look at me.

“Perhaps.”

“And I would imagine there is one in Italy too. Don’t you think so?”

I replied that it was possible.

He looked sidelong at me. “I’m sure there is a strong underground movement here. And frankly, I could understand such people. It’s quite possible they will have an important role in the Italy of the future.”

“No doubt.”

“Of course,” he said, looking away from me again and speaking casually, “not every man who has the confidence of the underground would be trustworthy. But certain men—yes.”

That was as far as he went. But this hint was all I needed to see that somehow Bellini—the underground—must have given him to understand that I was all right. He certainly had no direct or formal connection with them. But I was certain that he knew of their existence and helped them whenever he could without compromising himself.

Bellini took me up on my offer to help in unification negotiations. He consulted the Rome Circolo Primo, and a message was sent to the Naples Circolo Secondo leader, Enrico Certosi, proposing a meeting with the Communists there who were led by one Carlo Soboni. In a few days we were told that the meeting could be held July 16 in Naples and that Soboni would not object to my presence. We were to go to Naples and meet

Certosi, who would lead us to the place of meeting.

At 7 a.m., July 16, Bellini and I, occupying separate compartments, took train for Naples, three hours away on the faster Formia route. There was no difficulty in Bellini's getting the day off; government office hours at this time were from nine to three, and almost any official could take time at will without being subjected to scrutiny as he would be in Germany, England, or the United States.

At ten we left the train in Naples, still keeping separate, but within sight of each other. I watched Bellini. He looked around the station, but no one came to meet him. After half an hour's wait we drifted outside. Bellini walked behind me and in a low tone told me to go into town. Something had gone wrong. He would find out and meet me at twelve.

At noon I was back in the waiting room. Bellini came in and with a motion of his head indicated that I should follow him. He went into the men's room. We stood side by side before the bowls, staring at the wall like strangers to each other. He murmured that one of his men, a railroad worker, had learned that a considerable number of men of both underground organizations, including Certosi and Soboni, had been trapped that morning by Questura agents and arrested. He had not been told whether the police had known about the meeting.

We returned to Rome by the next train.

That same evening I went to see Pinelli.

When I found the proper opening I said: "Did you hear about -the arrests in Naples this morning?"

"No. Of what sort?"

"Underground workers, I think."

"Among the dock workers, I suppose."

"I think so."

He made a grimace of distaste and asked: "How did you find out about those arrests?"

“I happened to be in Naples this morning, with a friend of mine. I understand there was supposed to be a meeting of underground leaders there.”

“Oh.” He took a few reflective steps around the room. “Of course I don’t know any of those people. But I should imagine they are an irresponsible lot. Especially the Naples harbor workers. Violent, heedless men . . . For anyone to mix himself up with that crowd is a great mistake. It is stupid and dangerous.”

I said I didn’t know anything about the violence or the heedlessness of the Communists in Naples. But some men I did know had gone to Naples to attend the meeting. The question that interested me was whether the Questura had learned anything about the scheduled meeting, and whether they had found any connection between the Naples people and Rome.

He drew a deep breath, as if he were annoyed. He would let me know what he could find out.

Bellini reported the mishap to the Rome Circolo Primo; we imagined that a new Circolo Secondo was being set up in Naples to replace Certosi and his colleagues. But no news came from Naples either.

On the eighth day I saw Bellini. He told me that the Naples arrests had swept in fifty men in addition to Certosi and Soboni. They had all been sentenced to ten years in the notorious Sardinian penal camps, where the prisoners worked the coal mines; many died because of the unaccustomed hard labor and primitive sanitary conditions. There were suicides every day.

On the ninth day Pinelli told me that he had seen the list of suspects still sought by the Questura in Naples. Neither Bellini’s nor my name was on the list; the names were all those of Naples workers.

Pinelli’s final comment was: “I have no sympathy for those men. They are Communists.

They're Italians but I doubt if they're interested primarily in Italy. They get their orders from Moscow."

We talked no more about it. I felt I had been properly reprimanded.

But Bellini and I didn't give up the idea of eventual union of the two undergrounds.

9. THE GESTAPO ABROAD

BY MID-AUGUST I was ready to see Sprago. He suggested I come to his legation office to meet a friend of his.

I said no; it would be wiser to come together as if accidentally in a public cafe. I suggested the Aragno again.

We met that afternoon. Sprago's friend was a man of about fifty with a small toothbrush mustache and keen, intelligent eyes. Despite civilian clothes he was obviously a soldier. He was the military attaché and I will refer to him hereafter only as the Colonel.

He went straight to the point. "We can use reliable information . . . I'm glad you're in a position to give it to us."

I said I had three conditions. The first was that whenever I requested it, my information be forwarded to the British and the French. I might be coming into possession of certain military and naval data which would be useful to them.

After a moment's consideration the Colonel agreed.

My second condition was that he never ask me what my sources of information were.

The Colonel glanced at Sprago, who said: "I have known K—for some time. If he says a thing is so, I think we can rely on him."

The Colonel nodded again.

And my third condition was that I and my collaborators must have complete freedom of movement, because we did not want to be paid.

For a long time the Colonel said nothing. He looked from me to Sprago and back again several times, and when he spoke he continued to watch us both attentively.

"You're putting me in a very difficult position," he began. "Your first two conditions are

intelligent and to the point. But the third— You see, that can be not only what a perfectly sincere man would say—

I said no; he couldn't possibly mean that.

"I could—possibly," he said.

On the contrary, I pointed out, a Nazi agent wanting to gain confidence would make every effort to behave like a professional spy and demand pay. He would not risk arousing suspicion in the very beginning by offering to work without pay.

He shrugged. "I'm sorry—"

I didn't want him to blow up a bridge that would be so hard to build again. I interrupted before he could finish. I was glad he had raised the question, I said. It gave me confidence to explain my motives, difficult though it was to make them understood by someone without first-hand experience of Nazism. I, like many others, had lost everything—family, friendships, business career, and the right to breathe in my native land. We had seen freedom destroyed, ethical standards corrupted, and constant fear turn ordinarily decent people into cheats, liars, and murderers. We had seen the inverted morality of Nazism cancerize the concepts of decency, honor, honesty, and human relationships by which we had lived. Hunger, pain, and death would pass; but Nazism was infecting the world with a disease that might take centuries to cure. Dictatorship was destroying the fundamental significance of life—freedom.

Abraham Lincoln had said it better than could I or any other, and only one word in the last passage of his Gettysburg Address need be changed to express our desire: "... that this *world*, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

If these seemed to the Colonel like words from which the world's complacency had squeezed all meaning, he would have to believe that my experience—and the experiences of thousands of us political exiles—had put meaning back into them and made them again

the expression of ideals for which we stood ready to die. Provided only that our work, our fighting, and, if need be, our dying, were not in vain.

No outsider could feel toward Nazism—dictatorship—as did we who suffered from it at first hand. But it was that very first-hand experience which enabled us, its immediate sufferers, to fight most efficiently, because we had paid for our knowledge of the mentality and methods of the oppressors with everything we had. Now we had only our lives to throw into the fight, for we had nothing else to lose.

For myself, I saw that the anti-Axis forces were handicapped most by lack of information and that was where I could be most useful. I wanted nothing for it, any more than a soldier volunteers only to get his monthly pay. In fact, he will endure voluntarily many things for which no man can adequately pay him.

The Colonel listened to me with attention and, when I finished, said without any other comment that he had one task more important than anything else: to find out as much as he could about German fifth-column activities in Central and South America.

I told him the outline of the Gestapo structure, as I had given it to Palcini's committee in Milan, but added more about the foreign organization—the so-called fifth column, a phrase which the Germans never use officially.

It is the foreign Gestapo, using elements of the second and fourth “circles,” and is in turn divided into five classes.

Division A is the Allgemeine Abteilung (General Division), the only one which is open or official in countries still not at war with Germany. It consists of the Auslandsorganisation (Foreign Organization), composed of Germans residing abroad. These local branches are organized wherever possible and their members have two duties: to report information at frequent intervals—in Rome it was at weekly meetings at the Brown House in Via Babuino—and to spread rumors and propaganda according to specific instructions.

Division B's function is military espionage, gathering information about the armed

forces of all countries. Under this division Gestapo agents are also planted in hotels, airline, steamship, and travel offices everywhere. Its further duty is to organize sabotage directed specifically against armed installations.

Division C consists of factory workers who report on new manufacturing processes used in industry, on plant capacity, expansions, raw material deliveries, etc. They also may be called on to organize factory sabotage.

Division D is agricultural, consisting of farm and food distribution workers whose task is to gather information relating to crops, harvests, food shipments, and ship sailings.

Division E is the most important. It deals with economic penetration of countries, with obtaining footholds in foreign industry, with laying the groundwork for Hitler's famous one-way economic treaties, with keeping trade going in spite of the British blockade, with organizing native Nazi or pro-Nazi parties. Until 1939 one corporation and its related firms in Switzerland and other countries were the local Gestapo centers. This setup enables Gestapo agents to travel in the guise of legitimate businessmen. When Dr. Ing. Hermann Neubacher was dismissed from the general managership of the Gesiba (Genossenschaftliche Siedlungsgesellschaft m.b.H.) in Austria because of his Nazi principles, he was immediately given the corporation representation for Austria and supplied with unlimited funds to continue and expand its espionage and infiltration work. Division E is lavishly financed and supervises the distribution of funds to Divisions B, C and D.

Contact between the Gestapo divisions and the official foreign missions of Germany is maintained by the presence in every such mission of a Gestapo man. His duties include gathering together all the information collected by the five divisions and transmitting it via diplomatic courier to Gestapo headquarters on Alexanderplatz, Berlin. In many instances the Gestapo man has greater authority than the minister or ambassador; often the majority of the staff does not know which of its members is the Gestapo liaison.

All of this is entirely separate from the military espionage bureau under Colonel Nicolai. Much of it is sheer duplication of Colonel Nicolai's work, and it has often occurred that in a single factory there will be not only one of Nicolai's men but also a man of Gestapo C Division. They may be working without knowledge of each other—which fits into the Nazi idea of everybody watching everybody else. It enables each bureau to check on the accuracy and truthfulness of the reports it receives.

Prior to the outbreak of war, Gestapo Chief Himmler had some discretion in giving or withholding information to other branches of the German government. Since the outbreak of war, Colonel Nicolai has complete discretionary access to everything the Gestapo gathers in.

Two other topics the Colonel and I discussed that afternoon are worth setting down because they throw light on subsequent events.

On August 11 Air Marshal Italo Balbo, governor of Libya, had been received by Mussolini in the presence of State Secretary of Colonies Teruzzi. Balbo had voiced bitter opposition to the German-Italian alliance and reproached Il Duce with undermining Italian independence. An excited scene had developed. Mussolini furiously resented the criticism, reminding Balbo that he was only governor of Libya, not premier, and warning him to keep his opinions to himself. Balbo returned to Libya in white heat.

On the same day the underground had struck a serious blow.

A group of Milan Anarchists wrecked two trains—a freight and a passenger—by throwing a switch in Domodossola and dynamiting the roadbed three hundred yards from the station, the last one before Simplon Tunnel. The Domodossola line runs from Milan along Lago Maggiore to Vogogno through the tunnel into Switzerland and is one of the three rail routes between Italy and Germany. The other two are Arnoldstein-Tarvisio and Brenner Pass. Over these lines Germany delivers the coal that sustains Italy.

The Domodossola line is industrially important because it is the most direct one to Italy

from the German Rhineland whence comes most of the coal. The other two lines are not alone sufficient to handle the traffic between the two countries.

But the Domodossola line is politically important, too, because the Simplon Tunnel, one of the longest railroad tunnels in the world, is entirely in Swiss territory. The Swiss have mined it thoroughly and informed the Germans that the Simplon will be blown up the moment Switzerland is invaded. This is one of the main reasons why Switzerland still enjoys independence at the very border of the two dictatorships.

The Colonel listened attentively. He made no notes but sometimes asked me to repeat when unfamiliar place names were mentioned.

Before parting we arranged methods of communication; no written reports, no fixed meeting place, no regular time. But we began by comparing our list of social engagements and discovered that in several cases we had been invited to the same homes; we were sure to meet there. Then we would continue comparing social engagements. In emergencies I would telephone Sprago that I was in the neighborhood, whereupon the Colonel and I would meet in a prearranged series of cafés around town.

10. WATCHED BY THE GESTAPO

BECAUSE the Colonel's chief interest was German work in the Americas, it became mine too. I proceeded to find and identify my chief quarry.

He was the generalissimo of the non-military branches of German total warfare in the Americas, North and South. He masqueraded as a prosperous international merchant in an office employing fourteen clerks and a Prussian office manager on Via Tritone in Rome. I never met him face to face; it would have been too dangerous. And I have been instructed not to reveal his name. He would only be removed and valuable time would be lost in locating and identifying his successor.

But I sought and found connection with his office manager, a typical Prussian bureaucrat named Karl Meier.

As soon as I met him I spent four days ascertaining his habits. Watching from a bar across the street, I saw that he entered his office promptly at ten every morning and at eleven-thirty walked to the Banco di Roma on the Corso Umberto. Then he would stroll to the Birreria Lowenbrau on Via Nazionale, reaching there about twelve-thirty. He would have a few seidels of beer and then go home for a midday meal. I followed him through this routine for four consecutive days, skipped three days, and then followed him for two days more. His schedule didn't vary.

I became a frequent Lowenbrau customer too. Meier seemed delighted when we met "accidentally" and insisted that I have a few glasses of beer with him.

He was about forty-five, getting bald, and with an incipient pot belly. He always wore bow ties, smoked a pipe, and drank enormous quantities of beer, which made him talkative. A pedantic man who lived a precisely organized bachelor's life, he was never to

be seen without the Auslandsorganisation emblem in his lapel and behaved like a little Hitler. His weakness was prostitutes of the cheapest kind, who appeared in his conversation as beauties with titles.

We became friendly to the point where I learned exactly how to provoke him into talking, though it took pains and planning.

He had lived in Italy eight years and boasted of his knowledge of the country. But he never mentioned what he had done before, where he was born or schooled. I came to suspect that he was a native of a Latin-American German colony and that he had also spent some time in the United States.

He spoke of his friendship with Fritz Kuhn, ex-leader of the German-American Bund now in an American prison for forgery and grand larceny. Meier was disappointed in his friend. Kuhn, he said, had been only a Nazi supporter, not a direct trusted agent with a mission. Nevertheless, he should have been more clever.

“The main trouble with him is that he is too greedy. He commits petty larceny—not larceny on the grand scale as we do.”

Total war has created total espionage. It has become in its own right a weapon of psychological political warfare.

The total espionage agent is not only a spy in the classic sense—a purloiner of military secrets—but he must also be a propaganda carrier, a sponsor or creator of subversive movements, and a termite in the structure of his enemy’s national entity.

This change has been forced on all countries because of the perfection with which Nazi Germany has teamed up the basic means of making war: economics, propaganda, and armed combat. These are the three servants of politics, all integrated by the totalitarian states to bring about political results.

Therefore the espionage agent cannot concern himself exclusively with military data. He

must now concern himself also with information about economics, trade, finance and industry, and propaganda (news, rumors, morale).

Taking its cue from the Communists' Comintern, the Gestapo has learned in masterly fashion how to use rumor and gossip as weapons in its arsenal of warfare. This adds vast confusion to an already confused international scene.

As rumors are launched by the Nazis either to disguise an accomplished fact or to hide an intention, the modern espionage agent's first operating principle at once becomes clear: he must learn to assemble data, to separate true from false, then verify and confirm them into facts. This is extraordinarily difficult, because few single agents ever can come into possession of complete data concerning any one specific situation. Events in war and international politics today are complex and far-flung and cut ruthlessly across national lines; few sets of facts can be complete in themselves. Each event is tightly integrated with other events in other fields of operation. Furthermore, the Germans take extraordinary pains to cloak all their movements so that disentangling them is often like decoding a strange cipher. A further consequence of this condition is that while some facts in a given chain may be learned, let us say, in Rome, the complementary facts are not to be learned there, but in Lisbon or Washington, in Ankara or Tokyo.

In my work I often discovered facts of the highest military or political importance concerning events several thousand miles away—as when I learned in Rome of the Japanese betrayal of negotiations with the United States taking place in Tokyo.

No agent, therefore, can operate alone. He is one cog in an immense machine. For example: agents in Berlin may uncover and verify a certain cluster of indications pointing to a dozen countries. If the agents operating in Berlin try to link up the rest of the chain themselves, they at once kill their future usefulness. The network of Axis agents can easily trace the details back to the original sources.

Hundreds of other operatives must follow up the first set of facts and indications across,

perhaps, three continents. They must try to find the other facts to make a complete picture. It is tough and unrelenting investigation, with human lives in jeopardy every step of the way. Often the picture is never completed. At other times the results are more definite: a Nazi conspiracy is nipped in the bud in South America; a new secret submarine base in the sub-Arctic is bombed out of existence, or an Italian air line suddenly ceases to get gasoline in Brazil.

German use of the false rumor as a weapon is exemplified in the following incident:

Several foreign newspapers had their Rome offices in the same building, including the Graf von Reischach's Zeitungsbureau, a Nazi newsgathering and propaganda distributing agency. Around May 1, 1940, one of the foreign journalists found on the staircase a document addressed to the Reischach bureau, marked *Secret-Confidential* in red. It was dated late in April 1940, when Europe was seething with gossip about a forthcoming German offensive against France and the Low Countries.

The document was signed by an official of the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin and it said:

“As the German High Command has decided upon a march into the Balkans, you are hereby requested to transmit to all newspapers with which you are friendly the information that a march into Belgium and Holland is being prepared. These rumors of the Low Countries' invasion will cover the High Command's real intention of invading the Balkans.”

The journalist who had “found” the letter was convinced by it that all the stories of German invasion of Belgium and Holland were rumors inspired by the Nazis—to trap the French and the British into massing troops in France and to lull the Balkans into a sense of false security.

I explained to the Colonel that the document had certainly been “lost” on purpose, and had been designed to make its finder think what he did think and lead him and his colleagues to send stories to their newspapers that the Nazis were really going to invade

the Balkans.

The Nazis sought in this way to counteract the true stories that they were about to invade the Low Countries by making their enemies believe these stories were deliberately false rumors and lead them to stop their troop movements and relax.

I obtained confirmation that German plans still called for the crash into the Low Countries, which indeed took place a few days later, on May 10.

This emphasizes how pointless and dangerous it can be to pass along unconfirmed items; they can bring disaster. In my work checkups of information took days, sometimes weeks. When I came into possession of a piece of information and was satisfied that it came from a competent source, my immediate problem was to verify its truth. If it was political information, I had to choose among my contacts that man or group of men whose knowledge was authoritative. If military or economic, the same process of selection was used.

But I couldn't get confirmation simply by asking outright questions. I had to plan in advance how to lead the conversation cautiously and indirectly around to the desired topic. From the comments of my interlocutor I could then tell whether my original information was correct or not.

At the same time it was essential to avoid giving away the information. Therefore, I had to be extremely well acquainted with those from whom I sought information and confirmation. Nor could they be understrappers; they had to be in that select circle of the government which was always accurately informed. In these days of power over a nation concentrated in the hands of a few—even in the belligerent democracies—only these few know what is going on. It is these few which the efficient agent must know intimately and thoroughly.

A contemporary espionage agent thus is not a dashing Robin Hood committing a series of overt acts, but a gentleman crook moving unsuspected among his dupes. Only so can

he distill his own propaganda work to weaken the unity of the enemy people. For he has the further duty of encouraging subversive movements within his enemy's boundaries. This means he must find ways to help every organization or movement that is against the government. This was my interest in the Italian underground; the stronger I could help to make it, the weaker was the Fascist regime.

We have all still got a great deal to learn from the Gestapo. It is a magnificent organization, and it will continue to be effective until it is opposed by world-wide counterespionage equally well organized.

Every citizen residing abroad must be utilized as Germans are utilized in the Auslandsorganisation. Every businessman must be an economic soldier, fighting not for his own profit but for his country's interests. Every travel bureau must be a pair of eyes and ears, every hotel register a source of revealing information. There must be short-wave transmitters in every embassy and legation, as well as microcameras to make the minute film used for transmission of instructions and information between agents. Ambassadors must no longer be polite pickets, but active members of the espionage brigades. As Franz von Papen said: "The envoy wears the cutaway less often than the garb of a second-story man. The German envoy is accredited less to a government than to the inner enemies of that government." This is the way to strangle Germany before her armies are finally defeated.

One August morning I was shadowed again. I went into the Pincio Park, which is almost deserted until noon, and took a side path to compel my follower to keep fairly close to me. I wanted to identify him.

I tried two or three paths, until I was walking with the wind. I stopped and turned my back to light a cigarette. Over my hands cupping the match I saw there were three men following me. Number one was a Questura man: overelaborate casualness, folded

newspaper, long jacket and stupid face. Like all Questura agents, he wore a Fascist lapel button.

My second follower, I reasoned, was Gestapo: a big blond fellow with military bearing and clothes cut in German style. Italian jackets are long; German ones end above the buttocks. Germans buying suits in Italy often had them cut short regardless of the style.

The third member of my following was dressed like a laborer. He disappeared as soon as I sat down on a bench. His identity puzzled me, until later that day when I learned he was an underground man also making a checkup on orders from Bellini; the Rome Circolo Secondo wanted to know whether I was seeing people other than those I told them about.

I spent the day drifting aimlessly around the city.

The next day my entourage dwindled to a single German; a different one from the tall blond fellow of the day before. Again I kept away from my friends and regular cafés. The third morning I stayed in bed much later than usual to help kill the day. But when I came out into the sunny street, I couldn't see anyone. I strolled down to the milk bar where I always had breakfast.

I sat down at my regular table and ordered. A stocky man in a brown Homburg took a seat opposite me. When he removed his hat, I saw he had a German haircut. He ate for a while in silence, then coughed apologetically. He asked if I would please advise him; he had been in Rome only two days. He spoke very bad Italian.

I said he might speak German.

He coughed again and said with a Kiel accent: he would be in Rome two weeks on a Strength-Through-Joy excursion. He looked very unhappy. Could he see much of Rome in that time?

I said no.

He said he was a sausage manufacturer. What did I do?

I worked for the Seta silk company, I answered.

Then he switched the conversation to the Danzig question.

I fell into the role of political ignoramus. What? Wasn't Danzig really Polish?

He seemed hurt. "Don't you read the *Voelkischer Beobachter*

"Oh yes," I said, "but I spend most of my time studying singing."

Now he was plainly surprised. He said hastily: "How interesting. I am very fond of singing too."

I invited him to come along with me to my lesson. We finished our coffee and went to an old studio building on Via Tritone near by. There on the fourth floor I had found a voice teacher—he was about seventy with a white beard -and mustache—and I believe I was the poor old gentleman's only pupil. His musty studio walls were covered with faded photographs of forgotten opera singers; the furniture was threadbare; the black frock coat he always wore was turning green.

Ah yes, Maestro Agosto Armando told my companion, the gentleman has a fine baritone voice. It only needs a little training. My lesson began. I sang very badly, as usual. After fifteen minutes the maestro said I seemed not to be in good voice; how about letting it go for today? He explained to my companion that it is dangerous to sing when the vocal cords are tight. I paid him in full, fixed another appointment, and we left.

Down in the street my tourist friend thanked me hastily for my advice about sightseeing. He would start at once. He looked at his watch.

I told him my throat was dry from singing; he must have a seidel with me. He protested; I insisted. I led him into a café on Via della Croce and talked at him about singing—my own idiotic theories about voice production, the relative merits of Wagner and Puccini (!) —but my companion's interest in music had evaporated. He squirmed, drank his beer quickly, and went away with a relieved look on his face.

I was pleased too. The Gestapo didn't yet think enough of me to send a really smart man. But later they did—they tried a girl and that nearly worked.

One of the men I came to know well in the Caccia Club was Alessandro Trasazzo, captain first class in the Italian navy. He was a good-looking man in his middle forties with a monocle always in his eye and an extra-long ivory cigarette holder in his mouth. His uniforms were cut to perfection. He was a passionate poker player and an equally passionate playboy and perfumed himself so that he smelled like an elderly prostitute. His fellow club members considered him an able officer and a good fellow.

He lived in my neighborhood and on many evenings, when his current light-o'-love would call for him in his car, he insisted on dropping me off on his way home. I must say he had exceptionally good taste in women. He drew with discrimination on the plentiful reservoir of good-looking females who flock to Rome for film careers as every beauty prizewinner in America, I'm told, runs to Hollywood.

One evening late in August I arrived at the club to find Trasazzo mooning about alone, waiting for the other members of his poker crowd to show up. He was then assigned to the planning and engineering division of the Naval Ministry specializing in submarines.

I led him around to the question of Italian naval strength, and the sum of what he told me was this:

Italy then had four battleships of the *Littorio* class—the *Roma*, *VImpero*, *Littorio*, and *Vittorio Veneto*. These were of thirty-five thousand tons' displacement and were undoubtedly, Trasazzo insisted proudly, the finest ships of their type in the world. There were four remodeled heavy-armored cruisers of twenty-six thousand tons, nineteen large and twelve smaller cruisers, about sixty destroyers, seventy torpedo boats, and over a hundred and twenty submersibles ranging from seven hundred to fifteen hundred tons.

He himself was then trying to perfect an idea which had originated in the Spezia naval experimental station for a periscope which need not protrude above water. They were working along two lines: with the electric selenium cell (photoelectric eye) and with

infrared rays. The experiments were not as yet concluded, but Trasazzo was very hopeful.

I reported this invention to the Colonel at a party in the home of Gr. Uff. Count Roberto Terrini, a permanent official in the Ministry of Interior. He is a serious man in his work, a delightful host in his free time, and has a charming wife. As my time was largely my own, I often went shopping with her and squired her to various social functions. I was often in their house on the Piazza Ungheria, and their guests included many government and party people I was anxious to know. But no effort of mine succeeded in inducing the Terrinis to talk politics.

I was on the point of dropping them again, but two things stopped me. First, Contessa Marina Terrini was a lovely, vivacious woman many years younger than her husband. Second, it seemed wise to have at least one regular haunt where I never discussed political or military affairs. I became very fond of her younger boy named Riccardo.

Thus my life took shape. I was a frequent visitor in the Caccia Club and the homes of Venturi, Terrini, and Pinelli. I had my singing lessons, and my work for Seta, which took not much time but produced enough income for me to live on.

11. WAR, 5 A. M., SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

IN THE SECOND WEEK of August German propaganda over Danzig hit the boiling point. The Italian press reflected the heat, pointing out that Italy too had suffered at French and British hands under the Versailles Treaty; she could satisfy her aspirations only in a general European settlement.

In the Aragno café, toward noon of August 21, I found a Fascist party inspector I knew sitting with Count Sarpi of the Foreign Office. Mussolini had been summoned by King Victor Emmanuel, who had had a letter from the brother of his daughter-in-law, Leopold of Belgium. It reported the British and French decision: if Poland were attacked there would be no second "Munich."

Lunching with Kerbel at a Bohemian restaurant, I told him the war was here at last. The British and the French would fight.

Kerbel had been repeatedly decorated as a flier in the Austro-Hungarian army in World War I. I asked him whether he would continue working with me.

"Of course," he said quickly. "I made my decision long ago."

But he was afraid that we might all be called into the German army. He had already talked with General Delaqua in the War Office and had received the promise of a reserve commission in the Italian army should the Germans call him back.

"I'll arrange to be stationed in some remote easy post. I don't fight for Hitler's Germany no matter what uniform I wear. I began some time ago to fight against him, and there's no turning back."

We agreed to meet for luncheon again the next day. Late in the afternoon I was invited

to play poker in the home of Dino, former Albanian foreign minister. No poker was played; only the riddle of the war was discussed. In the evening I spent a couple of hours at Pinelli's. During the afternoon Mussolini had left by plane for the King's summer palace at Santa Anna di Valdieri near the French frontier.

The next morning, the twenty-second, Mussolini came back by train. He and the King had had a violent scene which ended with Il Duce's solemn promise to decide nothing without consulting the sovereign. Victor Emmanuel was afraid that war would cost him his throne.

Count Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk, German Minister of Finance, arrived from Berlin to see Finance Minister Paolo Thaon di Revel. The German demanded immediate payment of the Italian debt arising from the transfer of southern Tyroleans to German territory. He asked for food and submarine torpedoes.

Late in the afternoon the Italian Ambassador to Germany, Bernardo Attolico, arrived by plane to depress Mussolini and Ciano with the news that Berlin had reacted unfavorably to Il Duce's suggestion for a conference of England, France, Poland, Germany, and Italy over the Danzig question.

Throughout the evening in the Caccia Club the chief topic of conversation was that German-Russian negotiations for a mutual non-aggression pact had been completed and Ribbentrop and Molotov would sign within two days in Moscow. War more certain than ever. Italy had been one of the first countries in Europe to recognize the Soviet state—on February 7, 1924; and that recognition had been implemented on September 2, 1933, with a mutual non-aggression pact. And the regime would have welcomed an agreement, between Germany, Russia, and Italy, rumored to have been suggested by Stalin on May 4, 1939, to eliminate British influence from the continent preliminary to the Russo-German pact now negotiated.

Farinacci's *Regime Fascist a* of the twenty-third for the first time officially voiced Italian

demands on France—and in Hitler-esque style: they must be satisfied “one way or another.” As a trial of Italian opinion, it won the approval of only reckless nationalists and frightened everybody else.

The Russo-German pact was publicly announced on the twenty-fourth. The Vatican was shaken. It meant a spread of Russian godlessness across Europe. The Italian people reacted differently. Forgetting their own non-aggression treaty with Russia, they saw that this pact gave Germany a friend instead of an enemy in her rear. Their fear of involvement in the war sharpened.

If Germany attacked Poland, France and England were going to their ally's aid. Germany would be at war with the two western powers. We knew that Mussolini would by no means fight against anybody, but suppose France and England declared war on Italy as an Axis partner? This new and unpleasant doubt was voiced by Pinelli and some others that evening.

Mussolini had begun to mistrust his own policy, because a declaration of war would mean the complete collapse of the Fascist regime. France's million men in the north behind the Alps could easily occupy industrial Lombardy. Italian resistance could not be serious, for the Alps terrain is favorable for invasion from France, not vice versa. Nor could Germany help. Only military experts spoke of lightning war in Poland; everybody else believed it would degenerate into a war of position.

August 25. Uncertainty among the people grew. The sailings of the *Conte di Savoia* from Genoa and the *Saturnia* from Trieste had been canceled. President Roosevelt had sent a peace message to Victor Emmanuel. Mussolini, thoroughly alarmed, called a meeting of all chiefs of the armed forces. It lasted far into the night. People were stunned. After Ethiopia and Spain the Italians feared war more than any other people in Europe.

Anxiety was deepened by a call to the colors for September 3 of the classes of 1903 and 1913 and thirty-five battalions of Blackshirt militia. Added to the classes of 1902, 1910,

1917, and 1918 already in service, this brought army strength up to one million, eight hundred thousand. Popular opinion expected Italy to be fighting by the first week of September.

The secret official fear that France and England would act against Italy seemed to seep down into the people. My good landlady Signora Zarra muttered something about “. . . if the French don't attack us.” Bellini told me the underground reported the same fear all over the country. Mussolini realized that his suggestion for a five-power “Munich” over Danzig would not be reconsidered by Hitler. In fright he summoned his military leaders again on the twenty-sixth, closed the frontiers to all departing Italians. That night Pinelli commented on the visit to Von Ribbentrop of the American Congressman, Hamilton Fish, which had received some notice in the Italian press. Pinelli was baffled. How could a member of a democratic legislature not be ashamed to visit this champagne salesman, let himself be loaded with honors, and then fly in Von Ribbentrop's private plane to Oslo for the international parliamentary conference?

This comment is not so naive as it sounds. Pinelli could not understand—nor could any other leading Fascist I ever talked with—American blindness to the fact that Germany and Italy were deadly enemies of the United States, and had been from the beginning. A German friend of Kerbel's arrived. At the Brown House they had been told that Germans living abroad would not be recalled to the Wehrmacht for the present. A phone call for Pinelli summoned him back to the War Office. Right after dinner French Ambassador Andre François-Poncet had told Ciano that an understanding with France might still be possible. The French envoy to the Vatican, François Charles-Roux (later governor of Vichy Syria), had told the Pope the same thing at Castel Gandolfo. François-Poncet's epigrammatic portrait of Hitler flew from mouth to mouth: “He is a mixture of an American gangster and the Maid of Orleans.”

A sudden wave of optimism the morning of the twenty-seventh. Mussolini was

conferring with François-Poncet in the Palazzo Venezia. Sure now that his former fear of French attack was groundless, he took an arrogant high hand with the Frenchman. All Italian demands would have to be satisfied!

August 28. Neville Henderson returned to Berlin with word from London that England would not negotiate. Optimism vanished. Mussolini conferred with his defense undersecretaries: Benni of Communications, General Pariani of War, Admiral Cavagnari of Navy, and General della Valle of Air, and also General Favagrossa in charge of anti-aircraft defense. Ciano was present. The King left the summer palace near the French frontier for his villa in San Rosso near Leghorn. Mussolini had a long, anxious telephone talk with Hitler, again urging a “Munich” over Poland and repeating that Italy was not ready for war.

August 29. Von Mackensen told Mussolini that the German army would march into Poland on September 1, a Friday, which Hitler considered his lucky day, because Austria and Czechoslovakia were successfully occupied on Fridays.

August 30. Fear on all sides that the French would come over the Alps.

The article in *Il Giornale d'Italia* of August 31, by Virginio Gayda, Mussolini's editorial mouthpiece, was titled “Why,” and developed the theme that it was ridiculous to set off a world war because of Danzig. Between the lines he made a plea for a new Munich conference.

On September 1, at 5 a.m., the German army and the Luftwaffe struck at Poland. The noon papers carried the news; the Corso emptied quickly. A national black-out was ordered.

September 2. After a council of ministers, Mussolini issued a statement proclaiming Italy's neutrality. His moral justification was the fear among the people and his own renewed fear of France.

On Sunday, the third, England and France declared war on Germany. The German High

Command reported its first successes in Poland. Mussolini still trembled in fear of war declarations against Italy. He kept talking about his pet five-power conference.

In the immediately ensuing days the newspapers not only took a neutral tone toward their ally's war in Poland, but printed the communiqués of the Polish High Command. In fact, the press had been instructed to feature Mussolini as the middleman of peace; he wanted to keep open a path to the western powers. Axis friendship was not mentioned in any newspaper.

On September 5 Mussolini again dragged out his round-table discussion idea, this time publicly. But the western powers refused to negotiate unless Poland was evacuated. The proposal died then and there.

On the ninth, when German victory seemed sure, a new possibility occurred to Mussolini: would not the victorious Germans wheel into the Balkans which Italy liked to think of as her own sphere of influence?

And to show the world his peaceful intentions, Mussolini sent the *Rex*, *Conte di Savoia* and *Saturnia* out on their regular American runs.

Public excitement relaxed somewhat. Il Duce's proclamation of neutrality and the peaceful voyaging of the prides of the merchant marine evoked a wavelet of loyalty and gratitude from the people. They believed he had kept them out of war.

But official circles were not so sure. Safely insulated against the pressure of public feeling by all the controls of dictatorship, the regime continued to maneuver for advantage.

On the tenth Von Mackensen called on Mussolini to say that as soon as Poland was conquered—now a matter of days—Germany would make a peace offer to France and England. Mussolini sensed the danger that Italy, not having participated in the war, would be omitted from the peace conference and all her aspirations would be ignored, set aside, or made forever impossible. Mussolini became much nicer to Germany than he had been

and went so far as to make a voluntary offer to increase food and materiel shipments to his Axis partner.

The Stukas Germany had so successfully tested in Spain had razed Polish towns, pitted her airfields, and smashed her army. Warsaw capitulated on the twenty-seventh. In October Germany shifted most of her troops from Poland to the Dutch border. The French and the Germans stared at each other with polite interest from behind their Maginot and Siegfried lines; the British distributed leaflets to learn something about night flying and the Italian press took a stronger pro-German line.

The winter of “phony war” began. The total black-out was relaxed. Italy heaved a deep and quavering sigh of relief.

12. GERMANY'S FIRST GRAB

SEVERAL TIMES at Pinelli's I had met a Westphalian German named Rudolf Bergdorff, who had been studying art in Rome for ten years. He looked about thirty-five, to all outward appearances a dilettante and drawing-room habitue. He was a favorite among the ladies—big, blond and blue-eyed, with a mustache like Adolphe Menjou's. He smoked cigars except in the presence of ladies and was proud of his well-shaped, well-kept hands. Nothing in his manner suggested strong principles or determined character. He and his family were rich and art was as good an excuse as any for living sybaritically in Rome.

Kerbel told me that Bergdorff carried a German passport and frequently attended the weekly meetings of the Rome Auslands-organisation. In the German colony, Kerbel said, Bergdorff was generally regarded as a good Nazi.

But according to Pinelli, who thought he knew him intimately, Bergdorff had originally left Germany because he had seen Nazism coming and hated it. He was behaving like a Nazi only to save himself annoyance.

So one evening in October at Pinelli's I told Bergdorff about the music-loving sausage manufacturer who had talked to me in the milk bar. I added that the other day, nearly two months later, I had seen the same fellow on Via Nazionale, going into the building occupied by the Arbeitsfront, German workers' organization, obliquely across from the Albergo Quirinale near the Royal Opera. He had been hatless, as if he had just run into the street for a moment. I told it all as if it were only an amusing anecdote.

Bergdorff was positive the man was from the Gestapo.

I laughed. Why should the Gestapo watch me?

His manner became a little violent. "Why not?"

Then I admitted I had suspected something of the sort.

“Why don’t you go up to the Arbeitsfront office and see?”

I pointed out that the fellow might recognize me, and I didn’t want to meet him again.

“Of course not. I’ll go. I’ll pretend I want a German-Italian stenographer to take notes for my art book.”

“Good,” I said. “A real reason is better than a pretext.”

He laughed. “I’m not writing a book. But I’ll go up there and see what I can see.”

Within two days Bergdorff sought me out to tell me that the Arbeitsfront itself now occupied only one room: all the others on both floors were taken up by new people. To the surprisingly observant Bergdorff the bulletins on the walls, the military bearing of all the men, the tone and content of the casual remarks he overheard, were unmistakable. The Gestapo was taking over.

Bergdorff insisted on continuing the investigation, for our own satisfaction, as he put it. We found that the Gestapo was digging in for what looked like a permanent stay. It held careful surveillance over German emigrés and, in co-operation with branches of the Auslandsorganisation, was keeping an eye on “unreliable” Italians—“unreliable” from the German point of view. Its men also watched certain French, British, and Americans. In Milan,

Naples, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Turin, and Genoa too they moved into Arbeitsfront offices.

At the beginning personnel had come from the regular Gestapo officials and men who happened to speak Italian. But now they were being trained specially, at Italian expense.

The Italian police academy in Tivoli, nineteen miles from Rome, opened its regular colonial courses to them. This academy had been founded in 1929 by the Ministry of Interior to train men not only in domestic but also colonial police and administration work for the coming Italian empire.

The Gestapo began to send classes of three and four hundred men there for two reasons: it was an innocent-looking way of getting Gestapo people into Italy, and it gave them an opportunity to study the Questura organization and learn fluent Italian. They lived in the Albergo Victoria near Via Venteo and went to Tivoli every morning in buses.

The courses were to be six months long. At first the Italians were very flattered that the Gestapo came to them to learn. But the irony of the result was not lost on all of the Italians, who came only later to realize what happened. The Gestapo men didn't go to any colonies; Italy had few and Germany none. The Gestapo men were stationed all over Italy, in cities and in small towns. The victim had begun to train its conqueror's army of occupation.

At this time the Gestapo in Italy conducted investigations and surveillance independently, but any arrests it required had to be made by the Questura. Such requests originated with the Gestapo in Rome whence they were routed through the SS Reichsführer Kanzlei of Himmler to the German Foreign Office; thence via Ambassador von Mackensen in Rome to the Italian Foreign Office (Ciano), who turned them over to the home office. This was more or less in accordance with normal extradition practice except that foreign police were working on Italian soil. This, despite the Fascist kingdom's own adequate police organization.

In Italy supreme police authority is vested in a division of the Ministry of Interior called the Direzione della Pubblica Sicurezza (Department of Public Security).

Contrary to foreign belief, there is no Fascist counterpart of the Russian GPU or the German Gestapo; that is, no secret political police set up as a completely independent government agency.

A major branch of the Pubblica Sicurezza is the Questura, a federal police embracing all functions from street patrol and traffic regulation to crime detection and political terror. Every town has its Questura Centrale (Police Headquarters), and all prefects are

appointed from the Department of Public Security in Rome. Its minor branch is the OVRA, often mistaken outside Italy and by foreign journalists for a secret state police. It is no such thing. OVRA, which stands for Opera Volontaria Repres-sione Anti-Fascista (Voluntary Work for the Suppression of Anti-Fascism), began as the plain-clothes police of the Fascist party, even before the march on Rome. When Mussolini became Il Duce in 1922 he promptly incorporated OVRA into the Pubblica Sicurezza, and today its duties are only to do some political surveillance and to guard Mussolini. OVRA men are recruited from both Questura and party ranks, but their role is minor. The Questura is mainly responsible for stamping out native and foreign anti-Fascists and spies.

So German penetration completed its first long step: the establishment of the Gestapo network with the excuse of ferreting out Emigrés who “endanger the security of the Axis allies.”

The second step followed immediately: the Germans began to stick their noses into the affairs of the Italian police itself, and from an unexpected direction.

In 1936 the Germans had sent a racial commission into the Ministry of Interior to cooperate in creating a code of race laws for Italy. The commission consisted of half-a-dozen men, I believe, from the office of Alfred Rosenberg, Hitler’s high priest of racism. It was not publicly announced; I heard only rumors of it while in Rome that year.

When I was in Rome again the following year Dino Alfieri, then Propaganda Minister and later Ambassador to Germany, admitted in answer to my question that a German race commission was in fact working in the Ministry of Interior.

“But,” he declared, “Italy will never have a Jewish problem. Il Duce has said we are all Italians.”

But already this shifty-eyed Germanophile with an ascetic face was learning to speak German. He speaks it now more measuredly, I hope, than his native Italian, in which he sputters with excitement, words tumbling one over the other, until he comes to an abrupt

stop, only to gather himself and make a fresh start.

After September 1, 1938, when the Ministry of Interior promulgated the first anti-Jewish decrees prepared by the German racial commission, Alfieri was among the loudest agitators on their behalf. One measure required Jews owning buildings or real estate in excess of a sliding scale of values to sell their holdings and deposit the proceeds in the banks, whence they were allowed only small monthly withdrawals. Similar measures applied to shops and other Jewish-owned enterprises.

In Germany anti-Semitic measures were carried out with much greater severity, as, for instance, when the Jews of Germany were fined one billion marks (four hundred million dollars) after the nation-wide pogroms in November 1938, following the murder of German Embassy Secretary Ernest von Rath in Paris by the Polish Jew Herschel Grynszpan.

Months previously all Jews had had to file detailed reports of their possessions and incomes. For payment of the fine Jews were ordered to deliver their valuables to specified receiving offices. Long lines were then to be seen, with bags, baskets, and valises, surrendering family silver, gold watches, jewelry. The clerks assigned purely nominal values to the valuables and credited them to the total amount of the fine.

A friend of mine on the staff of the central delivery office in Düsseldorf asked me if I wanted to see “what the Jews had stolen from the German people.”

He led me through twenty or more storerooms packed with spoils. At least ten of the rooms were filled only with silver objects—ornamental dishes, candlesticks, cutlery, watch chains, fobs, salt and pepper shakers, earrings, bracelets—everything imaginable which man has made out of silver.

Gold objects filled other rooms; I saw at least four packing cases dripping gold watchcases.

Another room was devoted to the sorting and packing of jewelry. As we passed through,

one of the jewelers at work there stopped my friend to show him a particularly beautiful diamond bracelet worth, he said, at least a hundred thousand marks. It was being packed in a separate container. They had special instructions, my friend said, to send objects of the greatest value and beauty direct to Marshal Goering.

The Germans, in other words, applied their Jewish laws with ferocious vigor and cunning. But the Italians allowed their new race laws to become more or less dead letters until the German racial commission insisted on an example. On July 9, 1939, twenty-four Milanese Jews were convicted for failing to report their Jewish blood by the regulation date of January 1, 1939. At the same time they forced the issuance of a decree adding firms in which the government had only a minor interest to the list of government agencies and firms forbidden to buy from Jews.

The racial commission had seemed an innocent and friendly gesture, at least until it exerted undue pressure on the Ministry of Interior.

Now, however, Pinelli told me, officials in that ministry were complaining that the commission was no longer confining its interest to Aryanization. Every day its members were visiting the office of the Pubblica Sicurezza, inquiring into activities and offering advice. The staff was augmented weekly with police officials imported from Alexanderplatz.

In piecing together this picture of Italy's virtually double police system, Bergdorff showed that he was shrewd and daring. Our constant contact also left no doubt of his anti-Nazi attitude. He betrayed only one serious defect: a headstrong recklessness. Several times later on I had to fish him out of trouble; he might have cost us all our heads. I'm sorry he isn't alive any more; he was caught after the British raid on Taranto. For, despite his social-butterfly way of life and his impetuosity, he had a strong heart; he didn't crack under the third degree he had to endure before being executed.

On November 9 the rumor sped around Rome that Hitler had been killed by a bomb

under the speaker's platform in Munich's Buergerbraukeller. Everybody was delighted. But when the official report stated that Hitler was safe, faces grew long again. In the Caccia Club everyone was sad: only fifteen minutes between Hitler's leaving the cellar and the explosion of the bomb—and these fifteen minutes decided the fate of Italy.

Bergdorff and I were well into our investigation of the Gestapo when another pipe line I had been working on for some weeks began to function.

It had started back in August, when I had first felt the need of an "ear" in the office of Lieutenant General Emil (Enno) von Rintelen, German military attache in Rome. He and his staff occupied rooms in the German Embassy at Via Conte Rosso 25.

I had seen Von Rintelen, brother of the World War I saboteur who had worked under Von Papen in the United States and now an anti-Nazi exile in London. In his early fifties, about six feet three in height, he was the picture of a dashing military man. So I asked Kerbel if we could get Rintelen to change mistresses. Or perhaps Ingrid Soederberg could help.

Kerbel shook his head. He remembered vaguely to have heard that Rintelen had been seen repeatedly at the Biblioteca night club with a young and beautiful picture star. It would be better to work on her. But Kerbel didn't know her nor could he suggest a way of meeting her. After several other fruitless inquiries, it turned out that Bellini could aid me in taking the first practical step.

He telephoned a friend of his, a good Matteotti man who was an assistant director at Cina Citta, the state-built Hollywood outside Rome. The man told Bellini to send me out to the studio next day. His name was Federico Gianni, and he would be helpful.

To make the visit seem innocent, I took along Contessa Terrini, and we spent several amusing hours watching films in the making. I exchanged only a few words with Gianni, a most energetic and efficient young fellow. Late in the afternoon he said they were shooting a big mob scene; why didn't the contessa and I join in? We did. We milled

around among hundreds of extras, shouted, shook our fists, acted magnificently, though the cameras never came within fifty feet of us.

Gianni suggested I return the next afternoon, when no shooting was scheduled; he would be able to spend more time with me. I told the contessa I was going again to see the technical engineering part. She had had enough. So I went out alone. I found Gianni and we talked a little in his office. I said I wanted to meet the girl Kerbel had told me about.

He grinned. "Everybody does. But I'm afraid you're a little late."

"Why?"

"She's not here now. She's vacationing in Taormina. Guest of some very wealthy fellow. I forget his name."

"An Italian?"

He nodded.

"I thought she was very friendly with that German officer. What's his name? Von—Von Rintelen."

He shook his head. "I don't think that's anything, though her mother was German and she has a lot of German friends. Only one girl here is friendly with the German army. She's an extra and her name is Bettina Salvoni."

"Pretty?"

He rolled his eyes a little and made a kissing sound with his lips. "But stupid. I've seen a German Embassy car call for her several times."

I'd like to meet her, I said.

"For yourself?"

"No."

Gianni said he would invite me to the next party the extras gave.

Four days later I went to Cina Citta to meet Bettina Salvoni, who turned out to be very

pretty and vivacious. She had glossy black hair, large black eyes, and firm shoulders. I invited her to dinner.

“Thursday,” she said.

“Tonight?”

“No. Only Thursday.”

So on Thursday evening we met. I explained to her that I had found a fine little *trattoria* in Trastevere—workers’ suburb of Rome, where some of the restaurants are extraordinarily good.

We had a nice time. She was a good sport, laughed often, and when some strolling street musicians came in and played very sugary love songs, tears came to her eyes. She had a streak of sentimentality. She told me she came from a small town near Rome, where her father was a pharmacist. I made a little love to her; not much. She referred several times to her friend “the lieutenant.” When I took her home I suggested we meet again.

“Two weeks from tonight,” she said.

“Thursday again.”

She smiled brightly and went into her hotel, the Imperiale near the Piazza Barberini. We met a fortnight later, and several alternate Thursdays after that. The sixth time she came to my room without protest, and thereafter our regular fortnightly dates were indoors.

About the fourth or fifth time she said to me: “I’m tired of the Imperiale. I would like to come here to live.”

“Where?”

“I could take the room next to yours. Then we could be together all the time.”

The idea had to be killed while it was young. I said I had very little money and an *amante* to boot.

“Now tell me what’s really the matter. Your lieutenant angry at you?”

What I liked about that girl was her honesty. She nodded. “He is good to me. And I like

him very much. But he is a Prussian with a nasty temper. Any day he may decide he doesn't love me any more." A pretty euphemism for withdrawing his protection and support.

I became very practical. I told her she would be foolish to leave her officer. That I liked her very much, but could not afford to keep her, and didn't want to risk her lieutenant's getting angry and making trouble for us both. I offered her a substitute plan by which she could be sure he would not dismiss her without thinking it over twice. It always worked in the movies, I said; why not with her in real life?

Her little mind worked busily. Like people of peasant stock, she had a very clear-eyed appreciation of her situation: she had a good protector with whom her tenure was uncertain. She wanted to keep a good hold on a possible reserve, until she found a really wealthy protector or had to go home to marry the village doctor.

She was interested but not enthusiastic. "How?"

I explained that she should get him to discuss his work with her. She would learn his official secrets, and then he'd be afraid to quarrel with her for fear she'd give them away.

Her extraordinary black eyes rested on me, but already her mind was busy with how to apply my advice. Finally she said: "I think I can do that."

Bettina Salvoni was not stupid as Gianni thought; she was cunning rather than intelligent. She took my advice, and after that, because I'd given her such good *conseil d'amour*, she made me her confidant and thus became my best unwitting collaborator in espionage. When I left Rome she was in her third year as the mistress of the lieutenant.

In December our relationship paid its first important dividend. Her lieutenant had been called to Berlin and she had a premonition she would never see him again. Besides, the scoundrel might not only visit his fiancée, to which she had no objection, but no doubt he would see his former mistress, owner of a hatshop on the Kurfürstendamm. She worked herself into a rage over this thought.

But two weeks later she was all smiles. He had returned after less than a week's absence. I asked her if the lieutenant had been to see the milliner.

She said no. She had voiced her suspicions, but he had soothed her fears by explaining that he had driven nearly every morning to an army center outside Berlin to witness tests of a new tank. It threw flames, Bettina said wonderingly. Seventy meters—two hundred and ten feet. The lieutenant had had no time for the milliner. The tank trials had been successful, he had said, giving Bettina to understand that his approval had been the final word. This seemed doubtful, even though he was Rintelen's adjutant chiefly because he was a tank expert.

Bettina and I finished the evening in the Cinema Imperiale, where she wanted me to see a dreadful new film in which she appeared as an extra—I saw her face for perhaps three seconds on the fringe of a street crowd. I never saw the picture the contessa and I were in.

I was doubtful about Bettina's narrative until the next evening or the evening following, when I brought it into conversation with Pinelli. He confirmed it—not purposely, of course, but by way of expressing horror that such a weapon should exist. He had been told in the War Ministry only three days before that the German army was producing a quantity of these monsters.

I reported this promptly to the Colonel, and at my specific request he forwarded the information to the [French](#).

Notes

Yet more than five months later, when the Panzers crashed across the Low Countries into France, the French were reportedly struck with astonishment at the appearance of these new flame-throwing tanks. The following fall I learned from another source that the German High Command had feared the French might defend their strategic rivers by firing gasoline and oil poured on their surfaces. This, in German opinion, would have prevented the use of rubber boats and pre-built wooden bridges. Nor would their soldiers, psychologically conditioned to face barrages and machine guns, have braved raging flames.

13. MUSSOLINI'S NEW POLICE

IN DECEMBER Rome had two influxes which brought indirect proof of the ruthless strength of Italy's ally. One was of German officers either on leave or en route to new posts. The other was of wealthy Polish refugees from Warsaw. These people had stayed throughout the siege and capitulation and then, for German approval of their departure, had paid from twenty to eighty thousand zlotys each—a fantastic sum when it is remembered that a four-story apartment house in the best section of Warsaw had been valued at a hundred to a hundred and twenty thousand zlotys.

They told of the ferocious bombardment and of the plundering of the city by the German army. Soldiers went from home to home taking out whatever had value. A number of apartments whose owners had fled were broken open and even the furniture carted off. One day an organized raid swept young women and girls, mostly Jewesses, into military brothels.

From the influx of German officers the week before Christmas I had my most valuable holiday gift.

Strolling on the Piazza Colonna, I met an old friend from Berlin, Franz Ricker, a down-at-the-heel film agent. He had been a flier in World War I and since 1933 a reserve flying officer. When we had known each other in Berlin I had been doing well and he not so well. His manner had always been envious and fawning.

But now it was a different matter. He had been called to active service as a squadron leader—Staffelfshrer—commanding nine planes and three reserves. He was Captain Ricker of the Luftwaffe. But he was still small and blond and strutted like a rooster.

He almost kissed me. I didn't want to be seen on the street in the company of a German

officer, so I suggested we go into a bar. Ricker disposed himself like a field marshal.

“Well, my friend, what are you doing in Rome?”

“The same old thing, Ricker. Silk.”

“Silk.” He rolled the word on his tongue as if he were going to spit it out. “Silk. As you see, I am not doing the same old thing.”

I inspected him with unconcealed admiration. “How did you get that Iron Cross First Class? They don’t give those out for nothing.”

He waved a hand. “It was nothing really. I brought down three Polish fighters over Warsaw.”

“Ah. You were in Poland?”

He nodded casually. “They’ve sent me down here now. An important assignment.”

I paid no attention. “Look, Ricker——”

He must have sensed I was going to ask him to repay the loan I had made him in Berlin, for he hastened on: “The way we smashed those Poles! I don’t think they ever heard of our Stukas.”

“Your what?”

“Stukas—Stukas,” he said impatiently. “Dive bombers.”

“Oh yes,” I said, as if he had told me some perfectly incomprehensible fact which I had to accept on faith. He got a little irritated. I went on: “I suppose it was all very exciting. Tell me, what happened to your film agency?”

But he didn’t want to talk about that reminder of less halcyon days. “And we’ve got something else—a new secret weapon that will amaze everybody.”

“Secret weapon!” I said, as if I were very bored. “Don’t you think the British and the French have spies? And besides,” I told him, “if it’s really a secret weapon, how would you know about it? I mean, the whole German army doesn’t know.”

“Oh no?” He surveyed me triumphantly; he was going to crush me with his superior

knowledge. "Did you ever hear of a general in our army named Student?"

"No. How would I?"

He was started at last. This general, who is not listed in the Rangliste, had spent two full years, from 1936 to 1938, under a pseudonym in Russia studying the organization and technique of Red army parachute troops. Now that Poland had fallen, he had set up a huge secret training base in Lublin to reorganize the German parachute corps and train them personally in new techniques. Ricker said Student was thirty-eight years old.

Ricker and I parted on the best of terms, after I had diverted the conversation to girls. He had remarked that it was possible he would be returning to Rome soon; if so, could I introduce him to some pretty women? I said yes and involved him in an argument about the relative merits in love-making of Italian versus Prussian women, and he went away with the impression I had tried to create in his mind: that we had not particularly discussed Stukas or Fallschirmtruppen but chiefly women.

While Italy's economic condition was not too good, my own was a little improved since I'd arrived in Milan with only a few hundred lire.

Venturi had been very decent and generous. He had at once paid me several thousand lire owing me for my final month's business in Germany. And from time to time he paid me a few thousand lire as advance commissions against business I would do in Germany after the war. He said I was entitled to it after nine years with him both as associate and as friend.

In addition, he turned over to me a number of established accounts in Rome which I called on periodically, and I was closing an average of two or three contracts a week for Seta, some small, some sizable. I used my pensione as my business address and received my phone calls there.

But the income from these sources was far from regular and I had many anxious days. It cost me about eleven hundred lire per month to live, not including clothes. My food

expenses were low because I was so frequent a guest for meals with my friends. Fortunately, I wasn't expected, even permitted, to reciprocate beyond bringing flowers to the wives from time to time or performing small friendly services. Once I offended Pinelli by sending a small gift to his son; he told me plainly that he knew I couldn't afford it.

All in all, my living was fairly smooth. The following year, as prices rose and business grew worse, I faced much greater anxiety.

Evidence of worse to come was plentiful. Italy was not having a happy winter.

In August, during the week the Polish war started, Mussolini had called to service several new classes of conscripts and Blackshirt militia. These last had been under army jurisdiction only since the previous year. Marshal Pietro Badoglio, never on cordial terms with the Fascists who irritated him with their strutting in uniforms, had maneuvered Mussolini into giving up party control of the Blackshirt militia—counterpart of the Nazi Sturmabteilung—and handing it over to army control so far as recruitment and training went.

At the time the men were called, the number had been so large that a fear immediately coursed through the people that the men would be sent to Germany or would be fighting France. Though this danger passed, it had been impossible to reduce the force occupying Albania because the Albanians were restive. Cattle and corn had been cleaned out of the trans-Adriatic conquest, not for the Italian people, but to replace Italian army reserve food stocks that had been shipped to the German army.

The people's apprehension remained so great that in early October Virginio Gayda devoted his regular front-page article in *Il Giornale*, explaining that the men were kept in service only to be trained in the use of new equipment. No other purpose was in view.

Unexpectedly in November the new quotas were dismissed. The men coming home revealed the reason for their return quickly enough: it had been discovered that there were not enough heavy winter coats in military stores to clothe them.

Italian soldiers are miserably paid: fifteen lire per month and allowances of six lire per day for wives and two lire fifty per day for each child under fourteen. The uniforms issued, not always new, must be returned when they leave service, though when they go into the combat field they are given new ones. Officers' pay begins at two hundred and fifty lire monthly for lieutenants, four hundred for captains, and twenty-five hundred for colonels.

In Rome I even saw soldiers of long service walking around in badly torn and darned uniforms. There were so many that on October 12 the military commandant of Rome issued an order—Pinelli let me read his copy—directing all regimental and area commanders not to permit soldiers to go on leave in shabby or damaged uniforms but to issue special garments to them from a reserve to be kept on hand. This was done. Men going on leaves or even only an evening out of barracks were given fresh uniforms, which they had to turn in on returning to quarters.

October produced another embarrassment for the regime. Since August there had been a regulation making ownership of gas masks obligatory on all civilians. But people trying to buy masks found none available: the entire supply had been taken up by the army. In October the regulation was unobtrusively withdrawn.

Mussolini had been right when he told Hitler at their July 1939 meeting that Italy was not ready for another war.

With winter, coal became a tragic problem. It was unusually cold and there was snow several times; a surprise to Romans. They suffered especially under the restricted heating of hotels, offices, and homes. In Rome only the most modern buildings have central heating; many homes not even a stove. To regulate the use of coal, the government decreed that heat should be given only six hours a day, and that much only if the indoor temperature dropped to fifty-four degrees. Business offices were allowed no heat at all.

To eliminate the need for heat and the complaints that arose from its lack, government

and business office hours were reduced to one session—from eight to two on weekdays and on Sundays from eight to twelve. This regulation was badly received because it gave the people no day off. A delegation from the Ministry of Corporations called on Mussolini to protest that the Sunday hours prevented their employees from going to noon mass, so Mussolini advanced the Sunday quitting hour to eleven-thirty. But no work was done on Sundays anyway; a sort of club life grew up and nobody did anything about it.

Italy had got her coal from England until the Abyssinian war. Since then Germany has supplied her southern partner. To exist, Italy must have fifteen million tons a year: one-and-a-half million for consumers, one-and-a-half million for the railroads and twelve million for industry. But only two million tons come from the mines in Istria and Sardinia. The other thirteen million must be imported from Germany—fifty trains per day of fifty cars each, deliveries ranging from 980,000 to 1,200,000 tons per month.

The Germans know exactly what their coal means to Italy.

In its proper place I shall tell how she exploits Italy's carbonic dependence to the very hilt with skill and ruthlessness.

Christmas and the turn of the year brought Mussolini little cheer.

On November 13 the Russo-Finnish war broke out and the Italian papers reflected the pro-Finnish feeling of the people, who had always had little sympathy for Communist Russia, and of official circles which were definitely anti-Communist. When a new Russian ambassador arrived in Rome and read the papers, he left for Russia the next day without even presenting his credentials to the King.

The regime carried its sympathy for Finland to the point of shipping a full trainload of munitions, artillery, and machine guns to Mannerheim's army. By necessity the route lay across Germany, and the Nazis, whose press maintained an aloof air of neutrality, confiscated the trainload on January 10, 1940. German Ambassador von Mackensen and Mussolini had some bitter talks about it, but the result was that Italy got the arms back.

On December 30 the Anarchist underground cost Mussolini two hundred soldiers killed and from six to eight hundred injured in a spectacular train wreck at Torre Annunziata on the shore line south of Naples. A passenger train was switched into a troop train carrying soldiers from Sicily to the French border.

In the midst of all this the government rationed sugar. Domestic beet sugar had hitherto always sufficed, but now too large a percentage of refinery capacity was being diverted to fill German needs.

Then a rice shortage loomed.

The German Economics Ministry had for some time been using large Italian firms to buy foodstuffs in South America and the Far East. Shipments were routed through Trieste and Genoa, where they were loaded into German freight cars for transshipment.

News of the impending rice shortage got out just as stevedores began to unload a rice ship newly arrived in Trieste. Crowds collected; a riot broke out. The people tried to stop the rice from being reloaded into waiting German freight cars. Soldiers were ordered to clear the docks and freight yards. At this the stevedores slowed down so seriously that the soldiers were helpless. German emissaries came and made threats, but without success. Subsequent loadings proceeded at snail's pace.

On January 30, 1940, Mussolini was able to bring off something on his own hook again. That was the day he announced the creation of his Polizia Militare Mobile.

This little-known organization had its roots in Mussolini's desire, born when Badoglio had got the Blackshirts away from him, for an Elite-Guard-like unit of his own. From the ranks of the party he selected twenty thousand men, grouped them in five battalions, uniformed them somewhat like the feathered Alpini but with yellow facings and cuffs. These units he distributed among army garrisons all over Italy and the empire. He lodged nominal authority over the P M M in the Ministry of War, where it took an office. But the real command went into the hands of his then private secretary, Dr. Osvaldo Sebastiani.

This sinister P M M does not fight; its job is to watch the army and to guard Mussolini against the military leaders he fears. The real usefulness of the P M M became apparent to the army and to other Fascist leaders only after Italy entered the war and strange things began to happen to persons of prominence.

On March 9 German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop came to Rome and told Mussolini that Hitler was soon to attack Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, and France. Germany would need increased quantities of food, munitions, and gasoline. Italy was “requested” to step up its purchases abroad.

On the eighteenth Mussolini met Hitler at the familiar Brenner Pass railroad siding. Il Duce agreed to concentrate more divisions on the French frontier to immobilize more of the French fighting force. But as to increasing munitions deliveries Mussolini had to confess inability. Though Germany was delivering quantities of coal and iron ore, there was not enough to keep plants working at capacity and so, immediately on his return to Rome, Mussolini ordered all iron fences and gates in Italy taken up—without compensation to the owners.

Later in March the German General Staff invited a group of high Fascist officials, including Pinelli, to Berlin.

After being properly feted, the Italian visitors were ushered into the Romania section of General Staff Headquarters in the war office. There they were shown precise plans for military action against Romania and lists of political leaders for and against Germany. With the name of each politician appeared a digest of his beliefs, who his personal friends were, how they could be approached, how much money or what other promises would buy their support—the results of painstaking espionage and staff work over a period of years. The exhibit, filling dozens of filing cabinets in this suite devoted entirely to the conquest of the small Balkan kingdom, had only an academic interest, it was broadly hinted, because it was well known that Romania had been helpless in German hands

since late 1934.

The Italians were vastly impressed; Pinelli came away sure that the German General Staff had such roomfuls of documents and plans for Italy too.

When German soldiers swarmed from innocent freighters in Norwegian harbors on April 9—the Luftwaffe filled the skies above the Skagerrak and Denmark agreed to German occupation—the Italian papers adopted a neutral tone toward Germany as they had in the Polish war. The people maintained their legendary faith in the British Fleet, and when it could not land men in Norway to oppose the Germans they were astonished.

Before they could recover, the Panzers and Stukas flooded Holland and Belgium on May 10. The Italian fear of being dragged into war as a German ally surged up again, augmented by a new call for troops late in April.

As German successes followed each other with dizzy speed, belief in English defeat overtook official circles and grew among the people, too, fostered by a no-longer-neutral press and radio.

French and British war communiques had been dropped; German communiqués were featured.

The German Propaganda Ministry invited Italian journalists to visit the fighting areas. They were royally treated and many were even paid, Ingrid Soederberg told me. They discharged their obligations by rewriting the reports given them by men of the German PK Propaganda Kompagnie.

Only one sour note was struck in the chord of Italian press unanimity.

The Vatican newspaper, *Il Osservatore Romano*, edited by Count della Torre, had been pleading for neutrality. The Pope sent telegrams to the crowned heads of the Low Countries and the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg, expressing sympathy with them at the violation of their countries' neutrality. This created a stir among devout Romans and admirers of the royal family because Crown Prince Umberto's wife was Leopold of

Belgium's sister.

Mussolini sent for Della Torre and demanded that *Il Osservatore* drop its columns of political news and comment and restrict itself to its proper function of church mouthpiece. Della Torre refused and Mussolini went over his head to the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Luigi Maglione. While their negotiations were proceeding, Fascist district organizations sent men to all newsdealers and by persuasion and force prevented the sale of *Il Osservatore*. On May 17 Mussolini succeeded in squeezing out of the Vatican an agreement that the paper would give up its political section. Circulation of *Il Osservatore* took a severe drop.

14. ONLY CHILDREN WANT WAR

EARLY in May Bergdorff had reported that the old Daimler automobile plant in Wiener Neustadt near Vienna, which had been making Messerschmitts, had been greatly enlarged to build gliders with a capacity of thirty-five fully armed men.

Captain Ricker would have been my ideal source of confirmation. He might not know about the location of the factory, but he would certainly know whether the Luftwaffe was turning to practical use its long years of experimenting with motorless aircraft. But Ricker wasn't in Rome. I decided to see if Meier knew anything about it.

On May 15 I went to the Löwenbräu. The German drive into the Low Countries was five days old. I waited for Meier to come in, then paid my check and started to leave. He stopped me, insisting I stay and keep him company. I said I had only a few minutes; a girl was expecting me. But he wouldn't listen. I sat down with him.

He began to crow about German successes in the north. I kept edging toward airplane topics; Junkers 87s—Stukas—were proving their offensive power. But he could not or would not discuss the Luftwaffe.

He preferred to gloat over the German army's clever preparations: how soldiers swarmed suddenly out of barges to attack Dutch defenses and how, the previous winter, a friend of his had smuggled a trunkful of Dutch army uniforms into Germany to be copied in quantity for the use of units dropped behind Dutch lines. Then, as if regretting his indiscretion, he added hastily that Germany had really been making Dutch uniforms in exchange for food shipments from Holland.

Like every German, he was a table-top strategist and, exasperated at some particularly stupid remark of mine, he sketched a diagram on the table. Here were the Dutch, here the

Belgians, here the British and French advancing across Belgium to meet the Germans; here the Maginot Line, here the Siegfried.

I said: “Bah! It will all turn out the way it did in 1914. We will go so far and no further. Stop talking about the war. I read the *Voelkischer Beobachter* every day too.”

His fat face pouted. “You think I *get* my knowledge out of newspapers?”

“Of course. Where else?”

He snorted angrily. The night before his chief had dined with Von Rintelen, who had said that the Schlieffen Plan for the attack on France had been altered. British and French generals expected the main assault to be attempted through Belgium and northern France as in World War I. But Hitler and Keitel had improved on Schlieffen: the break-through would come at Sedan.

I asked vaguely who Schlieffen was; I seemed to have heard the name somewhere.

“You’re really dense,” Meier said in despair. “I can’t talk with you. You don’t know the simplest things. And ever since you’ve been taking singing lessons from your Maestro Armando you’re worse than ever.”

We separated. He had kept me an hour.

General von Schlieffen, Chief of Staff under Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, had in 1908 worked out a complete plan for the invasion and conquest of France. It called for a sweep through Belgium to the Channel ports by the main forces, the right wing, and thence along the coast to Havre, where a sharp left turn toward Paris would form one prong of a mighty pincers movement. This plan had been tried in World War I and is thought by military strategists and by German postwar analysts to have failed because the German right wing was not strong enough to execute its mission. Now in World War II British and French generals expected that the Germans would try the Schlieffen Plan again, this time with a much stronger right wing. Therefore they had massed their men in the north opposite Belgium behind a hastily erected system of field defenses.

If the attempted break-through were to come at Sedan, where the Maginot Line ended, it would call for a whole new strategy of defense.

I didn't dare try to confirm this with Pinelli. There wasn't time to wait and see him that evening at home. Any other source of possible confirmation would have taken even longer.

I saw the Colonel that afternoon, repeated what I had been told, pointing out that I had not confirmed it; I didn't want to lose time. British and French agents could perhaps confirm it by observation of German troop concentrations.

I got confirmation of the glider manufacture at Wiener Neustadt after two weeks through Bettina Salvoni.

Fear of war was spreading. The rich Poles who had fled to Rome in September all prepared to go to Spain. The American Ambassador warned Americans to leave Italy.

War agitation in the Italian press approached fever heat. The papers preached entry into the war to satisfy Italian aspirations toward French territory and for a free Mediterranean—Mare Nostrum.

But the wide mass of people could not be aroused. Laundry soap and sugar were added to the ration list; potatoes disappeared; bread contained one quarter corn meal, and on Sundays there was not enough milk even for the sick and the children.

Under the Italian food distribution system, the peasant delivers his products to official state-marketing organizations under the Ministry of Agriculture. The producer may not sell milk, cattle, or grain direct to anyone; these marketing agencies buy everything from peasants and large landowners alike at fixed prices and resell at fixed prices to food stores and the armed forces.

As any increase in prices was forbidden, peasants began to bootleg some of their products. They were holding out so much that the marketing agencies couldn't fill orders from the cities and from the army and navy. New punitive decrees were issued; every

train traveling toward a large center was searched by the railway police.

Only the Holy See had considerable food reserves, some of which found their way from Vatican City to the bootleg market. Mussolini therefore stationed Questura agents at all exits from the Pope's domain, who searched everybody on the way out. The detectives were especially anxious to uncover the source of coffee that was being sold at fantastic prices.

On May 23 the peasants were stung to fury by a decree of the Ministry of Agriculture requisitioning 30 per cent of all cattle. Agricultural officials toured the country, paying low fixed prices and then paying not in cash but by deducting the price from past-due taxes owed by so many of the farmers. The only exemptions were breeding cattle and peasants owning as little as three head. The peasants' fury increased when they learned that many big landowners, including high Fascists like Achille Starace and Adelchi Serena, were completely exempted. The collected beef was delivered to Germany on the hoof.

Industrial workers reacted sharply to the food shortages. An open-air mass meeting planned by the party in Rome had to be called off; district wardens reported too strong an anti-war feeling among the people.

Federale Marotti was very bitter about it when on June 3 we stood together on the Piazza Barberini watching a parade of school children behind Italian and German flags. He added: "All they can get for their war is children."

The strength of anti-war and anti-German feeling may be gauged from the fact that a good Fascist like Marotti talked that way; but he felt free then to do so; 60 per cent of the party agreed with him, he said.¹ His experiences in Spain had not made him love the Germans—only their machines.

Unable to whip up adult enthusiasm, the party turned to school children. A holiday was declared. But instead of getting the day off, the children were marshaled by their teachers into marching columns behind German and Italian flags, and they trod the streets of

Rome shouting for war. People on the street turned their heads away from the spectacle.

Marotti and I followed along behind the procession. It turned down Via Regina Elena, where a group of paving workers were repairing the roadway. The children marched by, lustily shouting. Some of the workmen yelled derisively at them: “Forget demonstrating and go back to your studies!” The teachers retorted, and a fight broke out between them and the workers. Policemen came and quelled the disturbance. But by that time the workers had disappeared. And the children too.

Other processions by children that day met similar fates, I heard; they were laughed at and scorned and melted away.

Then the German break-through came—at Sedan on May 14. Nazi planes blasted a passage for tanks, infantry, and artillery across the Meuse and encircled the French Ninth Army under General Corap. A gap of fifty miles in the French lines went unfilled, and the Panzers sliced past Sedan and cut the French army in half. The Maginot Line was turned.

I knew the Colonel had forwarded my information about the alteration of the Schlieffen Plan, but apparently the French disregarded it. Or if they actually did try to confirm or disprove it, they must have gone at it in the 1918 way, reporting that “no troop concentrations of sufficient magnitude for a break-through could be observed in the direction of the nearest railhead.” Thus was the vast fabric of the Maginot Line rendered a useless monument, all its guns pointing the wrong way.

On the day Sedan was by-passed, the Dutch commander in chief, General Henri Gerard Winkelman, directed his army to stop fighting. And on May 28 Belgian King Leopold surrendered his forces.

This event had a special interest for Italians because of the royal family relationship. A rumor sprang out of the Vatican that Leopold had sought terms from the Axis through his sister. The Vatican had relayed to him the German reply: Leopold would be left on his throne if he stayed in Belgium and put himself at the disposal of the conquerors. But if he

fled, the Germans would declare his throne forfeit.

15. ITALY GOES TO WAR

NOW THE COLLAPSE of France came rapidly. Italy looked on amazed at the swift decay of the country that she had always regarded as a mighty power with the finest army in Europe. The press pointed gleefully at this proof of democracy's inner weaknesses; England, too, would soon follow France.

This echoed Mussolini's conviction, which dated from March. Ever since the mission had visited the German General Staff and reported Germany's efficient preparations, he had been convinced of German victory. Now he believed England could not hold out alone and that Italy would lose her share of prostrate France if he did not jump promptly in the right direction.

So he decided to take Italy into the war. Pinelli told me on the eighth that within two days Mussolini would proclaim a state of war with France and England from his balcony on the Palazzo Venezia.

At noon on Monday, June 10, Fascist party men went from house to house and office to office with lists of names and ordered everyone to appear in the Piazza Venezia at three o'clock. A retired civil-service official named Ferucci, living in my building, was threatened with loss of his pension if he didn't turn out.

The employees from government offices gathered in orderly columns. At the head of each contingent were party men to lead them—and at the rear to prevent desertions. Companies of Fascist Youth came marching from each district. All business establishments were closed by decree, and Questura patrols went from street to street to enforce the closing orders. Italian and German flags were freely displayed, also by order. I went, too, to the Piazza Venezia—perhaps the only one present of his own free will among

that mob of a hundred thousand.

Il Duce began his speech. Wild cheers broke from the crowd at intervals. On the balcony stood Mussolini; behind him one or two functionaries; and also a man who at every resounding ferocious period gave arm signals to the party men scattered among the crowd. These men stood with their eyes not on Mussolini but on the head cheerleader behind him. When he signaled for cheers they yelled, and their contingents did likewise. There was no voice of approval except when the party men cued it.

Such was the spirit of the Italian people the day Mussolini led them to war.

Rome was plastered with posters exhorting the populace in the event of air raids to rush calmly and quickly to the bomb shelters. Newspapers and handbills also spread the exhortations.

At eleven-thirty that night French planes appeared over Rome. The sirens howled. Men, women, children, scantily clothed, whipped by fear, stormed out of their rooms. But in our five-story building there was no cellar and no shelter. Nor in the next house. We piled out into the street only to learn that the nearest public air-raid shelters were in the Red Cross building on Via Sicilia three blocks away. We went back and stood in our hallway. The drone of motors kept rising and falling overhead and finally died off in the distance. After an hour we heard the all-clear. No bombs had been dropped; no anti-aircraft guns went into action.

The next morning, Venturi told me, he could get no work at all out of his staff in the Corporations Ministry. Nor did other government or business offices fare any better. The Romans were badly shaken.

That night the French planes came again and went away again without bombing. The Italian anti-aircraft batteries kept still too.

On the third night the French once again droned over the capital. This time the AAs—few enough—went into action. The noise caused new panic among the people. Flares and

exploding shells lit the night. Shrapnel splinters dropped into the streets.

We were sure that this time the French were dropping eggs. We stood tight-packed in the dark entrance hallway. It was stupid, but at the moment there was nothing else to do.

A woman got a heart attack and we had to pack together even closer to make room for her to be laid down on the stone floor. Children wept without stopping, and men cursed Mussolini and the regime. All fear of the janitor, the party stool pigeon, was forgotten.

When finally we heard the all-clear, the people were exhausted and beaten down as if after a great battle. The unconscious woman was carried up to her apartment on the third floor; in the light of someone's flashlight the men carrying her looked as pale as she did.

The next morning I walked around to see what damage had been done. Not a single French bomb had fallen. But a shoe store on Via Nazionale had been blasted apart by an AA shell that fell back unexploded, only to go off when it hit the street. In Via Sardinia a splinter had made a five-inch crater. That night the Italian AAs had killed three and wounded fifteen Romans.

Mussolini made a personal tour of the AA batteries and forbade them to shoot at enemy planes until bombs were actually dropped. And these orders were followed. Planes came, but the AAs were silent.

On the third day of the war, June 12, at 5 p.m., I went to a party district meeting with Bellini, who got me a party emblem for my lapel and a forged Fascist credential.

The meeting hall was on the second floor of a poor building. At the door of an anteroom we gave up our postcard notices of meeting and showed our credentials. We went into the auditorium, which seated about three hundred people. At the front end was a speakers' platform decorated with Italian flags; in the center a picture of Mussolini in his steel helmet.

The auditorium filled up in a curious but characteristic way: the earlier arrivals took the rearmost seats, so that the place filled up from the back forward. Obviously nobody

wanted to sit right under the district leaders' eyes. Across the platform hung a large banner with the legend: *Vincere e vinceremo*—To win and we will win. Bellini and I sat in the last row.

When the hall was nearly full, the speaker appeared, and in general outlines repeated Gayda's editorial from the previous day's *Giornale d'Italia*. The audience of men sat quiet throughout. At the end loud voices burst out: "When will the war end?" "How long will it last?"

The speaker stated glibly: "I am authorized to say that the war will end in August with the complete defeat of the anti-Axis forces. Then our people will enjoy the fruits of victory."

And he closed the meeting.

The people were in fact frantic and ugly-tempered. The street patrol of Rome by Questura plain-clothes men was doubled, from two thousand to four thousand. Tempers flared in the stores when harried housewives suspected that merchants were withholding foodstuffs from sale. On Via Volturmo an excited crowd smashed a delicatessen (*salsamenteria*) because the women believed the proprietor to be secreting cheese. The Questura intervened, arrested a few women, and closed the store for a month.

Air-raid shelter posters were torn into shreds. On a wall in Trastevere someone had written in red across the face of the shelter instructions: *Dove per noi poveri?*—Where for us poor people?

But Mussolini already had his air-raid shelter in his villa on Via Nomentana. Should he be in bed when the raids came, at the press of a button his austere pallet slid into an electric elevator which lowered him majestically into a subterranean apartment, bomb- and gas-proof, of eight rooms: bedroom, bath, dining room, drawing room, studio, a first-aid station, and sleeping quarters for cook, butler, and valet. A separate exit leads from this luxurious cavern to the street.

The Pope too has an elevator from bedroom to shelter, but he can reach it only on foot. Both Venturi and Pinelli vouched for these facts. Pope Pius XII, Venturi added, declared that if Rome were actually bombed he would lead a barefoot procession through the city.

Immediate danger for Rome ended one week after Mussolini's speech. On June 17 the French asked for an armistice, negotiations began, and the French army laid down its arms. Mussolini's proclamation of victory referred to a "break-through" by the Italians across the Alps.

The following week a lieutenant colonel on the staff of Crown Prince Umberto, then a division general in command of the army attacking France, told me that if the French had not collapsed under the German avalanche in the north, the Italians could not have held their own front, much less have broken through. The French had in fact been wonderfully well fortified in the Alps, and the Italians had to advance up open slopes against murderous fire. Huddled in valleys to bivouac, by morning many units had lost half their men in killed and wounded. Later I saw photographs taken by a soldier on that front; it was true.

I was reporting to the Colonel daily on a multitude of items and assignments, many of which I do not mention here either because they related to investigations perhaps not yet completed, or were of temporary importance. We met as we had arranged, at social gatherings or on the street.

Rome was adjusting itself again to the black-out. Light traps, an invention of the Germans, made their appearance in the doorways of restaurants, theaters—all public places which stayed open nights. The light traps consisted only of draperies replacing the usual doors. One entered through a slit into a small curtained cubicle perhaps three feet square and left it through another slit diagonally across the cubicle from the first slit, so that light from inside the building could not leak out into the street.

Open-air restaurants provided illumination for their patrons with little blue bulbs under

shades just large enough to throw light exactly to the edges of the tables and not on the patrons. In the Casino delle Rose, one of Rome's smartest places, ribald guests scribbled obscenities and suggestive drawings on the white inner linings of the lampshades. They provided much amusement and so the management didn't clean them off.

Black-outs in Rome are less fun than elsewhere. There was not a flashlight to be had any more at any price, and no batteries. And Italian ingenuity was not up to providing luminous lapel and hat buttons such as the Germans used to avoid collisions in the darkened streets. We just banged along and hoped for the best. Therefore Roman night life went indoors: people stayed home or went only to the movies.

I kept in frequent contact with Bellini and during Italy's first week in the war I went to Genoa alone on a mission for him. By accident I saw there an experimental flight over the harbor of the navy's propellerless plane.

Since August 1939 experiments had been going on with a propellerless plane model built in the Breda plant in Milan from plans by an engineer named Enrico de Forlini. First trials had been conducted at the military air base in Spezia without much success. A new model was built in 1940 and this was the machine I saw.

It was about twenty-one feet long with a wingspread of eighteen feet, and under each wing were rocket tubes and a larger one on the tail, as both rockets and a compressed-air mechanism gave it power. Top speed was a hundred and fifty-five miles per hour and it could not make U-turns. For this reason it was doubted that larger models could be built. Yet a bigger model was projected, as well as a wingless propellerless plane powered with a rotary cylinder.

16. FASCISM EATS ITS YOUNG

THE DAY AFTER I returned from Genoa, Pinelli telephoned me to come at once to his office. I always avoided visiting him in the War Ministry, but his tone was urgent. I went.

He told me the Gestapo had given the Questura a long list of Germans they wanted arrested. The Questura itself had added many Italian names to the list as well as Jews of all nationalities and of foreigners who had no compelling reasons for remaining in Italy. Foreigners would have the choice of going to some other country within ten days, or else concentration camps. My name, said Pinelli, was on the list.

“Do you want to leave Italy?”

“No.”

“Then go back to your room. My chauffeur will pick you up in an hour. He’ll take you to a farm of mine twenty kilometers southeast of here, in Frascati. It’s a quiet little place hidden in a valley. The chauffeur is also the caretaker and lives there with his wife. When you reach the house, call the nearest doctor— my man will tell you his name—and he’ll see about your health.” That’s all he said. I went home, told Signora Zarra I was going away, and also notified the Colonel and Bergdorff; he would tell the others.

The chauffeur came and we started. On the way I complained of pains. They grew worse. The man was very solicitous. We arrived at Pinelli’s place—a combination farm and country villa: a two-story stone house surrounded by olive trees inside a walled garden of flowers. It was about a mile outside the village of Frascati.

The chauffeur-caretaker and his wife, a very tall, bony woman with a composed face, put me to bed and called the doctor. He arrived in less than half an hour in a one-horse carriage.

He turned out to be an old man, simple and kindly, who had been tending peasants in the valley for over forty years. He said he had heard about me from his “young patient Pinelli.” The pains were growing worse, I told him. He agreed that I had a serious inflammation of the gall bladder. He gave me instructions for poultices, chatted with me for a few minutes, and drove away, promising to stop in again the next day.

Pinelli telephoned that evening; he said he would tell the Questura about my poor health.

When the doctor came the next day he said I needn't stay in bed; it was very weakening. I might get up, but I should be extremely careful; I might have to go to bed again at any moment. He had luncheon with me in the garden before driving off on his rounds. I passed the hours reading or sitting in the garden fending off the solicitous feeding of the mistress of the house. She and her husband were firmly convinced I was ill.

On the eighth or ninth day Bergdorff turned up unexpectedly. Twelve thousand foreigners and Italians had been arrested, he said, held in jail for varying periods, and then sent to concentration camps. A Hungarian woman of our acquaintance, whose husband was arrested in Viareggio, had been held in prison with her five-year-old daughter. (When she emerged a month later she had lost forty pounds.)

We knew about the new concentration camps erected hastily at the outbreak of the war. They were not so bad as the Gestapo's, but they had their own disadvantages. Sanitary conditions were frightful in the long, poorly built barracks. There were no staff physicians and outside physicians could be called only by means of a complex red-tape system.

In most of the camps no food was issued to the prisoners, but they were given six-and-a-half lire a day. This bought little, since milk alone was two lire per liter. When undernourishment caused disease in the camps, the allowance was raised to eight-and-a-half lire.

The inmates were given no work to occupy them; there were no pastimes; in fact,

nothing but dreadful inactivity. Families were broken up; men and women were in separate camps. Foreigners granted visas had to apply through the Ministry of Interior and the Questura for permission to go to Rome to get them. In many cases the permission was so long in coming that the visas expired and the prisoners remained hopelessly in camp.

And on top of all this, said Bergdorff, a rumor was going around that the Gestapo would take over. This later turned out to be incorrect, but it caused a wave of fear.

After another three days Pinelli telephoned again, on June 30. He and Venturi between them, he said, had secured permission for me to remain in Rome because of my poor health. My residence permit was extended another three months; my first six-month soggiorno had expired in November 1939 and had been renewed every three months thereafter.

I said good-bye to my good friend the doctor and the calm bony woman, and Pinelli's chauffeur drove me back to Rome. I felt quite secure and went back to work after expressing my gratitude to Pinelli and the Commendatore.

The first notable thing I now noticed was that Germany had begun its open grab for power in Italy. The Gestapo was working directly with the Questura, as proven by the list of arrests. The racial commission in the Ministry of Interior openly abandoned its function of advisory body and concentrated on the administrative tasks of the Italian police.

This racial commission had been continuously expanded by the Germans with police specialists. They began by giving friendly advice to the Italian officials of the Pubblica Sicurezza; advice soon changed into veiled instructions.

When a leading official of the Ministry of Interior complained to Mussolini about it, Il Duce declared that he welcomed the suggestions of the Germans as they had had so much more police experience than the Italians. This comment leaked out among the ministry

staff and led many of the men to go through their work so listlessly that it amounted to passive resistance.

Barely two weeks had passed since my return from Pinelli's farm when a detective appeared at the pensione to arrest me. It was six in the morning. I didn't dare telephone Pinelli or Venturi, and the man was very impatient.

I had a sudden stabbing pain, then another. I doubled up and begged the detective to call a car; he must take me at once to my doctor at Frascati.

He refused surlily. I must come with him to the Centrale.

My attack grew worse. He looked uneasy and irritated. Signora Zarra appeared in a flowery wrapper. Her eyes widened at the sight of my pain. She screamed at the agent in a rage. Couldn't he see the gentleman was very sick?

He shrugged elaborately and went downstairs. I dressed and followed him. He had a taxi. We got in, and I told the driver to go at once to Frascati.

The detective swore. Why couldn't I go to a doctor right in Rome? What was the matter with me anyway?

I said only the doctor in Frascati could help me. He sank back in the seat and looked very sullen all the thirteen miles to Pinelli's farm. It took less than an hour, and it was barely half-past seven when we got there.

The caretaker and his wife were alarmed. I tottered to bed and feebly asked that the doctor be called. The Questura man sat down in a corner, puzzled, and watched everything. Nobody paid any attention to him.

The old doctor arrived with surprising promptness, did not even glance at the man in the corner, examined me, and shook his head mournfully. My bladder inflammation had come back. I could not be moved.

The Questura man asked to use the telephone. He went into the front room—my bedroom was on the ground floor—and I could hear him explaining to his superior in

Rome what had happened. His voice was grumpy. Then he put the doctor on the phone and he explained in medical terms. Very well, they said, I could be left there. The Questura man went out to drive back to Rome alone. The doctor smiled at me.

Later in the day the doctor called Pinelli and told him what happened.

A few days later Pinelli telephoned. After my first “illness” the Ministry of Interior had sent the Questura permission to extend my residence permit. But it had never been issued to me. Pinelli had investigated and discovered that the Questura had lost the new permission from my dossier in their files—a typical piece of Italian carelessness. So the Ministry of Interior sent a new permission, my residence permit was extended three months as intended, and my bladder inflammation got better the same day. I went back to Rome.

I saw Palcini briefly for the first time since I had left Milan. He said that the day after war was declared, June 11, the workers in the Fiat factory in Turin had struck for one day. The Questura had ended the strike by sending some fifty workers, foremen, and engineers to the penal mines in Sardinia. He said the Milan Circolo Secondo was certain that this strike explained the wave of twelve thousand arrests all over the country: the regime sought to silence all doubtful people.

Bergdorff and I resumed our investigation of German penetration.

We found that the Gestapo staff in the Arbeitsfront had been expanded to overflowing; the space was no longer sufficient. The same was true of the Brown House in Via Babuino. Bergdorff had dropped in at several district meetings of the Auslandsorganisation. Usually these were attended by block and district wardens making weekly reports to be collated and sent to Alexanderplatz, Berlin. But he was now meeting many men and women there who had only the slightest excuses for their presence in Rome.

The Gestapo third circle was operating in Rome, keeping an eye on German officials,

though the embassy was guarded by Questura men in a cordon up Via Conte Rosso as far as the Church of San Giovanni di Laterano. I personally spotted at least six or seven at a time. But the Gestapo was not as interested in guarding as in watching all the clerks, underlings, and visitors, and especially Ambassador von Mackensen and Military Attache von Rintelen. The latter resented being spied on by Himmler's men and complained to Berlin, with the only result that the personnel watching him was changed. Bettina Salvoni's adjutant said Von Rintelen and his staff were furious.

At this time Von Rintelen's staff increased to a hundred and forty-five and moved to a building separate from the embassy in Via S. Croce in Gerusalemme. The whole personnel was brought from Germany, down to the humblest stenographer and including even the cleaning women. The only Italian was the doorman, and he wasn't permitted to enter the building. But the Gestapo surveillance continued.

Never good friends, the army and the Gestapo were at sharper swords' points than ever since the Polish campaign, when General-oberst Werner von Fritsch had met his mysterious death.

Von Fritsch had preceded Von Brauchitsch as commander in chief but had been removed in 1938 because he objected to the occupation of Austria. He had been not only a general, but one of that caste of generals with a political bent. As the army is the final decisive element in politics, Hitler regarded him as dangerous. When war came, Von Fritsch at once joined the infantry regiment of which he was honorary commander in Poland.

On September 21, 1939, Von Fritsch, his adjutant, and four soldiers set out to locate a new site for regimental headquarters. On the way, Von Fritsch and his adjutant were shot from behind by the four soldiers, who were Gestapo men. The adjutant died at once, Von Fritsch was carried back mortally wounded; he died within a few hours.

The official report stated that he had been shot by a Polish patrol during a skirmish. But

the line of hostilities was some fifteen miles from the spot where the accident took place.

I had this story from both Bergdorff and Kerbel.

On July 1 proof came that Mussolini was not to be outdone by Hitler.

Italy had a shock. She lost her most popular hero, her finest aviator, the man who had led a squadron of planes halfway around the world. Marshal Italo Balbo, governor of Libya, fell victim to a strange airplane accident over Tobruk.

Rome promptly issued a bombastic statement that the Fascist hero had been shot down during a large British raid. Three days later the British issued a terse statement that none of their planes had been anywhere near Tobruk. This, investigation proved, was correct.

On June 28 Balbo was at the controls of a tri-motored Savoia 76, with nine other men. One motor conked out. Balbo came down to five hundred feet to land. Anti-aircraft shells blasted the plane; it crashed, and all ten men were killed. The story generally accepted was that the one engine had been sabotaged by men of Mussolini's P M M, and the AA batteries that destroyed his plane were manned by gunners of the same organization.

17. INSTEAD OF MUSSOLINI, MACKENSEN RULES

IN JULY, through a friend of Pinelli's in the Ministry of Interior, I saw the telegram of inquiry about me which the Questura had sent to the Düsseldorf Gestapo on my arrival in Italy the previous May. At this time the police of Germany, Hungary, and Romania regularly answered such inquiries, and Yugoslavia occasionally.

The reply gave all of my personal history that was recorded and added that, while I was not known to be an outspoken enemy of the regime, I harbored latent defeatist and democratic tendencies. Therefore I should be watched.

I had no doubt that Düsseldorf had sent a stronger telegram about me to the Rome Gestapo.

August and September were months of comparative placidity on the surface, but none at all underneath. For those who knew where to look, there was visible a sinister pattern of German and pro-German pressure from above and of anti-German rumblings from below. The Italians make little distinction between war and Germany. The two are historically associated in the Italian mind; and so a blow against the war was the same as a blow against Germany.

A German commission moved into the Ministry of War, and it fell to the humiliated Pinelli to lead its members from office to office and introduce them to the Italian staff and leading officials. He installed them finally in the most elegant suite of rooms in the building.

But he no sooner had left them than they popped out again and began singly to visit all the officials they had just met. In the afternoon they repeated the performance, questioning, chatting, and offering advice. This became their daily routine.

The staff took it variously: some were enraged, a few noncommittal, a few accepted it and fawned on the Germans. Undersecretary of State for War (Mussolini is Minister of War) General Visconti was helpless even though they were overrunning his entire department.

Similarly, German commissions moved into the Air and Navy offices, sent from Germany in accordance with the Axis military treaty of May 22, 1939. But Italy was refused the right to send corresponding commissions to Berlin; the Germans used the threat of withholding coal as a lever for prying always further concessions.

The regime was accepting German infiltration and supporting it officially, though not with great enthusiasm. But it played its part in stimulating Italy to prove herself also cold and ruthless.

Italian press agitation began against Greece; more and more soldiers were shipped across the Adriatic to Albania. Bellini told me the piquant story of the troopship *Paganini*, which the underground had planned to set afire before it sailed from Bari on June 28. But the plot came to nothing when the dock where the *Paganini* was moored was suddenly closed to workers; the underground canceled the plan. The worker appointed for the task did not give up so easily; he somehow acquired a uniform and joined the soldiers boarding the *Paganini*, still intending to carry out his assignment. But officers seized hold of him as a stranger in their midst and questioned him. He told them that as a good Fascist he was impatient to go and fight the enemy. They took him at his word, enrolled him, and he found himself crossing the Adriatic to Albania on a transport crammed with melancholy soldiers.

In Durazzo harbor the *Paganini* burst into roaring flame; some men were trapped below, others plunged into the water; two hundred and twenty men died.

A few detachments had gone ashore before the fire broke out, the underground man among them, though he had not, after all, set the fire. That had been done by the Albanian

underground nationalists in complete ignorance of the Bari plan.

Bellini learned the story from the doleful letters of his man who was now a soldier of Fascism in Albania.

The flames of anti-Greek agitation were fanned by the sinking in the Greek port of Tinos of the Greek mine-laying cruiser *Helli* on August 15. The Italian communique said that the British had done it to inflame Greek feeling against Italy.

But Captain Trasazzo told me in the Caccia that in fact an Italian submarine had done the job, believing the *Helli* to be British.

I believe it was that night, too, since we were talking about the vulnerability of ships to torpedoes, that Trasazzo said the Germans had begun to equip their ships, especially battleships and cruisers, with Aussenraeger (literally, outside-carriers), steel compressed-air chambers attached to the outer hull from water line to keel. He did not say to what extent such chambers would slow down a ship.¹

The anti-Greek agitation was led by two newspapers. Roberto Farinacci, vulgar Fascist firebrand and director of *Regime Fascista*, was making monthly visits to Berlin as the guest of the Nazi Reich. His first visit had been in 1938 when, Rome rumors insisted, he had begun to accept subsidies for his paper from Goebbels. I was not able to verify this, but it is certain that Farinacci received credit in Fascist circles for originating Italy's anti-Semitic laws and that he was regarded as a German mouthpiece.

People looked to his articles for hints on what Germany thought of anything, for Farinacci would state frankly what Germany would countenance in Italy and what she would not. Opposition to the one-armed patriot—he lost the other in World War I—was difficult, because he stood well with Mussolini.

The only other paper openly pro-German was *Il Tevere*, a feeble weekly which the German Embassy had bought and turned into a daily in the fall of 1939. From Berlin Goebbels was sending it monthly “subscription fees from Germany,” and the paper

became a weapon of political pressure via tried-and-true anti-Semitism.

The two papers caused considerable excitement, topped off by the appearance in *Il Tevere* on August 12 of a German column called *Deutsche Mitteilungen* (German Reports). This caused a sensation. Ingrid Soederberg learned in the Propaganda Ministry that almost at once the paper lost 25 per cent of its circulation. Thereafter its newsboys traversed the streets in pairs, yelling lustily, but did little business.

At my suggestion Bellini and I attended another party meeting in the same district rooms we had gone to in June, when the people had been promised that the war would end in August.

This time the speaker, before anybody could ask questions, said he had been instructed to announce that the war would end in September.

Angry, doubting voices burst from the audience. The speaker looked confused and adjourned the meeting.

Anti-war, anti-German feeling was seething. In this ugly and bewildered atmosphere a conspiracy against the regime was hatched in the Caccia Club.

Leader of the plot, of which no word has ever appeared in the Italian press, was Prince Filippo Doria Pamphili, who had married a Scotswoman after she nursed him through a severe illness. He had long been an open anti-Fascist. At the start of the Abyssinian war in 1935, when the party ordered every house to hang out a flag, he had refused. A mob had stormed his place on Via Doria and hoisted a flag by force. The name of the street was soon changed to Via di Plebiscito.

His companion was Don Alessandro Torlonia, born in the United States of an Italian father and American mother who after her divorce repudiated the title of princess and lived in New York. He was raised in America and never concealed his democratic sympathies.

These men were inexperienced plotters and word of their scheme got out. I heard about

it from Captain Trasazzo one dull afternoon at Rosati. The conspirators had had a final meeting the night before in the Caccia, he said, and he was both angry and contemptuously amused at the notion of naive aristocrats plotting against the regime in its own stronghold.

Pinelli knew all about it by the time I arrived at his home that evening and was sure Pamphili and his lieutenant faced imprisonment regardless of their high social positions.

“Nobody will know what happens to them,” Pinelli remarked.

Two days later Pamphili was seized by the Questura, questioned for three days, and imprisoned, first in a villa in northern Italy and later in the Sardinian penal mines. The other man, married to a daughter of the late King Alphonso of Spain, was freed on his father-in-law’s guarantee of good behavior.

But Pinelli’s confidence that their fate would remain secret was soon destroyed. The numerous servants of the arrested men gossiped freely, and in no time virtually all Rome was aware of what had happened. In a bar near my pensione several men were arrested for openly expressing sympathy with the conspiracy.

On September 19 Von Ribbentrop came to Rome to tell Mussolini that Hitler was abandoning plans for the invasion of England and that a treaty had been prepared to bring Japan into the Axis. Though they had been kept informed of the negotiations in broad outline, the Italians were not too well pleased; they didn’t trust Japanese motives, but signed the treaty anyway.

Ciano’s contribution to the meeting was that Italy had decided to attack Greece or, as he phrased it, to occupy the little country.

The same day Von Ribbentrop had an audience with the Pope which turned into a violent argument. The Pope protested strenuously against the persecution of priests by the Reich and demanded the return of confiscated church properties in Germany and

Austria. Von Ribbentrop rejected the demand as against the interests of the German state and made a counterdemand: for a papal instruction to cardinals in Germany prohibiting independent political activity by priests and ordering them to support the Reich in their sermons.

The Pope refused this request and went on to repeat a list of persecutions which so angered Von Ribbentrop that the audience ended, after lasting an hour, on a brusque note.

Vatican protocol demanded that Von Ribbentrop should visit the Papal Secretary of State. But the audience with the Pope had so upset him that he had to lie down on a sofa in an anteroom for two hours before paying a brief formal visit and leaving the Holy City.

In contrast to the bad relations between Nazidom and the Papacy, Fascism is on a good footing with the Holy See. In December 1939 the King had visited the Vatican and the Pope had returned the call. The Church was never persecuted by Fascism and religious education of children in the public schools was assured by the Lateran treaties. Over and above this is the fact that the Pope and a majority of the cardinals are Italians and, like all Italians, never lose their sense of nationality.

Of all the stringencies, that in olive oil was the saddest blow to the people who use oil for all their cooking. To make the olive harvest stretch farther, the Ministry of Agriculture ordered the refining process cut from five stages to three, thus saving 40 per cent of the raw oil. Unhappily, another result was that from now on all cooking oil was very strong and had an unpleasant smell. In a half-liter bottle I bought, settling sediment quickly filled one third of the bottle.

In the fall the sale of coffee by the cup in public places was prohibited. Instead of real coffee—*espresso*—the bars began to serve *miscela*, made of roast corn and chicory.

There were two meatless days a week and sausages had jumped 30 per cent in price since the summer before. Canned goods disappeared from the stores; sardines, tuna, and

marmalade were hard to find because they were favorites with the Germans, who bought up all they could find to send home. Automobile traffic was reduced; at night from ten to eight taxis could be obtained only through the Questura; car owners had to have permits from the war office.

On September 26 German Minister of Agriculture Richard Walther Darre met with the Italian Giuseppe Tassinari. Darre declared that since Italian food production was too low a German commission would have to be sent into the Ministry of Agriculture. Tassinari consulted Mussolini, who acceded to the demand. So now there were German commissions in Interior, War, Navy, Air, and Agriculture.

Both underground and party recognized the inflammability of public opinion. In the north, the underground fanned the antiwar feeling among the industrial workers into open demonstrations. To restrain the tide President Capoferri of Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National Leisure-Time Activities), counterpart of Germany's Strength Through Joy, called Milan workers out of their factories and offices to a mass meeting on October 6. Capoferri addressed them in fiery terms: Fascism would conquer; victory was near; sacrifice—patriotism—heroism . . . But the crowd went back to work without visible change in its feelings. On September 24, said Palcini, whom I saw on a quick assignment in Milan, the underground had damaged a loading crane in Fiume harbor. In collapsing it fell on two submarines and a destroyer, damaging them so heavily that they were eight weeks in drydock.

This month—September 1940—Germany showed herself not content with getting control of governmental bureaus; she reached out for bigger booty. By means of a deceptive agreement industrial study commissions were exchanged, and within a week German experts moved in on the Fiat and Ansaldo tank and engine plants, Montecatini chemicals and steel, Caproni (makers of Italian dive bombers, the *picchiatelli*) and Breda (producers of the excellent torpedo bombers, the *idrosiluranti*). This was the cream of the

peninsula's heavy industry.

Early in October I saw my old friend Ricker again. He was parading along the Corso in bright noon sunshine. A half-step to his left and rear strode a natty young lieutenant.

Ricker had been made a lieutenant colonel since I had last seen him and had acquired an adjutant. With a flourish he introduced Lieutenant Rehner, who clicked his heels, saluted smartly, and then stood by. When we went into the Zeppa for a drink the young man sat upright in his chair and spoke only when his superior addressed him.

Ricker said he would now be in Rome about once a week, stopping at the Excelsior. He was stationed in Taormina.

Strong German air forces were indeed stationed in Catania, Messina, Palermo, and Syracuse on the island of Sicily, which served as the main base for operations in the Mediterranean and Libya.

The officer commanding in Sicily was General Hans Geisler, who, with his staff, occupied the entire Albergo San Domenico Palace in Taormina near Catania. Many of the officers had brought their wives from Germany and had developed a lively resort life for themselves. The people of Taormina—who had always lived on tourists, chiefly Americans—were practically starving and were enraged by the drinking and dancing to a Luftwaffe band that went on night after night in the luxurious San Domenico. Some of them attacked a group of German officers' wives while shopping.

The prefect of Catania, in whose jurisdiction Taormina lay, complained to Ciano, who took the matter up with Mackensen. It actually resulted in the German wives leaving Taormina eight days later. But this didn't change much. The wives were simply replaced by the dozens of German stenographers and clerks of the Luftwaffe.

It happened that one of the waiters I knew in the Cafe Aragno was sent to Taormina by his syndicate; he returned to visit his family in Rome in a fury against the Germans. The

goings-on in the San Domenico were scandalous and, besides, the Germans were niggardly tippers. He hoped the British would bomb General Geisler and the San Domenico out of existence.

Even before the British counteroffensive in Libya under General Archibald Wavell, German troops were being transported across the Mediterranean. (The number ultimately exceeded a hundred thousand and may have reached a hundred and fifty thousand, a more likely figure.) They were under command of Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel, who had distinguished himself at the Sedan break-through by leading the Panzer advance in his own tank.

Though a first-rate soldier, he made a very unpleasant impression on Pinelli, who met him at the War Ministry when Rommel was on his way south. This son of a simple artisan had won the Pour le Merite during World War I and afterward became an SA leader in Württemberg. Back in the army, he commanded Hitler's headquarters during the occupations of Austria and Czechoslovakia. He had only contempt for the Italians as fighters and didn't trouble to conceal it. His particular dislike was Graziani.

Despite the British fleet, the Germans began the transporting of well over a hundred thousand men—brought down from Germany to various Italian harbors by rail—to northern Africa.

This was when their ally clamped a firm hold on the Italian railroads. The German military authorities demanded that they be granted offices in the main stations on the lines from the Brenner Pass and Tarvisio down to Sicily; they had to supervise and guard the passage of their soldiers.

Again, it seemed an innocent suggestion. But actually expert German rail-operating officials moved in and took over the direction of traffic on the Italian roads. In Rome the new German division superintendent came and put up a sign: *Der deutsche Bahnhofsoffizier*, installed his own staff of two hundred, and so terrorized the Italian

stationmaster that the man lost courage to give orders in his own right. The commandant of the Italian railroad police complained to the Ministry of Railroads. They shrugged. Too late they realized they were helpless to do anything about it. Italian railroads became for all practical purposes part of the Reichsbahn. The Germans moved into the two large hotels near the terminal, Albergo Internazionale and Albergo Stazione, for a long stay.

The Italian railroad workers were put on day-and-night shifts, but their weekly ration of a hundred grams (about one fifth of a pound) of frozen meat was not increased. When they learned that the German operating staff was getting fresh meat twice a day five days a week, they were enraged at every sight of a German uniform.

I went by tram one day from the railroad station to the Piazza di Popolo. In the rear were four empty seats. The car slowly filled up. Two German officers in uniform got on and sat down in the middle two of the four seats. More and more people got on, but nobody sat near the German officers. Nor did anyone stand near them. Finally the car was full; no more room. Normally a streetcar full of Italians is noisy with chatter. But in this one there was icy silence and two empty seats. I could see the Germans become conscious of the hostility; they whispered to each other and got off. They were no sooner gone than the empty seats filled up and everybody began to talk at once—chiefly bitter remarks about Germans.

I think it was that same week that on reaching Pinelli's villa for dinner I found him too upset to eat. It was no trouble to get him to talk.

A German captain had appeared that morning at the war office and demanded payment of a hundred and seventy-five thousand lire to General Geisler's headquarters in Taormina. The Italian colonel in charge of the quartermaster division asked for a bill. The captain took out of his pocket a torn and wrinkled scrap of paper on which was scribbled in pencil: "175,000 lire for construction of barracks in Sardinia"—and an illegible signature. The colonel said he could not authorize payment on such a bill and without a

proper Italian order.

The captain pounded on the desk in fury and said he would not leave the room until he had the cash voucher. When the colonel protested and reminded the German he was not in occupied territory, the captain produced his revolver, leveled it at the colonel, and demanded immediate action.

Very calmly the colonel rang for his orderly and sent him to fetch Pinelli. When the latter walked in, he found the two men facing each other, the German with gun in hand. Pinelli suggested the colonel phone Von Rintelen. The German military attache asked to speak to the captain, and half an hour later Von Rintelen appeared in person. Pinelli was forced to arrange the following settlement of the incident:

The German captain made a *pro forma* apology to the colonel, but got the payment order for one hundred and seventy-five thousand lire.

Pinelli shook with anger at retelling the story. “That captain was drunk! But not with liquor!”

This story got about and created the bitter comment: *Peccato emme cambiata!—Alas*, the M has been transformed. Instead of Mussolini, Mackensen rules.

This was literally true. German Ambassador Hans-Georg von Mackensen, son of the World War marshal, son-in-law of former Foreign Minister Constantin von Neurath (until recently Reichs-protector of Bohemia), and a convinced Nazi, had become the real ruler of Italy on behalf of his masters in Berlin.

At eleven o'clock every morning Mackensen would visit Il Duce in the Palazzo Venezia with a list of German demands, complaints, and advice. They would be closeted alone for an hour or more and about one-thirty Mussolini's private secretary would forward the German demands to the various ministries in the form of urgent instructions. When Mackensen was away or busy, his aide, Prince Bismarck, grandson of the Iron Chancellor, would go in his place.

An example: one day Mackensen asked for the immediate delivery of forty carloads of sweet corn. Various German garrisons in Italy had conceived a great fondness for corn on the cob and their supply officers wanted more. At once Mussolini sat down with Minister of Agriculture Giuseppe Tassinari.^o

It was difficult to locate forty additional carloads of sweet corn because the season was far along. The marketing agencies had already distributed all the corn to the cities. Mackensen stood on his demand, however, and the Italians had no choice but to take forty carloads back from their severely rationed people and deliver them to the German troops within two days.

A new difficulty arose: a shortage of Italian rolling stock. In return for her 900,000 to 1,200,000 tons of German coal per month Italy had to ship two thousand carloads a day of olive oil, southern fruits, and vegetables. As it was impossible to use the empty German coal cars, the Italians had to send their own cars, which they hardly ever saw again. They were kept in Germany and used to transport food and materiel to German troops scattered all over Europe. Also for the traffic between Russia and Germany, which was putting a great strain on already insufficient German rolling stock.

The usual merry-go-round began: the Ministry of Railroads complained to the Reichsbahn without result, then to Mussolini, who complained to Mackensen who, as usual, promised relief.

But nothing happened. So the Italians loaded their food supplies into cases and shipped them to Germany in the German coal cars. Some of the food was spoiled on delivery because the cars, of course, were open. This time the Germans complained. The Italians said they were running short of packing-case material; the Germans must send back their cars. Instead of that the Germans sent packing cases and packing-case material on condition that they be returned too. But it was still insufficient, and the Germans were compelled to put the Italian food cars back on the Italian lines. The German control,

however, made certain that the cars were used only for shipments to Germany and did not vanish into interior Italian use, where there was crying need. *Il Messaggero*, Rome's largest morning paper, begged the people editorially not to be unduly alarmed at food shortages: they existed only because rolling stock was being used to supply the troops at the front.

In the previous November Bergdorff had reported a conversation he had had with several high-ranking German officers at an informal dinner in the Brown House. They had talked at length about their great confidence in the West Wall, or Siegfried Line, of fortifications vis-a-vis France. It was impregnable, built in great depth, and was much more modern than the Maginot Line. But Bergdorff was unable to elicit specific details.

In subsequent weeks both he and I had tried to learn something more about the Siegfried Line. The only news anyone heard —and that was widely reported in the press— was that part of the fortifications along the Rhine bank had been flooded by a rise in the water and had collapsed.

In February, I remember, Pinelli had been baffled by the German refusal of an offer of a hundred thousand Italian workers. There had been considerable unemployment in certain Italian industries; the Italian workers in the German Volkskraftwagen-werk in Eisleben had been sent home.

In the fall Ricker told me a story almost too fantastic to be true. I brought the Siegfried Line into the conversation and expressed great faith in its strength. Ricker explained, with much laughter, that there was no Siegfried Line and that the whole world had been hoaxed, with the kind help of foreign journalists. This was the story:

Though tank traps had been built by Dr. Fritz Todt, then Inspector-General for Fortifications (he built Hitler's famous Reichsautobahnen), from the Dutch frontier to Switzerland, only four strong forts had been built at strategic points: Karlsruhe, Saarbriicken, Aachen, and Cleves on the Holland border. That was all Todt could do,

according to Ricker's story. The fortifications supposedly linking the four strong points were only camouflaged trenches absolutely useless in modern warfare. Work on them had not started until after the Polish war and continued up to the attack on the Low Countries—a period of about nine months. Taken all together, these intermediate fortifications were not so strong as any one of the Maginot forts and an attack on them by the French would have succeeded easily.

To buttress its weakness, the Germans turned to psychological warfare, reasoning that the enemy's belief that strong fortifications existed was the same as if the forts really did exist.

Accordingly, the High Command took a corps of foreign journalists on a tour of the Siegfried Line to report its wonders to the outside world. They were taken in closed cars—a logical precaution in any case—on day-long trips. They saw one fort, then were driven around and shown the same fort from different angles. This process was repeated with several of the strong points until the correspondents had an impression of continuous fortifications.

Further, German labor corps men were plainly to be seen from the French side of the Rhine working day and night. Thus Hitler created the myth of an impregnable line leading to a British and French conception of World War II similar to World War I— a war to be won by attrition and starvation with vast armies immobilized behind their lines of defense.

I repeated this tale to Pinelli and he said he had heard the story in the war office, wherefore Italian officials had not set too much store by the Siegfried Line.

If this tale is not true, there remained the otherwise unexplainable fact of Germany's refusal of a hundred thousand Italian workers, coupled with the severe cement shortage which afflicted Germany and Italy during the winter of 1939-40. A large share of the cement Germany was getting before the Low Countries' attack had come from England

and France through Dutch and Belgian middlemen.

Further proof of Germany's reliance on propaganda and espionage—always easy to talk about learnedly, yet hard to prove— came in October. Germany gave another example of how she uses her allies and satellites for her own purposes. At the beginning of World War II, Italian organizations and foreign-service missions acted as transmission posts for German agents.

Almost daily Meier took sheaves of messages to the Foreign Office, where they were coded into innocent-seeming business communications and sent to Italian consulates in the countries for which they were intended. There they were recoded into another innocent form and despatched to their German addressees. Italian diplomatic couriers also carried messages to and fro. It was for this kind of activity, no doubt, that the United States closed Italian consulates in the fall of 1941. But with Italy in the war her consuls and cultural groups in foreign countries became suspect too. Mackensen told Mussolini that the Gestapo would have to look around for new camouflage.

Therefore, on October 17 Gestapo chief Heinrich Himmler and a staff went to Madrid and worked out a scheme with the Falange, Spanish Fascist party, headed by Foreign Minister Serrano Suner. Following Franco's victory in Spain, the Falange had taken over the foreign committees which had supported the

Franco rebellion and turned them into Falange branches. But they accomplished little; they were poor and inefficient.

But Himmler could use these Spaniards; he installed over a hundred Gestapo men in their Madrid headquarters. They in turn began to build up Falange branches in South America and the Philippines, with special attention to the island commonwealth. Propaganda was issued, claiming the Philippines for Spain. Gestapo men who spoke fluent Spanish and traveled on Spanish passports were sent to organize and vitalize the Falange outposts.

Pinelli told me this first, and I confirmed it in conversations with Karl Meier.

I reported it to the Colonel. In the spring of 1941 Philippine authorities arrested a group of Spanish irredentists. But Falange offices in South America kept on working for the Gestapo and all Spanish Falange propaganda was financed by Germany.

18. WHO BOMBED BAHREIN?

EARLY IN OCTOBER Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, the new commander in Libya, began his offensive toward Sidi Barani, advancing almost at will against the few ill-equipped British defenders.

Suddenly and inexplicably the offensive stopped. Graziani's conquering army sat down to commune with itself. After weeks of mysterious silence Graziani sent an open report to Mussolini, saying he could advance no further because the retreating English had destroyed all the roads, which had now to be rebuilt so that Italian reserves and additional water could be brought up.

One evening soon after that Pinelli let loose a tirade, extremely violent for him, against the Fiat works for making inferior container trucks, and I got a hint of the real story behind the stalled offensive. It appeared that these mobile containers had not been properly built to withstand desert temperatures. Their tin linings came loose, both because of faulty design and, doubtless, because of sabotage. The supply failed completely, and water had to be brought up in skins and old oil cans, which did nothing to improve the sanitary conditions. Then a serious typhoid epidemic broke out among the soldiers.

The same month, though the Italian people are to this day-unaware of his identity, an Italian aviator performed one of the most amazing feats of the whole war, in bombing Bahrein Island in the Persian Gulf, a distance of twenty-eight hundred miles from Italy. Shortly after the declaration of war on France articles had appeared in the press telling how Ettore Muti, General Secretary of the Fascist party, could no longer curb his fierce desire to fight the enemies of Fascism at first hand; how he wanted to be with the brave

soldiers fighting for greater Italian glory; how he wanted to set an example for Italian youth. And so on.

The truth was otherwise. Muti was ordered to active war service by Mussolini himself in the hope that he would be killed. While Balbo died because he criticized Mussolini, Ettore Muti was sacrificed to grafters leeches onto the Fascist party.

The six-foot Muti was born in Ravenna in 1902 and joined the Fascist party in September 1919. Wounded several times in the Abyssinian war, he afterward fought in Spain and was wounded again. There he had gone under the name of Gino Valeri in accordance with the Fascist regulation that all Italians fighting in the then-still-doubtful Spanish war use assumed names to conceal their identities. So they all took Italian names, though precisely whom this deceived has never been made clear.

In any case, Muti returned from the Spanish war as the most highly decorated officer in the Italian army, to succeed Achille Starace as General Secretary of the Fascist party. A true believer in the Italian revolution, Muti hated exploitation of Fascism for personal gain. Despite his high position and frequent opportunities, he remained honest and comparatively poor.

Therefore, as General Secretary of the party he set out to expose some of the vast network of corruption he knew to exist. His biggest bombshell was the discovery that the Scaleri brothers, all-round businessmen reputed to be worth a billion-and-a-half lire, had corruptly secured road-building contracts for Abyssinia, Albania, and Libya.

The result of Muti's efforts was that the Scaleris kept on getting road contracts and he himself was ordered to join the armed forces. A wary man, he examined his plane personally before every flight and kept his own confidential man in the hangar at all times. For five months nothing was heard about Muti.

On October 21 he was ordered on a long-range bombing flight to Bahrein Island, British-held but operated by the American Standard Oil. Because of the great distance, twenty-

eight hundred miles each way from Sicily, the operations staffs of the Navy and Air ministries worked out an elaborate plan. Submarines were to meet him at stipulated points along the Eritrean coast to refuel the amphibian in which he was to fly; his only companion a bombardier.

All the submarines met him on the way out as scheduled. He dropped his bombs on Bahrein—an act that drew American protests—and started back to Sicily. But the last submarine scheduled to meet him did not appear; its sailing orders were canceled at the last moment by Dr. Osvaldo Sebastiani, Mussolini's private secretary, through the P M M, Mussolini's sinister police.

But Muti, a careful man and a good pilot, had kept enough extra fuel aboard to take him to the Red Sea Abyssinian coast, whence he subsequently flew to Eritrea and Libya and so home again. Thus he completed one of the longest wartime flights on record.

But not a word that it was Muti who performed this extraordinary feat reached the Italian public. On the contrary, on October 28 he was dismissed from the Fascist general secretaryship; Adelchi Serena was appointed in his place. Muti remained in the air force.

Some weeks after this in the Caccia Club I met one Captain Valeri, a submarine commander from whom I learned the story of what happened to Italian submarines based in the Red Sea after the British seizure of Italian Somaliland. Three of the largest ones, of more than twelve hundred tons' displacement—one of them commanded by Valeri—made their way down the East African coast to a point thirty miles off Capetown. There, in accordance with a plan worked out by the mixed armistice commissions sitting in French African ports, the three submarines were met by a French tanker which gave them fuel, food, and water, and recharged their batteries. The journey continued to Dakar, where another French tanker came out to meet the three little boats, after which the only remaining serious obstacle was Gibraltar.

“But that was child's play.” I remember Valeri's exact words. They had expected mines,

but they found none; he concluded that Gibraltar was not mined. Two months from the time of leaving the Red Sea the three submarines docked at Spezia, great Italian naval base.

19. WHY THE GREEK WAR FAILED

ON OCTOBER 27 Ciano issued an ultimatum to Greece, believing he had bought acceptance of it by the Greek General Staff. When he was disillusioned, Italian soldiers launched their attack on Greece.

But attention of the Italian people was a little distracted from the offensive starting out of Albania against their contemptible little enemy Greece by a new suspicion of Hitler.

On October 23 Hitler and Petain had met and everyone suspected that Hitler was doing Italy out of her share of war gains at France's expense. On the twenty-eighth Hitler did indeed meet Mussolini in Florence, hoping to stop the attack on Greece—but it was too late—and also to demand that Italy surrender its claims to Corsica, Savoy, and Nice. Mussolini did, and the story leaked out within a day.

Pinelli, who had gone to Florence on Mussolini's staff, came back furious. To save face the government published its war aims: Corsica, Tunis, Savoy, Nice, Djibouti, Malta, and Suez. But thereafter the special propaganda committees which had been created to push these claims were disbanded, posters were scraped off the walls, and the press was forbidden to mention the aims again in any way.

Early in November the British struck their first serious blows against Italy. On the fifth they raided Naples, and the papers, as usual, reported that "Naples was attacked by British planes but all their bombs fell in the water. . . ." The morning after the raid I went there secretly—foreigners were now forbidden to travel except by special permission—to see the truth for myself. The bombs had made a direct hit on the giant oil reservoir of the outer harbor submarine base on the north side of the bay opposite Ischia.

On the twelfth British seaplanes swooped down on the naval base of Taranto and badly

damaged a battleship of the *Littorio* class so that it sank half under water; a *Cavour* class cruiser so that the entire deck and rear fire tower were under water; damaged another *Cavour* class cruiser, and sank two auxiliaries.

The official communiqué acknowledged the raid and announced that one ship had been slightly damaged. But rumors of far worse damage spread throughout the country immediately, and on the eighteenth Mussolini admitted in a personal statement that three ships had been hit, one of them so badly that months would be required for its repair.

Within three weeks the Italians received another body blow. The Greeks fought back; the Italian offensive bogged down. The Ferrara and Giulia divisions were shattered, and on December 6 Marshal Pietro Badoglio was relieved of his command.

I had seen Badoglio—a national hero to the people—in the Caccia Club many times; a short, stocky man with a sharp tongue and a passion for poker. I often watched him in games in which stakes exceeded a hundred thousand lire; he was a cool poker strategist—the only sign of his excitement was the rapidity of his cigarette puffing. He had a forceful way of advancing his opinions in conversation, to the point of offending others; his fellow club members respected him but thought he was stubborn and obstinate.

Political foresight finished Balbo. Honesty finished Muti. Expert knowledge brought General of Naval Engineering Sigismondi—dismissed a year and a half before because he was a Jew—back to active duty on December 2. He was the only man who could salvage the sunken battleship *Littorio* from the waters of Taranto harbor. For twenty-five years he had been commandant and practical engineering boss of the great navy yard in Ancona. Europe's finest technicians and teachers consider him a genius in nautical engineering. He is now in his middle sixties.

It was also expert knowledge and sound military advice that brought the long-smoldering feud between Mussolini and Badoglio to the boiling point. Again, the full

truth has never been published before. Badoglio had never got on with the Fascists. His first major conflict with Mussolini came in 1938, when he insisted that the Blackshirt militia be absorbed into the army as ordinary soldiers, not as special pampered brigades. In retaliation for this Mussolini organized his long arm, the Polizia Militare Mobile.

Shortly before the Greek war Badoglio told Mussolini that he could not conduct an offensive against Greece with the few troops then in Albania—Italy's base of operations on the Balkan side of the Adriatic. Ciano sneered at the marshal's fears; all the Greek generals were bribed; some slight Greek token of resistance at the beginning would be stopped by the Greek High Command itself. It was only, Ciano said, a question of peaceful occupation.

Badoglio was skeptical and demanded more troops. Mussolini invoked his power as Commander in Chief and flatly ordered Badoglio into Greece with what troops he had.

So the Marshal was recalled December 6. But he didn't shut up even then. He came back to Rome and talked openly about why he had been recalled. On the tenth Mussolini summoned him and threatened him with arrest. Badoglio retorted that he refused to have his military reputation ruined by Fascist stupidity.

That same evening he told the story in detail in the club. The very next day Mussolini ordered him confined in a state-owned villa at near-by Lake Albano, where he still is. The guards sent to patrol the grounds were men of the P M M.

At the same time a number of other naval and military men spontaneously identified themselves with him. Chief among these were Admiral Domenico Cavagnari (replaced by Admiral Riccardi) and Governor de Vecchi of the Dodecanese Islands (replaced by Bastico). A month before, on November 1, General Visconti, Undersecretary of State for War and a Badoglio protegee, had been dismissed, to be replaced by General Ubaldo Soddu, who later went to Albania.

On December 12 the regime made a further effort to discredit Badoglio. Farinacci in

Regime Fascista wrote that after all Badoglio had started the Greek war and had to bear full responsibility for its failure. Badoglio was replaced by Ugo Cavallero and Soddu became field commander in Albania.

Despite the fanfare made over the change of command the people continued to regard the Albanian war with morbidity. Stories of huge losses spread in spite of official refusal to issue full casualty lists. Slow anger was growing against the command for sending men into battle without adequate defense against a new method of attack the Greeks had uncorked.

This was the so-called “Metaxas infiltration.” It was developed by the Greek dictator, General John Metaxas, who had been a favorite student in Potsdam under the strategist Von Schlieffen, author of the Germans’ offensive plan against France. The German had offered him a post on the General Staff. The daring Greek had changed the alignment of infantry attack. Instead of waves of men approaching the enemy’s lines parallel to them, they attacked in single files and went through the defending lines, thus flanking and enfilading them. It is somewhat like the German tank-attack tactic and caused the surprised Italians frightful losses.

Parents of common soldiers went weeks without information as to whether their sons were alive or dead. Only officers’ parents were promptly and personally notified of wounding, capture, or death. I remember one night in the Caccia seeing a certain infantry captain of my acquaintance come in looking very drawn; he asked for a drink quickly.

Just invalided home from Albania, his first errand had been that evening to visit the parents of a friend of his, a lieutenant in his company, who had been killed. He had seen the mother and father and left as hastily as he decently could.

As he was leaving the house he met on the pavement an officer from the War Ministry who, he discovered, was also going to visit the same elderly couple—to tell them that their second son had been killed too. The captain persuaded the other officer to postpone his

visit at least a day.

20. BEHIND THE TARANTO RAID

I HAD BEEN HAVING TROUBLE with Bergdorff. He had daring, courage, and intelligence, but his headlong vitality made working with him depend too much on luck.

A few weeks earlier he had been in contact with a man representing himself as an Argentine ready to smuggle letters out of Italy. I warned him, and then one night he met his “Argentine” in the Brown House. Each thought the other was Gestapo—and Bergdorff let it go at that—from a different Kreis.

Another time we had to get him out of jail for tearing down anti-British posters. We said he was drunk, and the official on night duty was too sleepy to doubt it.

Again: on finding himself followed by a Questura man, Bergdorff had whirled on the fellow and demanded to know why he, a good Nazi, should be trailed like a common thief. Thereafter a different man followed him every day for a while.

One of these missteps of his was bound to be fatal.

A short time prior to the British raid on Taranto he came to me and said he had made contact with a cluster of Italians working for British Intelligence. He wanted me to meet them.

I said no; I would not trust myself to Italians in espionage.

He laughed at me. These were earnest, desperate men preparing an important enterprise.

What was it? I wanted to know.

Bergdorff was airy. If I wouldn't join them, it would be better if I didn't know.

I begged him to drop the thing. He was putting his neck in the hands of people who would have no interest in helping him, a German, if something went wrong.

Again he laughed. Everything would be fine.

Then came the Taranto raid. Rumors of complete disaster rocked government circles. Though Mussolini tried to conceal the truth from the people at large, every government official soon knew the real extent of the damage. They were sickened. Several days passed and then we read in the papers that four Italians had been arrested and charged with being British spies.

I waited to hear from Bergdorff. Two weeks had passed since I last saw him. Pinelli had not seen him either. I made a point of visiting every morning each of the four coffeehouses where we alternately held our rendezvous—the Aragno, the Lowenbrau and the two smaller places in the roofed arcade opposite the Palazzo Chigi.

After a few days I ran into a man in the Lowenbrau who I knew belonged to the same Auslandsorganisation district group as Bergdorff, a Bavarian railroad traffic manager. The two men had been fairly friendly. With great indignation he told me he had been hauled down to the Questura early that morning and questioned exhaustively about Bergdorff.

Bergdorff had been drunk again, I supposed. The man said he didn't know, but he had spoken up stoutly for him until they'd said that Bergdorff was a spy involved in tipping off the British for the Taranto raid. The Bavarian shook his head in bewilderment; a good Nazi like that turning out a spy!

I said I thought only Italians had been arrested; so it had said in the newspapers.

The Bavarian shrugged. He had seen other Germans at the

Centrale for questioning. These days, he sighed, you never know who may turn out to be a spy.

I left him eating his midmorning breakfast. I didn't believe Bergdorff would willingly betray me or any of the rest of us. But they would give him the third degree. I went to see Kerbel in his shop. As usual I acted like a customer, selecting a few stones for closer inspection in one of the two little consultation rooms he had at one side. They were

virtually soundproof; each was furnished with two chairs and a small green baize-covered table under a strong light.

Kerbel sat down opposite me and I told him what I had heard.

There were two things each of us had to do, he said: protect ourselves, and try to get Bergdorff out. I said I would try to find out what other names were on the Questura list for questioning or arrest.

I went to see an Italian lawyer, who acted as consul general for Nicaragua. He would sell me a passport for ten thousand lire in case I had to leave Italy in a hurry.

I found Bellini at home, where he always went during the early-afternoon hours when all offices were closed. I told him a friend of mine was accused of espionage and I needed his help: perhaps the underground could work through its connections in the Questura.

Bellini shook his head. "You know the underground will not touch anything connected with espionage, even if your friend is falsely accused."

Instead of going to the Terrinis' late that afternoon I went to see Venturi, with whom I had to be extremely cautious. I told him only as much as I had told Bellini: a friend of mine had been arrested on suspicion of espionage. I wanted to help him.

Venturi's good and honorable soul was shocked. It would be distinctly out of order for him to pry into the affairs of the Pubblica Sicurezza. I didn't dare to press the point.

That evening I saw Pinelli. I could go much further with him because of his unspoken sympathy with anti-regime feeling. I

explained that I wanted to help my friend, who was his friend too.

But at mention of the word "espionage" he reacted as had Venturi. There was nothing he could do, he said.

Days passed. I had to drop all other investigations.

I expected a summons to the Questura. Ingrid Soederberg could not help; all her connections were in the Propaganda Ministry. Kerbel heard nothing new. I saw Bellini

again and asked if he had any way of finding out what names were on the Questura list. He shook his head.

I pressed Pinelli again. It was easy for him to find out the names of those the Questura still intended to question. Perhaps then I could find some way of getting Bergdorff cleared.

Pinelli was still reluctant. It was one thing to warn me of Questura displeasure when every foreigner in Rome was under suspicion. But to pry into an espionage inquiry ... I pleaded, and he finally consented.

The next night he said he had seen the list of arrests, suspects, and those who were still to be questioned. They were all Italian names, none of which he knew, except two German: Bergdorff and one other he recognized, Kerbel, who was only to be questioned.

As I left Pinelli said sharply: "Evidently Bergdorff does not choose his associates carefully enough." He looked very straight at me.

As early as possible the next morning I returned to Kerbel's shop, picked out a tray of small bracelets, and went into one of the consultation rooms.

Kerbel followed me in a moment later. I told him his name was on the list.

His kindly face crinkled in a grin. From a pocket he took a card which he handed to me. It was a brand-new certificate of good conduct, countersigned by Countess Edda Ciano.

The Questura had questioned him the previous afternoon, very politely and with many apologies, he said. He had told them Bergdorff was a good Nazi and a bad artist.

I suggested that he try to interest Edda Ciano in the matter.

He shook his head. That he could not do. She would protect him; she would get him out even if they went so far as to throw him in jail. His influence with her was enough for that. But he could not transfer it to some other person. And finally, the affair involved espionage, and Edda Ciano was after all the daughter of Mussolini.

Nevertheless, I felt much relieved. Kerbel was safe and my name was not on the list.

But that evening when I came home I knew my room had been searched.

Signora Zarra said two men, an Italian and a German, had questioned her how I lived; they had spent some time in my room. I saw that nothing had been disturbed; not even the smallest object was out of its regular place. But I knew it had been searched.

I had two large wardrobes with doors, each with a large old-fashioned lock in which the keyhole was open at the back. I had bought a dozen or so tubular paper spools of silk about as big around as a pencil. By looping the thread through the spool, and then drawing the thread through the keyhole from the back, I would pull a spool into each keyhole. Then I would turn the key carefully and snip off the bit of thread hanging out. Every time I came home I would look to see if each spool was in its place. When I inserted my key the spool would necessarily fall down inside to the floor of the wardrobe. If a searcher were to open the wardrobe with a key, the spool would of course fall down and he would see one spool of silk lying on the floor of each of my wardrobes. To avoid the suspicion this might arouse, I scattered my ten extra spools—five each—on the floor of each wardrobe. In such precautions against counterespionage it is just as important to avoid betraying the fact that precautions have been taken as it is to avoid being caught in an incriminating act.

That day my wardrobes had been opened; the spools had been pushed in and had fallen among the extra ones.

But still I was not called to the Questura.

Then Kerbel learned from a high OVRA official customer of his that another half-dozen Italians had been arrested in Taranto and Rome, and that Bergdorff and the first four arrested in Taranto had been sentenced to death. The Questura was satisfied these five had given the British the information about the ships in Taranto harbor and their exact mooring posts that enabled the English planes to strike so accurately.

I went to see Bellini again. He was the only man who could help now. I told him all we

had learned and used every conceivable argument to win his help. But he refused. The underground could not help spies who had helped to sink Italian ships and destroy Italian lives. I pointed out that the underground itself often did the same thing.

“We do it,” he said with some dignity, “because we are preparing for civil war. But we will not help the enemies of our country.”

I continued to argue. It was essential to rescue Bergdorff. I don't know which of my reasons finally convinced Bellini, but after two hours he gave in. He would help—but not on behalf of the underground—simply as an individual.

Kerbel had learned that Bergdorff was in the Regina Coeli jail, but it was Bellini who discovered he would be transferred to another prison for execution early in December. It took us another three days to learn that he would be moved in a regular police van with a driver and one guard and that they would come down Via Alessandro Volta at about seven in the morning of December 2, when the streets in that outlying district were still deserted.

I met Bellini on Via Gignori near the corner of Alessandro Volta. He pointed to a heavy enclosed truck standing near by. There were two men in the cab. Two more men in laborers' clothes were loitering in a near-by doorway. I saw about a dozen other poorly dressed people, mostly men, sauntering down Gignori out of sight of Alessandro Volta, which is at right angles to it. In case there were more guards than we expected, Bellini said. The street was chill and gloomy; the sky was oyster-colored.

We waited. I was to take Bergdorff to a small osteria close by where another of Bellini's men would hide him until we could send him aboard a ship leaving Genoa. We waited a long time.

A man on the other side of Alessandro Volta waved his arm. The driver started up the engine of the truck. It roared in the gray narrow street. We moved to the corner. A hundred yards away the police van came down Alessandro Volta. The truck moved

forward slowly, then faster. The van was crossing the head of Gignori. Ten yards away the truck apparently got out of control. It swerved. The police van twisted toward the narrow pavement. The truck careened forward at full speed; there was a grinding, metallic crash, sharp yells, and the pound of running feet.

I ran close. The police van had been turned over and jammed against the building. The force had sprung its rearward door. I could see the driver, his head all bloody, pinned behind the wheel. The guard, swearing dazedly, was trying to climb out the front door. He got himself caught in jagged glass and stuck there.

The rearward door swung open. A man who was not Bergdorff jumped out like a cat, ran around to the front of the van. He saw the guard stuck halfway. Hardly stopping, he delivered a hard swinging kick at the guard's head. The guard made no sound. He slumped down loosely. The man in the sweater—I'll never forget how white his face was—didn't stop to look at us. He ran desperately to the head of an alley a few feet off and disappeared. We never saw him again or discovered who he was. We only learned that our informant had been tricked.

Bergdorff was shot the next day.

21. “BAKED IN THE FIRE OF POLITICS”

ON DECEMBER 21 Senator Arturo Bocchini, director of the Pubblica Sicurezza, died and was succeeded by Carmine Senise, a complete Germanophile, who was accompanied everywhere by a German adjutant provided by Himmler. The adjutant always wore civilian clothes.

This advancement brought Aldo Vidussoni to the post of second-in-command over the whole department, with the OVRA in his direct charge. Several times at Pinelli's and Venturi's I had met this man—the only one in the Fascist organization capable of becoming an Italian Himmler: a shrewd, cynical schemer not afraid to build up an independent police like the Gestapo. He was fortyish when I met him; about five feet seven in height, clean-shaven, and very dark-skinned. His Italian had a Lombardy accent; his French and Spanish were fluent, for he was a volunteer for Franco in the Spanish civil war. He was just then learning German, and he was, like Senise, a Germanophile. He was married, honest as far as money goes, and was supposed to have come from a good family.

Groups talking politics changed the subject abruptly whenever Vidussoni joined them: to the weather or Signora Y's new daring gown. Not because of his brusque, bad manners—Vidussoni was a strong character insensitive to snubs—but because he was widely suspected of compiling secret dossiers on everyone of importance like Napoleon's Fouche and Hitler's Himmler; of scheming to strengthen his own position by amassing incriminating details against all possible opponents.

I shall always be grateful for the experience that befell me Christmas Eve, though it verged on tragedy for two human beings I had come to love very much. It made me feel

again, reassuring me that the years of living so guardedly had not withered my emotions.

Contessa Terrini's eight-year-old son Riccardo had been strangely ill for several weeks; some sort of fever the doctor supposed he had contracted the previous summer during a visit to Venice with his parents. Finally it turned into pneumonia, and the boy lay in bed at home for weeks, pale and weak. I had spent every spare hour with him. I was the only visitor he would tolerate.

Christmas Eve he seemed somewhat better. Terrini had gone to Spezia on official business, and I accompanied the contessa to midnight mass in the new church across the street from the Terrini palazzo on the Piazza Ungheria. The church was full; we kneeled with the rest. The altar was alight with candles and the choir was singing "Adeste Fideles." We had been there only fifteen minutes or so when a servant from the palazzo came and touched me on the shoulder. He whispered to me to bring the contessa home at once.

We followed the man out; Marina was white and silent. I felt her arm tremble. We hurried up to Riccardo's room. The doctor had not come; another servant had been sent to look for him, but the nurse was worried.

^JIt is for this reason that so much interest should attach to his appointment December 26, 1941, as General Secretary of the Fascist party succeeding Adelchi Serena who, like his predecessor Muti, "volunteered" for active fighting service. This is the first time a man with a police career has been appointed to the general secretaryship.

The child had had a relapse; his fever unexpectedly risen, he was tossing and moaning continuously. The contessa fell on her knees beside the bed; Riccardo was her favorite of the two children; the older boy seemed closer to the father. The nurse kept putting cool compresses on the boy's hot forehead, but they fell off as he tossed and turned.

It was dreadfully hot in the room; I opened the window. From across the darkened street we could hear the choir singing in the church. The nurse sat down to hold the boy's hand; the contessa was kneeling in the corner, her small onyx crucifix in hand. Only a

night light on the table near the pallet broke the gloom. The doctor still did not come.

I went to find the housekeeper. She was in the downstairs entrance hall. From her I learned where the count was staying in Spezia. I telephoned him. If the boy was going to die he had better be there. He said he would take a plane at dawn.

I went back to the sickroom. The voice of the choir singing Holy Night hymns floated in. The contessa was still praying in the corner. The boy lay still.

It was almost two o'clock when the doctor arrived; they had had to trace him to church too. He replaced the nurse by the bedside; the contessa rose to stand beside him. The boy's temperature was high. The doctor worked hard and swiftly. Minutes and hours went by. I got a glass of brandy for the contessa; she looked about to faint. At last she consented to sit down. Her fingers were icy cold.

The choir had stopped singing; there were no sounds in the room except now and then the boy's labored breathing.

At dawn he broke into a sudden drenching perspiration; they changed his bedclothes once, and then again. The fever had broken, and at last he sank into a steady, easy sleep. Marina crossed herself. The doctor went away, saying he'd come back in the afternoon.

I was about to leave, but the contessa begged me to stay. I telephoned the count again, but he had already left his hotel in Spezia. I took Marina out into the street for a walk; it seemed the only way to get her nerves unbound. We walked and walked in the chilly dawn till at last, when her eyes grew heavy, I took her home again. I got home about eight-fifteen the morning of Christmas Day.

During Christmas week Pinelli gave a large reception which I remember especially because it marked one of Virginio Gayda's few social appearances. While his wife was playing cards in another room Gayda, Pinelli, and, I think, a man from Breda fell into a discussion of Winston Churchill's speech of December 23 calling on the Italian king and

people to range themselves against Mussolini. Gayda had led the press in ridiculing it, but I knew that its swift distribution in leaflet form by the underground had begun to bring in new members.

Gayda has become world-famous because he is the director of the authoritative newspaper *Il Giornale* (*Thalia* and Mussolini's editorial mouthpiece).

He is a man of middle height, about fifty-five years old, with very sparse hair. He began his professional career as correspondent for *La Stampa* of Rome, in which capacity he was sent to St. Petersburg in 1912. Two years later he was appointed embassy press attache and remained in Russia until after the Revolution, leaving only in 1918 after the general armistice. Returning to Rome, he was editor of *Il Messaggero* until 1927 when he reached his present post. He speaks Russian, Swedish, English, and German with considerable fluency.

He talks in dramatic sentences of concentrated meaning like newspaper headlines and, though his gestures are violent, too, his manner of speaking is slow, regular, and considered. And he has a way of taking his interlocutor's remarks and turning them into the exact contrary without giving offense, a technique he must have perfected in his years with Mussolini.

The news of William Knudsen's appointment as director of the American Office of Production Management had just come; it was received in Italy with greater surprise and reaction than in Germany. The press took an aggressive tone, especially *Il Giornale*, which threatened that a day of reckoning would come for what was called America's violation of neutrality. The general press tactic was to attack President Roosevelt for having got out of touch with his people. To prove this, the speeches and declarations of the America First Committee were advanced. Roosevelt and his wife and New York's Mayor LaGuardia were ridiculed in the weekly humor papers led by the *Marc Aurelio* as warmongers and Jews, until the impression was created that only those three in America

wanted war in opposition to the people led by Lindbergh and Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana. *Il Giornale* published a two-column article to prove, with genealogical data going back hundreds of years, that Roosevelt was a Jew.

The German papers, on the other hand, were more objective and restrained, but they published liberal quotations from the Italian press—an assignment of roles worked out by the two Propaganda Ministries.

This evening Pinelli remarked that American labor troubles would seriously delay American armament. There were such great differences between industry and labor that even one-man industrial rule could not bridge them, and therefore so much time might be lost that America would be three or four years approaching the level and intensity of German production. So the United States could be ignored as a factor in this war.

With amazing ease Gayda twisted Pinelli's opinion into support of his own idea that the United States would play a decisive role. He said: "You are quite right. Industrial disputes do retard production. And the greater the industrial unit affected, the greater the deficiency in the over-all result. But by the same condition it is obvious that delays can be caught up in the same ratio. And this is the case in the United States. Shortly, then, we must reckon with the American factor."

He went on to talk about the United States, which he has never visited but about which he is widely read. I recall only a few of his comments: "For the American, Europe is only the village from which he came. . . . The American people don't grasp that their daily bread is baked in the fire of politics. ... We don't give money to the America First Committee. They have money. But we provide them with their arguments. . . . America is a paradise for twelve families and a hell for the other hundred and thirty million people ..."

Gayda works in the *Giornale* office near the Corso Umberto at a huge desk, dictating his articles into an American-made dictaphone. At noon every day he sees Mussolini in the

Palazzo Venezia to discuss the next day's editorial, and in the evening he sends one of his four secretaries with proofs for Mussolini's revision. **11** *Giornale* appears six days a week at 1 P.M., with a second edition at five; its Sunday edition is called *La Voce d'Italia*. Gayda's articles appear sometimes daily and never fewer than three times a week.

His influence in Italy is great, not because what he writes is true or even intelligent, but because his few fundamental themes are endlessly reiterated. So, in accordance with Hitler's comment on propaganda and the axiom of American advertising that constant repetition breeds belief, his ideas acquire considerable strength.

I remember seeing a young soldier's letter to his mother from Albania. It read as if copied verbatim from any Gayda editorial and reeked with stock phrases like "Glory of Fascism. ...I am proud to die for the greater Italy and empire. ...Il Duce commands—we follow. ..."

For this sort of inspiration Gayda's salary is thirty-five thousand lire per month plus a percentage of *Il Giornale's* profits, so that Ingrid Soederberg estimated his income at seventy thousand lire per month. In contrast, Pinelli's official salary from the war office was four thousand lire per month, but he had a large private income.

Signora Gayda expends her fanaticism not in the politics of her husband but at the bridge table, where she lives a greater portion of her waking hours. Taller than her husband, without beauty, she keeps their apartment filled with bridge-playing friends among whom her famous husband rarely appears. They have no children.

Gayda's private life is very secluded; his hobby is Italian history on which he is an unquestioned authority. He boasts that his father was one of Garibaldi's immortal Thousand, but Rome society whispers that he was an immigrant from Russia.

Just before Christmas I was in Reder the furrier's on Via Sistina to have a minor repair made on my fur coat. I had known Reder for many years, and as an example of his fine

work he proudly showed me a new white fox-fur bedcover—two skins long and nine skins wide—he had just finished for a girl named Maria Natalia Ferroni.

Her name was not unknown in Roman society, for it was Mussolini, the gossips insisted, who had built a certain luxurious villa on the exclusive Monte Mario near Pinelli's home. Built, rented, or conjured out of Rome's salubrious air, the villa had been inhabited for over two years by two tall, pretty sisters named Ferroni from Brescia in northern Italy: black-haired sixteen-year-old Maria Natalia and twenty-four-year-old blonde Francesca.

Il Duce had picked them both for his personal pleasure from among an official reception committee in their native town. But Reder's beautiful bedcover was for the younger sister.

Like all government towns, Rome resembles a tiny village in the knowledge its inhabitants have of each other's activities. It is impossible for anyone of any prominence to do anything in secret, and the slightest tidbit of rumor and gossip flies from mouth to mouth as fast as the grapevine intelligence of African tribesmen.

The fox-fur bedcover was such piquant propaganda material that the next day I invited the gossipy Marchesa di Rittone to come see it with me. Reder gladly showed it, for the marchesa was a good customer of his. The matron's eyes bulged out at sight of it, and within two days her story of that bedspread aroused the envy of every woman who heard about it and damaged the Fascist regime more than a heavy casualty list from the Greek front.

Soon after the New Year Maria Natalia Ferroni bore Mussolini a son.

The new year started off with another Italo-German contretemps, this time on the light side.

One of Rome's best bordellos was situated on Via Capo le Case which runs down to the Palazzo Chigi parallel to Via Tritone. A group of drunken German aviators visited it one night and refused to pay. When the madame insisted, they raised a row and she called the

police. Two Questura men came and remonstrated with the Germans. Result: fisticuffs. Police reinforcements came and after considerable discussion everybody went to the Questura Centrale.

The Germans still refused to pay; a new fracas broke out and the Germans began to throw the furniture around. In desperation the official in charge telephoned Von Rintelen's office. Shortly an adjutant appeared, who took the aviators away with him. But he didn't pay their bill.

As a result of this incident the government rented two bordellos exclusively for the use of the German military. The Italian Ministry of War paid the girls in both houses: one for officers just off the Piazza di Spagna and another for noncommissioned officers and soldiers near the railroad station. A German military doctor was put on duty in each house all the time to give the men injections both before and after contact.

By the year end the Colonel and I were meeting less frequently at social gatherings and more often at night in the eerie darkness of Rome's blacked-out streets.

22. ESPIONAGE A LA OPPENHEIM

JANUARY 13 Italy learned that the Greek war was still a sad affair. For the third time the field commander in Albania was changed. Soddu was relieved after a bare thirty days and General Ugo Cavallero, the new Chief of Staff, took over himself.

The cheerier side of a gloomy picture was represented by the party and the royal house patching up their differences, simmering ever since so many of the court had expressed sympathy with the abortive Pamphili conspiracy. To implement this *rapprochement*, Crown Prince Umberto, hitherto a division general, was promoted to the rank of army general *Generale dell' Armata*. The Italian army, headed by the General Staff, is organized into six army commands, twenty-one army corps, and a separate command of Alpini, under thirty-five senior division generals and ninety-six division generals. The command given Umberto is the highest in the army.

But then new troubles from the other side of the Axis arose to plague the regime.

In the summer of 1940 the Nazis had begun asking for Italian workers to make up for their own labor shortage. By February 6, 1941, there were three hundred and fifty thousand Italians employed in Germany in steady jobs, plus seasonal agricultural workers.

To retain some hold over them, the Italian Propaganda Ministry sent along propaganda commissars, one for each five thousand men. Their duties included interpreting, supervision of the men's working and living conditions, representing the workers before the German authorities, guiding their syndicates and Fascist party cells.

Trouble sprouted quickly. The Italians found themselves assigned to the hardest and most disagreeable work. They protested to their commissars, who forwarded the protests

to Ciano via Ambassador Alfieri in Berlin. As usual, Ciano took it up with Mackensen who, as usual, promised relief but did nothing.

Protests continued and mounted and the commissars finally went direct to the German authorities. Ugly clashes resulted, and the Germans demanded that the commissars be recalled. But for once Mussolini remained adamant; he feared the workers' families at home. The commissars stayed. Yet the Germans managed to get their way.

Regular workers were allowed to send home from six to eight hundred lire per month. Now the Berlin exchange commission reported a shortage of lire, and the commissars were refused permission to send their salaries home to their families. The result was that the commissars had to spend their money in Germany, while at home their families went hungry. One by one, then more rapidly, the commissars quit their jobs and went home.

But other and more important Italians were unable to leave Germany. These were the industrial managers, who had been appointed to the exchange study commissions.

In September 1940 German Economics Minister Walther Funk had proposed that the two countries exchange a number of industrial study commissions to co-ordinate production methods. The proclaimed purpose was to standardize processes and thus increase production results. Ciano embraced the idea, and the Ministry of

Corporations instructed leading firms to send their operating executives to Germany.

When the committee of German managers arrived at the Fiat works in Turin which produces airplane motors and tanks, they began at once to reorganize production management in what by now was standard practice: polite inquiring circuits of the plant twice a day, a little advice offered, and finally outright instructions.

Meanwhile the Italian executives of Fiat were sent to the Benz-Daimler works in the Rhineland. They were installed in a magnificent suite of offices and taken on a quick tour of the plant. On returning to their armchairs they found the desks piled high with documents, statistics, and blueprints. They had seen very little on their tour of inspection

but now they rubbed their hands at this mark of confidence. But the rubbing soon ceased.

The documents, statistics, and blueprints were all at least two years old.

They wanted to go home again. The Germans, however, wouldn't let them go. So, like the workers, they complained to Ciano via Alfieri, in Berlin, and Ciano took it up with Mackensen in one of their daily conversations. Mackensen said he knew nothing about it but would investigate. He did nothing at all. The Italian managers continued to sit in their magnificent offices, draw their munificent German salaries, and look at the heaps of useless papers. They complained again and again.

Finally the Germans broke down and gave them some more documents: statistics on current production. Very interesting, said the Italians. But how do you do it? We would like to study plant operations. The German superintendent was horrified. Even he couldn't go on the floor without permission from the army, the Gestapo, and the Economics Ministry. But he would see.

The same thing happened with the Sardinian coal mines, the mercury pits of Istria, the Breda airplane, Ansaldo engine, and Viscose textile companies. Their operating executives too got trapped in the north while aggressive Germans took over in their front offices and control booths.

This marked the snap of the Nazis' most important trap to integrate Italy as ruthlessly into the New Economic Order as any one of the conquered Balkan kingdoms.

Several times in the Caccia Club I had met and chatted with the elderly prince of an old aristocratic house, a fat and good-natured sixty-year-old. He was extremely rich, had lost his wife some years before, and all his children were married. More for appearances than because his libido was still active he kept a girl friend with whom he was seen everywhere.

One night I met her too. He made the introduction with obvious pride of possession

which I could well understand. Gerda Witra was a striking young woman of about twenty-six, tall, graciously proportioned, with rich auburn hair and soft brown eyes. She was an Austrian.

I joined the prince's party of three men and two other women, drew my chair in next to hers, and we began by talking together about boating on the Danube. She came from Linz near where the famous blue river enters Austria.

After this I saw Gerda Witra very frequently, as often as possible while the prince was in Rome, more often whenever he was away. She looked upon him as a kind of uncle.

She turned out to be a really lovely person, and I have the impression that she became fond of me. She said that before meeting the prince she had earned her living making translations from German into Italian for business firms and book publishers. On the other hand, for a girl from a small city, she had extraordinary poise and her clothes, even her old ones, were obviously more expensive than translations could have bought. No matter.

She had left Austria when she was eighteen and had thus been in Italy eight or nine years. She was now legally a German resident abroad and so her passport stated.

I saw her almost daily, usually in the late afternoons or evenings. The prince had provided her with a charming three-room apartment in a building in Via Regina Elena; she gave me a key. It was a relief to be with someone who had no interest in politics or any of the other topics of incessant discussion everywhere else I went. In fact, she refused to let me even mention them.

In this atmosphere I dropped a little bit my role of idiot; I swam along with a new sense of gaiety and excitement.

This had been going on for about a month when one night Bellini, in the middle of a conversation on some other topic, asked me if I knew a certain Signorina Witra.

I said yes, surprised that he knew about her.

“You know all about her friends?”

“Most of them, yes.”

“Do you know,” Bellini asked, “that she receives visits from Hans Ettel?”

I felt as if I’d been hit in the stomach.

Bellini added: “His brother is head of the Nazi party in Italy.”

I said I knew that.

He went on: “He himself makes his office in the Arbeitsfront.”

I said I had met Ettel once or twice with Meier at the Lowen-brau. What would a Gestapo man want with Witra?

Bellini didn’t answer that; he simply commented that he thought that I ought to know about Ettel.

I asked how and why the underground had pried into Witra’s visitors; and had they discovered others besides the principe, myself, and Ettel?

Bellini smiled. “No.”

I insisted: how had they found out?

Again he evaded the question. Nearly every residence in Rome is near one or more food stores, and the women who shop are great gossips. One of the other tenants in Witra’s building might easily have seen me and Ettel. Another question: “How had they made certain that Ettel had been visiting Witra? He might have been visiting some other tenant.”

Bellini only said that he was sure. He repeated that he thought

I ought to know. “I’m sure,” he added, “she’s working for the ^Gestapo.”

I think this was the most unpleasant surprise I have ever had. I couldn’t accept the truth of what Bellini said. I knew that the Gestapo, like every other espionage system in the world, uses women, preferably good-looking ones. I myself was using Bettina Salvoni. And I knew that Gerda Witra had not cut off all her other men friends on my account. But

still I couldn't make myself believe that she was baiting me for the Gestapo. I cannot set down exactly what gave me that certainty. I suppose I am naive. Or I might have found it easier to believe of a less magnificent woman.

But if this were true, more than my feelings were involved.

As I look back today on what I did next it seems to me as unreal as a half-remembered motion picture of improbable people doing improbable things without shame. It may seem that I would never have done what I did but for the fact that I was only jealous; but clearly, I had the decisive reason that my first obligation in a very unpleasant situation was to keep my own neck out of Gestapo hands.

I had never been near her apartment in the forenoon, but now I watched the building entrance for three days until I saw Ettel go in.

I waited fifteen minutes, then entered the building and went up to the third floor by the stairs. I was wearing rubber-soled shoes. I let myself into the apartment without a sound.

The door opened into an entrance foyer. To the left lay the kitchen, straight ahead her bedroom and bath, the living room beyond. I could hear her voice and, after a few seconds, a man's voice.

I went into the bedroom. There was a double french door covered with opaque curtains between it and the living room. I could hear fairly well through it.

I heard the clink of a spoon against a cup. They were having midmorning breakfast—Gabel-Fruhstiick. As well as I could judge from the voices, she was sitting on a chair beside the small tea table, Ettel on the divan.

I had difficulty making out what they were talking about, but from the tone I could tell it was not personal. I was also certain that their friendship, whatever else it meant, was not an intimate one. Then I heard my name.

Ettel's tone was impatient and therefore a little louder. "What about K—?"

"Nothing yet," she said. I remember being greatly astonished at the lightness of her

tone.

This seemed to make Ettel angry. “You mean to say you don’t know yet what sort of fellow he is?”

She murmured something I couldn’t catch.

Ettel demanded: “Is he as big a fool as everybody says?”

“Yes,” she said.

I felt as sheepish and foolish as a little boy.

Ettel said: “You don’t seem very certain of yourself.”

Apparently she got angry. “I’ve told you all I know. He never talks about anything except movies and singing and places he’s been.”

“You must get him to talk more than that.”

“I’ve tried,” she said. She never had.

A silence fell in the living room. I stepped back, thinking Ettel had risen to go. He would pass the bedroom door and see me. At the same moment I heard the front door open. The maid was coming to clean the apartment.

I stepped back into the closet behind a mass of dresses and coats. It was hot and I could hear very little. After a time the front door closed heavily; that would be Ettel. Then I heard Witra in the bedroom just outside the door. The noises she made with lipstick, powder, and perfume were sharp, as if she were angry and were flinging things around. Then the front door closed again.

There was still the servant. She took a long time to clean up. I was in that closet three hours before she left and I was free to get out of the building.

I had not planned to see Witra that evening; I was invited to the Terrinis’. But the next night I went to her apartment as usual. She behaved as she always had. She made no attempt to make me talk about anyone I knew in Rome or about political topics. She said that the principe would be back in Rome the following week and then she would break off

with him.

I don't know if Ettel visited her again that week. I went along as before, but I still had that sick feeling. The incident shook my confidence in my ability to study and understand people. It may be absurd and youthfully romantic to say so, but with all my watchfulness I detected nothing in that girl other than that she had become honestly fond of me. I say only "fond" because I don't know. Too many other factors were involved to be clear about that.

On the following Monday the principe returned to Rome. I didn't see Gerda that night. Nor on Tuesday night.

She telephoned; why had I not come the night before? I said I had had to go to the Terrinis'. I would see her tomorrow.

The next morning, as I was leaving the house for breakfast, she was waiting for me on the street. She looked pale. She went with me to the milk bar for breakfast.

Why hadn't I come to see her the other night? And was I coming tonight? The principe was going home early.

I couldn't look directly at her. I said the Contessa Terrini had found out something and had made an awful scene.

She said I could easily promise the contessa not to see her again —I had told her about the Terrinis at the beginning—but there was no reason why I had to keep the promise. I said that was what I would do. I promised to see her that night. I went, and the evening turned into endless conversation over what the contessa's jealousy meant.

The next night I stopped in at the Caccia Club. When I found the principe I complimented him enthusiastically on his lady friend; I admired her eyes, I said, and her hair, and especially her figure.

He laughed with pleasure. Good figure she had, eh?

Oh yes, I went on. I thought Signorina Witra was wonderful. In fact, I had every

intention of stealing her away from him. He had better watch out.

There was some alarm in his good-natured little eyes when we parted.

The next day he took her away from Rome to an estate of his on the northern coast. I had a note from her by messenger saying she could not refuse to go. I never saw her again in Rome.

23. NIGHT LIFE IN ROME

IN MID-FEBRUARY German soldiers on their way to and from Libya were again involved in preying on innocent Italian merchants.

Domestic regulations compelled shops to accept German money at the rate of seven lire per mark; the Black Bourse was paying only three. The German purchaser would take the merchandise and his change and sign a receipt which, on presentation at the banks with the mark notes, would be credited to merchants' accounts in lire.

All went well until a number of merchants discovered that the marks for which they had given out merchandise and cash were hundred-mark notes of the 1923 inflation era. They were no good.

The merchants set up a great clamor. The total amount involved was about a hundred thousand marks, or seven hundred thousand lire. The perpetrators of the swindle couldn't be found; the names signed on the receipts by the German soldier purchasers turned out to be false.

In desperation the Questura appealed to Von Rintelen, who requested that the merchants be kept quiet until he and Von Mackensen and Ciano could find some way to settle the incident. But the merchants were not to be kept quiet. They complained so lustily that everyone in Rome knew the story.

After protracted negotiations Ciano announced that the Italian government would pay out good lire for the worthless marks. Merchants were then forbidden to accept any more marks; German soldiers would have to change their marks in advance at the Banco di Roma and the Banca Commerciale.

The Nazis did not reimburse the Italian treasury.

But German individual excesses were not confined to financial chicanery. I went one night with Ingrid Soederberg to Rome's most extraordinary night club, the Basilica Ulpia, near the Forum Romanum, beneath the restaurant on the street floor. To get into it you go down steep stairs; halfway down is a balcony, and below is the main room on the stone and marble blocks which constituted the floor of the ancient forum. This is about thirty feet below present street level. There are a number of flat marble benches with bear rugs thrown over them for those who want to drink in the reclining posture of ancient Rome. Vases and fragments presumably dug up from the ancient forum are scattered about.

Tino, Rome's best singer, who has refused many opportunities to sing abroad, is here, with the best accordion player and the best orchestra. The Ulpia is fabulously expensive; a bottle of Lacrimae Christi is eighty lire and only sixteen in a wine shop. There is no dancing; only dim-lighted atmosphere peopled by Rome's best society.

By eleven o'clock the place was reasonably full; Tino was in good voice and pleased at the responsiveness of the crowd.

Six German air-force officers came in and took a table in a corner near Tino. One of the officers' voices was raised above the murmurs of general conversation. I looked over. They drank Hitler's health in loud German. The tables nearest them fell into a strained silence; people tried to look unconcerned; there was a sibilant undertone of angry whispers.

Tino began at once to sing the rollicking Neapolitan "Ay-Ay-Ay-Ay!" One of the German officers, a captain, left the table, marched over to plant himself directly in front of Tino. The song stopped abruptly.

The captain demanded that the orchestra play the "Horst Wessel" song.

Tino looked hurt. Women's voices came from among the guests urging Tino to continue his Neapolitan song. More voices joined them.

A German lieutenant sprang up at the table and called out: "*Silenzio!* The captain has

asked for the ‘Horst Wessel’ song and it must be played.”

The orchestra leader protested that neither he nor his musicians could play the “Horst Wessel” song; they did not know it.

The captain said that made no difference. He and his friends would sing it themselves. He marched back to his table.

The distressed Tino followed him over, expostulating that in Italy the playing of national anthems in drinking places was forbidden. The lieutenant, his face flushed, shoved Tino; the singer’s face contorted with anger. The headwaiter pushed himself between.

Then the officers, led by the brave captain, sang the “Horst Wessel” song from beginning to end, without music. Everybody had to stand.

Except for their six strong, rough voices in the song, which glorifies a pimp, there was no sound in the Ulpia.

But table after table emptied. Party after party dropped money on the tables and went out; the waiters stood by with empty, staring faces. . . . The men who passed us on their way out had sullen, defeated expressions; the women were openly angry and sneering.

The officers kept singing.

Ingrid was looking down at her glass, breathing very rapidly. She reached for her wrap.

“Stay where you are,” I said.

She looked at me; her eyes were narrow with rage. “I can’t listen to this any more.”

“Stay where you are.”

“They are dirty—”

“Don’t raise your voice. We can’t leave without attracting attention.”

The singing stopped. She lowered her eyes again to stare into her glass. She kept biting her lower lip.

The German captain looked round at the nearly empty place, then turned to his companions and said something, and they all laughed.

“Come on.” I paid the check and we went up the long, steep stairs.

Once in the blacked-out street I took a deep breath. All of a sudden my companion was crying. We walked several blocks without saying anything.

24. WHAT MUSSOLINI SAID TO FRANCO

ITALY'S WINTER was growing worse.

Sugar disappeared from the stores completely; sausage went from twenty-five to thirty-five lire per kilo; the butter ration slid down to one tenth of a kilo per month—if one could find any. The meat ration approached zero: eight to ten dekagrams (three ounces) per week. And it was meat frozen in such a way that when cooked its bulk shriveled.

Since December special courts had been trying food-hoarding cases. By a new decree the death penalty would be meted out to the guilty. But none ever were.

For workers and peasants the staple is spaghetti, of which a man consumes a half kilo per day, a quarter kilo at each meal with *sugo* (meat sauce), and on special occasions with butter. With the latest rationing system, individuals were allowed a total of only two kilos of spaghetti, flour, and rice per month. So that if a man took it all in spaghetti, it would still last him only four days. The rest of the month had to be eked out with vegetables cooked in water without butter or olive oil, and bread.

In peacetime, the standard luncheon as well as supper of the average man included spaghetti, meat without gravy, vegetables

with olive oil, or salad with oil and vinegar, plus fruit, bread and cheese, and wine. Confections are rarely eaten in Italy. In wartime the workers' lunch came to consist usually of a *sfilatino*—a sort of long roll—with vegetables; in the evenings, a water soup made with tablets, some rice or spaghetti, wine if there was any, vegetables, and fruit.

For Sundays the meat ration was three ounces, and butcher shops opened only on Saturdays with long queues lined up at their doors. Many women complained about the smallness of the ration and the shriveling property of the frozen meat. Policemen were

therefore stationed in every shop to quiet outcries and to see that the butchers didn't give oversized portions to favorite customers. Some women were arrested as examples to the others.

There was no pork, game, or fowl. Fish, which had always been so plentiful in Italy, vanished mysteriously because, a dealer told me, gasoline rations to the fishing barques had been practically eliminated and the bigger schooners requisitioned for the navy. What fish could be found had gone from twelve lire per kilo the previous autumn to thirty-five lire.

Never a popular diet item in Italy, potatoes now became a substitute for spaghetti. They were cooked in their skins and served with olive oil and vinegar. The ration was theoretically one kilo per day—available occasionally for a day or two at a time.

Fruit, once plentiful, became so expensive that the average person couldn't afford to buy it. Sardines moved up into the class of caviar. With tuna fish they had become popular at the beginning of the war and now both vanished from the markets.

The olive-oil ration dipped to a half liter per month, too little in quantity for cooking and so poor in quality that its smell spoiled whatever it was used for. Italians began to reconcile themselves to meals without oil.

Laundry soap, rationed since the beginning of the war, consisted mostly of plain earth. A piece six centimeters square weighed one kilo and was a dirty clay-like gray.

The fruit and eggs left over from 1940 began to spoil in storage.

Because of the shortage of tin for canning, the Italians resorted to paper containers. But they were very poor in quality; unlike American milk containers, which are heavily paraffined both inside and out, these were thinly coated only inside.

Bread, already corrupted with 25 percent corn meal, was still further assailed by the addition of 25 percent dirty-looking flour made of potatoes. (Later on the wheat-flour content was reduced by another 12 percent rice flour.) The result was a gray bread that

hardened immediately on leaving the ovens. The same flour mixture was used for spaghetti too.

There had been no real coffee for a year and a half. The so-called miscella, made of roast corn and chicory, now changed into something made of chicory, dried figs, and a black powder of unknown origin. Of course a few lucky rich could get real coffee, but only for four hundred lire per kilo—*twenty* dollars. Restaurants violating any of the food regulations were summarily closed; the newspapers published lengthening lists of such closings.

Italy has always been one of the world centers of fine shoe manufacture; even its ordinary shoes were always handmade and sold at reasonable prices. But now leather was just a memory, and shoe stores were forbidden to exhibit anything more than three standard types of shoes made of paper-and-leather combination. The price of these rose to a hundred and fifty lire, while shoes made of real leather went to four hundred lire a pair. People virtually tore them out of the dealers' hands.

Queues of housewives stood with shopping bags to get their rations of coal. And this in the extraordinarily cold winter when the temperature frequently dropped to twenty-three degrees Fahrenheit.

Both wool and silk cloth rose to four hundred lire per meter and there was little of either.

An ingenious scheme was perpetrated to cut down on the use of coal for the manufacture of fuel gas. By vitiating the heat-producing quality by the admixture of other than coke gas, time of boiling was made longer, and thus less total heat was used in households and non-essential industries. The doubled cost of heat also contributed to economy of gas use.

The paper shortage, which had long since resulted in the complete disappearance of bags and wrappings, compelled the newspapers to cut down to four or six pages. In peacetime

Il Giornale d'Uitalia had run twelve to sixteen pages daily; *Il Messaggero* sixteen daily and twenty on Sundays.

I doubt if there was any gasoline at all in Rome at this time. Only government automobiles were to be seen on the streets and most of these had methane gas tanks on their roofs or baggage racks. Methane gas is made by burning organic refuse; wood-burning stoves, too, propelled automobiles, smoke pouring from them.

The cars of foreign diplomats and of the Vatican, which always had the very latest American models, still had gasoline. But even they had to stand in lines ten to fifteen blocks long at the official distributing stations and pay six lire per liter, or as much as twenty for bootlegged gasoline.

Automobile traffic, consisting only of privileged cars, was allowed on weekdays only from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. and on Sundays not at all. Taxis were restricted to one at each police booth; to get a taxi at night the approval of the police officer there had to be obtained.

Picture theaters went unheated even in the coldest weather, and on top of that there were not enough films to satisfy the market. The Italian film industry, hitherto controlled by the Propaganda Ministry, had fallen under control of the German Reichsfilm chamber. All foreign films except German were banned. And good German films were too expensive; only propaganda films came for nothing. The newsreels were cut in half to conserve raw film stock.

Wine prices rose 50 per cent—a drastic blow to the average man who drank wine with every meal, from a quarter to a half liter with the evening meal. Gelati, the Italian version of ice cream, consisted now only of water and artificial coloring; milk and fruit were banned.

In spite of decrees, restaurant prices soared. But people with money could still eat halfway decently, ordering several portions of frozen meat at one sitting. When the serving of more than one portion was prohibited, we had to go to as many as three

restaurants to get a full dinner.

More and more black-garbed women appeared on the streets—mourning for the mounting casualties in Greece and Libya. The Fascist party issued a patriotic appeal to cease mourning; the men had fallen in a glorious, not a melancholy, cause. But women went on wearing black.

Despite higher and higher prices, wages of workers and employees stood still.

But at the same time German civilian and military officials were eating meat twice a day five times a week. Their field-gray Opels and Mercedes dominated street traffic and aroused such comment that the German commission in the War Ministry ordered all German military automobiles permanently stationed in Rome to be painted in various standard colors. This was done, and the bill was paid by the Italian War Ministry. The cars were also given Italian license plates.

Local Fascist party headquarters were stripping every house of iron. ... A woman was arrested on Via Sardinia for complaining about the bread. . . . More women were arrested on Via Voltumo. . . . Guards were increased at the big markets, and every gathering of more than three women was broken up by traffic policemen.

The fall of Benghazi to General Archibald Wavell's Imperials in Libya on February 7, on top of the disasters in Albania, struck the people amidships. Regular fortnightly party meetings were canceled to prevent outbreaks. Casualty lists were long, and the people regarded the war as already lost. The underground started a whispering campaign that Mussolini was sacrificing the Italian people to Hitler.

Italy had only one consolation for its degradation: the spectacle of Vichy France.

"We need no longer be so ashamed of ourselves," a man said in the Caccia Club with an ironic smile. "The French are even bigger pigs than we. We are allies of Germany and so couldn't avoid our misfortune. But the French didn't face the necessity before, nor do they today, to make agreements with Hitler."

Through Marotti I had met a supply officer regularly stationed in Bari in southern Italy where were loaded into ships the food, munitions, and clothes for Italian divisions fighting in Albania. He was a morose man, disgusted by the subterfuges of war.

The ships that sailed across the Adriatic—the *Rex*, *Conte di Savoia*, and *Conte Rosso* among them—were loaded with materiel on the outward voyage, while returning they were filled with sick and wounded. Contrary to international law, even Red Cross vessels carried guns and munitions on their trips across the narrow sea. For almost a year this traffic remained unmolested by the Allies.

Then on the night of February 11 the British dropped parachutists near Bari. These men blew up the aqueduct which supplied the town from the inland mountains, and this important shipping center remained virtually without water for eight days. Troops passing through got only a daily half liter for drinking purposes, brought in by tank wagons which rolled in an endless line on the highway from above the break in the aqueduct. Even though this disrupted the heavy military truck traffic toward the port, the water thus brought was less than a quarter of what was normally needed.

Another result of the raid was a spy scare. A large proportion of Bari's population is of Greek origin, and the Questura learned that the Greeks had induced street urchins to talk to soldiers and discover their units and destinations. So soldiers were forbidden to talk to anyone and a few children were arrested.

Some of the British parachutists were killed, others rounded up and imprisoned. All of the men must have been specially selected; all of them spoke fluent Italian and were familiar with the countryside. One of those caught was a Florentine who had emigrated to Australia as late as 1934. His new citizenship was not acknowledged by the authorities and he was summarily executed as a deserter from the Italian army for having, according to the charge, evaded compulsory service when his class was called.

On February 9, just two days before Bari, the British fleet appeared suddenly off Genoa and pumped three hundred tons of explosives into the city. According to the official report a hundred and forty-four were killed and two hundred and forty-two seriously wounded.

As a result of these two totally unexpected blows the spy scare became national.

At hastily called meetings in every village and city party leaders warned the people for the nth time against talking politics or strategy and pleaded that they be on the lookout for suspicious characters, who should at once be reported to the Questura.

Because of the damage to Genoa, Mussolini was compelled to change the place of his February 12 meeting with Spanish Generalissimo Francisco Franco to Bordighera on the Nice line.

Il Duce is never sure of his life—only the highest Fascists know that the Palazzo Venezia where Il Duce works has a secret underground exit to the Forum Romanum several hundred yards away and the Palazzo Chigi housing the Foreign Office a similar one to Via Campo Marzio. Mussolini and Ciano carry the keys in their own pockets.

Il Duce left Rome for Bordighera in the armored train which Hitler had presented to him: a luxurious passenger car between two cars each bearing eight rapid-fire anti-aircraft guns. The German crews were still in charge of the guns though wearing Italian uniforms. With them were squads of P M M. I could get no closer than a hundred and fifty yards to the train outside the Rome station; detectives were on guard everywhere.

Fantastic precautions were taken in Bordighera. Though the meeting of the two dictators would take place in a villa outside the town, all transients were sent away, no trains were allowed to stop at the Bordighera station, and the entire Riviera from Rapallo to Ventimiglia swarmed with Questura and OVRA men. The coast was patrolled by Italian navy speedboats as far as Rapallo; twenty miles off the coast lay the entire Italian high seas fleet, including a passenger ship converted to carry six or eight pursuit planes. The army airfields at Genoa and Spezia were on the alert; the roads from Ventimiglia to Spezia

were closed to all traffic. New anti-aircraft guns were installed in Bordighera, San Remo, Ventimiglia, and Ospedaletti; army garrisons from Mentone to Spezia were on the alert, and four thousand men of the P M M converged on Bordighera. In the town itself all inhabitants were ordered to stay indoors, but stores were kept open to preserve appearances, a detective sitting in nearly every one.

But all this wasn't enough for Generalissimo Franco. He brought along two hundred secret agent guards of his own.

These were the security measures guarding the meeting of the two "people's leaders" of Italy and Spain.

In this atmosphere Mussolini attempted to inveigle the Spaniard into co-operation with Italy. Specifically, he urged Franco to advance his claims on Gibraltar, to give permission for the passage of Italian troops through Spanish Morocco in case the British drove them completely out of Libya, and to plan an early entry into the war on the Axis side.

Theoretically, Mussolini was in a strong bargaining position. Spain still owed for the arms, soldiers, artillery, planes, and munitions Italy had sent her. When Ciano and a staff of officers had gone to Spain on July 12, 1939, ostensibly to repay Serrano Suner's visit to Rome of June 10, his real purpose was to negotiate for the return of planes, submarines, and two destroyers. Though Franco, through Suner's visit to Rome, had pleaded to be allowed to keep those arms, Mussolini had refused and sent Ciano to get them back; Italy needed them urgently herself. Sailors, officers, and pilots were ordered to Spain to bring back the submarines, destroyers, and what was left of the planes.

Despite Franco's obligation to Il Duce he declined Mussolini's proposals at Bordighera on the ground that Spain was exhausted by her recent civil war. He conceded only Italian use of Spanish territorial waters and Spanish tankers.

The dictators parted with the usual expressions of mutual esteem.

When Franco got home he had troubles. Santander had been half devastated by fire and

hurricane; people were homeless; looters were despoiling the city that once had been Alphonso's summer court. The Spanish troops on the scene were too few to cope with the situation; El Caudillo sent out a hurry call to the German soldiers quartered just across the border in Occupied France.

On February 21 a full armored division of the German army moved into Santander, complete with tanks, mobile artillery, and planes. And like German soldiers who had been invited into other countries temporarily, they settled down for a permanent stay.

Of course Franco didn't tell his people the truth, any more than Mussolini did on the twenty-third in the Adriano Theater speaking to assembled Fascist leaders.

He gave them a more or less unvarnished picture of the war situation, including the destruction of the Fifth and Tenth divisions in Libya. But he concealed the casualty total in Albania and the true extent of the disaster in Cyrenaica. He promised his people a beautiful spring (*bella primavera*) and an even more beautiful summer (*piii bella estate*).

25. IN A GENOA CELLAR

THE MORNING of February 22 Bellini sent me word in the usual way that Palcini had arrived in Rome for a visit. We met that night in an osteria in Trastevere across the Tiber.

Palcini was excited over the success the underground had had in the past weeks fanning discontent into open demonstrations.

There had been serious ones in Milan, Turin, and Genoa, all resulting in sweeping arrests. Women had rioted in the markets where conditions were worse than in the favored capital city. Just the month before, in Milan, German customers had been driven out of the stores. They called the police, who flatly ordered the shopkeepers to sell merchandise to the Germans. But the Italian customers prevented sales by crowding the counters. They threatened and attacked the Germans. The police pulled revolvers and finally dispersed the crowd.

But biggest of all had been the factory dynamiting in Pola near Trieste in December. It had been carried out not by the men of the Pola and Trieste cells, whom the mainland leaders mistrusted because they included so many non-Italians, but by men moved there beforehand over a long period of time.

This spectacular act of sabotage was not reported by the Fascist regime nor has it ever been reported elsewhere.

In the Adriatic port of Pola, once the greatest naval base of the Austro-Hungarian empire, was located a former branch of the English Whitehead torpedo company. After World War I it came into Italian hands and since the outbreak of World War II had been manufacturing torpedoes for the Italian and German navies. In explosions originating in the powder magazine and the final assembly room, most of the buildings had been

wrecked, over three hundred men killed, and from eight hundred to a thousand injured.

But Palcini had not come to Rome to tell us this. He had come to plan my attendance at a meeting of the Matteotti group with representatives of the Anarchists and Communists in Genoa on the twenty-fourth. The meeting was called to discuss unification. It would be attended by Palcini and another man of the Matteotti Circolo Secondo of the first region, which had its headquarters in Milan, Bellini from Rome, and two men each from the Communist and Anarchist groups. All parties had consented to my attendance.

The only problem was how I could get to Genoa. Bellini and Palcini could go at will; they needed only their Fascist credentials. But I was a foreigner and forbidden to travel without written permission of the Questura and the Ministry of Interior. I would have to file a petition stating the purpose of the trip and proposed length of stay. It would take four to six weeks to get an answer and then it would be no. I would have to risk the trip without permission, which meant arrest if I were caught by the railway police. Watchfulness was increased too because on the twelfth a hundred and thirty-three regular trains had been dropped from the schedules to save coal.

We discussed some of the difficulties but took no advance precautions beyond planning to begin the journey sitting in a car near the middle of the train. Police controls began at either end; this might give us time to find a way for me to avoid the inspection. The country was still gripped by the early February spy scare.

We agreed to meet at 10 P.M. the next night in the station near the ticket windows.

By ill luck the Questura chose the next day for one of its periodic shadowings.

I left my pensione about nine-thirty in the morning for breakfast. A young man with a big nose and wearing a gray suit was leaning against the wall reading a newspaper. An unlighted cigarette hung out of the corner of his mouth.

I walked down the street to the *latteria* and took my usual table in the dim back room. In less than a minute the young man in the gray suit came in and stood at the bar. He laid

his paper flat on the counter. The cigarette still hung unlighted from his mouth.

I had a sfilatino and chocolate. The man at the bar was having what looked like vermouth and bitters. He read a little bit, took a short swallow from his glass, then resumed reading. I paid for my breakfast and walked out. He had only half finished his drink.

I took ten minutes to walk over to the Via Tritone. It is always crowded on account of its many stores. When I reached it I saw I had made a mistake. I couldn't lose the man in the traffic because it all moves down one side toward the Palazzo Chigi and all up on the other side.

I joined the shopping crowd. Halfway down Tritone is a large optical, radio, and photographic supply shop. Two doorways lead from the sidewalk into a large vestibule lined with display windows. I went in one doorway, out the other, and circled back to the first doorway instead of continuing in the same direction as before. But the young man in the gray suit doubled right back after me.

I circled back again to continue down Tritone toward the Chigi to the arcade. Its two short branches are entirely roofed over and electrically lighted. I walked around the center block and into the first of the emigre coffeehouses. I saw no one I knew and walked out again. I went into the second coffeehouse, then out, and into several shops one after another, as if looking for someone.

The man kept about ten paces behind me, cigarette still hanging from the corner of his mouth.

I walked over to the Rinascente department store. The escalator took me to the third floor where I bought a necktie. The man in the gray suit waited by a counter near the bank of two elevators. I went and stood before the elevator doors. One of them opened. The man was about ten feet away from me. Just as the elevator door was closing I stepped in—the only passenger. The operator refused to take me upstairs. We went down. The

Rinascente elevators are old and slow. As I got out on the main floor the man in the gray suit emerged from the stairs.

At a near-by counter I bought a plasticene tumbler for my toothbrush.

Two o'clock came. I was hungry. I bought a newspaper and went to the Re d'Amici restaurant on Via della Croce. I took a table in the back. The young man in the gray suit planted himself at a table halfway between me and the door. He lighted his cigarette and smoked it while he ate.

It was about three when we left the restaurant. A bus to the Garibaldi Bridge stopped at the nearest corner. I got on. The door closed sharply behind me. The man in the gray suit was outside. But he banged on the door; the driver opened it again and let him in.

I rode to the Tiber and changed to a streetcar going to Castel Sant' Angelo, where Clement VII hid during the Sack of Rome in 1527. From there I walked over to St. Peter's and went into the church. It was about four o'clock. Groups of sightseers drifted around the vast interior of the church. The only sounds were the whispering shuffle of feet and the faint drone of guides' voices explaining the sights.

The man in the gray suit leaned against a column and stared at a stained-glass window. I followed a group of sightseers down into the crypt where the Popes are buried. I knew it had three exits, one of them beside the elevators to the roof—a narrow staircase leading to a point on the main floor about a hundred yards from the stairs we had used to come down.

I left the sightseeing group and went up the stairs and back to the main floor. Not twenty feet away stood my shadow. He had posted himself in sight of all three exits.

I went out again into the sunlight.

A bus took me to the central post office on Piazza S. Silvestro. I bought some stamps and postal cards and then went into the general-delivery parcel room. The man in the gray suit stood just outside its double door to the pavement. By moving to one side I escaped his

range of vision. I went through a side door into Via delle Vite and crossed the street into a doorway. It was five-thirty. Dusk was falling.

I saw the man in the gray suit come hastily out of the main post-office exit. He looked up and down the street, but didn't move away. I waited ten, fifteen minutes. He still didn't go away. I had to come out. He saw me.

I walked back to Via Tritone and took a bus. He boarded it right behind me. I got off in front of the Albergo Excelsior and went into the lobby. He loafed over to the other side and hung another unlighted cigarette in his mouth. He bought a paper and held it open before his face.

I went into the men's room. Its large window into a courtyard stood open. But there were people moving around there. I came back into the lobby and walked a few steps behind a group of two men and a woman. At the moment they bunched together to enter an elevator they masked me from my shadow's sight. I stepped sharply through the small back door into Via Marche. It was dark.

I walked rapidly into Via Boncampagni. No one was following me. I moved along more quickly.

As I turned the corner onto Via Veneto I almost bumped into the man in the gray suit. The unlighted cigarette in his mouth jerked with surprise.

I kept on going. I reached my pensione about seven. I went into the courtyard. He stopped in the entranceway.

I had dinner in the pensione. I had less than three hours to lose this fellow. I don't think he had any dinner. From the diningroom window I could see him leaning against the wall. He had lighted his cigarette. Its tip glowed in the gloom.

At eight-thirty I was ready to leave. I told Signora Zarra that I would be out all night and the next day . . . that if anybody asked her, please to say I had slept in my room. I hinted at a romantic adventure and Signora Zarra was ready to help. In fact, she wished me luck.

It was eight-thirty when I went out again, the shadow close on my heels. It was a real Roman night—damp, cold, and hazy. As I marched along the street I could hear his muffled footfalls very close behind. There were few people out. I walked over to the Corso Umberto.

On the corner of Via Condotti is the Albergo Plaza. I went into the Cinema Imperiale next to it. I bought a ticket; so did my shadow. But I didn't go at once into the auditorium. I stopped for a drink at the brightly lighted bar in the lobby. After the blacked-out streets our eyes would get used to light again. I dawdled over the drink for ten minutes, and when I saw a large group of people going into the auditorium I fell in with them. My shadow was almost on my heels.

We entered the perfectly dark auditorium. I couldn't see a thing. Certainly my shadow couldn't either. I stepped sharply away from the people and slipped out through a near-by fire exit. I walked quickly down the Corso to the Piazza Venezia. I had lost my shadow.

I boarded a bus which took me up Via Nazionale to the station. It was then half demolished to make way for the new station behind it which was only half finished. Both structures were completely darkened from the outside.

I went into the ticket hall. In one corner stood Bellini. It was five minutes to ten. Palcini came up to the ticket window. There were a lot of railway police in the hall. We exchanged no greetings, bought our tickets at different windows, and went out into the darkened shed. Bellini was ahead, then Palcini; I came about ten feet behind.

I got into the last compartment of the middle car, Palcini in the next one, and Bellini in the third. The blacked-out train, every window covered with curtains, black oiled paper, or glazed linen, was full of poorly dressed people and many soldiers. In each compartment was a little blue lamp throwing a ghastly light. There were eight of us in my compartment: two soldiers, three civilians, two women, and myself. Conversation started, but I didn't want to be drawn into it. It was impossible to read; I feigned sleep. We were traveling

third class, cheapest and hence the most crowded. The train was poorly heated; it got very cold.

At about half-past two the train stopped at Livorno, a little more than halfway to Genoa. I saw Palcini come out of his compartment and go down the corridor. In a few minutes I went down the corridor in the same direction. It was cold and still. I could see nothing out the window, but Palcini said he had leaned out a door and had seen an officer and two bayoneted men of the Milizia Ferroviaria get on at the head of the train. They were probably going to begin the inspection.

Palcini said that when I arrived in the station I had looked in a hurry. What had happened? I told him I had been shadowed all day and finally lost my man in my carefully planned "shadow trap" in the Imperiale.

A dangerous thing to do, wasn't it?

I pointed out to him the special advantage of losing a shadow that way: the man would sit through the picture thinking he had simply lost temporary track; he would pick me up when the picture ended. On discovering I was gone, he wouldn't dare report that he had been outwitted. He would lie and say he had followed me home again. If I had lost the man in some less innocent-seeming way he might report it at once and other men would have been sent out after me.

Palcini went to the vestibule at the front end of the car; I went back to my compartment. After a little while I saw Bellini stroll past toward the rear of the train; a few moments later, Palcini. I got up and followed. Slowly, without joining one another, we drifted toward the end car. There again I went into the very last compartment, Palcini into the second, Bellini into the third. It was crowded here too; most of the people were dozing uneasily upright. It was even colder now; time dragged by slowly.

The inspection was coming our way, but it took a long time. Every passenger's papers had to be inspected and approved.

It was about six-thirty when the inspection squad came to the head of our car. I stood up and went into the corridor for a smoke. The inspectors reached the third compartment. One private remained in the corridor, the other private and the officer, a lieutenant, went into the compartment. It was twenty minutes to the next stop at Rapallo. It was ten minutes before the inspection finished with Bellini's compartment and came to Palcini's.

I returned to my seat. Through the thin partition between compartments I could hear the murmur of voices; then Palcini's, unmistakable and loud. The lieutenant said something in reply. The others in my compartment began to listen too. Apparently Palcini couldn't find his credential card. The angered lieutenant waited a moment, then threatened to search Palcini; my friend protested noisily. No, he had his card; he would find it. The lieutenant waited.

Five minutes to Rapallo . . . four minutes . . . the train was decreasing speed . . . but it was still going very fast . . .

The lieutenant lost his temper and ordered his second trooper into the compartment to search Palcini. A new and even louder argument broke out; passengers from other compartments crowded the corridor to listen.

I left my compartment and went to the rear vestibule and undid the catch on the doors on both sides. The train slackened speed still more. Behind me I heard a sudden burst of laughter and Palcini's voice triumphant. He had found his credential card in an inner pocket of his overcoat; he was apologizing at great length to the lieutenant, who told him to forget it and moved toward the last compartment with his two men. The other passengers went back to their seats.

The train slowed down. It was coming into the Rapallo station. I opened the door on the side away from the platform, crouched on the steps, and then dropped down on the cinders. On the next track a long freight train was moving slowly in the opposite direction. Our train was slowing to a stop between me and the station platform. Bent low, I ran

ahead about ten cars, found an open door, and got in; this part of the train had been inspected hours before.

The train started again. Within half an hour Bellini passed in the corridor. When Palcini passed, he drooped one eyelid in a wink. I managed to sleep most of the remaining fifty minutes to Genoa.

The train stopped with a jerk and woke me up. We got out. We were not in the Stazione Principe, however, but at the suburban Stazione Franco d'Albaro.

I followed Bellini and Palcini at a distance. To avoid the inspection of passengers at the main gate, Palcini led us into the yards and out through a side gate used by yard men.

We took a tram into town. At the Stazione Brignole we got out. I saw that the whole train shed was wrecked—a result of the British fleet bombardment of the ninth.

We began walking, still in the same order, to Via Venti Set-tembre. Palcini went up to a man as if to ask directions; the man turned and started away. Palcini followed a few paces behind him. On the other side of the street I walked behind Bellini. We headed toward the harbor.

On Via Venti Settembre and on both Via and Piazza Colombo I saw a number of apartment houses completely destroyed. A projectile had made a thirty- or forty-foot hole through both walls of one house; it was like looking down a long perspective. Crews of workmen were hanging straw matting to hide the damage from the public.

We came to the water front. Close to one pier a small ship mast stuck out of the water. Our guide turned off the quay into a side street; we followed. One after another the three men ahead of me disappeared into a little osteria. I went in last.

I found myself in a filthy room with a counter for drinks and a few tables. At one of them was a couple with a bottle of chianti; a very fat man in a filthy apron was reading a newspaper. But no Palcini and Bellini or guide. I went to a table in the rear and sat down. Even the table tops were filthy.

After a moment the fat man with the apron waddled over to me. His mustache hung down on either side of his mouth like a Chinaman's. Without saying a word he jabbed a fat finger into my shoulder and turned toward the rear of the place. I got up and followed him. He led me out into a small courtyard filled with refuse and broken barrels. He went down a flight of steep, dark steps; I followed him. We came into a wine cellar. The fat man snapped on a flashlight. On every side were huge wine barrels and rows of bottles on shelves; the stone floor was damp, and there was a powerful smell of stale wine.

Still without saying anything the fat man waddled on, with the rolling gait of a sailor, into the farthest corner where he went behind a large vat and opened a little door. I went through. He closed the door behind me.

I had come into a cellar room about thirty-five by twenty, also lined with cobwebbed barrels and rows of straw-wrapped bottles. A single light bulb hung on a wire in the middle directly over a circle of smaller barrels. Bellini and Palcini were there; I was introduced to our guide; his name was given only as Alessandro. The damp smell of wine and cobwebs made it hard to breathe. We all sat on the barrels.

Bellini and Palcini went into a corner. Only low muttering could be heard from them. I asked Alessandro if he were Genoese; he said yes. I brought the conversation around to the bombardment damage.

"The dirty bastards," he said.

Who, the British?

"No, the Fascists. They left the city defenseless."

The bombardment had begun, he said, without any warning. At the Ansaldo factory, where he worked, the boiler and drop forge plants were badly hit. In the whole city four hundred-odd had been killed and eleven hundred wounded. (The official figures had been one hundred and forty-four and two hundred and forty-two respectively.) More than a hundred dwellings had been severely damaged. The aqueduct inland carrying water to the

skyscraper section in the upper city—there are five buildings there of thirty-five stories—had been hit; two weeks after the bombardment the skyscrapers were still without running water. The main electric power station, drydock, Stazione Principe, as well as Brignole and the main freight yards, had been damaged, as well as the ANIC gasoline installations, largest state-owned refineries in Italy. The mast I had seen in the harbor belonged to an eight-hundred-ton fishing steamer; several fishing barques had gone down too.

The population had been terrified, wandering around the streets during and after the bombardment, dazed and slowly becoming resentful. AA gun crews deserted their stations when low-flying British planes strafed them.

Photographers from the Propaganda Ministry took a picture of one bombed-out woman in the act of hoisting an Italian flag “defiantly” to the top of her ruined home. But Alessandro wondered how the photographers could be so stupid; tears had been running down the woman’s face. (Later Ingrid Soederberg saw that photograph in the Propaganda Ministry; it was never released.)

Angry crowds had demanded of the authorities why there had been no alarm. The well-to-do left the city at once; bombed-out families were housed in miserably built military barracks; paratyphus broke out among them, and they were hastily distributed among hospitals in upper Italy.

Workers by the thousand had deserted their jobs in the factories to care for their families. Unmarried workers violated the law by leaving Genoa for other cities.

Our talk ended when the little door in the corner swung open and four men came in.

I was the only one introduced, by first name only; the others knew each other already. We sat down in the circle of barrels under the light and negotiations began at once.

Bellini stated the first problem: that of moving workers freely from job to job and from city to city. Regulations forbade such changes without petition for permission from the

Corporations and War ministries. The petitions were usually denied. This seriously hampered the undergrounds, who needed to move their propaganda agents, organizers, and saboteurs from cell to cell, and to factories where cells were to be established.

The reason for my presence came out: they believed that my connection with Pinelli in War Ministry might help. Their plan was to agree on a uniform style of petition which every one of their men would use in applying for change. These petitions would be handed as usual to the syndicate delegates in the factories to be forwarded to the ministries.

They wanted me to memorize this form so that I could describe it accurately to Pinelli and ask him to approve such petitions as they came through.

I promised to do my best.

Bellini stated the second point of negotiations: the merger of the two underground organizations. He said he and his committee were anxious for it.

One of the two Anarchists was a strong little man with a short rough beard. For some time during the earlier talk he had been toying with a long-bladed pocketknife; and it's against the law to carry even a small knife. Bellini had no sooner made his first remarks than this fellow could restrain himself no longer.

He stood up and began to talk, his voice continually rising. He kept waving his knife as if it were an extension of his forefinger. He spoke in a thick Sicilian dialect.

He accused the Matteotti men of insincerity, of wanting to use the Anarchists for their own purposes (jab with the knife). . . . When the Fascist regime was finally smashed (jab, jab) the Matteotti leaders would persecute the Anarchists just as they were persecuted now (gesture of drawing the knife across his throat). ... In fact, persecution of the Anarchists might be much worse (jab) because by then the Matteotti leaders would know all the details of the Anarchists' underground work (jab, jab). . . .

The bearded little fellow's voice was strident and excited; his eyes rolled in his head. It

occurred to me that he would be unhappy if he wasn't persecuted and would have welcomed an assurance from Bellini that everything he predicted would surely come to pass.

But the tone of Bellini's answer was moderate. . . . His friend was mistaken, they must trust each other if they were to bring Italy safely out of her travail. . . . Now surely—

A muffled sound made him stop short. It was repeated. Three quick knocks on a door somewhere near by. Somebody, I think it was Alessandro, turned off the light. Blackness swallowed us all. A small flashlight went on; it was Palcini. He grabbed my wrist and pulled me along with him. The others followed. He led us through a door I hadn't seen before, hidden at the other end of the cellar behind more barrels. I was a little dizzy from breathing heavy wine fumes and from the sudden plunge into pitch darkness.

We climbed a flight of slippery stone steps into another courtyard, much like the one I'd come through on the way in. It too was filled with garbage and barrel staves. The sunlight was blindingly bright. Without any exchange of words the two Anarchists and the two Communists went out singly into the street beyond; then Alessandro walked out, then Bellini, myself, and Palcini, all separately.

I kept Bellini in sight; Palcini followed some paces behind me.

We had come out into a dirty narrow street parallel to the one on which the osteria stood. Bellini walked fairly quickly, winding in and out among the crooked streets lined with ancient houses that seemed about to fall in on each other. They were propped apart by iron rods draped with a fantastic variety of wash. Every doorway let out its own stream of bad air. The composite smell was something like overripe oranges and feet.

The gradual change in the character of the buildings and the dress of the pedestrians told me Bellini was heading out of the port quarter. Suddenly we were again on the Via Venti Settembre.

I was very hungry; I'd had nothing to eat since dinner the night before. But Bellini kept

on walking; Palcini and I were on the opposite side of the street. Suddenly Bellini stopped on a street corner, bought a newspaper, and stood reading it as if we had all the time in the world. As a matter of fact we did have, because our train back to Rome wouldn't go until ten that night. And it was hardly eleven in the morning now.

Presently Alessandro came strolling along on Bellini's side of the street. He too bought a newspaper and stood beside Bellini as if accidentally, reading the front page. After a moment he turned and went into a small office building just off the corner.

I saw Palcini lounging halfway down the block.

After about half an hour Bellini came out, again glanced across the street at me, and walked a half block further, where he turned into a little coffeehouse. I crossed the street and went in after him. As I turned to go in, I looked for Palcini. I didn't see him.

Bellini was sitting at a table calmly ordering food. I joined him and ordered too. The place was nearly empty.

Bellini said Alessandro had found out what had happened. It had been a police raid; squads of Questura men had swept through the whole water-front section raking in vagrants, workers who'd left their jobs after the bombardment, and anybody else they took a fancy to pull in. It was a *razzia*—general raid—such as the Italian police execute about every two weeks in all harbor cities. They had known nothing, apparently, about our meeting and had not found the hidden wine cellar. Alessandro would see the Communist-Anarchist representatives as soon as he could and arrange another meeting.

A half-hour went by. Bellini got nervous. Palcini hadn't showed up. I wanted to go out and look for him; Bellini said no, Alessandro was waiting on the corner; he would send Palcini in to us.

After another few minutes Palcini came in and sat down. While waiting down the block from me he had seen a man he suspected of being a detective staring at him. He had gone for a walk to throw him off the trail. He had lost the man quickly enough and concluded

his quarry was not an agent after all.

We killed the afternoon by going to three movies, one after another, with time out for some food about six o'clock after Palcini had left us to return to Milan.

I went into a store on the Piazza Umberto I to buy a piece of bread for the return journey. The proprietor recognized my accent and cried out in a rage: "There is no bread! You damned Germans have bought up all there was!" He brandished a fist at me.

About nine o'clock we took the tram at Stazione Brignole to Franco d'Albaro, bought our tickets separately, and got on the train. We used the same precautions as in Rome, locating ourselves in different compartments in the middle car of the train. About eleven o'clock Bellini came out into the corridor, motioned to me to join him. The conductor of the sleeping car next to our car was with him.

He was an underground man. I paid him fifty lire and he ensconced me in his own little cubbyhole. I was safe there from the inspection and even managed to sleep a little.

Early in the morning we reached Rome. Bellini went to his office and I went home to bathe and change.

An evening or two later, when I was at Pinelli's for dinner— there were three or four other guests—I drew him into the library while the others were setting up a bridge game.

I asked him who in the War Ministry had jurisdiction over workers' petitions for changing jobs.

Why did I want to know?

I said I had been told of some workers who hoped to change jobs and I would like to help them.

Pinelli went and stared out of the window. After a little while he turned and said: "I'll be glad to help you, but I can't approve all petitions blindly."

I told him that a certain form of petition would be used and described it.

He asked me to repeat.

I did.

He nodded. As far as the War Ministry was concerned he would take care of all petitions which reached his desk in that form. But he added that the War Ministry's consent alone was not enough; the Corporations Ministry too had to approve. I said nothing, and Pinelli did not press the point. The Corporations Ministry end of this affair was being satisfactorily arranged.

But there was one other problem.

The German commission sitting in the Corporations Ministry had some time before fixed the percentage of each industry's workers to be sent to Germany. Each industry in turn applied the percentage to the individual factories, the workers' syndicates then submitting lists of names to the required number. In a number of factories key underground men had been listed and sent to Germany without recourse. Several promising organizing efforts had been ruined as a consequence.

Bellini therefore arranged with an Italian official assisting the German commission to strike off the lists the names of the undergrounds' key propaganda and organizing men.

Within two weeks Bellini reported that the first petitions were submitted in the agreed form. I cannot give it here because it is still in use.

A week later Pinelli said he had approved transfers to Tivoli, Bologna, and Spezia.

Sometimes valuable information came without effort. One day while I was in a shop getting something for Contessa Terrini I saw two German sailors trying to buy some women's stockings at another counter. They were having great difficulty haggling in Italian.

I offered my services and helped them complete their purchase. They took and paid for six pairs of stockings each. Then we went to have a beer together. Haggling is thirsty work.

The sailors had come in German navy speedboats from Marseilles across the Bay of

Genoa and along the coast to Naples where they were now stationed in anticipation of a Balkan war.

There were two types of boats, they said: one sixteen meters long carrying ten men with a top speed of ninety knots; the second twenty-four meters long carrying twenty men with a top speed of eighty knots. Both types were armed with two torpedo tubes, machine guns, and light anti-aircraft guns.

These boats did in fact operate later in the Aegean during the Balkan campaign.

26. THE NEW ORDER IN SOUTH AMERICA

TOWARD the end of February Meier introduced me to a man named Hans von Kuhlemann, head of the South American division of the German Economics Ministry. He had just spent four months in South America making an economic survey.

He was a tall, slender man, about forty-eight, looking more like a Prussian officer than an economist of the New Order. He wore a monocle and carried himself rigidly straight. Actually he had studied in the old cadet school in Potsdam and had been an officer in World War I.

I gathered that he was spending some time in the office of Meier's chief before continuing on to Berlin to report to Funk. But like all Germans, in the afternoon he liked to relax in a beer house. Meier sat with him, and often another man or two whose identities I never clearly established; they spoke little but listened attentively to Von Kuhlemann. Flushed with triumph at the success of his mission and doubtless having to mask his feelings under the eyes of Meier's chief, he liked to come to the Lowen-brau and expand over his beer.

Meier's attitude toward him was one of uniform, almost abject flattery which Von Kuhlemann brushed aside in a way that implied: "Of course these compliments are due me, but let's not talk about it."

Nevertheless, he was ready enough to talk about it. He remained in Rome about ten days; I spent some time in his company nearly every day. He welcomed my unconcealed admiration.

He had gone to South America at the head of a mission, all twenty of its members traveling out separately and back separately to avoid attracting attention. I imagine they

used assumed names on false passports. Certainly Von Kuhlemann did.

The purpose of the mission had been to complete an exhaustive economic analysis of South America to fit it into Hitler's proposed New Economic Order. Von Kuhlemann boasted that his was the most comprehensive analysis of its kind ever made anywhere by anybody for any purpose.

This is a broad statement, but in any case it is a fact that South America has been more fully studied and more carefully and thoroughly planned for by the Nazis than any other region of the earth's surface, for there complete reliance had to be placed on economic workability rather than on armed force for final decisiveness. It would not be possible to station divisions all over the continent to enforce economic edicts.

The plans were premised on the conviction that Europe is South America's only logical customer and South America Europe's natural source of food and certain raw materials. To bring about South America's complete economic dependence on Germany, Hitler's agents proposed to use the same methods of economic infiltration first and then political which had been operated so successfully in the race for control of the Balkan countries.

Far in advance of Von Kuhlemann's arrival in South America an immense apparatus had been working to gather data. Embassies, consulates, business firms—both German and native—individual Germans familiar with local conditions, German-subsidized air lines—all co-operated. With the exception of Germany's key operatives in pivotal posts, none of the men participating were aware that they were doing other than their day-to-day jobs in their respective fields of ordinary business. Salesmen and peddlers went into every remote settlement and returned to their offices with exhaustive and detailed reports of market conditions. Export firms requested precise bids for huge quantities of various commodities deliverable in various periods in order to calculate capacities of production in each field. Other men went forth to check, verify, and explore further.

The entire import and export potential of the continent was studied to the last detail—

industrial production, natural resources, raw materials, agriculture—all for the purpose of bringing control of South American economy into German hands.

Von Kuhleemann's approach to the matter of Argentine hides will illuminate the over-all method.

On his arrival at Nazi economic headquarters in Buenos Aires, a complete picture of hide production was submitted to him. Members of his commission then visited the largest jobbers to verify the information. They followed up with visits to large ranches, abattoirs, and hide processors to explore the possibilities of future expansion.

This system of study and examination was applied to every important product of the South American republics, the threefold line being: the current situation, possibilities of expansion, and fitting into the New Economic Order.

Agricultural conditions too were analyzed. Current production and market were studied and investigations made of the quality of methods used and the possibilities of increasing yields. On this basis a plan was worked out to apportion European foodstuff requirements among the various agricultural regions of South America, with adjustments projected as necessity might indicate.

The industrial import capacities of the South American countries were examined with a view to making uniform all products to be imported from Europe—meaning Germany. For example, Von Kuhleemann found that eleven different kinds of fever thermometers were distributed; the Nazis would reduce this to two types. The same simplification and standardization would be applied to all other manufactured articles, the overwhelming majority of which were to be imported.

Native industries competing with Euro-German industry would be closed down and their labor forces shifted into agriculture or raw-material production. The Nazis would destroy, for example, Brazil's American-financed infant steel industry, Chile's nascent textile and chemical industries.

On this basis a comprehensive plan was developed for channeling trade between Germany and South America in such a way as to exclude all other nations.

But the Nazis were not waiting for a remote day of peace. The plan was already well under way.

Two complete networks of German firms had been set up and were operating in every country: one of exporters to buy South American products and ship them to Europe; another of importers to sell Euro-German products. These latter are to gather into their hands the entire export trade, thus becoming indispensable middlemen to South American agricultural and raw-materials producers.

When peace (read Nazi victory) does come, a new state-owned import-export organization is to be formed in Berlin to take over these networks and transform them into an official German government agency. This might not happen the precise moment peace came; it would wait until such time as openly pro-German regimes were brought into power in each South American country. Until then the networks within the politically unripe countries would continue to operate ostensibly as groups of private firms, yet given full advantage of the cheaper transport costs to be brought about by unification in the rest of the continent of all rail, waterway, and ocean shipping under a single German authority.

To finance this trade, a special import-export bank would be founded to operate clearing agreements—Germany's favorite form of commercial treaty—made with each country.

Under these treaties, each signatory sets up a “clearing,” a sort of combination bookkeeping and loan office, usually financed by the national bank. The local producer, wishing to export, transfers his commodities to the clearing office, which pays him at once. His goods are shipped to Germany and the clearing debits Germany on its books and receives a corresponding credit on the books in Berlin. Goods are purchased by the same process working the other way: on the order of the purchaser the German

Economics Ministry buys from its local exporter and ships to the importing country, at the same time debiting and receiving a credit on the importing country's books respectively. Open balances are supposed to be wiped out by additional imports or exports as necessity indicates.

But they never are. Germany always maintains itself in a heavy debtor position until the creditor nation, impoverished by the endless wait for payment, installs a regime politically malleable by the Nazis and carries out inflation dictated from Berlin vis-a-vis the mark.

Neither American nor British competition in South America was taken seriously. The United States, herself agricultural, could not long be a purchaser in South America, Von Kuhlemann said, while England would have to get her food from whatever colonies she may have left at the end of the war.

Answering the objection that the South American states could throw legal obstacles in the way of the plan, Von Kuhlemann said that the German policy was to burden any recalcitrant government with such large clearing credits—that Germany would not pay with corresponding industrial products—to the point where a more complaisant regime would be brought to power by the people themselves.

In other words, Germany, having purchased the greatest portion of a given country's export, would be that country's largest debtor. If she did not pay, the country would have no choice but to continue doing business with Germany because she would have neither export surplus nor cash to do business with any other country. Thus Germany would control the economic existence of the country, just as she had done with all the Balkan countries one after the other.

After a period of such relationship, the political and economical dependence on Euro-Germany would be complete.

Should the war meanwhile disrupt the operations of the first networks of disguised

private firms, substitute networks were already organized, to purchase and ship not directly to and from Europe but through middlemen in neutral countries. This might explain Argentina's attitude at the Pan-American conference in Rio de Janeiro, January 1942.

Thus far Germany had had little difficulty in buying South American raw materials despite black lists and other legal barriers. The blockade was more serious, though it was being avoided at the cost of considerable effort and money.

Von Kuhlemann said that even in the event of all of Europe becoming involved in the war—evidently referring to Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Sweden, and Turkey—provision had been made for ships from South America clearing for elsewhere but actually bound for Euro-Germany. Despite questioning from Meier he would make himself no clearer on this point. He only said laughingly that ships reported sunk on the high seas would later steam into Axis harbors.

The German bank to be set up in South America will finance agricultural expansion, even compelling the governments to participate.

It was found that to carry out most efficiently the obliteration of South American industry and the expansion of raw-material and agricultural production, changes in the boundaries of certain countries would be necessary. The entire continent would be divided into five geopolitical units.

The American reader may judge for himself how far this plan is in operation by attentive observation of all the news from South America.

27. THE WIFE OF THE MEDIEVAL STUDENT

CURIOUS INFORMATION often came in curious ways. One evening at Venturi's I met Maria della Rocca. She was tall for an Italian woman, with dyed blonde hair, an extraordinarily *soignee* figure, and an equally extraordinary bosom, wherefore she invariably wore very tight-fitting dresses. She was very beautiful and must have been about thirty. I had wanted to meet her because she described herself as the niece of General Ugo Cavallero.

His name soon came into our conversation and I inquired: exactly who was General Ugo Cavallero.

She laughed lightly. Why, he was Chief of Staff of the Italian army and a great friend of Keitel's. "I hope you know who Keitel is," she added.

Yes, I knew something about him from the newspapers. He was some sort of general too.

She laughed again, but not so lightly. "He's the German Chief of Staff and Hitler's right-hand man. General Cavallero talks with him every day on the telephone!"

Really? And did Cavallero speak German or Keitel Italian?

This time she didn't laugh. She said shortly: "They are both cultured men. They speak French."

After I got her a fresh anis we talked only about how beautiful she was, and she forgot her annoyance at my stupidity.

Noon on the Corso one day in late February. The pavements packed as usual so that everybody moved very slowly: chatting groups forming and reforming. Suddenly I saw

Ricker coming toward me.

Casually glancing past him—he was still eight or ten feet away— I saw the Questura official of the foreign division who had always handled the renewal of my soggiorno; we had come to know each other.

I looked beyond Ricker; he was a yard away, his head just turning toward me. Another step. I reached out and touched his arm and said:

“Can’t stop. Girl. Dinner tonight?”

He looked momentarily bewildered; then the word “girl” penetrated. He nodded. “Roma at nine?”

Neither of us had stopped walking. I repeated, “Roma at nine.”

Ricker disappeared into the crowd. I kept on past the Questura official. I don’t know whether he saw me, but had I stopped for the usual chat with Ricker, he would have sent an agent the very next morning to ask how it was that I was so friendly with a high-ranking German flying officer—something I preferred not to be known.

I arrived punctually in the Ristorante di Roma, finest eating place in the city, near the Palazzo Chigi. A few minutes later Ricker strutted self-consciously toward me, his boot heels clacking on the marble floor. Some diners darted malevolent looks at him.

We ate the best, for the Roma was one of the few places where delicacies could be had for the price. Ricker bubbled along about his flying successes in France the previous spring and about what the Luftwaffe was doing in Libya. He was still on Geisler’s staff in Taormina.

I asked him what was new in the field of flying. How were my favorites, the Stukas; and hadn’t the Luftwaffe yet invented a plane that could fly without gasoline?

He cackled and said he was sure the Luftwaffe was strong enough to ignore all innovations. But it didn’t. He had seen the new thirty-five-man gliders being made in the Wiener Neustadt Daimler plants.

Somehow the capture of the Belgian Fort Eben Emael the previous May n came into the conversation. Everybody said it had been done by some secret weapon.

He laughed. Not a secret weapon—only parachutists. A picked company of thirty-seven was dropped over the fort which had the same defect as the Maginot Line; it had been built to withstand only artillery bombardment and frontal attack. Twelve of the thirty-seven men reached the ground able to fight. They sealed the casemates with flamethrowers, then blew it all up with a dynamite ladder: a two-meter iron staff on which at twenty-centimeter intervals were attached charges of TNT, set off with a slow fuse; he said its explosive force was greater than that of a thousand-pound bomb.

In exchange for Ricker's obliging conversation I took him to a new bordello.

Roman bordellos of the better class are much alike in that there is invariably one blonde or dyed-blonde Austrian girl who, even if she's from Stix-Gramatneusiedl, gives herself out as Viennese. She is usually unpopular with her colleagues and popular with the patrons. From this and from the well-known German penuriousness comes the uniform anti-Germanism of Rome's prostitutes. What particularly irritated the Italian girls was that the Germans rarely gave them tips. As a class the girls are thrifty, and they loathed the war because it was killing their fathers and brothers as well as their best patrons.

That night Ricker took a sixteen-year-old Sicilian girl. He smirked with pleasure when she discovered his Iron Cross and put it on, running around stark naked with the decoration bobbing between her breasts.

When we left I paid for Ricker, as he had paid for our very good dinner in the Roma. I also gave his Sicilian a tip, which he had not done.

One of my streams of information had its source in the emigre group clustering in the two coffeehouses in the Piazza Colonna arcade.

I made it a point always to meet new arrivals from anywhere in Central Europe because

from their casual conversation it was possible to glean hints that would fit into some other picture I might at the moment be trying to fill out. These people—businessmen, lawyers, merchants, small manufacturers—were not trained observers but they were talkative. And they received mail from their homelands—censored, of course, but still often containing worth-while seeds of information. Among these I often found men I knew.

One such who arrived in February was Karl Horst, who was in artificial silk and with whom I had done considerable business. He had come to Rome for his health. He was an ordinary man, a Nazi party member, but by no means a Hitler devotee.

He had recently traveled in the Sudetenland, in Karlsbad and Marienbad, and he said all the hotels were crammed with rich Nazis from Rhineland and North Sea cities fleeing British bombings. Czechoslovakia was seething with unrest. Churchill's V campaign had caught on, in the Skoda works particularly. Whole carloads of defective shells marked with Vs had been delivered to the German army.

Also in one of the arcade coffeehouses I met a woman I had known for many years in Vienna. She and her husband had owned and operated a prosperous dress factory using several thousand yards of Seta products every year. Because her husband had a long-past political record that was distasteful to Gauleiter Josef Buerckel (colloquially inverted by coffeehouse habitues to *Bierleiter Gaukel*, which literally translated means Beer-Leader Buffoon), they had had to sell their enterprise to a Nazi designee.

After paying most of the proceeds back in taxes, they were emigrating to Cuba, as poor as in 1919 when they had started their business.

The woman was a well-made, energetic person whose face, while not pretty, had yet retained a great deal of young-girl charm. Far more practical than her husband, she had gradually become the real head of their firm, while he, a small man physically, devoted all his time to studying the economic history of the Middle Ages. From time to time he

published articles in obscure magazines with microscopic circulations.

His wife, far from resenting this, admired him all the more and acquired toward him the attitude of a mother toward a highly talented son. She took little or no pride in her own achievement as a businesswoman—so much rarer in Europe than in America—and bent all the qualities of her own practical down-to-earth mind to supplying a good living for them both.

In Rome her husband spent his time in the company of a Vatican priest he had known for years; also a passionate student of the economic history of the Middle Ages. Despite his scholarly bent this priest was an extremely tall, athletically built man, and the odd pair were often to be seen in the Pincio or crossing St. Peter's Place on the way to the Vatican Library—the small Viennese gesticulating energetically beside the great placid bulk garbed all in black with flapping skirt.

This is the woman who told me how she was raped in Vienna by men of Dr. Alfred Rosenberg's Amt fur Volkskunde (Bureau of Anthropological Research).

The second time we met in Rome she confessed herself worried and upset; a problem gnawed at her and she had to talk about it. Would I, as an old and trusted friend, perhaps advise her?

I knew some of the background of what she told me: how in the spring of 1939 all residents of Germany had had to apply to the police for personal identity cards. The Jews, of course, came first, submitting the regulation five identical photographs taken in the regulation way, with the left ear just showing. After fingerprinting, the cards were issued.

At the police station in Ausstellungsstrasse, in Vienna, the Nazis had been quick to take advantage of the fact that so many Jewish women had to apply for cards. Certain of their practices became well known in the city.

The youngest and prettiest of the girls and women were systematically pulled out of the long lines and led upstairs one by one, where they were forced to strip completely before

entering a large room filled with cameras and lights in charge of five or six men of Rosenberg's office. These proceeded to make detailed measurements of their victim, not only of the usual standards, but also of the breasts and sex organs. Photographs were taken in various poses, including close-ups of the crotch, all with the excuse of collecting data on the Jewish race. Finally the victims were criminally assaulted, in some cases by as many as three of the men one after the other.

I had known another Viennese Jewish family with an attractive seventeen-year-old daughter who, a virgin, was attacked in this manner by an SS man in the presence of five others. When she screamed and fought back, she was beaten and assaulted by a second man and again beaten. By the time a Jewish doctor with the courage to treat her could be found she had become pregnant and had to undergo an abortion.

This too had happened to the wife of the man who lived, mentally, back in the Middle Ages. Having heard stories before she went to the police station, she had inserted a pessary to prevent impregnation in the event she was attacked.

She had been pulled out of the waiting line, taken upstairs, stripped, and photographed in intimate detail and assaulted by three men. She resisted, but terror, humiliation, and blows made resistance useless.

Since then, she confessed, she felt degraded, dirtied, unfit for her husband. She had not had the courage to tell him what had happened. Not that he would have blamed her or heard her story without the fullest understanding. Despite their curious relationship, in which she was the stronger-minded of the two, there was nothing but the closest devotion between them. A strange sense of guilt had arisen to come between her and him, of which he seemed oblivious. She said that whenever he came to her for intercourse she had to master an impulse to refuse him. And at the same time she was obscurely sorry for him.

I urged her to tell her husband at once. She had no reason to fear his emotional reaction, and the danger to her peace of mind was too great.

I don't know whether she took my advice. I never saw her again, though from others I heard she and her husband stayed in Rome several weeks.

28. INNER MEANING OF THE NEW ORDER

GERMANY had been increasing its demands on Italy for more industrial and agricultural workers till the total number in Germany had risen to six hundred thousand.

When the Germans demanded more, Italy refused. Von Mackensen thereupon told Mussolini and Ciano that the three eight-hour-shift system then in use was a sheer waste of labor potential; all arms factories should be put on the two twelve-hour-shift system, thus increasing the labor supply by one third.

Under threat of curtailment of coal deliveries, Mussolini had to capitulate again, and on March 2 heavy industry switched to two twelve-hour shifts per day. The workers had been receiving their pay on a flat weekly basis; the rates were not increased, with the result that the men found themselves doing 50 per cent more work for the same money.

Slowdowns occurred at once in the Fiat and Breda plants, which had already been chafing under German management. Ringleaders were arrested. The German managers tried cajolery, threats of concentration camp and army service, and finally German foremen were imported. But their efforts brought only slight improvement.

While Italy was busy coping with her Nazi ally, the latter was poaching more and more boldly on what Mussolini thought was his preserve: the Balkans.

On the previous September 6 German troops had been sent into Romania for training purposes and to prepare the way for larger contingents to come by agreement with the pro-Axis government of General Antonescu. Italy, fondly believing the Balkans to be her special sphere, insisted on participating. Mussolini and Von Mackensen agreed that two Italian regiments should go.

On October 7 German troops made official entry into Bucharest in parade formation,

with bands and flying flags. But the German command routed the two Italian regiments to their quarters through suburbs and side streets.

In pursuance of a secret agreement as part of which Bulgaria was to get Saloniki, German troops marched into Sofia on the second of March. This was preceded by one of those strange episodes which have become commonplace in this century of dictators.

King Boris of Bulgaria came to Rome incognito to see his father-in-law, King Victor Emmanuel. He conceded that occupation of his country was unavoidable but, he asked, in that case could it not be arranged for Italian, not German, troops to carry out the occupation?

The King consulted Mussolini, who flatly refused to discuss the request with the Germans; they would reject it, he said. Besides, it would make subsequent and more serious requests difficult.

German fruits of the Bulgarian occupation ripened at once. Later in the month Meier said the Voss shipbuilding firm of Bremen was building a large U-boat base in Varna on the Black Sea coast with materials shipped down the Danube.

And as March marched along Germany kept on increasing her pressure on Yugoslavia, which had not yet signed an Axis pact. On the twenty-fifth Regent Prince Paul sent a delegation headed by his Prime Minister Dragisha Cvetkovitch to the Belvedere

Palace in Vienna to sign the pact with Von Ribbentrop. Among other things, Hitler's bait was again the promise of Saloniki, already pledged to the Bulgars as reward for their Axis adherence. Promptly the Yugoslav army and people revolted, deposed the Regent and his regime, and began to mobilize. It was the first armed defiance of Germany with the aid of the *coup d'etat*, hitherto a treasured weapon in Hitler's arsenal of total war.

I reported that I had learned the main German smash would be launched from Bulgaria toward Skoplje (Uskub) in the south.

On April 4 German tanks rolled over the Yugoslav border and the Luftwaffe bombed the

open city of Belgrade as they had punished Rotterdam almost two years before. On the eighth two mechanized German divisions—seven hundred tanks and six thousand other armed vehicles—commanded by General List rolled over the pathetic four thousand infantrymen, virtually without anti-aircraft or anti-tank defense, which the Yugoslavs had stationed at Uskub.

These and other divisions made a juncture with the Italians in Albania, the British landed a token force in Greece, but in less than three weeks the Germans overran both Yugoslavia and the Greek peninsula.

While fighting was still raging in the Peloponnesus the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes began to fall apart as a result of long-prepared German penetration. This was the beginning of a story which is better told when its climax was reached—in mid-August.

Here, however, is a good point at which to examine briefly the process which brought low Yugoslavia. This country is the clearest example of the Nazi method of conquest. The same process with variations worked well in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and is well along in Sweden and Turkey. As my talks with Von Kuhlemann disclosed, the groundwork is well laid in South America.

It began in Yugoslavia, as all Nazi schemes begin, very innocently. Following the plan laid out by Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, German economic wizard, the Germans came to Yugoslavia and offered to buy all the agricultural surplus, explaining to the poverty-stricken Yugoslavs that Germany would pay with industrial products. A commercial treaty, or clearing agreement, was made in 1934. The Yugoslavs were delighted, not stopping to realize that Germany would be “buying” agricultural products far exceeding in value the industrial products which little Yugoslavia could absorb in return.

Germany not only foresaw this but deliberately brought it about, with the result that from year to year Germany owed Yugoslavia more and more on the books of the clearing.

Twice within two years Germany increased the value of the mark in terms of Yugoslav dinars, thus causing disastrous inflation. In consequence of having sold the bulk of her agricultural surpluses to Germany, Yugoslavia had little left to sell to other countries and so came into complete economic dependence on Germany, its debtor. With this as a lever Germany compelled adherence to the Axis, and only the last-minute revolt retarded Hitler's plans for the inclusion of Yugoslavia in his New Economic Order.

The purpose of the New Economic Order is to make Germany the dominant industrial, and hence economic and political, force of the world.

Its basic principle is state-directed planned economy.

As Hitler expresses it, the individual can no longer work independently to contribute his mite to the needs of a nation or the world. To economics, more than to politics, applies the Nazi programmatic principle of community interest before individual interest (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*). Freeing this of its overtones of sloganeering, it means the suppression of all private initiative in favor of the state, even if the total effort be somewhat reduced. In dictator opinion, private property no longer exists; Thing and Man belong exclusively to the sovereign power.

In 1933 Hitler began to create the war economy of Germany by feeding huge arms orders to heavy industry, thus making it dependent on the Nazi regime rather than on revived private trade. Simultaneously, by shepherding organized and unorganized labor into the Nazi Arbeitsfront and giving its officials great authority, he prevented hostile action by industry and finance against him. Arbeitsfront commissars acting with state authority became the *de facto* bosses of factories and industries, and the bosses, owners, and managers became *de facto* employees.

This was not force, but the result of a forced development. At first Arbeitsfront delegates were like inspectors in American defense plants, placed there only to pass on the quality of the product. But they had power also to supervise labor welfare, which they used as a

weapon to threaten recalcitrant industrialists. They could demand, and get, plant reconstruction and expansion. Thus the dependence of industry on Hitler had its roots in the distress of German economic life in 1934 and 1935.

In 1936 the Economics Ministry, through Dr. Wilhelm Zangen, director of the industry department, presented plans to individual factories calling for the expansion of assembly floors and the installation of new machinery. After the depression years of 1929-33 the German machine park was obsolescent, but with the upturn in 1934 new machines had been bought. When government orders started to flow, profits were heavily invested in additional machine replacements and expansions as a bulwark against inflation. In 1936 Hitler demanded still further expansion in the war industries.

Of course there were objections; the recent installations were ample for current backlogs. Hitler broke the backbone of this resistance by confiscating a few factories, for instance the Ricker Schuhfabrik A.G. at Tuttlingen, Knopffabrik A.G. at Ems. As a consequence, new construction and expansion sprang mushroomlike all over Germany. New machinery was purchased but for the most part stayed under its oiled-paper packings.

Thus Hitler began the creation of his “shadow industry”—a vast, unused production potential kept under wraps.

Meanwhile centralization too was begun, first by grouping those heavy industries which were already state-owned or state-controlled into the Hermann Goering Works, then forcing into the combine other industries still privately owned. Thus was formed the largest vertical-horizontal trust in the world; for it included, on the greatest scale yet seen in Europe, both forms of trustification. Its nearest rival, financially and in labor employed, had been the state-owned I.G. Farben Industrie, which was more of a horizontal trust, in chemicals, than vertical.

By the granting of government contracts Hitler, in fairly simple manner, could control

those units of industry which still remained outside the combines and so completely manage their production.

In this state-directed planned economy, orders to industry were granted or withheld, not to accomplish economical or more efficient operation, but to bring about new political conditions. Profit ceased to be a permitted incentive and became only a bookkeeping expression. Vast sums of money were given by the government to various industries for experiments looking to the development of raw materials. Some of them bore fruit—artificial wool, for example; others were like Professor Tausend (appropriate name) and his experiments to produce artificial gold.

All this, of course, cost money, and when Hitler came to power in 1933 Germany was poverty-stricken. How did he manage?

As in the other countries from 1929 to 1933, money flowed out of everybody's pockets into the stagnant pools of bank deposits and insurance-company investments. It remained inactive, too frightened to take normal business risks. And the insurance companies were permitted by law to invest only in first mortgages and bond issues approved by the Minister of Finance and from time to time to put out call money.

Here was a vast reservoir which Hitler could use for war preparations and public works. He got it, first by canceling the legal circumscription of investments and then by selling the insurance companies non-negotiable, long-term government bonds. With this money he paid his bills from industry and for public-works pay rolls and expanded his vast governmental and party bureaucracy.

When the funds thus acquired ran out, the regime ceased paying 100 per cent cash for purchases from industry; it paid 60 per cent in cash and 40 per cent in non-interest-bearing tax certificates (Steuergutscheine), which were to be applied to the payment of taxes over the ensuing ten years. Thus Hitler financed the German war effort with the industrial tax receipts of ten years into the future.

This had a catastrophic effect, since industry, operating at a normal 30 per cent write-up, faced a 10 per cent discrepancy between cash receipts and cash costs. The needed cash was then obtained through ever-mounting bank loans and plant mortgages. Therefore, all banks being state-owned, industry found itself passing into state ownership through the machinations for continued power of the very force it had itself conjured up to preserve private property and capital safe from the German Communists. A vicious circle was closed.

When, finally, Hitler had German industry in his grip, he began to reach out. The foreign division of the Economics Ministry studied European and world economic conditions; commissions swarmed into every country on the globe.

I have described something of what Von Kuhlemann did in South America: similar commissions and networks operated in other areas. In February 1941 Meier's superior was sent to Norway, Sweden, and Finland to check up on the surveys of the lumber situation then being made. The Economics Ministry planned to set up wood-sugar plants after the war, especially in Finland, and a single lumber-production plan for the whole world was worked out, with the goal of pitting Scandinavian and Russian lumber against Canadian in world markets. These are but two out of thousands of undertakings within the scope of Nazi plans.

A double track leads toward the new order:

One: the planning and integration of production;

Two: the planning and standardization of consumption.

To discuss track one first, production is divided into two sections: raw-material production (including agriculture) and industrial production.

To make Germany the chief industrial power in the world, Hitler has forged several effective weapons. Control of German industry and its freedom from the necessity of earning profits enabled him to strike at foreign competition by lowering prices at will; he

subsidized exports with premiums running as high as 50 per cent; he sucked out the economic lifeblood of neighboring nations by means of his one-way commercial treaties; and by forced revaluations of the mark in German favor. Each step, of course, backed by the threat of German arms.

The industry of every country has been studied with the single purpose of seeing how to substitute German industry for it or rearrange it for German benefit. For instance, it is planned to concentrate the porcelain industry in the Sudetenland, the source of kaolin (China clay). Copenhagen and Sevres factories are to be transferred there as well as the British Wedgwood. Export of the clay is forbidden to prevent the establishment of new porcelain industries elsewhere. Control of that much once in the hands of the German state, a global agreement would be made with the Japanese porcelain industry to divide markets and production.

The artificial-silk industry is to be concentrated in Germany. The fine Italian artificial-silk industry would be limited to the production of semi-fabricates, all printing and dyeing would be done in Germany, and the final product sold all over the world as German. The American artificial-silk industry is to be competed to death, an easy task in Hitlerian opinion, because the American wage scale is so much higher than the European.

The European automobile industry is likewise headed for German centralization. Italian automotive factories would make only differentials, brakes, parts of the chassis, etc.; the French cylinders, carburetors; German factories would make the electrical and some other equipment; final assembly and sales would be

German prerogatives. The products would be distributed as German products. The British automotive industry would die in the face of price competition and a global agreement reached with the American automobile industry.

The production of aircraft would be permitted only in Germany, though some nations might make parts. The American aircraft industry would be competed out of existence;

the British shut down forthwith. The British textile industry would be enveloped in a trust with the German; other factories in Europe would be either drawn in or closed down.

Europe, except for Germany, is to become an agricultural supply source, like South America. North America too is to become an agrarian land with the exceptions noted, which would include the American chemical industry to be trustified with the German, while the British would be reduced to a sales outlet for the British Isles.

In short, German industry being controlled, the remaining task is to integrate with it or destroy all competing industry. The prime consideration is not local or regional need, or logical location with regard to national resources and transportation, but what it can contribute to the power of the German state. Thus the Economics Ministry has already begun to close down, move, or reorganize many European factories in accordance with their importance to the German war machine. Transportation costs— a heavy item in capitalist trade—lose their importance because all shipping means are to be owned by the state and need not earn profits at the expense of production and consumption.

Such ruthless transfer of industry will not be new for Germany herself. Before the war a part of heavy industry was transferred from western to central Germany out of the easy reach of French and British bombers. During the war the largest part of the Junkers airplane works was moved to Lodz, now called Luetzmannstadt by the Germans. Lodz had been the center of the Polish textile industry, but that was transferred wholesale to Silesia, center of the German textile industry. There are numerous instances of whole factories, machinery, and labor personnel being moved from one part of Germany to another; and from Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, and other occupied countries to Germany proper. In no case was the motive profit or commercial efficiency, but purely and simply the benefit to German arms production and world hegemony.

The Hitlerian economy will work in accordance with exact plans for consumption reckoned up for each country by German authorities. Industrial products will be paid for

by raw materials and foodstuffs. The distribution of merchandise will all be in the hands of German state-controlled import and export companies. To insure control of other national economies, Germany plans to expand its network of clearing agreements. All transactions, even between second parties, would be cleared through Germany.

Thus if France should buy Argentine meat in exchange for French products, payment would be made through the German clearing bank which is to be established. By this method Germany is to become the global middleman. Her import company would buy from Argentina, her export company from France, and the accounts balanced by the clearing bank in Germany. Thus gold will no longer be needed in international trade. Bookkeeping will take care of all international balances.

Agricultural production likewise is to be integrated and rearranged. No more blind planting and uncontrollable harvests. The Economics and Agricultural ministries will cooperate in setting up quotas for every country according to their capacities, and this without necessary regard for what the country itself may want or be best able to grow. For instance, the New Order would prohibit the growing of wheat in Italy.

Italians usually imported 40 per cent of their wheat needs, and it has been a national goal for fifty years to lower this discrepancy between production and need. Premiums have been given, marginal land reclaimed (fifteen billion lire were spent in the Pontine Marshes near Rome in ten years), and in 1941 it seemed that Italy would have to import only 30 per cent. In ten years wheat production had been increased by thirty-seven million quintals. And now, at a word from Berlin, all this is to go for nothing. The agricultural corporation vented its bitterness to Mussolini, who only shrugged his shoulders.

The New Order will, Nazis believe, execute the old vision of German industry which Hitler expresses: the simplification and standardization of industrial production. It is an aspect of the German yearning for uniformity.

Hitler wants to force the world into standardized molds. In 1933 his Nazis expanded the so-called normalization institute in Munich to study industrial production throughout the world and its simplification down to the precise number of types of each product needed and no more. From this, the institute estimated future requirements and elaborated plans for their fulfillment by German-controlled industry.

According to the institute, consumption in the entire world and of every individual in it is to be regulated, to the last cent of income and in every detail, by prescription originating in Euro-Germany and carried out by New Order regimes in all other countries. Therefore, to the individual, the New Order will mean the over-all direction of needs and desires. It will be a system of global rationing that will eliminate luxuries and the “needless” variegation of products and at the same time compel the purchase by everyone of other things, such as houses and radios. This will greatly simplify and expand some industries and destroy others. Taste and demand will of necessity become canalized to the forced purchase of standardized products. Competition, the diversifying instinct of humanity (except Germans), and the force of demand to stimulate progress are to be suppressed.

The individual will have only the most limited choice—if any at all—of necessities. Food, articles of personal use, housing, clothing, automobiles, radios—the purchase of every item will be prescribed by deduction from wages at the source; any minute quantity left over at the end of each month will go into the banks, whence the government may recover it through forced loans.

Food is to be prescribed for the areas of the earth’s surface according to climatic conditions, while shelter too will be subjected to standardization; people are to live in uniform homes. Hitler will carry out his dream of dissolving cities and scattering through the countryside uniform little houses which he designed himself: four rooms and one tiny bathroom, gabled roof, small front garden, imitation peasant furniture, and small

windows admitting little light and air. This pathetic conception of the house of the future betrays that Hitler has never freed himself of his Austrian village ideals.

To fill these standardized needs, new products will be brought into being, solely for their utility and without regard for appearance or the vagaries of human taste. Passenger automobiles will be reduced to only three models. The endless variety of feminine clothing will vanish and the new fashion center is to be Vienna, not Paris. Newspapers, radio stations, magazines, will be simplified, consolidated, and standardized.

As a forerunner of the New Order, shoes in Italy have already undergone the simplifying process. From a country which has always been proud of its shoes and shoemakers, variety has disappeared; all factories now make exactly the same models at the same prices.

Men's shoes may be had only in the Oxford model, in three grades: sheepskin at one hundred and ten lire, cow at one hundred and fifty lire, and inferior calfskin at one hundred and eighty lire—in either black or brown. The simple, ordinary design is identical; the three grades differ only in the leather. Women's shoes too have been reduced to three types in two colors, costing approximately ninety, a hundred and thirty, and a hundred and fifty lire. Children must wear high shoes of one type only, in brown or black. The worker's heavy shoe is the same the army uses; straw-soled house slippers of artificial wool are made in one model each for men, women, and children. Since Italy is a warm country, there must be some concession to summer; so there are white shoes of artificial linen, one model for men, one for women, one for children. The only hope of getting shoes other than these was to find the fast-vanishing stocks surviving from pre-simplification days or, like the rich, have them custom-made at fantastic cost.

Of course the problem of consumption is not quite so simple; still, in Nazi view, it is much simpler than production, which to some degree depends on natural resources and the sometimes unsteady foundation of human ingenuity. Consumption, however, can

easily be fixed by fiat.

American industry is to be limited to its natural economic boundaries, meaning the United States and Canada. After the war, German competition is to prevent America from exporting anywhere in the world by selling cheaper and buying more, because Germany will need more for overpopulated hungry Europe.

It is the Nazi theory that the United States, more or less by accident after World War I, acquired vast power to which it has no claim. Hitler's task is to bring Europe and the United States again into what he sees as proper balance. This means: to make America what it was before World War I, the debtor of Europe instead of creditor of the world.

American industry, expanded in Hitler's opinion beyond its proper size, will fall inward upon itself—which Hitler will help because it would be intolerable to have the American worker living on so much higher a scale than his Euro-German brothers; he must be reduced to the lower level. American industry will do this itself because it will face shrinking world markets and a labor oversupply. Then industry will atrophy, until there is left only that part of it which is a branch of German industry. To preserve themselves, American industrialists will use their power, waning though it may be, to reorient American politics to travel on the Hitler path. Contact for this purpose was already under way. The usual methods would be used: exchange of patents and mutual delimitation of markets. For further control of American industry, trusted agents of the German Economics Ministry would function in American corporations.

This process has already been carried far along with Japan and forms one of the strongest links binding the island empire to the Axis.

The whole scheme may sound like a madman's concept. Apart from its merit or lack of merit as a plan of world organization, it is likely to be smashed in its present form if and when Hitler and his Axis allies are militarily defeated. But nothing short of force will destroy those preparations for the New Order which have already been made. Legal

obstacles such as black lists, diplomatic utterances such as the Atlantic Charter—none of them realistically obstructs this kind of Nazi machination. Force and force alone is the final and complete answer to the plan for Nazi world domination.

But there is another question to think about: by the time this war is over, several thousand highly trained, keenly intelligent men in the leading industrial countries of the world will have studied these plans. It is possible that the ensuing twenty years in Europe will see Hitler's New Economic Order issued in improved form, and a new attempt made to fasten it on the world.

Meanwhile its proponents sneer at democracy's counterefforts. When the United States adopted the Lend-Lease Bill on March 7, the Italian papers, aping their masters in Berlin, accused Roosevelt of lengthening the war. Statistics, proving that American industrial capacity was overestimated, appeared by order of the German mission in the Italian Propaganda Ministry; all was talk, nothing was done. But with German consent *Il Tevere* published a violent article branding Roosevelt as the leader of America's Jewish plutocracy and accompanied by open threats of revenge.

A week later the Italian press was again able to loose a blast of anti-Semitic propaganda against the President of the United States, this on the occasion of his speech promising help to all the democracies. The Italian people were depressed, for they still remembered what American entry meant in World War I.

Still another outburst of fury was provoked by the American seizure of Italian and German ships and the internment of their crews. For once general feeling agreed with the regime; the people were angered, too, though some envied the captured sailors because they were safe and would have plenty to eat. As a man remarked in the Caccia: "I'd change places with those fellows in a minute!"

Even the recapture of Benghazi by Italian and German troops on April 3 failed to arouse enthusiasm. Nor did the visit to Rome on March 26 of Yosuke Matsuoka, Foreign

Minister of Italy's newest Axis partner.

29. THE UNDERGROUND STRIKES

ONE DAY IN APRIL I went to the general post office on Piazza San Silvestro to send a long cablegram to the United States. As I handed the message across the counter to the clerk I felt someone touch my shoulder. It was Meier.

We exchanged greetings. He leaned against the counter. The clerk facing us on the other side laid the cable flat to read it and count the words. By turning his head a little Meier could see the cable form too. I had printed out the address and message in capital letters—my handwriting is barely legible—and he could easily read it upside down.

I began at once to tell him a story, but he turned his head again. I persisted; he glanced at me, then turned his head again, his eyes on the cable.

The clerk finished his calculation and said, “A hundred and eighty lire.”

I paid, and Meier walked out with me. “A hundred and eighty lire,” he repeated. “That must be going to America.”

“Yes.”

He chuckled. “What kind of business can you have in North America—sending such expensive cables? You never told me you knew anybody there.” He laughed with false heartiness. “Looks like you’re sticking your nose into our territory.”

I said a friend of mine, who was called to another part of Rome that day, had asked me to cable his sister for him.

Meier said: “But you signed it with your own name. Come on now, tell me the truth.”

We were walking toward the Löwenbräu. I insisted I had told him the truth. He refused to believe me. He said something to the effect that a man who spent all his time singing and chasing women could have no legitimate business overseas in the United States.

We went into the Löwenbräu. I led him to an isolated table. He ordered beer.

I said I would tell him the truth. I couldn't tell everybody, but he was a man of the world and would understand. . . . He liked that. . . . Perhaps he could give me some advice out of his experience.

I fabricated a long and complex tale about an American woman I said I had met in Rome some months before, wife of some sort of manufacturer in Florida. I had taken her around a little, I said. She had wanted to visit the Coliseum in the moonlight . . . and now she wanted to divorce her husband and come back to Rome to marry me. I had cabled her not to act hastily, to think, to reflect . . .

Meier said knowingly: "And I suppose she wants you to send her money for the trip."

Incautiously I said she was rich, or at least very well to do.

He sat up. "Give me her name and address and I'll have her thoroughly investigated for you. If she's really rich, you're making a mistake not to marry her."

No, no, I said; I couldn't marry her, money or no money; she was not pretty.

He shook his head doubtfully. "I'm sure you're handling this thing all wrong. What did you say in the cable?"

I made up a message.

He called the waiter and dropped some coins on the table. "Wrong—all wrong. After a message like that she will be over here on the first boat. Let's hurry; we can get back your message, and I'll help you phrase one that will make her hate you the rest of her life."

No, no, thanks, I said, and made him sit down. My message had surely been sent off already. But, I promised him, if I heard from the lady again, I would consult him before replying. Meier gave up without further struggle and went back to his office.

I had never known him to be so clever.

Throughout the spring Germany kept up her unrelenting pressure for the exploitation to

the utmost of her alliance with Italy.

For some time she had been expressing discontent with the quality of Italian workers and the wages they were getting. Because Italy needed the younger men for herself, she had been sending only the older and weaker. Therefore the Germans on April 27 sent a draft board (Assentierungskommission) with examining physicians to inspect men as if for military service in one industrial center after another. From then on Germany took only the young and strong.

But they didn't take them younger than eighteen. To make up for the shortage of agricultural workers, Party Secretary Serena on May 27 ordered the Avanguardisti sent to the fields for the June harvest.

The Avanguardisti include all boys from fourteen to sixteen, though in this instance, as in others, the party decree operated only on poor children, not on those of the rich or influential.

The rest of Italian youth is organized too and all are grouped under GIL (Gioventu Italiana del Littorio). Each child receives a *libretto personale*, a blue service book in which every detail of his record is inscribed. Boys from six to eight comprise the Sons of the Wolf (Figli della Lupa). From eight to fourteen they belong to the Balilla, named after a Genovese street urchin of two hundred years ago who gave his life in defense of the city.

At fourteen the boys graduate into the Avanguardisti where they are divided and trained in three branches: army, navy, and air force.

Beginning at the age of eleven, the boys are trained in the use of light rifles and from seventeen on, when they become Young Fascists (Giovani Fascisti), in regulation arms.

Girls join Gioventu Italiana at the age of eight, but do not undergo such rigorous training.

Helpless Italy that spring struck but one resounding blow against Hitler's war, another of the sabotage acts which have never been reported in Italy or abroad.

The harbor of Spezia between Pisa and Genoa is Italy's greatest naval base; its protected waters are ideal for the shelter and repair of fighting ships. On its outer fringe lies the navy's biggest submarine base, with complete training and repair facilities, including a series of large oil reservoirs built underground and connected with each other.

On an April night explosion after explosion rocked the outer harbor and smashed hundreds of windows in the sleeping town. The inhabitants thought the British were bombarding. Flames from one oil reservoir shot high into the sky; swiftly the other reservoirs caught fire too. Two submarines refueling were badly damaged. Many sailors and civilian laborers were burned by spraying oil.

When the flames were brought under control it was found that the tanks were so badly burned out that they would have to be rebuilt. As there were no other refueling facilities for submarines at Spezia, the boats were compelled to refuel in Naples and Genoa. Rebuilding the reservoirs would be a long process.

Investigation by both Questura and Gestapo started at once. Hundreds were questioned—sailors, civilian laborers, townspeople. But they could find no clue as to how the saboteurs had contrived to set fire to the tanks, which were extraordinarily well guarded.

After several days of feverish work the police threw up their hands, sent a few laborers to concentration camp as an example, but not a single man talked.

When Bellini told me all this, I asked if it had been done by the men transferred to Spezia with the help of the new petition forms Pinelli had promised to watch for.

What's the difference? he said.

I became angry all of a sudden; angry and alarmed.

I reminded Bellini that I had arranged for those petitions to be approved. The very first batch passed by Pinelli had included men asking for transfer to Spezia. He might think I had ensnared him in a conspiracy against the government.

Again Bellini said calmly: "What's the difference?"

The difference, I told him, lay between my safety and the likelihood that Pinelli would change his mind about me and have me picked off by the Questura.

Why would he do that? Bellini's calm exasperated me.

Investigating the Spezia affair, I reasoned, the Questura would certainly examine every man's labor card (*carta di lavoro*) to see whence he came. A number would show recent transfer. Suspicion would immediately focus on such men—and the rest was obvious.

Bellini said: "You forget that their transfers had the approval of two ministries."

What of it? I demanded. One of the ministries acted through Pinelli and he would certainly have some explaining to do.

Bellini shook his head slowly and confidently. "Believe me," he said, "the Questura wouldn't even dream of asking impertinent questions in the War Ministry. On the contrary, the ministry approval on those men's cards would divert suspicion from those men rather than center it on them."

Even if that's true, I retorted, you can't think Pinelli such a fool as not to put two and two together.

Bellini shook his head. "I have never even seen your friend Pinelli, but I know something about him. You may be sure that he understood what he was doing from the very beginning. I don't mean to imply that he knew we would sabotage the oil tanks. But he certainly does know that the underground's only purpose is to weaken the regime one way or another—by propaganda, by sabotage, some day by open revolt. I feel that he and I resemble each other in many respects. After all, I too am an official of long service. I too am in the service of the nation, of the people of Italy. Neither of us will betray that trust. We won't deliver Italy to her enemies. But we will do anything—including murder—to smash the Fascist regime and get our people out of this Hitler war—out of the hands of our real enemies. Hasn't he ever hinted as much to you?"

I was in no mood to depend on hints, not when something had happened which might

well endanger Pinelli's position so that in pure self-defense he would have to divest himself of all connection with me.

Despite my pressing inquiries, Bellini disclosed nothing about the method of igniting the Spezia oil tanks—a technical triumph —or the number of men involved in carrying out the plot.

As a result of this very disturbing interview I remained completely in the dark on two vital points:

First: had Bellini and the Circolo Primo used me cynically to get their petition form approved?

Second: what would be Pinelli's attitude toward me?

30. I ACQUIRE PERSONAL GUARDS

EARLY IN MAY, at Venturi's, I met General Conte Ugo Cavallero, who had become the "conqueror" of Greece with some assistance from the Germans. He was making the social rounds after a long tour of duty at the front. The lovely Maria della Rocca was with him.

Cavallero, born in 1880, looks more like a schoolteacher than a soldier. He is short and stout, wears pince-nez, and talks but seldom. His voice is slow and sleepy. He has been married since 1905 to a woman of the aristocracy, Olga, daughter of Count Grillo; and his children—Carlo, cavalry officer, and Bianca Maria—are both married to members of the aristocracy. He has a long, brilliant record of service going back to the conquest of Tripoli by Italy in 1902-03. In 1918 he headed the Italian military delegation to Versailles; in 1922 became Mussolini's first war minister; in 1926 was made a senator for life, and in 1928 a count. He is generally regarded in Fascist circles as a very diligent executive but without imagination. In private life he was hereditary chairman of the Board of the Cogne S.A., one of northern Italy's greater steel enterprises.

That same evening Colonel Sartori, commandant of Turin's anti-aircraft defense, was also there. The colonel told me he did not have enough guns for a proper curtain of fire against bombers and so several British raids had recently damaged Turin badly. He had tried artificial fogging to hide factories, but it had not worked very well; his foggers were antiquated. Also, Sartori confessed, he had no night interceptor planes and the success or failure of British raids on Turin depended only on British aim. The British had not yet dropped any of their new bombs on Turin, he said. He had been told that these bombs, already dropped on Berlin, were five times more powerful per pound than the old ones, and exploded with such force that the air concussion produced lung lesions on people as

far away as ten blocks.

Then he recounted a curious story. He had been in Berlin some days before to consult air-raid officers there and they had told him that two British planes recently shot down over Berlin had had women pilots. On his expressing amazement, one of the officers offered to show him the girls in the Moabit Hospital. Sartori went out of curiosity the next day and in a ward there was pointed out to him one girl, a twenty-four-year-old Australian, both of whose legs had had to be amputated, and in the next bed an English girl who had lost an arm.

I asked Sartori his conclusion. He said he didn't know whether to believe that the British were still desperate for pilots—their empire pilot pool had not yet begun to produce trained men in quantity—or that women were fighting was a sign of British determination to win the war.

Did he really believe that the girls were what the Germans said they were?

Oh yes. He was convinced.

I asked him if he had personally talked with the girls. No, he had not.

Nazi Germany, always the source of unpleasant or mysterious surprises, contributed two more to the month of May.

First, the flight of Rudolf Hess to England on the tenth, anniversary of the Low Countries' invasion. The Italian people took it calmly and gave no credence whatever to the Goebbels fairy tale that the Deputy Fiihrer had gone insane.

Second, on the twentieth the Germans literally descended on Crete, led by the legendary General Student, and opened their amazing air-borne invasion of the craggy island. Nor did this spectacular event capture Italian attention, which was fixed much more firmly on the once-weekly meat ration. It was established custom to go food-hunting in the morning and to discuss one's successes and failures at afternoon card and cocktail parties.

For in the midst of extraordinary events daily life went on.

I would rise every morning at eight-thirty. Because of the shortage of gas to heat water, I could bathe only once a week. Shaving was torture because there was no decent shaving soap any more. I would go to my usual milk bar for breakfast where I sat at a table in the darkened rear. The proprietor himself would serve me a cup of real cocoa and a sfilatino. Once in a great while there would be an egg.

Promptly after breakfast the daily pursuit began. I had discovered that in the workers' suburb of Trastevere some stores still had canned goods whose price had risen beyond the reach of their regular customers. I would take a filobus (omnibus powered by overhead trolley) and begin my rounds, under my arm a copy of yesterday's *Giornale* to serve as wrapping paper since the stores used none. Many days were fruitless; others would be successful, as when I ferreted out two cans of sardines, ten dekagrams of cheese, and two jars of marmalade. The sardine cans, each containing three fish, were seven lire each; for the cheese I paid two lire eighty, and the marmalade was six lire per jar, so that my shopping bill was twenty-eight lire eighty for what would have cost me only eleven lire fifty a year before.

I was proud of my Trastevere cache and told nobody about it. But one day in a store where I was offering three lire for a can of tuna fish for which the shopkeeper was demanding eight, the Marchesa de Bonivetti swept in. She fell upon my can of tuna like a vulture and imperiously demanded that I let her buy it. I was a bachelor, she pointed out, whereas she had to find food for a family of four. I surrendered without protest.

Then I would go home and deposit my morning's booty with Signora Zarra to supplement the scanty meals she was able to provide out of the permitted rations. In the hour or so remaining before luncheon would be ready I would go for my regular noontime stroll on the Corso. I would return at one-thirty for a luncheon consisting of a tablet soup, dry potatoes when there were any at all, green salad without oil. I would get up feeling hungry, but this was not the Signora's fault. There could be no meat; and the combined

ration of fat, olive oil, and butter had been reduced months before to four hundred grams per person per month.

From about one to four in the afternoon Rome goes to sleep. Shops and offices close; traffic policemen retreat to booths and station houses; even plain-clothes men take a rest. I would use this time to meet my collaborators in bars or coffeehouses.

At five there was usually a bridge or poker party to attend. First everyone discussed politics and food and then the games would begin, for fairly high stakes, lasting till about eight. It wasn't that I played either game much, but I would usually be seeing the Colonel or meeting someone worth pumping.

I was a frequent dinner guest at three houses: at Venturi's, Pinelli's, and Terrini's. Meals in these houses were always perfect and plentiful; Pinelli, for one, received a lot of produce from his Frascati and other farms. Had it not been for frequent dinner invitations I would have been sadly undernourished. As it was, I lost forty pounds while I was there.

After dinner we often danced to American records, though social dancing is forbidden. We rarely listened to the radio because everyone had long since been wearied by the everlasting reports of victories.

Such gatherings usually broke up about one o'clock and then it would take me a long time to get home on foot through the dark and deserted streets.

The Questura had been shadowing me more frequently this spring than ever before. The good Signora Zarra had been questioned several times, and I knew the Gestapo had its eye on me.

I was convinced, however, that my greatest danger lay in the possibility of some secret unofficial action by Gestapo agents rather than in formal arrest. In the latter case, there might be time for my friends to exert themselves on my behalf. But against a sudden assault in Rome's black streets I was helpless. I never lost the fear of what I had seen in the shallow fishlike eyes of that man in Düsseldorf.

My fears were reinforced when I went to Naples in May. The wife of a former Seta customer of mine was on her way to Cuba to visit her brother and her ship put in at Naples for a few hours. She and her husband were close friends of mine and they were probably the only people in Düsseldorf except the Gestapo who suspected my real reason for leaving Germany.

We had luncheon together in the town and almost the first thing she said was: "The day before I left, Albrecht Kannitz came to see me. He knew I was leaving and that you would meet me here. He told me to give you this message: he will be in Rome in a few weeks to give you his final answer for the way you treated him."

I would have expected some such words from Albrecht Kannitz. They were very much in character.

After working for some years on an *avant garde* literary review he had become manager of a small motion-picture theater in

Cologne. Then he was discharged because his mother was a Jewess from Lodz who hardly spoke German, having left her native land only late in life. He never mentioned his father.

He had a desperately bad time, piecing out a living by all sorts of odd jobs. It turned him very bitter. But he didn't hold it against the Nazis; on the contrary, he blamed himself for having Jewish blood. He began to drop unpleasant remarks about his mother.

In the spring of 1938 he turned up in my home with the news that he had become a full-fledged member of the Gestapo. Proudly he showed me his credentials.

I was stunned. The man had changed from an introspective failure to a sly, self-confident success. He wanted to boast and I let him talk.

He had first completed a two-month course in the Aachen Gestapo school. He had been admitted because he could mingle with Jews unsuspected and ferret out those who were smuggling their money and other negotiables out of Germany. He told me with pride that

the course was supervised by an SS leader from Alexanderplatz and that he had had much of his instruction individually, as many did so that they would not become too friendly with other agents.

He had been taught how to break up the various ways of exporting assets secretly, how to shoot, how to memorize faces by selecting their oddest characteristics, and how, in general, to conduct himself without arousing suspicion.

From Aachen he had been sent to Berlin for a final month of instruction.

For the better part of an hour he talked with smirking face, boasting about what he had been taught, mouthing Hitleresque catch-phrases. The more I listened the angrier I got until, I regret to say, I lost my temper. I told him I despised a man who went crawling to the very people who had ruined his life; that I could have some respect even for a Gestapo prison guard, no matter how brutal, because he was stupid and ignorant. I ended by marching him straight out of my front door.

The moment he was gone I felt I had made a mistake. Now I knew it. My friend's wife confirmed it in Naples. She and I had exchanged letters about our meeting and doubtless Kannitz had learned the contents through the Gestapo censorship.

She was frightened on my behalf; from what she told me it was apparent that Kannitz had toughened up in over two years of active work. He had also become the sort of man who would delight in terrifying a woman. She was still terrified. She urged me to write him a letter of apology.

I said I couldn't bring myself to do that. Besides, it would do no good.

But she insisted, and refused to go back on board her ship until I promised to take steps to protect myself. She could hardly have been so frightened fully on my account; most likely Kannitz had also threatened her husband.

I reassured her as well as I could, but on the train back to Rome I too had time to get thoroughly frightened. Kannitz was coming. And in Italy he might feel free to act on his

own.

I sought Pinelli's advice. He said he too doubted that the man, even in Italy, would act against me officially. But first we had to know when the man came to Italy. He would check over the war office lists of those entering or intending to enter Italy.

That was the best he could do, for without saying it aloud we both realized the obvious fact: that Gestapo agents never travel under their own names.

Kannitz could come into Italy at any moment and I would never know it until too late.

The thing worried me so much that I discussed it with Bellini too. He said he had long been afraid I might be attacked and murdered some night, as I could easily be caught in the blacked-out deserted streets. He would assign two men to alternate in guarding me.

The next night I was followed by a strapping fellow with a withered left arm. I went to Pinelli's on the Monte Mario; when

I came out, shortly after one, the young man followed me home again. I talked with him. He had been a factory worker but had lost the use of one arm in an accident. He was twenty-six and so strong he could easily have coped with two attackers.

His alternate was a twenty-three-year-old law student whose study expenses were being paid by the underground. The Matteotti organization had a fund to support the families of men lost in sabotage or by arrest.

Since public conveyances didn't run after twelve, guests usually left their hosts early enough to catch the last bus, or, if the houses were far out, the party would continue until seven in the morning. Or the hosts would put them up for the night. But I was always careful to go home no matter what the hour. I never knew when a detective would inquire for me at home and, not finding me there, become suspicious.

This program was not too easy on my bodyguards. One night I didn't leave Pinelli's villa until 4 A.M.; another night three. My poor guards had to wait around outdoors; there were no near-by osterie, no wayside eating or drinking places. Thereafter I told them in

advance each evening what time I would be returning home, so that they could go off somewhere meanwhile and then come back.

My consideration backfired one night. I was a guest in the home of a seventy-year-old retired General Baron Adelchi de Vigoli. I expected the party to last long; I told my guard he need not return until 3 A.M.

Unexpectedly the party broke up about one o'clock. I couldn't go home; the guard would have become alarmed. I had to stay with the general. At first he seemed only mildly surprised that I remained; then a little apprehensive; maybe he thought I was going to ask him for a loan. When I began to discuss the guests who had already left he was relieved; we had an amiable chat for half an hour and then he got up. He yawned several times.

But I ignored the hints. I talked on and on; his conversation lagged. His eyelids drooped and he began to look like a hunted man. He opened his waistcoat and then his collar. His cheeks sagged and he inquired a number of times if I wasn't sleepy.

Oh no, I was enjoying his conversation immensely. After almost two hours of this mutual torture I went downstairs just as my guard arrived. I decided we'd have to work out some other scheme.

I was never invited to the general's home again.

31. THE TEN-KILO PACKAGE

NO CITY of Europe today is without its Black Bourse, the illegal money market where otherwise respectable people deal in foreign exchange—a traffic forbidden to all except the official exchange bureau, Istituto Cambio Valuta, which by a maze of regulations seeks to concentrate foreign-exchange holdings in the hands of the regime to finance its purchases abroad.

Since 1939 Black Bourses in Rome and Milan had been especially active in dollars, the only bank note commanding universal respect as to permanence of value. Large industrial firms bought heavily to pay for their foreign raw-material purchases. The Istituto winked at and even obliquely encouraged such transactions when the result promised a greater raw-material supply for the blockaded Axis countries. Individuals too sought the safety of dollar bills for their savings against possible inflation and confiscatory forced loans.

This, as well as the smaller traffic in English pounds and Swiss francs, was carried on in both currency and bills of exchange.

Chief market influence in Rome was exerted by certain Vatican priests whose dealings were so large that they virtually set buying and selling prices. At this time the official dollar rate was nineteen lire eighty; on the Black Bourse it rose to thirty-two and thirty-four and even higher.

I undertook to investigate the dollar traffic, using as my middleman a clerk named Venturino Lana. He worked in the Grande Albergo, where Goering always stayed on his visits to Rome. Unusually energetic for an Italian, Lana kept books in his spare time for a commission merchant. I met him in the course of a transaction I handled for Venturi

which involved the bankruptcy of a men's shirt manufacturer in Florence to whom this commission merchant had sold a great quantity of Seta silk. Much of it was not yet paid for and the commission merchant claimed that the loss should be shared proportionately by Seta. Venturi did not agree and asked me to arrange a better settlement. Lana's most profitable side line, however, was dealing in foreign exchange on the Black Bourse.

I told him I wanted to buy dollars. The next day he offered me two thousand dollars at thirty-four lire. I refused on the ground that the price was too high but learned that the actual seller was a Vatican priest, one Father Alphonso, acting for a religious society with its world headquarters in Rome.

I persuaded Lana to introduce me to the priest, whom I found to be a simple, kindly, almost saintly man of about fifty. He declared, readily enough, that his only desire was to help people escape persecution by Fascist authorities. Therefore he had become active in transferring money to America.

His method was to accept lire against which he issued an order for the corresponding sum in dollars drawn on one of the religious societies in the United States. He was doing this on behalf of all those societies which collected money abroad to be sent to their respective Vatican City headquarters. He was at the service of anyone who represented himself as anxious to escape from Europe or rescue his savings from the Fascists or Nazis.

I told him I was deeply impressed with his goodheartedness, and with his permission would send him any deserving people I came across. I warned him there would not be many, however, as I would take pains to make certain that none of them were Nazis.

What did I mean?

I said it would distress me if Nazis used him to transfer secret funds to the United States.

He was shocked at the notion; it seemed never to have occurred to him. He fell into a

fuming worry. To calm him I offered my services; if he would let me know the names of everybody who came to him to buy dollars I would investigate their real identities.

For some weeks nothing happened; his customers were all harmless émigrés. But one day he told me a man named Franz Kuelberg had said he wanted to buy twenty thousand dollars, for which he would pay approximately eight hundred thousand lire.

The size of this amount—most transactions were much smaller —and the fact that Kuelberg had told Father Alphonso he was enroute abroad from Berlin sharpened my suspicions.

I asked Kerbel to see what could be learned about the man among the émigré groups.

In three days Kerbel found a man and his wife who had known Kuelberg in Berlin as a minor clerk in a bank. He was a Catholic converted from Judaism and had formerly belonged to the Reumann group of nationalist Jews who had tried to support Hitler in the early days but had been rebuffed. Kuelberg's wife was an "Aryan," and they were staying in a very expensive pensione on lower Via Veneto. Kerbel's friends were morally certain that Kuelberg was not above suspicion.

Another man said he had met a Mrs. Kuelberg at the Brown House.

I had Kuelberg and his wife pointed out to me by Kerbel's friends and for two days I shadowed the wife. On both days she made extended calls at the German Embassy.

I told Father Alphonso what I had learned, and he promised not to sell dollars to Kuelberg. Father Alphonso was very grateful to me.

But this was only plugging up one trickle of the stream of German money being sent to the United States, whence much of it was doubtless sent to South America. Most of it was from the Gestapo and Propaganda bureaus and they chose this devious means both to make it difficult for the FBI to trace their sources of income and also so that the German Embassy would not know to whom money was paid. The fewer hands money passed through, the safer the agent who finally received it.

In April Lana told me in great excitement that a friend of his in the Istituto Cambio Valuta had said the Istituto would pay forty-two lire for every dollar bank note he could bring them. The Istituto promised to accept all offers without asking any questions. Lana was frantically buying dollars from every source; he expected to make a big profit.

I suggested that Lana find out why the Istituto needed dollars so badly. He learned from his friend that Italian submarines operating in the Atlantic needed the bills to buy oil in French and Spanish North African ports. And the only payment the French and the Spaniards would accept was dollar notes.

The Germans too had the same problem and were trying to meet it in the same way.

In May the Black Bourse rocked with delighted, malicious laughter at the story of what one Herr von Witzleben had done to his fellow Germans.

I had heard of Von Witzleben a little before this from Lana, who sold him some dollars at the fantastic price of forty-four lire. Von Witzleben let it be understood that he had orders from the German Embassy to buy fifty thousand dollars quickly at any price.

These demands exhausted the Milan dollar market first and soon after it Rome. Von Witzleben and his lady secretary therefore went to Unoccupied France, whence he returned in a fortnight with fifty thousand dollars, few of which he had obtained in Italy.

He delivered them to the German Embassy, was repaid, and presumably made a large profit. But he enjoyed his profit only for a brief time. The embassy discovered that some forty thousand dollars of Herr von Witzleben's money was counterfeit. Von Witzleben and his secretary were promptly arrested. The good Herr, a registered Nazi, protested; he had bought the dollars in good faith; Vichy Frenchmen had deceived him. But he was shipped back to a German jail just the same.

The German Embassy then had to do some tall scurrying to raise enough dollars for their submarine commanders calling at French Moroccan ports.

Later on the freezing of Italian and German assets in the United States on June 16

caused a bull market on the Black Bourse; the American action closed off the source of supply of dollars. Black Bourse traders—hotel porters, travel agents, salesmen—ran to each other to buy, and in one day the price rose from thirty-eight to over fifty lire. The following day Italy retaliated by freezing American assets, amounting to a hundred and forty-five million dollars, and the bull market boomed again. To the Black Bourse these two actions looked like steps nearer to war and the eventual depreciation of Italian money. The dollar went higher and higher, to fifty-five lire and beyond.

This was fantastic enough, but the dollar trade on Germany's Black Bourse was even more so. I knew a man in Milan who operated a small electric-light-socket factory as a blind for his very large Black Bourse trading. He would amass dollars in Italy and smuggle them into the Reich on ostensible business trips. He would dispose of them to German traders for as much as sixty-five marks—and the official dollar valuation is two marks sixty-five.

Almost a year before I had met a man named Roberto Nardini, chief weighing official of the air express and baggage division of the Lati air line—Linee Aeree Transcontinentali Italiane S.A. His duties were to supervise the make-up of cargoes and weight distribution. He was stationed in the main office in Rome. Passengers reported there to have their baggage weighed before making the forty-five-minute run in Lati's red passenger buses to the airport at Guidonia in Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, whence went the seaplanes from Italy to Sevilla, Lisbon, Villa Cisneros, Pernambuco, and Rio de Janeiro.

Nardini was the only underground man who ever helped me in espionage, and he begged me not to tell Bellini, of whom he stood in awe. Later, for some reason, he told Bellini himself and they had a serious quarrel.

Toward the end of May he visited me one night to report that the day before a courier from the German Embassy had brought in a ten-kilo package. After having it weighed he

had handed it to the flight captain of that day's plane for Brazil, whose custom it was to go to Guidonia with the passengers. What had caught Nardini's attention was that the courier had specified it was not to go in the baggage compartment of the plane; the flight captain was to carry it himself.

I asked Nardini to question the flight captain about it when the plane returned.

Within two weeks he reported: the flight captain had been instructed by the traffic superintendent's office to accept the package and deliver it to a courier from the Rio de Janeiro German Embassy who would meet the plane at the Pernambuco airport. A second ten-kilo package was sent in the same way the next trip.

Since the cable incident I had been neglecting Meier. I had contrived to encounter him once or twice but both times managed not to spend any time with him. But now I had to see him.

It took me three days to manage another "accidental" meeting. Finally I bumped into him outside the Löwenbräu and soon we were chatting. But the conversation simply would not veer to South America.

Two days later I found him again and his first remark was: "When is your wedding? When are you marrying the beautiful American?" He was laughing.

I said I had had no reply to my cable; no doubt the lady was angry.

We took a table. "I knew you made a great mistake to refuse her. Think of having all her American dollars."

Yes, I admitted ruefully, all of us Europeans underestimated the importance of American wealth.

That started him off. He said I hadn't the slightest idea of conditions in the United States. And if I did I wouldn't have let that rich woman get away from me. But he knew that country and its people. True, they had more money than we, but no organization. And their intelligence service was in swaddling clothes. And besides, I remembered what Von

Kuhlemann had said: the United States would never play a role in South America.

Maybe so. But the United States had gold enough to support South America indefinitely and Washington's political influence was unbeatable.

Meier laughed sarcastically. Did I think they were asleep?

"No, but you think you're all-powerful," I told him. How can we poor Germans deliver goods to South America in wartime?

Easy, he said. Why, right in America they had established firms to manufacture drugs under German labels for delivery to South America. But that was nothing. "We know where to meet our enemies," he said, "where they are weakest. And do you know where America is weakest?"

I thought hard and said: "The Canadian border."

He laughed uproariously, then said dramatically: no, it was the Panama Canal. Already the Germans had airfields and Stukas in Bolivia and Nicaragua. The day America declared war they would bomb the Canal. And then Japan would have it easy in the Pacific Ocean. Meier's chief had the fields constructed, but not near German colonies, of course. They were well camouflaged, trees planted all over the fields in buckets which could be removed in a few minutes. The planes had been sent across Spain and through the blockade and were hidden in underground hangars. The pilots were all chosen men and were already on the spot.

I told him it was a pretty story, but I doubted it. We Germans were not that clever.

He went on: "Take Argentina, for example. My chief knows that country as well as he knows his own pocket. The present government there is supposed to be pro-British. But the army is organized along German lines and the generals are all pro-German. And in Argentina there are three-and-a-half million Germans, 99 per cent of them good Nazis. The plans have been worked out to the last detail." He seemed inclined to stop talking.

I said that we Germans were all alike. When we made a beautiful plan, we thought the

job was done.

This exasperated him. “When you read in the papers three months from now that there’s a revolution in Argentina, you’ll believe what I say! The plans have come from Berlin, my chief has checked them, and everything is ready. There’ll be no street fighting. The generals are with us. You’ll see. . .

Checking up on what Meier had told me took some time.

Concerning the Stukas sent to [Bolivia and Nicaragua](#), I knew that the Germans had developed all manner of devious ways of shipping airplane parts around the world; they also could get their men abroad. By the merest accident we discovered that the corrupt consul—also a Roman lawyer—of a small Central American country had sold passports to the Germans for ten thousand lire apiece. One batch had been all for men—that would be the Stuka pilots.

I reported our investigation to the Colonel.

Notes

Three months later the Taborda Committee of the Argentine Congress nipped a widespread Nazi plot in Argentina; in his Labor Day 1941 speech President Roosevelt reported German airfields found in Bolivia. An American congressional committee subsequently reported secret airfields in Colombia and that Messerschmitts had been flown to German “plantations” by Japanese pilots. This was prior to American participation in the war.

32. "OUR SONS ARE DYING . . ."

MAY. A beautiful spring day on the Corso.

The tables at Golden Gate, Zeppa, Rosati, Excelsior, all full, sprinkled with German and Italian officers, elegantly dressed and jeweled women.

A group of some twenty women with shopping bags crossed the Corso on their way to the markets near Via Tritone. They slowed down at sight of the chocolate, rich cakes, and pitchers of milk on the cafe tables. Remarks were made.

The whole group stopped at a table of five army officers. Shrill voices rose. "Why aren't you at the front? . . . No milk for our children ... no potatoes in the markets . . . our sons are dying and you loaf here. . ."

Some Germans were sitting near by. The women swore at them. The Italian officers were desperately embarrassed. The crowd of women surged forward; tables were overturned; dishes crashed; sweet cakes rolled in the gutter.

Questura plain-clothes men—the four usually stationed on that side of the Corso—came plunging into the melee. They shepherded out the poorest-dressed women and took a half-dozen away. The tables were picked up and order restored.

Thereafter eight Questura agents were stationed on that side of Via Veneto and all coffeehouses along the Corso were forbidden to place tables on the sidewalk.

Soon after the occupation of Crete by the Germans, long-range British bombing raids on Italy were intensified. One such raid resulted in the destruction of five of Naples harbor's six great loading cranes. The Germans who had been shipping all heavy materiel to Libya from here were compelled to make other arrangements. Troop shipments continued, Kerbel reported—he was my informant on this, with confirmation from the gossipy Maria

della Rocca—but heavy materiel shipments were transferred to the Greek port of Patras.

This in itself caused the Germans great trouble: loading at Naples, they had brought their guns and tanks down through the Brenner; but to load at Patras they had to route their trains through the newly acquired province of Marburg, through war-torn Yugoslavia and Greece, and then back west to Patras on the Peloponnesus.

I reported this shift to the Colonel with the request that he notify the British. Within a fortnight Patras suffered an annihilating British raid that destroyed most of the harbor installations. Thereafter the Germans had to split up their heavy matériel shipments among several ports pending repair of the cranes in Naples harbor.

The same month Rome government circles were staggered when State Secretary Zenone Bernini of the Foreign Office openly defied the all-powerful Scalera brothers, Michele and Salvatore, greatest road-building contractors in Italy and the wealthiest men in the country. They are, in some ways, the Thyssens of Italy, though unlike the German they have often proven stronger than their political master.

They were the sons of a small north Italy road-building contractor who made money during World War I building military roads in the Po Valley behind the Allied front at fat profit to himself. He died in 1925 after transferring the headquarters of the firm from Milan to Rome. Though it is only rumored that he gave money to Mussolini's then struggling newspaper, *Il Popolo d'Italia*, it is a fact that the two boys were Fascists even before the march on Rome.

After Mussolini came to power the young Scaleras ingratiated themselves with the budding dictator and in return landed contracts for building Fascism's network of modern automobile highways. Gradually cementing their intimacy with the regime and extending their control of road building by secretly buying up competitive firms, they developed their inheritance to fabulous dimensions of which even their profiteering father had never dreamed.

They have built roads—as good as any of those built by Caesar’s toiling legionaries—all over Italy, Tunis, Libya, Eritrea, and— despite some behind-the-scenes difficulty—in Albania.

Near the Lungotevere Ripa in Rome the administration offices of all their enterprises today occupy two adjoining new five-story buildings. Their wealth is estimated at a billion-and-a-half lire which, at twenty lire, is the equivalent of seventy-five million in dollars but of five hundred millions in power.

Michele, more able of the two brothers, is about fifty-five; Salvatore two or three years younger. Both were born in Rome. Married, with children, they live well, separately but always close together; they have town houses in Rome, villas in Monte Mario, and summer estates at Lake Como. Though Caccia members they appeared there seldom, but Michele’s Fiat and Salvatore’s old Ansaldo were often to be seen on the Corso Umberto and Via Tritone. The only Scalera sister is married to a member of the brothers’ legal staff. She has a twenty-four-year-old son.

Michele is a law and construction engineering graduate of the University of Bologna and his brother holds a law degree from Rome, but neither ever applied for admission to the bar.

Their closest friends in the party, to which they contribute lavishly, are Mussolini and Achille Starace, but they also move freely in government and society life because of their wealth and political influence.

I knew Michele Scalera: a fat, big man, smooth-shaven, with a shock of black hair which he wears long like an artist. He speaks fluent French but no German and travels frequently around the Italian empire unless hostilities prevent. He talks with great ease and laughs heartily and often. Yet in reality he is one of the hardest and most unscrupulous men in Italy. Workers hate him because his firms pay the lowest wages; businessmen and government officials fear him.

In 1938 Mussolini told Michele that he and his brother were making so much money that they must expend some in cultural enterprises. Michele jumped at the chance to establish the most luxurious film studio in Italy, which has become his hobby. He invested the fabulous sum of thirty-five million lire and built his studio not in Cinecittà but in the vicinity of the church of San Giovanni di Laterano near the German Embassy. He brought most of his fine equipment from the United States, imported a number of American and French actors, actresses, and directors, and just before the war wanted to bring Greta Garbo to Rome for one picture.

He loves to dabble in the affairs of Scalera Film, of which the managing director is his sister's son, a bespectacled, narrow-chested youth who behaves self-importantly despite his ignorance of motion-picture production. Michele reads stories and synopses, hoping always to produce pictures equaling the best French ones. His particular pride is the setting and costume department of the studio.

Salvatore, whom I met but once, is fatter than his brother, but wears his hair shorter and is not so clever or so energetic.

The real foundation of Scalera power, however, is their virtual stranglehold on road building in Italy's conquered empire. By virtue of immense purchases of cement and machinery they were regarded as good customers by the Germans. But it is only a question of time until they, like any other force good or bad operating for Italian independence, are subjected to Nazi regulation and ruthlessness.

These are the men to whom the intrepid Bernini suddenly refused a huge Albanian contract, awarding it to other firms because, it was generally supposed in Rome, he had found he could get a larger secret rebate from the Scaleras' few remaining competitors.

At once Michele Scalera went to Albania and opened negotiations direct with the Albanian Premier Shevket Verlaci, one of the richest men in Albania. He had established there a dynasty of his own. His daughter married King Zog's former Foreign Minister

Dino. After Greece was occupied he was promoted to the new post of Royal High Commissioner of Ciamuria, that part of northern Greece which the Italians annexed to Albania by proclamation. Verlaci's twenty-four-year-old son became General Secretary—a kind of sinecure liaison office—of the Albanian puppet government.

All the power of this complex but tight nepotic political machine was called forth by Michele Scalera. Soon an order came from Mussolini discontinuing the post of Secretary of State for Albania in the Foreign Office, and so the foolhardy Bernini lost his position. Road building in Albania came entirely into the control of the puppet government and a high commissioner appointed from Rome. The Scaleras got the contract Bernini had tried to block, and all contracts since.

Late in May the German High Command turned the control of conquered Greece over to the Italians.

They entered the peninsula to find it an empty shell; the German occupation had swept through the poor little country like a hurricane. Foodstuffs were gone—even the peasant's last chicken; private homes were plundered, the currency was depreciated.

Famine was striking people down in the streets and the Italian army had to allot some of its own scanty supplies to the population. But too late. Typhus followed hunger and spread promptly to the occupying army; thousands of men were brought back to Italy for hospitalization; the Rome Polyclinic alone received six hundred cases.

Stories of friction between German officers remaining in Greece and the newly arrived Italian officers were freely recounted in the Caccia and elsewhere.

Meier told me, as a great joke, that he had met a friend of his at the Brown House, a German officer on his way from Athens to France via Rome. In a fracas in an Athenian coffeehouse he had shot and killed an Italian lieutenant. Arrested by the Italians, he had been released back to the Germans on Von Rintelen's promise that he would be punished.

His punishment consisted of being transferred from the troops going to fight in Russia to the occupying army of France.

Late May. I met Ricker again on one of his weekly visits from Taormina. We sat in the Pasticceria Rosati and he told me how much he liked Taormina—but that he had had a chance to leave Italy.

I asked him where.

He said far away.

I told him to stop being secretive; he ought to know by now I never believed a word he said.

At this he was piqued and fairly shouted at me that he could have gone to Japan.

I smiled in disbelief.

He insisted; the German Air Ministry had asked for volunteer pilots and ground crews; five hundred and planes would be sent to Japan. This meant two squadrons (Staffeln)—eighteen planes and six reserves. He added that the contingent had been made up and was already on its way across Russia. The men would work in Japan as “instructors.”

German-Japanese co-operation, in fact, dated back to the previous March, when Pinelli had told me of the successful conclusion of negotiations conducted by Ambassador Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg in Moscow with Stalin’s agreement to the shipment of soldiers across Russia to Japan. But Russia had made certain stipulations:

Never more than five hundred German soldiers with weapons in transit on Russian soil at any one time; they would not be permitted to leave the train, and a Russian military escort would go with each contingent.

In May, as I confirmed after talking with Ricker, two squadrons of Stukas were sent in command of a Luftwaffe colonel with five hundred men including pilots, ground crews, and mechanics, with arms and ammunition, the newest flame throwers, and dynamite ladders. Also included in the personnel was a Luftwaffe mission of fifty fliers going as

instructors and the air attache of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin. The planes were not fully broken down, but went in enclosed freight cars.

Arrived in Japan, the instructors were distributed among military training fields, while the fighting pilots and ground crews were sent to an island which had been cleared of civilians and made a military reservation. In April the Japanese had begun training a hundred and twenty thousand men here in mechanized maneuvers, landing operations, and parachute tactics. The last were under the tuition of two hundred German parachute officers and non-coms commanded by an adjutant of General Student named Von Hessler.

Troop transports were concentrated in the harbors and guarded by a good portion of the Japanese High Seas fleet.

Late in May Hitler called Mussolini to a meeting at the Brenner Pass on June 2 “to discuss the general political situation,” as these invitations were phrased.

Official attention was temporarily distracted by the announcement on June 1 that Dr. Osvaldo Sebastiani, Mussolini’s private secretary for some six years, had resigned—though he had already been inactive for more than two months.

No reason for his break with the regime was given, but from time to time he had indicated sympathy with Marshal Badoglio and the other men who had identified themselves with him. And he had made no secret of growing hatred for the Germans.

Therefore the new secretary, Dr. Nicolo de Cesare, went with Il Duce to the Brenner. Ciano and Cavallero went also to talk with Ribbentrop and Keitel. Pinelli and several members of his staff would consult with their opposite numbers in the German War Ministry.

The Italians were delighted at the invitation; this was their opportunity to make forceful protest direct to the German leaders about Croatia, which was becoming more and more a nettle in Mussolini’s hair shirt.

But when the Italian delegation returned and Pinelli told me what had happened, it was clear that Mussolini had gone to the Brenner only to receive another lesson in what it means to be a minor partner to the Führer. Hitler had taken up the whole time of the meeting talking about Russia and had refused, as usual, to permit any topics to be discussed except those introduced by him. The Italians returned, not only with their own problems still snarled, but with new ones besides.

Von der Schulenburg had been negotiating with Stalin and Foreign Commissar Molotov since mid-May, Hitler had said. He had ordered the following demands made:

Control through German experts of agriculture in the Ukraine; the building of a standard-gauge railroad parallel to the Russian broad-gauge lines to expedite food and oil shipments to Germany; free troop passage to Siberia and the Caucasus, and the establishment of a German military mission in the General Staff.

Stalin was prepared to agree to everything except the mission in the General Staff, which would have paralyzed his last line of resistance, the army.

Negotiations were still proceeding on this one point. But, Hitler said, if it were refused, he would attack Russia. His diplomatic information service (Informationsdienst) had told him conquest would be easy, Russia would collapse politically at once. Failing to neutralize the Russian army by indirect methods, he would destroy it by force of arms.

Hitler had ended by remarking: "It would be good if you would send some divisions when the fighting starts."

Pinelli was extremely apprehensive.

Hitler's preparation for the invasion of Soviet Russia reached even into his Mediterranean forces. A few days after Pinelli's return from the Brenner I met Ricker again on the Corso. He invited me for a drink and we went into the Albergo Excelsior bar.

He said I would probably not see him again for a long time as he had been ordered to a training camp in Poland. He went on to talk about a new Messerschmitt with a ceiling of

fourteen thousand meters—almost forty-six thousand feet—which he said would be “the fastest pursuit ship in the world.”

When I said the Americans were building better ones, he sneered. The Americans and English hadn't yet built planes approaching the Junkers 87 and 88s. And the Condor was faster than the Flying Fortress. And they had improved the Condor as a slight surprise for the Americans. First trial flights had just been made of a new Condor hydroplane, with a two-hundred-and-thirty-foot wingspread, a flying radius of seven thousand, five hundred miles, a twenty-ton bomb load, and a crew of eight men. It was partly armored and carried cannon. A lieutenant in his squadron had been to Holland for the trials.²

It was the last time I saw Ricker. As he left I clapped him on the shoulder and said: “I hope you have a good rest.”

He smiled. “I doubt that it'll be a rest.”

33. AXIS ESPIONAGE— ORGANIZATION AND METHODS

ALMOST at once after the German invasion of Russia was launched, the diplomatic information service, which had encouraged Hitler to believe Russia would promptly collapse, was taken out of the Foreign Office and given over to the military espionage division of the General Staff under Colonel Nicolai.

The Russian conquest would be easy, [they had said](#). Von Ribbentrop had assured his Fiihrer that puppet states could be set up, especially in the Ukraine.

But it became plain at once that a serious miscalculation had been made by the diplomatic espionage service. This was the Informationsdienst des Auswaertigen Amtes headed by Dr. Otto Meissner, liaison man between the chancellery and the Foreign Office since before Chancellor Heinrich Bruening.

Meissner's agents had based their estimate of Russian political strength on what they were told by the anti-Communist Russian underground organization, whose hopes led them into error. Agents of the military espionage, whose advice was precisely contrary, failed to gain Hitler's confidence until it was too late, because they were handicapped by the difficulty of getting reliable information about Russian armed strength.

The bureau in which the Informationsdienst now found itself has always been a favorite child of the General Staff. Care, attention, and money have been lavished on it. The Germans call it simply the Nachrichtenabteilung (News Division); it is called Viertes Bureau, B-4, by some outsiders.

Its personnel is trained in the old cadet school in Potsdam, where applicants from among army officers are accepted after very severe physical, manual, and psychotechnical examinations. The training course takes a year, during which the student body is divided

into classes according to the languages of the countries to which the men are later to be assigned.

On passing a final examination the men are sent for a year to their country of future operations as tourists, to perfect themselves in the language and customs. On returning to Germany they spend from six months to a year in the General Staff working in the division devoted to the country in which they are to work. Only after that do they return to their assigned country for active duty.

The training is along two lines: espionage and counterespionage. Contrary to general practice in World War I, the Germans now practice counterespionage in presumptive enemy countries.

This needs some explanation and definition. Espionage is the ferreting out of information; it is an operation animated by the spirit of the offensive. Counterespionage is the defense of a country's own interests against the espionage of its actual or presumptive enemies. In previous eras counterespionage operated in one's own country; its tasks were to forestall, catch, and destroy enemy espionage agents. Its principle may be compared to the air tactic of interceptor defense; that when an area is attacked by enemy bombers, interceptor planes rise from their home fields to prevent the attack. This is domestic defense. But the better defense against bombing, the Germans first proved in Poland, is to destroy the enemy bombers before they ever get off their own fields.

The same principle has been applied to counterespionage by the post-Versailles German General Staff. Instead of waiting until enemy agents may be caught *in flagrante* in one's own country, counterespionage goes into the enemy country in advance and devotes itself exclusively to the study of the enemy's espionage plans and activities. The counterespionage agent must learn all he can about enemy espionage plans, personnel and training, warn his home defense, and obstruct and destroy whatever he can before it ever gets started. He is bombing the enemy's bombers while they are yet on their own

fields.

He does not concern himself with ferreting out information. This is the task of the espionage agent who, under Nicolai, is generally limited to the search for military secrets. They work separately. Nor does he encroach on the field of political espionage; that is the province of the Gestapo and its branches. Nor on the diplomatic field hitherto reserved to the Informationsdienst. Nor is he under the direction or supervision of embassies and legations or the Auslandsorganisation.

Nicolai agents usually travel on foreign passports and, according to the individual's bent, appear as engineers, businessmen, explorers, writers. Only in the rarest cases are they known to the military attachés of diplomatic missions. Their reports are made not through any of the open or secret government agencies, but through ordinary commercial channels used by legitimate commercial firms operating between Germany and other countries. As, for instance, the I.G. Farben, the Afrikanisch-Deutsche Kaffee Import Gesellschaft of Hamburg, and many others.

Nearly every agent is equipped with a short-wave sending set, in whose repair and maintenance he has been trained, though he uses it only in the most urgent instances. He is trained in photography and in enlarging the microphotographs on which he receives instructions, as well as in making them to send his reports. He can drive a car (a more specialized accomplishment in Europe than in the United States), and can fly a plane, though he is not usually a highly trained war pilot.

The Nicolai office maintains both espionage and counterespionage on the territory of its Axis partner.

I met a Peruvian in the Caccia Club, a dark southern type who spoke Italian with only the very faintest trace of an accent. He was introduced, as I remember, by Trasazzo. He called himself Fernando de Rinajo and engaged me in a long conversation—more a lecture on archeological excavations in Rome. It was wordy, technical, obscure, and dull. He

bored me horribly and, I think, himself too. I retaliated by telling him at equally great and boring length about my singing. But this didn't prevent him from inviting me to his house for dinner; he appeared wealthy and occupied a small villa on the slope of Monte Sacro. I avoided accepting.

As he met the members and other guests I noticed that every-time he was introduced to someone his right heel raised a little off the floor and to the side as if about to snap to attention. Later in the evening I tried to engage him in German conversation. But his face remained blank; he said he understood not a word of that barbarous language.

We met a number of times in the ensuing weeks and I saw that he spent most of his time talking to foreigners rather than Italians.

I said to Meier one day in the Lowenbrau that I had met a man named Rinajo who ought to interest him, a South American.

Meier smiled. Did I mean a man so and so and so? and he described him. I nodded. "Ah! I know him," Meier said with distaste. "He's a German."

I said no more and thereafter completely avoided Rinajo at social gatherings. After another few weeks he disappeared from Rome society.

And there had been the Gerda Witra business.

Rinajo was of course not the only German counterespionage agent active in Italy. Pinelli complained that some time earlier

German "tourists" had made their way into Italian shipyards and airplane plants despite strict orders from the War Ministry against visitors. A worker in Tivoli was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "lending" his identification tag to a German "tourist" for three days. But the German was not touched; he was simply shoved across the frontier back into Germany.

Under war pressure German espionage, always superb, may by now well have surpassed the Russian. But its success is not so much the sum of individual initiative as the triumph

of organization.

Major decisions and groundwork in Berlin are the result of excellent coordination between the various related departments. No money is spared to create optimum conditions for work by Colonel Nicolai's men. Both direct and indirect tools and bases are provided; as deficits of strategically located civil air lines, like those in Argentina and Brazil, are cheerfully met. Money is lavished on the purchase of newspapers. Among those mentioned in this connection are *11 Tevere* in Rome, *Vreme* in Belgrade, *Aftonbladet* in Stockholm, to name only three out of hundreds. They have started papers, as in Mexico City; news agencies (Transocean in the United States) and distributed propaganda films (*Sieg im Osten*, etc.).

An interesting example is the magazine *Signal* published by the Propaganda Ministry and the army. Made up like the American magazine *Life*, the title was carefully chosen for its easy pro-nounceability in all languages. It is published in the language of every important country of Europe and given free to newsvendors. I have myself seen copies in Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Swedish. For smaller countries, like Denmark, only one or two articles would be in Danish, the rest in German; captions under the photographs are in both languages. I am quite certain the Spanish edition was distributed in South America and the Portuguese in Brazil, though now that is doubtful.

Attached to the Nachrichtenabteilung is the press office where every newspaper, book, pamphlet, and magazine published throughout the world—advertisements included—is read, catalogued, and indexed, the writers and their opinions analyzed for later influencing or combating. Short-wave broadcasts from all over the world are monitored; political, economic, travel, textbooks, and scientific books collected and examined, in spite of wartime difficulties. Important news is of course relayed to headquarters by short wave. All German explorers and industrial prospectors have reported to the News Division for many years; the library contains a file of maps of every city in the world, its

weak points of supply studied out and noted. All news photograph agencies are combed daily and selected prints purchased ostensibly for obscure publications. Pinelli saw the map and photograph libraries when he visited the General Staff.

American magazines are favorites because they give so much information, in word and picture, about American industrial and military affairs. Photographs are given to the technical bureau for study and cataloguing.

The Germans are justly proud of their espionage. By now it is an old story of how, during the winter of “phony” war, loudspeakers from the German lines would inform the British troops that a new general had arrived from England, recounting his rank and record, plus other amazingly accurate details of events that had happened only that morning.

Roberto Farinacci, on returning from his first visit to Berlin as Goebbels’ guest, loved to tell in the Caccia how his first breakfast had been served exactly as he always had it at home, though he had not ordered it: cold china tea without sugar, cream, lemon or milk, and *prosciutto crudo*—cold smoked ham. Goebbels had laughed at his surprise and said they knew the personal secrets of every important personality in the world.

To counter the superb organization of German espionage and counterespionage, only superior organization will suffice. The individual American or Englishman may be more clever and enterprising than the individual German, but he must be trained for his job and selected by aptitude.

The intelligence services in total war are no sinecure. They are in the front line of both attack and defense and, contrary to previous wars, are an important arm in themselves.

The Italian War Ministry too has its military espionage bureau, the so-called U-I, Ufficio Informazione, directed by General Ettore della Valle, cousin of the State Secretary for Air Della Valle and his brother, commander of the Italian Red Cross.

I once met Ettore della Valle at Pinelli’s but safety being more practical than valor, I

kept on the other side of the room all evening. He is a man of fifty-eight or sixty, of middle height and smooth-shaven. His huge bushy eyebrows, like Rudolf Hess's, give him a weird appearance. He never wears a uniform and is not listed in the army gazette.

Italian military espionage is mediocre. Counterespionage is worse because it is chiefly in the hands of OVRA and thus has become a routine police function. Italian espionage still operates on the 1917 model: spies are subject to military attachés, have only meager financial resources, and the personnel is of low grade. In a feeble attempt at remedy, soon after the start of the war in 1940 twelve Italian officers were sent to Potsdam for training in German methods.

On the other hand, the political information service of Fasces Abroad (Fasci all' Estero), counterpart of the German Auslands-organisation, is excellent. Its reports go to the *Direttorio Na-zionale, Divisione Fasci all' Estero* (National Direction, Division of Fasces Abroad), whence they are forwarded to U-I.

Disguise of Italian espionage is thin; usually they employ such devices as the Red Cross, cultural leagues (the Argentine-Italian Literary Association might be an example), but Fasces Abroad is not to be underestimated. On the average, its members are more fanatical Fascists than those in Italy: a reaction against the international contempt for Italy. Italian spies have neither short-wave sets nor microphoto equipment, though this may have been remedied by the Germans in recent months. Until 1940 Italian espionage agents worked through their consulates abroad, which made counterespionage easy.

The cultural leagues maintained by Fasces Abroad are under orders to foster close relations with Spanish Falangist and Japanese associations and, which is intriguing, not so close relations with similar German groups. In Argentina and Brazil such groups are highly organized, though when too much attention focused on them in 1940, many were dissolved and regrouped under more harmless-sounding names.

Fascists have managed to infiltrate even the largest anti-Fascist Italian organization

abroad, reaching high positions. The strength of Italian organizations abroad springs not so much from pro or anti-Fascism as from the historical fact that Italians, though readily becoming citizens of other nations, very rarely assimilate themselves into new culture; they develop elaborate Italian communities; no people of Europe has sent as much money to the homeland as the Italians; the ambition of most is to return someday to Italy and buy a piece of land.

I had only one experience with Italian military espionage; paradoxically it did nothing to prove the low standing of U-I.

In a pensione on Via Gregoriana where lived two girls I knew there came to live the biggest Italian I ever saw; he was six feet four inches tall. Vittorio Farini looked more like a German than an Italian, wore a monocle, carried himself like a soldier, and spoke fluent German, French, and English as well as Arabic and Hebrew. He said he had just returned from several years in Palestine as head of the Italian Red Cross delegation. He was also noteworthy for the fact that, unlike most Italians, he hardly ever talked about himself.

It happened that we went out together several times—he and I and the two girls—and he questioned me very fully; what I was doing in Rome, how long I'd been there, how long I expected to stay, who my friends were, etc. Friends of the Terrinis told me that he had inquired about me from them too.

To frighten him off I invariably talked long and dully about my music studies, but it was difficult to avoid him entirely because he too became a frequent visitor at the Terrini palazzo.

Pinelli said he remembered hearing some time before that Farini was a member of U-I; he was not certain. But I was by now. Another night he appeared in the Caccia Club. He didn't play poker but chatted with me, laying out careful conversational traps. I got rid of him by leaving with Captain Trasazzo and his newest girl friend.

Farini and I ran across each other several more times before I saw him at the Terrinis' in

the uniform of an army major. He had been called into service and was to be stationed in Tivoli. I'm glad to say I never saw him again.

It would have been far too dangerous to play with him, which is more than can be said for the ordinary agent who shadowed me one very warm day.

Feeling too lazy to walk aimlessly around the city, I drifted to the Pincio and selected a bench in the shade. It could not be seen from any other bench and the rest of the little *rondo* with its statues was drenched in heavy sunlight. My shadow had no choice but to lounge against a tree in the sun and read his newspaper.

I sat there six hours, alternately reading a paper book I bought on the way and sitting for long periods with my eyes closed as if dozing. In a very short time my shadow had read his newspaper; it was only six pages.

He shifted from foot to foot. Expressions ranging from murderous fury to quiet despair chased each other over his mobile countenance. At lunch time I took out a chocolate bar and ate it slowly, giving signs of relish. The man looked at it so yearningly I almost invited him to join me. Only nature forced me to leave that bench late in the afternoon and go home.

Notes

The version of this development published in America stated that the diplomatic agents had advised against the attack, and that the General Staff wanted it. Precisely the contrary is correct.

34. JAPAN'S DOUBLE CROSS

WHEN the Russo-German war began, official Italian opinion was still against Russia. And among the people there was a spread of anti-war feeling and passive resistance. In fact, war weariness increased markedly from this time on.

Pinelli told me that in two weeks the Rome garrison had lost a hundred and twenty-seven men by desertion; in the Polyclinic alone lay sixteen men suspected of self-wounding. Eight other men were executed.

The people feared that Italian soldiers would be sent to Russia. They said openly that Russia was a German, not an Italian worry. Russia was so far away that any direct threat to the country was impossible; Italian soldiers should not be cannon fodder for Hitler, etc., etc. Pinelli's viewpoint was interesting: that Germany would use her Russian war to encroach on Italy further and further weaken her army. From the moment he returned from the Brenner meeting he feared that Hitler would demand an entire army corps. Other high Fascists feared this too, though many of them approved the Russian war on ideological grounds.

Hitler did indeed make formal demand for troops the Monday after he marched, and on June 26 the first Italian divisions were ordered to the Romanian-Russian front via Hungary. They grumbled and protested, and Mussolini himself had to hustle to Verona to calm them with a speech.

He had little to talk about except the already badly tarnished glory of his diminishing empire. Hitler had tried to help by inducing German bishops to describe his attack on Russia as a religious war against the antichrist, but the Pope refused to ask the Italian Catholic hierarchy to make similar utterances. At every subsequent transport of troops to

the east Mussolini has had to run to their point of departure and inspire them personally with fiery speeches about glory and a distant victory.

His task became no easier when on July 7 President Roosevelt announced to Congress that American troops had joined the British in occupying Iceland. The tone of newspaper comment betrayed surprise that Germany had not taken the island sooner, and the Propaganda Ministry ordered the occupation treated as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine and proof of expanding American imperialism, coupled with the growing weakness of British world power.

As usual, private reactions were somewhat different. People were delighted to see their ally humiliated, and in the War Ministry an extended word battle broke out between Italian staff officers and Germans of the military mission.

Italian taunts about Iceland were met by a German query as to Italy's many unsuccessful efforts to bomb Malta to bits—which the Italians answered by pointed references to the invasion of England. Pinelli's secretary stopped the argument when the Germans grew angrier and angrier, and the episode was recounted by the Italians in the ministry restaurant amid shouts of laughter.

In July I obtained an insight into what was really going on in the minds of Japan's rulers concealed behind the mask of obscurity in which they and the Americans were covering their negotiations.

American Ambassador Joseph C. Grew had been talking for some weeks with Japanese Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka.

The talks dragged on and on and, while the Axis countries usually kept the subject of diplomatic negotiations secret from their peoples, in this case the Americans were doing likewise and believed the negotiations to be absolutely secret. Yet, I discovered, they were reported daily to German Ambassador General Eugen von Ott in Tokyo, who short-waved them to Berlin. The German Foreign Office in turn was keeping the Italian War and

Foreign offices fully informed.

Thus the Japanese purpose was clear: to play off the United States against the Axis. And Pinelli, who shared the official mistrust of the Japanese, had little faith in Japanese sincerity.

The Japanese were talking with Grew only for purposes of stalling, for the Japanese Elder Statesman had already decided Japan's course for 1942. Presently there would be a change in the cabinet. In about two weeks a transition cabinet would come and after that the all-powerful army would emerge into open control.

The Japanese armed forces were overwhelmingly anti-American and waited only for the Germans to capture Moscow and break Russian resistance to attack Russia in the rear and flout America's opposition in the Far East by expanding southward.

One day four of us went down to Ostia for a swim. My companion was Ingrid Soederberg, whose husband had just finished his annual visit to Rome. The other couple that day were young Gianni from Cina Citta and a new Serbian picture actress. We went by the overcrowded electric train which takes thirty minutes.

It was part of my character to flirt with the little Serb and I did. I had so built up my reputation as a woman chaser that my friends were never surprised at anything I might do. I wanted everyone to believe my only interest to be not wine, but women and song. I have no musical ability and my singing voice is not pleasant to the ear. Yet I sang for my friends whenever I could find someone to accompany me. They all laughed at me, but good-naturedly. It made no difference; it accomplished my purpose.

To prove my ignorance of political and world events I often invented improbable rumors which I would retail with all seriousness. My greatest accomplishment in this line was the Brazilian Expeditionary Force to France in the spring of 1940. I said I had been told on the highest authority that Brazil was sending a large shipment of troops to Bordeaux to fight the Germans in the south. Wilder rumors than this often circulated, but coming from me

this one drew shouts of laughter. For weeks afterward I was asked for further news of my Brazilian Expeditionary Force.

At Ostia that day we went to the Stabilimento Vineta, most exclusive beach club, where I had a guest card through the Caccia. The entrance fee is twelve lire, but swimming there is no great enjoyment. The sand is coarse and blackish, but for some reason the best Roman society frequents the place. It has its private *cabanas*, luxuriously furnished.

I remember that particular visit to Ostia because Edda Ciano was there with a German lieutenant, a big, good-looking fellow. I had seen them together several times in Rome.

This daughter of Mussolini is one of Italy's smartest dressed women. The designer of her tailored clothes is the famous Domenico Caraceni in Via Boncompagni, and her gowns are made by Maison Venturi—no relative of my friend—in Via Condotti. Rumor said the officer had been sent by the Nazi High Command to ingratiate himself with her because of her strong influence over Mussolini's and her husband's political acts.

Despite her talent as a political intriguer, she is as prone as her husband in taking advantage of her favored position in life. The following anecdote, told me by Shevket Verlaci, trivial though it is in a way, throws some light on the degree of cynicism with which the Axis denounces its enemies for sinking Red Cross ships:

On the previous March 15 the Italian Red Cross ship *Po* had been torpedoed by the Greeks in the Albanian harbor of Valona. Mussolini's propagandists issued the usual outcry of "barbarian-ism," but of course failed to mention that the *Po*, in order not to make the voyage to Albania for nothing, had gone loaded with munitions—information the Greeks had and acted on. Nor did the Italian press report that the ship had also had two vacationing passengers: Edda Ciano and the young German officer. When the Greek torpedo struck, thousands of Valonians, Verlaci included, who had rushed to the quays to watch the ship sink, saw the distinguished pair pop on deck to be rescued.

A sample of Ciano's attitude toward his country is revealed by the episode which began

on January 27, 1941, when an official communique was issued: “The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Galeazzo Ciano, Lieutenant-Colonel of the Royal Air Force, has resumed command of a formation of bombers in the zone of operations.”

The “zone of operations” was Bari, loading point for troops and materiel for Albania, and quite a distance from the fighting. A friend loaned Ciano his villa, where the count stayed for about a month, passing his time in endless parties and poker games. In one week the “Lieutenant-Colonel of a formation of bombers” lost two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. But he never so much as saw the inside of a bomber that month, much less command a formation in raids over Greek soil.

Frequent guest though I was in Venturi’s palazzo, it was not often that we found ourselves alone. Venturi had loved his late wife greatly and even after two years he had not accustomed himself to a house without her. So he always had many guests; he was a gracious host.

One night in the early summer of 1941 we had dinner alone together and afterward fell into a discussion of the possibility of revolution in Italy.

Veteran convinced Fascist though he was, Venturi readily enough conceded that the people were wearied by years of privation and war. Even the growing renascence of the people’s historic loathing of the Germans could not lead to planned revolution. Ruefully he admitted that Fascism had almost ceased to exist as a political force and had become nothing but a branch of the Nazi party. Therefore, when peace came to a defeated Italy, the remnants of Fascism would be overthrown by democratic forces; a prospect he disliked because he didn’t consider the Italian people ripe for democracy. Given peace, Venturi thought—as did the great majority of sincere Fascist Italians—Italy would have developed from repressive dictatorship into syndicalism, a tendency urged by Mussolini himself as leading to a degree of democracy adapted to the political maturity—or its lack—of the Italian people.

His low opinion of Italian political self-reliance springs largely from ignorance of the strength of the underground movements, particularly the Matteotti. His error is shared by a considerable number of Fascists.

But revolt now? He shook his head. The Fascist leaders were on guard against it. Mussolini has turned the Palazzo Venezia into a virtual fortress. He works at a desk at one end of a twenty-meter room on the second floor. The vast expanse is famous for its depressing effect on visitors—it is almost entirely unfurnished and the floor of dark green and black marble is shiny like an ice pond. The size of this room, it was said, had particularly impressed Hitler, who insisted that his workroom in the new Reichschancellery in Berlin be three meters longer, which he triumphantly showed to Mussolini on the latter's state visit in 1938. Halfway down Mussolini's long room is a fireplace on either side of which is a peephole from a little room behind the wall. There are stationed two of the best marksmen in Italy with sub-machine guns which they keep trained on Mussolini's visitors with orders to shoot at the first suspicious move. Venturi knew one of the two men: Angelo, who accompanied Mussolini whenever the dictator went out.

Every visitor to Mussolini passes through a dimly lit anteroom where, unbeknown, he is subjected to invisible search by X ray and photoelectric eyes to detect hidden metal weapons.

Next to the workroom, Venturi said, there is a suite where Il Duce relaxes. One day when the great man was out, his valet de chambre, Giovanni Mercati, had shown Venturi through, pointing with pride to the enormous numbers of civilian suits and uniforms, shoes, and linen. It is Mussolini's foible to order everything in duplicate; one set to be kept in the Palazzo Venezia, the other in his residence, the Villa Torlonia on Via Nomentana.

Mercati had also shown him Il Duce's toilet articles and he glimpsed a number of wigs,

false beards, and mustaches and putty for altering the conformation of the nose. Mercati didn't say whether Mussolini enjoyed making-up for fun, or whether these were in preparation for a secret flight from Italy someday. The latter sounds a little melodramatic.

From this suite runs the secret tunnel to which Mussolini carries the key.

Mussolini's mania is to be a lone eagle. Contrary to Hitler—who surrounds himself with a mass of strong characters, aides, adjutants, generals, interpreters—Mussolini fears and prevents anyone else's building up a strong reputation by being seen often with him in public. When he rides to an official function in his eight-cylinder Fiat, he sits alone in the back seat; in front sit the chauffeur and the chief of his bodyguards, Carlo Umbaldo. Twenty or thirty paces behind follows a closed car packed with armed marksmen, headed by Angelo, with sub-machine guns held at ready. The windows of the car are dark so that, while those inside may see out, those outside may not see in.

One day I saw Mussolini drive into Via Sicilia to open an exhibit organized by the confederation of artists. Long before his arrival the street before the building was cleared. On the pavement across the way were some three hundred men, like a crowd awaiting his arrival. I wanted to join them but I was chased; all those men were disguised guards. I was shepherded away to a distance of about a hundred yards. Other pedestrians, apparently used to these comedies, made no attempt to approach closer.

Mussolini's Fiat drove up and stopped before the building. The marksmen's car pulled up directly behind. Mussolini jumped out with his invariable display of animal energy. The crowd of detectives across the street applauded and cheered. Mussolini turned in the entrance, pulled himself together, and put on his imperator visage, with glaring eyes, jutting chin, and hand outstretched in Roman salute. Then he walked into the building.

But his shoulders were not as rigid as usual; he looked like a tired man. And he was fatter than when I had last seen him.

Like every man who has risen to power from extreme poverty, Mussolini has

surrounded himself with fabulous luxury. In Villa Torlonia he has not only tennis courts but a private riding academy. The house contains a motion-picture projection room about sixty feet long, decorated in red and gold. Pinelli had once attended a screening there and said there were only a few armchairs scattered about, each one a distinct work of art. The chair Pinelli occupied was finished in calf leather and gold leaf. Mussolini's rest is a divan a la Madame Recamier with a beautiful small table next to it for refreshments. There were a number of small movable bars bearing several brands of champagne of which Il Duce is very fond. He usually finishes a bottle himself in the course of each forenoon.

Particularly famous is his private swimming pool, tiled in blue and gold, with rose marble walls. The pool is about sixty feet long. Tables and chairs are scattered about beside the pool, and this is where Il Duce gives private swimming parties.

Italy's prewar parties were politically bankrupted by inept management and lack of forceful policy. The Italian army, though theoretically a victor, returned home badly demoralized. Industry even three years after Versailles had not yet found its way back to peacetime production. Living conditions were miserable and tourist trade had not resumed because other European countries were having their own troubles. The Italian people were left with a weak government and a weak king, ripe to be plucked by the first bold action. Thus in 1922 Mussolini organized the so-called march on Rome under the guidance of his brother, Arnaldo; the latter was the real brain, Benito only the executive arm. Chief financier was the Jewish Commendatore Giacomo Toeplitz, president of the Banca Commerciale, then of Milan, now of Rome. The King, terrified at the apparent necessity for opposing the acts of a few hooligans with soldiers, compromised by offering Mussolini the premiership without dismissing the incumbent cabinet. Mussolini accepted and finished the march as de facto Premier.

Mussolini had still to unify the country and that was when he founded his political police, the OVRA. From that era date the bloodthirsty stories of Italy's purge, when

political opponents were murdered, imprisoned, marched out into waterless deserts and left to die, dosed with castor oil. Among the victims was Giacomo Matteotti, revered as the twentieth-century martyr of the Italian people.

Arnaldo followed his brother to Rome to bring some order into the chaotic Fascist picture, but Benito promptly sent him back to Milan where, as editor in chief of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini's intelligent brother ended his days.

It is worth noting that, in contrast to Hitlerian Germany, Fascism has rarely elevated its own riffraff to leadership of the country. The mass of Italian people are politically lethargic, and for many generations the rule of the country had lain firmly in the grasp of the aristocracy and the lawyers. Even in twenty years Mussolini has not succeeded in changing this, and it is doubtful that he even tried. Many of the old-time ruling clique have adopted Fascism as a political label; some even believe in its expressed ideas; but with the exception of men like Balbo and Muti, few Fascists have succeeded in rising without the aid of prominent family backgrounds. In Italy there are no men of the caliber of Himmler, Goebbels, and hundreds of other Nazi leaders—able, forceful men who would probably have risen to some sort of prominence anyway. This failure of Fascism to bring its own spawn into positions of real power also explains why Italy, despite Mussolini's ferocious blusterings, has never fallen into the brutality and barbarism of Nazism, with the exception of the one political purge at the beginning.

Mussolini is aware of the weaknesses of the Italian national structure, which he has altered in name only. Unable to place his followers permanently in positions of power and within reach of the riches that go with power, he has to alternate his party leaders in the posts which he does control. Every two years he changes hundreds of appointments; this is the explanation of the "Fascist shake-ups" which receive so much attention in the press abroad and are interpreted as indicating an inner crack-up.

The aristocrats adjusted themselves to Fascism when they saw that their power, instead

of being restricted, was, in fact, expanded. Heavy industry likewise. It supported Fascism at the beginning because it limited strikes and promised to keep wages down. It has not been disillusioned, as was industry with Hitler. While the Arbeitsfront commissar is the boss of the German factory, the Italian factory is more than ever the private fief of the owner.

Industry in Italy is in a better position under Fascism than it was before. Until the Spring of 1940 it was paid in cash by the government, not partly in bonds as in Germany. Wages have been frozen since the Abyssinian war in 1935 though living costs have soared. And Italian industry has learned how to keep in the good graces of the government and so pile up always greater profits.

The Italian people are therefore drowning in apathy and despair. This explains the phenomenal strength of the underground movement, which grows stronger with every additional step of German infiltration and occupation. Though Italy is the scene of increasing unrests, it will not come to a general people's revolution because the people have no weapons and there are too many German soldiers and secret police. But the unrest is forcing Germany to immobilize always more troops.

The Germans recognized this in 1940, and many high officers and civilians I met freely said they regarded Italy as the weakest point in the Axis and that Hitler would halt almost any other operation in order to bolster Italy. This is the explanation of their taking over the direction of political, military, and industrial leadership.

But the leadership of the Italian army is not to be underestimated. Badoglio and Graziani, for example, are able men of strong character.

The royal House of Savoy is in a difficult position. The King, who had helped Mussolini into power and basked in his reflected glory for some years, then began to avoid identification with Fascism in the public mind. He tries not to be seen with Il Duce in public. Early in the Greek war, for example, some of the "victorious" troops were to be

reviewed. Mussolini had promised that both he and the King would pay them a visit in Albania. But the King begged off, Venturi told me, pleading illness. Mussolini inspected the troops alone and the King came a day later. An attempt was made on his life and Verlaci, Albania's Premier, suffered a scratch wound on the left arm. The King enjoyed at least a certain respect until he affixed his name to Mussolini's declaration of war against France and England, but since then he is almost as unpopular as Il Duce.

Through German encroachment Italian heavy industry has begun to suffer heavily, and this has led to unwillingness to continue to cooperate with the regime. This opposition gathered further impetus from a series of conversations between German Economics Minister Walther Funk and Count Volpi, spokesman for Italian industry.

As part of the New Order, said Funk, Italy after Axis victory would have to give up the manufacture of automobiles and restrict itself to manufacturing parts of the single German make which would supersede the large number of competing types. Fiat would make certain parts, Lancia other parts, etc.

When Volpi reported these proposals a wave of anger swept through industrial circles. Representatives of Ansaldo, Fiat, and Lancia called on Mussolini and demanded protection against such German illusions.

Mussolini, the prisoner of his own policies, could only reply that the end of the war was not yet and that this was no time to quarrel about postwar plans. He hinted broadly that for the time being acquiescence was indicated.

The proposals were also discussed in industry-wide meetings called by the Corporations Ministry where, Venturi said, he had some ado to prevent the industrialists and financial managers from revolting openly.

Frightened by the gloomy picture, wealthy Italians began a flight from money into real estate. The stock market rose to price levels having no relation to securities values. This false prosperity caused more and more restlessness among the people, so that Gayda had

to write a series of articles in *Il Giornale* severely condemning speculation of all kinds. The regime, he warned, had prepared an edict that all securities, must henceforth be inscribed with the name of the purchaser—so that unpatriotic speculators should become known—and that special new taxes would be levied on all real-estate transactions. Whereupon the capital flight shifted to jewelry, which rose fantastically in price until the government clamped down on all jewelry stores.

Nevertheless, the luxury of the leading circles remained unabated. Its less fastidious members continued to make such public display of their wealth that the party appealed to them to avoid ostentation.

Even in Balkan court circles I have rarely seen such a profusion of furs and jewelry on women as in Rome society. Any woman is ashamed of a diamond ring of less than twenty-five carats, and she usually wears four or five. Despite textile shortages, Roman women dress beautifully and richly in the very latest modes. Shoes are a fetish. The favorite shoe designer in Via Veneto, Luccatoni, is three to four months behind in filling orders for shoes that in 1940 cost four hundred lire and in 1941 a thousand.

In the homes of the extremely wealthy food was plentiful. Planes from Lisbon brought delicacies to their tables, their country estates sent them daily shipments of fine white wheat bread and fruit and vegetables. Official meatless days are ignored. And I remember an evening in March 1941, when there was no milk even for children in the stores of Rome, having whipped-cream cake for dessert—and this despite the fact that the sale of whipped cream had been forbidden for a whole year before.

35. GERMAN OCCUPATION OF ITALY

ON AUGUST 3, 1941, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of England met “somewhere in the Atlantic” and on August 14 issued the Atlantic Charter.

Gayda flew into characteristic print. Official circles however, envisioned an omen of future defeat and suspected that the meeting had resulted in secret military agreements. The people saw further proof of American entry into the war, and hence an excuse for further repressive measures by the Mussolini regime. The arrival of the first trains of wounded from Russia gave their fears a new and poignant strength.

In August, Nardini of Lati told me that the Germans were getting industrial diamonds for machine tools and quartz diamonds for radio telephones from Brazil via the Italian seaplane line. Nazis were shuttling back and forth to Brazil and Argentina on every plane. Invariably there were two seats reserved for Nazi emissaries or couriers. After the black list of firms in South America was issued by the British and subsequently augmented by the Americans, other firms took their places as purchasers in accordance with the Von Kuhlemann plan.

The Lati route was satisfactory for minute objects like industrial diamonds. But for bulky commodities like wool, hides, metals only ships could be used. Thus the Nazis faced the problem of getting through the British blockade.

In the winter of 1940 I had learned—I prefer not to say how—that the nub of German trade with South America centered in Madrid, where operated a considerable number of supposedly neutral middlemen. Most active of these was a prince of a widely known dynasty. Like the others, he imported ostensibly for the Spanish market, while in reality the goods were shipped through Occupied France to Germany. Meier’s chief was paying

this fellow only three thousand dollars for each [navicert](#) obtained by him, ostensibly through relatives in London.

Following my report to the Colonel, the British refused further navicerts to the prince.

Several times I hinted to Meier that I had highly placed friends in Madrid, and he believed me readily because he knew of my friendships in Rome. Sometime after I had reported the name of the prince to the Colonel, Meier picked me up.

He said that his chief was annoyed at the difficulty they were having with navicerts in Madrid; they had barely managed to get a shipment of wool through; now they were in need of Argentine hides.

He offered me three thousand dollars per shipload for navicerts if I could get them for him in Madrid.

I said I would need much more money than that. I might have to pay out a lot in bribes.

Meier's caution returned; he said that as soon as their regular Madrid courier arrived he would consult his chief again and let me know.

The following week he said he would have to withdraw his offer to me: his chief had decided to work with the Portuguese.

My only profit from these conversations was the information that General Rommel and the Italians had planned a Libyan offensive in August across the desert to Assuan. It was cancelled, however, because the German march into Russia was not going well, though Germany still counted on a Petain peace there.

At this same time I verified into fact a hint dropped by a German officer one night in the Caccia: nineteen miles from Rome had stood for some years a factory branch of the Breda Motor Company, one of Italy's leading airplane producers. It had now been changed over into a repair center for German planes damaged in North Africa. German mechanics were imported; some replacement parts were shipped from Germany, others were produced in the factory itself. Though English planes often appeared over Rome,

this factory was never bombed.

Thus German encroachment marched on: factories here, railroads there, commissions, troops “en route,” until the independence of Italy has become a fiction.

Translated into military terms, German control of its ally has meant the establishment on her territory of an army of occupation of 418,000 men—the equivalent of twenty-seven divisions. This total consists of the following:

Soldiers in their own barracks and armories from the Brenner Pass to Sicily: 4,000 officers and 28,000 men;

Fliers and ground crews, 25,000;

Industrial executives, foremen, and key workers, 8,000;

Railroad superintendents and operating personnel, 12,000;

Gestapo and SS men, 25,000;

Tourists (military in civilian clothes), 80,000;

Registered male members of the Auslandsorganisation aged between twenty and forty-five, 40,000;

North African expeditionary force of 30,000 permanent reserve in Sicily and 150,000 troops in Libya;

Sailors and naval officers with the Italian fleet, 15,000.

Total, 418,000.

The story of the Germans in the Italian fleet is odd. It dates prior to the British-Italian naval battle of Matapan on March 28, 1941, when the British rescued some German survivors of a sunken Italian ship. The German personnel consisted mostly of gunnery specialists, officially under jurisdiction of the Italian Naval Ministry but actually under the German commission. Ranks were arranged so that the German officers were subordinate to the Italian commanders. Curiously, no trouble came between the officers.

But with the men it was a different story, Trasazzo told me. The German gunners,

feeling themselves superior to the Italian sailors, refused to carry out ordinary shipboard chores: deck-swabbing, polishing brightwork, etc. Complaints by the Italian commanders to the German naval mission in Rome were ignored. Finally, on the *Vittorio Veneto*, the two hundred Germans had a magnificent brawl with some of the Italian complement, and this time the men were changed. A different two hundred Germans came.

Italian resentment was increased by the fact that the Germans were paid in marks which Italian banks had to change at the official rate—which resulted in an artificially favorable rate of pay for German sailors working side by side with Italians.

At Pinelli's, where I escorted Ingrid Soederberg one evening, I again saw Maria della Rocca, without Cavallero. I left the two ladies together for a chat and later Ingrid said she had got on very well with the general's "niece."

Ingrid took up my suggestion that she cultivate the Della Rocca girl; make an effort to win her confidence; and she soon reported that the friendship was ripening. Maria della Rocca was a simple, warm-hearted person completely without guile. Ingrid tried on her a modification of the trick I had worked with Bettina Salvoni—to show an interest in her "uncle's" work because men are flattered by such interest. Ingrid had fired the simple-hearted girl's imagination with encouragement to become the general's inspiration.

Very soon Ingrid was reporting conversations which the general had with Maria. He was very pleased at the sudden interest she displayed in his work.

Cavallero, it appeared, was not convinced of a military victory of the Axis powers, but he did believe that the world would become exhausted by war and that would lead to a negotiated peace.

The Germans would halt their Russian campaign on the line Archangel-Caspian Sea. The offensive power of the Russians having been broken by that time, the war would then change into one of position. Germany would hold her eastern front with as few troops as

possible and start organizing European Russia. Exploitation of this region, said Cavallero, would enable Germany and Italy to withstand a war of attrition longer than America and the British Empire. Egypt would be pressed from two sides: Libya and Turkey. The latter, having been promised Russian Turkestan, would play the role of a second Romania and give the Germans right of troop passage through their country to take the Caucasus in the rear. Syria, Palestine, and Egypt would fall in a pincer movement. Iran and Iraq would be kept in a state of unrest by German agents and propaganda, thus eliminating an assembly area for united British and American armies, particularly since India also would be kept in a state of unrest. The Gestapo was working with the Indian independence movement. The Germans could invade England at any time should that country become too dangerous a jumping-off place for air attacks on Germany.

The occupation of Spain and Portugal and the taking of Gibraltar were also contemplated. Vichy France would make no objection to the occupation by force of Tunisia and Morocco and, in fact, an agreement to that effect had already been made between the Petain regime and Germany. This summary could safely be taken as Keitel's view and much of it has since been substantiated by German actions, or attempts at action.

Ingrid and I were delighted at the success of our little intrigue.

We had a direct line into the Italian General Staff, a branch of the German. We saw no reason why it shouldn't continue.

But it did not continue indefinitely—for another reason altogether. Ingrid Soederberg's husband appeared unexpectedly, compelled his wife to resign her post, and carried her back to Stockholm with him.

I was afraid to cultivate Maria della Rocca myself.

Certificates obtained by shippers from British consulates attesting to noncontraband nature of cargoes and which on presentation to blockade authorities and contraband control posts entitle ships to pass through. [Return to text.](#)

36. IL DUCE OUTSMARTED

IN MID-AUGUST came the climax of the story of Croatia, which began when the Yugoslavs defied Hitler and thus touched off the Balkan campaign.

No sooner had Yugoslavia fallen than Croatia, one of its major subdivisions and long hostile to the Serb-dominated regime in Belgrade, split off into a separate state under the leadership of Ante Pavelich. He titled himself Poglavnik, Leader.

Pavelich came at once to Rome to negotiate with Mussolini and Ciano. Early in April he was called to Berlin, whither he flew in Von Mackensen's private plane, leaving the Italians staring, as it were, at his empty chair.

Promptly at the beginning of the Yugoslav fighting Italy had launched irredentist propaganda for Dalmatia, the strip of Yugoslavia bordering the Adriatic between Albania and Trieste. Its northernmost section is politically part of Croatia. The Adriatic is Italy's domestic sea; no other nation could be tolerated in power on its shores. The propaganda swelled into violent demands for the "liberation" of the entire coastal strip. Gayda claimed in a special article in *Il Giornale* that Dalmatia had once been part of the Venetian republic and therefore was old Italian soil.

The moment Croatian independence was declared, a struggle between Germany and Italy began over the new country, especially the Dalmatian coastal strip. To settle its frontiers a conference was called in Vienna May 3, to be attended by the Italians headed by Ciano, the Germans by Von Ribbentrop, the Croa-tians by Pavelich.

But the Italians, completely disillusioned by having to forego their claims to Nice, Corsica, and Savoy the previous year, foresaw that something of the same nature might happen in Vienna on May 3.

Unable to give the Italians real bread and spaghetti, Mussolini at least wanted to present them with a greater Italy. But, fearing a trap at Vienna and violent public reaction if Italy were again euhred out of its “rights,” Mussolini let his hardened attitude become known to the Germans, and the Vienna conference was cancelled. Pinelli told me all this; he was to have been in the Italian delegation.

But Von Ribbentrop, unbeknown to the Italians, had already had secret negotiations with Pavelich. To counter Italy’s demands for Dalmatia, Von Ribbentrop intended that Croatia, for Germany’s benefit, should have the coastal strip on the ground that the new state needed an outlet to the sea. The German Foreign Minister urged Pavelich to make Croatia into a kingdom and offer the throne to the Italian House of Savoy. This would flatter the Italians into assuming that Croatia would thus become an Italian puppet like Albania and therefore they would gladly give up Dalmatia to Croatia.

The first inkling Mussolini had of this was a message from Pavelich offering to establish a Croatian kingdom to be ruled by a Savoy king. Il Duce was delighted. It would give him a new means of binding the royal house of Italy to Fascism. Lengthy historical articles appeared in the Italian press about the independent kingdom of Croatia of nine hundred years ago which had been ruled by King Zvonimir the First. Now the independent kingdom would be resurrected under King Zvonimir the Second, an Italian prince.

After much confabulation in the Quirinale, Victor Emmanuel designated Aimone of Savoy-Aosta, Duke of Spoleto, as presumptive King of Croatia.

On May 17 Poglavnik Pavelich, attended by a bodyguard of two hundred fierce-looking Ustachis, came to Rome to formalize the offer of the throne. The Fascist party turned out a made-to-order enthusiastic crowd to line the streets from the station to the Quirinale.

In the throne room sat the King and Queen; about them stood the members of the court in full regalia. Pavelich humbly submitted his petition that he be permitted to offer the throne of Croatia to a Savoy. Victor Emmanuel indicated the Duke of Spoleto and Pavelich

genuflected before him and addressed him as King Zvonimir the Second, heir to Zvonimir the First.

From the Quirinale, Pavelich went to the Palazzo Venezia to see Mussolini and settle the matter of the Dalmatian coast. Very pleased, Il Duce agreed to the inclusion of Dalmatia in Croatia. He had put one over on Von Ribbentrop, he told his advisors. The new kingdom would be an Italian puppet.

But he didn't know that four days before Pavelich's resounding offer to the King, Pavelich and the Germans had already concluded an agreement.

So, on the eighteenth in Rome, Italy and Croatia signed a treaty of mutual respect and assistance, and Italy formally acknowledged the surrender of its claim to Dalmatia. Mussolini thereafter invited Von Ribbentrop to affix his signature, but he declined: it was an Italian-Croatian affair in which Germany could not interfere. But actually he didn't want to guarantee Croatia's frontiers, which signing the Italian treaty would have meant.

The Italian press blossomed with articles about the forthcoming coronation of the new Croatian king in Duvnanjsko Polje in southern Bosnia. It was described as a great political triumph for Italy. Photographs and biographies of the duke and his wife filled the papers, though none mentioned that the duchess had been a Greek princess before her marriage.

Meanwhile, however, Germany seized the real power in Croatia by appointing an envoy, a man trained in the SA leader schools. On May 30 his handiwork showed in a commercial treaty between Germany and Croatia, in which the latter agreed to send all of its exports to Germany—the usual one-way commercial treaty. When the Italian commercial delegates arrived in Zagreb in early June, they found there were no exports to negotiate about. They returned in melancholy mood.

The blow that woke Mussolini and the Italians from their daydream was a note to Ciano from the German envoy in Zagreb suggesting that King Zvonimir II postpone his coronation until after the war; at this moment he could not take it upon himself to

guarantee the safety of the new King's life.

Italy asked itself: why, then, the great festivities in the Quiri-nale? Why the surrender of Italian rights in Dalmatia? Why the failure to get a commercial treaty?

Mussolini was especially infuriated that it was the German envoy in Zagreb who had sent the note to Ciano, not Poglavnik Pavelich. He threatened to occupy Dalmatia by force. In terror Pavelich flew to Berchtesgaden on June 6 to get a guarantee of his independence. He returned to Zagreb easy in mind; Hitler and Von Ribbentrop promised him Italy would do nothing drastic.

King Victor Emmanuel was also displeased. In an ill-tempered meeting between him and Il Duce he accused the dictator of holding the House of Savoy up to world-wide ridicule and contempt.

Mussolini was out for revenge against his ally. When he didn't get a chance to say anything to Hitler about Croatia when they met June 2 at the Brenner, he waited impatiently for his chance—perhaps the last he'd ever have to annoy the dictator beyond the Alps.

It came in early August when the German armies were fully engaged in Russia. The Serbs too had waited; as summer went on their bands slowly formed into a hidden army under General Draga Michailovich and harassed the German occupying forces.

Mussolini struck. He shipped two divisions to Dalmatia and occupied it, giving the excuse that he sought to protect the shores of Italy's domestic sea from rampaging guerrillas of the Serbian shadow army who never came there, incidentally. Germany could not eject the Italians; what troops she sent became fully engaged with the Serbian Chetniki.

The festive treaty of May 18, celebrated in the Quirinale with so much pomp, had lasted less than three months when Mussolini punctured it.

But he was still not satisfied. Italian troops remained in Dalmatia while Il Duce

bombarded Hitler with notes demanding the outright partition of Croatia between the two Axis partners.

The reaction to President Roosevelt's speech of September 11, announcing that the American navy had been instructed to "shoot on sight" at Axis submarines, was taken as further proof of early American entry into the war. On the same day Colonel Lindbergh had said in Des Moines that the American people were being led into war against their will. A man like Gayda could see in these two speeches a confirmation of his own distorted perspective.

The people remained uninterested, but secretly welcomed Roosevelt's action as a possible means of bringing the war to a quicker end.

37. WHAT NEXT IN ITALY?

AFTER MY TWO YEARS and three months in wartime Italy—the culmination of an acquaintanceship reaching back eleven years—I am convinced that peace is the only goal of the Italian people, and they are convinced that peace can come only when Nazism is militarily defeated and destroyed. For they evaluate their future not in terms of their native Fascism but of the brutalitarian regime to the north, which to them is only another manifestation of the historic rapacity of their ancient enemy, Germany.

The people as a whole have begun to grasp that Fascism no longer has an independent existence. True, there are the trappings and the uniforms and the institutions of Fascism. But it is only a facade. Take away the German soldiers whose bayonets are pinning Italy to the Axis and the fabric of Fascism would vanish like morning mist in the sun. Mussolini knows this, the Italian people know it, and the Germans know it.

Italy is the Axis' weak flank, and it is the Nazi misfortune to have, even on their one supposedly friendly flank, an enemy who has hated them for centuries. Therefore they have stationed on Italy's soil what amounts to an army of occupation approaching a half-million men. They must send always more and more, to prop up the Italian army which refuses to fight Hitler's war, to prevent the police from going over to the people in a body, and to preserve the quaking figure of Mussolini in an erect position.

Italy, in fact, is in a state of unacknowledged civil war.

This truth has not yet penetrated outside consciousness, because the skill of Nazi propagandists has managed thus far to throw a veil of legitimacy over the symptoms of internal ruin. But it is the essential fact in making an accurate political estimate of Italy's position in the war and in the world.

Of course the awareness of Fascism's end has not spread to every member of the Italian nation in the same way or to the same degree. Each man evaluates the situation in terms of his own perceptions, but I believe it is possible to speak of several distinct schools of thought in Italy.

There are those whose lives, careers, and prosperity depend exclusively on the Fascist party. They are little concerned with the fact that there is no longer an identity between Italy and the Fascist party. By this I mean: the Fascist regime is no longer the expression of Italy's national interests as her citizens see them. These men, essentially political adventurers, know that when Fascism formally dies, they will be lucky to escape with their lives; the men who hope to rule Italy after the war have already marked them as criminals, thieves, and traitors. It is possible to substantiate the charges.

Their criminality includes organized murder; their thievery lies in bribe-taking and systematic raiding of the public treasury; their treason lies in that they have knowingly sold their country to Germany in order to hold their jobs.

The number of men who once were, or perhaps still are, convinced Fascists—men who believed the patchwork political philosophy of Fascism to be the solution of Italy's problems—is dwindling. These men need not be taken seriously, no matter how earnest and well intentioned they are. At least their fundamental patriotism cannot be questioned.

More difficult to delineate is the position of the aristocracy of blood and money, a fairly large and important group without profound political convictions of any sort. They control a disproportionately large share of the national wealth and therefore comprise one of the stubbornest problems confronting Italy. They must be dealt with firmly, for it is they who operate to keep Italy at a stage politically fifty years behind the rest of western Europe.

This leaves unclassified an element which always plays an important role in the political

evolution of European countries: the leaders of the armed forces. Few of the men who command Italy's army and navy and air force are convinced Fascists, yet many of their predecessors helped Mussolini to power. Badoglio, Graziani, Cavagnari—these are men who, if they will, can play important roles when the hour of decision comes. If they are as good commanders as their records indicate, they will lead their men where the men want to go—and that is not back toward dictatorship, regimentation, starvation, and senseless wars, but forward to peace, freedom from Germany, and a new Italy.

Then there are men like Pinelli, who belong to the ruling class and no longer believe in Fascism, yet are not satisfied with waiting for somebody else to do something about it. There are many of these—convinced liberals after their bitter experiences of the past twenty years—and those who survive the coming holocaust may be expected to play an important role in Italy of the future.

And there is the mass of people—the poor, bewildered, resentful, patient people who pay all the bills.

From the reservoir of their fortitude and patience comes the strength of Italy's best organized political group—the undergrounds.

Almost half-a-million Italians today belong to the united underground organization, of which the Matteotti people are the strongest and most level-headed. It is they who are the skeleton of future Italy, they who are bringing about the weakening of Fascism and who work to hasten the day when Nazism too will topple over.

Their program, as long as Germany sustains Fascism, is not to burst into open revolt, but to create unrest by demonstrations, sabotage, propaganda. They wage this fight not against Fascism—they regard it as already deceased—but against Germany. The fruit of their labors is to be seen in the attitude of Italian soldiers toward the war and in the conviction borne in upon Hitler: that Italy too is his enemy.

The underground leaders do not plan revolt now—which is to say as long as Germany

has so many soldiers in Italy—because it would lead only to senseless slaughter. They have no trained parachutists, no tanks, guns, or airplanes. They cannot organize a shadow army, like the Yugoslavs, because Italy has not the necessary wild terrain to hide hundreds of thousands of men. They realize that abortive revolt now would lead only to bloody repression, with no compensating benefits. On the contrary, it might lead to complete loss of heart among a people already worn by unwanted wars and from whom the final decisive action must come.

It is a mistake, therefore, if anti-Axis forces today suppose that Italy will drop out of the war by itself.

Such an event can be brought about by only two means, in my opinion, and in the opinion of the men who set the policy for the underground:

One is invasion by the United Nations, which would be warmly welcomed and abetted by the mass of people. The other is for Germany to be militarily defeated and Nazism destroyed. Axis victory, negotiated peace leaving Nazism still in charge of Europe—anything short of the disappearance of Hitlerism from Europe will not be enough.

There will be no revolution in Italy until peace—as defined above—comes again to Europe. This, at least, is the plan, though like all plans of mankind it is subject to correction by destiny.

I have seen the Italian underground at work; I have met many of its topmost leaders; I know what manner of men they are. And I believe they will bring their plan into existence. They will need, however, understanding and help, and then they will build

Italy into the strong and progressive democratic member of the comity of nations which its greatest men have always believed it can be.

At the critical moment of Italian history which will bring their revolution it is the intention of the underground, led by the Matteotti group, to set up a provisional government. It will immediately “freeze” the property of all Fascists from highest to

lowest and take control of industry. This will not be done, however, with a view to imposing a socialist regime but to protect the helpless, defeated populace from the inroads of rapacious financiers or other adventurous groups that may attempt to surge up. Seized lands will be placed under an independent state agency, freezing their ownership for the time being so that unemployed peasants and discharged soldiers may be put to work on them. Similarly with industry. To prevent wash sales of industrial properties to foreign groups, the state will freeze ownership of plants and keep them running.

These drastic measures will be purely temporary in character, it is intended, because the underground leaders desire one thing above all: that the people shall, as promptly as possible, have a free and uncoerced opportunity to vote at a general election and at regular local and national elections ever after.

The House of Savoy and the concept of monarchy have been blighted by Fascism. Therefore it is their intention to set up a constitutional democracy modeled on the American and British, with president, two-chamber legislature, and courts sharing the triple burden of government. The influence of men who have lived in America has played a large part in elaborating the plan. They do not believe, nor do they desire, to set up a regime either markedly left or markedly right, for a simple and eminently practical reason: Italy has always depended on tourism for a large proportion of its national income, and it must be lured back by the prospect of a moderate regime, not one addicted to the violences of the Left or the Right. Further, the Italian underground today comprises beliefs running the full gamut of political philosophies.

In preparation for the first election, the underground is already prepared with a detailed program which they will present and attempt to put into effect, for, democratic though they are, they still believe that the Italian people must be led. They propose to substitute chosen for confiscated leadership.

It is the view of the Matteotti leaders that the legislature will fall into three groups: a small Left, a heavy democratic center with a two-thirds majority, and a small Right made up of the aristocracy and industrialists. The danger of what is now an “against” movement splitting, as soon as victory is won, into a dozen chattering blocs will be prevented, it is believed, by the positive, unifying force of democratic idealism.

They will advocate, then, two major reforms in Italian life.

The first is in land. Large estates, even of non-Fascists, will be broken up and distributed among peasants, who will in turn be helped by state loans as part of the program for strengthening the middle class.

The second is industry. It is their intention to develop a Middle Way sort of society, which may be described as *laissez faire* tempered by government regulation. Their goal will be to hinder the absorption of small industry by large, again with the purpose of preventing further proletarianization of the middle class.

The first tasks of the new state will be to investigate the ownership of the frozen lands and enterprises. Those of known Fascists will be confiscated out of hand and their owners, if available, prosecuted as criminals. Others will be returned to their owners or permanently redistributed. The ownership of industrial enterprises will be similarly investigated to prevent domestic or foreign financial manipulators from regaining control and so perhaps forming the nucleus of reactionary obstructionism to the program of the new regime.

In foreign policy the new state will seek to assert Italy’s right to colonies because of her obvious overpopulation, and it will urge freedom of the seas and internationalization of control points, especially at Gibraltar, Suez, and the Bosphorus.

Idealistically, the Matteotti leaders yearn for a new league of people’s nations, and this idealism is strengthened by the Atlantic Charter. But at the same time their revolution-to-come is to be extremely nationalistic in character, thus partaking very little of the

socialism of Giacomo Matteotti. They are determined that Italy shall follow the course of its historical development, which began with Garibaldi and Cavour, and shall not again lose its identity and independence in a condominium of nations either of the extreme Left or of the extreme Right. The Nazis have given them enough of that.

For the same reason, the underground leaders working today will not permit political theorists now living outside tormented Italy to return like conquering saviors after peace and take a voluble hand in reorganizing the country. The salvation of Italy, they declare, must be worked out by those who have stayed and fought and given blood, not by those who ran away to form Free Italy movements or one-man foreign affairs committees.

In the final analysis, the world must look to the Italian people for a solution of their problem and for the proper Italian contribution to the new world we all hope for.

I personally believe the Italian people have the capacity. They are a simple, honest folk, though embittered now by twenty years of cynical chicanery and bloodthirsty double-dealing. But, like almost all predominantly peasant peoples, they live close to the earth from which they draw their daily bread, and so they are realists. Now, in their bewildered reeling, they hope only for the appearance of a savior to deliver them from their travail and give them the opportunity of purging themselves of the shame of having tolerated their Judaslike leader and his associates for twenty years. There will be many candidates for this savior-ship. I believe the Italian people have suffered enough to be able next time to distinguish between the mouthings of adventurers and the authentic voice of salvation.

THE ROOM WITH MANY WINDOWS

ONE AFTERNOON I dropped in at the Terrini palazzo to spend a little time with Riccardo. The contessa came in just as I was leaving. She wanted me to stay for cocktails; a man was coming who had expressed a desire to meet me.

She said he was a very charming gentleman from Munich named Franz von Heidenfeld.

I asked where she had met him and why he wanted to meet me.

He had been presented to her a few days before by a friend of her husband's at a dinner; my name had come into the conversation and he said he had heard about me.

I said I didn't believe I could stay, but would she please try to find out precisely why Von Heidenfeld wanted to make my acquaintance. Had he simply made a casual, courteous remark, or might he repeat it this afternoon?

The next day the contessa reported that Von Heidenfeld had seemed disappointed at my absence; he said he was interested in the silk business and wanted to talk to me. He was organizing a little dinner party in the Ristorante di Roma to which I was invited.

I told the contessa I would come; I appreciated the gentleman's courtesy. But the morning before the dinner I sent a note saying I was ill and would be unable to attend.

A night or two later, when I met the contessa accidentally at Dino's, she said Von Heidenfeld's interest in me was worrying her. Disappointed at my failure to come to his dinner party, he had begged her to arrange a small bridge for an afternoon soon to which I would be sure to come.

I suggested she find some plausible excuse not to do so. I had no intention of deliberately meeting a Gestapo agent.

In those same days I met a forty-year-old German minister from Cologne in the official

Italian travel bureau on the Piazza Esedera where he was buying a plane ticket to Lisbon.

He attracted my attention because of his erect carriage—the carriage of a military man beneath the clerical garb. I left the office with him and we walked a few blocks together. He left me in front of the American consulate on Via Veneto to see about his visa, he said. Normally a traveler from Cologne would get his visa in Cologne. Or in Berlin. But not in Rome.

Two days later we met by appointment in one of the arcade coffeehouses.

He told me he was going to Argentina via the United States. A German church in the suburbs of Buenos Aires needed a new pastor and he had volunteered.

He sighed; he would perhaps never see Germany again.

It is a big thing, I said, to shift the foundation of one's entire life—especially in wartime.

Yes. And to shift all one's effects. It was costing him two dollars a kilo to send his vanload of effects to Buenos Aires.

I laughed. A vanload? I had always thought churchmen went through life without accumulating many personal effects.

Ah, no, he said. "I must take my books—I am writing a life of Martin Luther, reinterpreted in the light of the new theology— and my clothes, and an automobile."

I knew that the Germans had two favorite methods of transporting airplane parts to South America.

One was to secrete parts in furniture vans, sealed wooden cases from four to six yards long and from two to two and a half high. Travelers—émigrés and exiles—used them to ship their household effects abroad. They were packed under customs and Gestapo supervision and officially sealed. Between that moment and when the vans were loaded into ships they would be secretly opened again and airplane parts stowed inside.

On their arrival in the port of destination such vans usually remained weeks, sometimes months, in duty-free customs warehouses, while the owners were traveling perhaps over

half the globe to get there. It was easy for the airplane parts to be secretly removed from the vans with the connivance of warehouse guards, the vans sealed again, and passed innocently through customs when the owners arrived.

The second method was to build-in smaller airplane parts under false floors or within the engines of automobiles appearing in shipping records as belonging to Spaniards traveling to South America. Routine customs examinations at foreign ports were unlikely to spot ingenious in-construction of this kind.

Most of such shipments had gone to South America. But this man was taking an automobile apparently into the United States.

I asked him why, since it cost so much, he was taking a car.

He didn't answer.

That same night it began to rain: an unseasonable, chill drizzle.

The following afternoon Pinelli made one of his rare telephone calls to me from his office: I must visit him that evening. The chilly, monotonous drizzle continued. I went out to Monte Mario in a streetcar, my bodyguard sitting behind me. He left me at Pinelli's villa.

I was the only guest for dinner, but Pinelli gave no reason for his call until we had finished fruit and coffee and moved into the library. The rain prevented our sitting out on the terrace. Suddenly Pinelli said: "I think the time has come for you to leave Italy."

He waited a long time for me to answer. Finally I said: "Why?"

... Kannitz is in Italy?"

He shook his head in answer to the last question and said carefully: "I suspect you yourself know that your presence here isn't considered as harmless as it was before. ... I don't think I have to say any more."

Nevertheless, he added in a moment: "We have become very good friends, and I shall be sorry to see you go. But it's exactly because we are friends that I must give you this

advice.”

I said: “To get to Portugal I will need French and Spanish visas. How can I get them quickly enough?”

He considered a moment and then said: “Give me your passport. I’ll get you a Spanish visa in the morning, then I’ll send up to Turin for the French visa from the Armistice Commission.

... You can plan to leave Rome in three days.”

When I went home—before twelve so that I could use the streetcar—the rain was coming down steadily. Nor did the next day show any improvement. The walls and floors of the pensione were cold and damp; clothing felt as if it had gained pounds in weight. The streets were gray and dark and depressing.

I stopped in to see Kerbel in the arcade coffeehouse. He told me the military-looking clergyman had not been seen there again. I went to his pensione. He had given up his trip to the Americas and returned to Germany.

I knew then that I had asked the one fatal extra question that betrayed too much interest. I had frightened off an important Gestapo agent.

On the morning of the third day after seeing Pinelli I got back my passport with the necessary visas. I sent my camera lens by underground to Lisbon, but carried the case with me as before.

I said good-bye only to Sprago, the Colonel, the contessa, Venturi, and Bellini. That was all there was time, or wisdom, for, and one morning—rain still falling in a chilling, pervading wetness—I left the Stazione di Termini for Turin. There I changed for

Mentone, where the Italian-French customs examinations were held.

I walked into the main room filled with chattering passengers. Bored officials stood behind long, low tables on which lay opened valises.

On my arm I was carrying a light spring topcoat and my raincoat. Concealed in the lining

of the topcoat was a document of some importance. To close my bags after examination, I dropped the two coats momentarily on the low table. Unthinkingly I moved a few steps back to let some people pass. At that moment I felt a hand on my shoulder. An officer of the Milizia Ferroviaria asked me my name, nodded, and then told me to follow him and a corporal who stood at his heels.

We pushed through the noisy crowd to the Milizia office, where the officer—a lieutenant—took me and the corporal into a small bare room.

First he examined my passport with minute attention. Then my other papers. He had instructions to search me thoroughly, he said. A squat blond man walked in and half sat on the edge of a table. He said nothing. Rain streamed down the windowpane.

I stripped. They took every article of clothing I had on and examined it thoroughly. With scissors they undid the stitching of my jacket sleeve lining to see if anything was concealed in the shoulder pads. In preparation for the journey I had ripped out my tiny secret pocket; my packet of poison was in my medicine case.

Their examination took the better part of an hour. No word of explanation was offered, no comments made.

They found nothing. The lieutenant looked at the silent blond man and spread his hands in a southern gesture. The corporal grinned a little maliciously at me and went out. I got dressed again. The lieutenant and the silent blond man watched me. I left them.

I went down into the large hall. It was empty. My coats still lay where I had left them beside my bags.

I crossed the hall and went out into the train shed. I gave a baggage porter five lire and told him to get my bags and coats. I went to my compartment. The train had just given its preliminary jerk when the porter tumbled in, breathless, with the things. I gave him another five lire, he dropped back to the platform, and the train left Mentone.

Began a five-day journey, riding by day in a rain that seemed to be coming down all over

the world. It was cold, and the dampness penetrated everything. The through coach to Lisbon was shunted onto a siding every nightfall. The first night I slept in Marseilles, then we continued the next morning to Barcelona. Again a change for Madrid, overnight in the Palace Hotel where a man met me to receive the document secreted in my coat, and then again a long, dreary, damp ride to Lisbon, where I arrived late at night—five days and nights from Rome.

I went to the Victoria Hotel on the Avenida de Libertade.

In the morning I got up early. I had to visit the American consulate to get a transit visa. The rain had stopped, but the air was still heavy and cold and the skies were liverish.

I was the first visitor. I sat for some time in a small reception room; I had arrived even before the consul. At about half-past nine his American secretary told me to go inside through a double door taking up most of one wall.

I went and opened the door and stepped into a large room with a great number of french windows overlooking the garden behind the consulate. At a desk stood a man with an impersonal courteous smile on his face. He seemed an immense distance away in that enormous room filled with gray light.

But in the moment that I stepped over the threshold, the gray light changed, and the bit of sky I could see beyond the garden outside changed from a dark, threatening gray to a pale, bright blue. It was swift and magical. A soft breeze rustled some papers on the desk.

Suddenly the sun streamed out through the clouds, over the city, and filled the room with its warmth and its light.

Study Guide Questions and Some Writing Topics

If your teacher asks you to write a short response or a longer essay after reading part of *Agent in Italy*, this is not meant to be torture. Responses and essays are ways to motivate students to complete reading assignments. If you haven't doing the reading, the writing the responses and essays will be difficult. And experienced teachers will only accept responses which contain quotations or paraphrases from the texts.

Completing these writing assignments are in your best interest. Unless you are independently wealthy, leaving high school with good writing skills will be helpful. Writing matters even if you plan a vocational education after high school, rather than a four-year college. For example, Physical Therapy programs in community colleges usually require the completion of English 101. Why go through the trouble of taking the course three times? Why use up your financial aid on the remedial courses before English 101? Leave high school with the reading and writing skills you need.

As you will see many of the chapters in this book are very short. Not every chapter in *Agent in Italy* provides the same opportunity for study guide questions or writing responses so this list is not complete.

The purpose of a study guide is to alert you to what an instructor feels is important in a chapter. If you Google the phrase "Do study guides help students," you will find research that supports the use of study guides.

In other words, if you read the questions before the chapter, you may find that these questions help you map the content of the chapter as you read.

Writing Topics

Here are some suggestions. One of the questions substantial enough for a longer response is in Chapter 29. *As an Italian opposed to the Nazis and the Fascist regime, would you have joined the underground in the sabotage in Spezia?* And in Chapter 37, this question appears, *Do you agree with S.K.'s explanation of why it would be foolish for the underground in Italy to rise up against the German army of occupation?* The question below in Chapter 1-2 may also be worth writing about.

Chapter 1-2. *How did S.K.'s technique for rescuing Jews from concentration camps work? Given similar risks like the situation he was facing, would you have participated in such a plan to help prisoners escape Germany?*

Study Guide Questions for Pre-Reading and and Group Discussion Questions Post-Reading.

Chapter 4.

1. How did Italy and Germany become allies in the 30s?
2. How did Italy “wade into the Nazi stream” as S.K. put it?
3. What in S.K.’s behavior attracted the attention of the medical student, Palcini?
4. What did you think of the Underground’s test of S.K.?

Chapter 5.

1. Describe the organization of the secret police, the Gestapo.
2. How did the Gestapo use rumor?
3. What did S.K. mean by the agent provocateur system?
4. Describe the role of the Gestapo in World War II beyond the internal control of Germany.
5. How did Mussolini deal with his Socialist rival, Matteotti?

Chapter 6. What were the effects of war on Italian society according to S.K.?

Chapter 8.

1. What were the major factions in the Italian underground?
2. How was the Matteotti faction organized?
3. How did this faction communicate with the Italian public?
4. How did it learn about the plans of the Fascist Party?

Chapter 9. The information in the first page implying that S.K. was approached by an American military attaché? But this happened before the U.S. entered the war. If you have time for additional research, you might find out if the O.S.S, which managed espionage the U.S., was active in Europe before the war began. What does S.K. say about how the Gestapo was organized to gather foreign intelligence?

Chapter 10. Here you will see that Germany conquered Poland in less than a month in September 1939.

1. Why was this invasion part of a “lightning war,” rather than a war of position such as World

War I?

2. Why did this invasion bring England and France into the war?

Chapter 12.

1. How did official anti-Semitism develop in Italy pre-War II?

2. Compare official anti-Semitism in Germany with government policies toward Jews in Italy.

3. Related to this is the question of what the world did while Jews were being shot and gassed by the millions in the 1940s in Europe. What did the U.S. do to provide refuge for European Jews before the end of the World War II?

4. Why were the French defenses so useless when Germany attacked in 1940?

Chapter 13. Why do you think that Italy moved from being neutral to joining Germany when Germany attacked France in May, 1940?

Chapter 17. After Italy joined Germany in World War II, why did Germany reach so fast into Italian industries, especially heavy industries, and into Italian railroads?

Chapter 20. What mistakes did Bergdorff make which led to his capture by the Gestapo?

Chapter 22. How did S.K. avoid entrapment by Gerda Witra and the Gestapo?

Chapter 24. How did the war affect the living standards of civilians in Italy?

Chapter 25.

1. How did S.K. lose his shadow who had been following all day?

2. How did the underground try to protect its men from transfers to factories in Germany?

3. According to S.K., what were the reasons for the lack of unity in the underground in Italy? Why weren't the largest groups able to work together?

Chapter 26.

1. What did Germany seek in South America?
2. What was the role of South America to be in the New Order?
3. What did Germany intend to do to the infant steel industries and textile industries in Brazil and Chile?

Chapter 28.

1. How did Hitler finance the German war effort?
2. What were his strategies for funding his "vast governmental bureaucracy"?
3. Explain how Hitler used economics to reinforce his political plans for the world. According to S.K., what were Hitler's plans for North America in the New Order?
4. S.K. mentions the Lend-Lease bill at the end of the chapter. Would you have supported the Lend-Lease bill which was signed months before the U.S. entered the war?
5. Why were some Americans opposed to the Lend-Lease bill?
6. According to S.K., as President Roosevelt helped Britain, Russia and China in 1941 through the Lend-Lease, his actions depressed the Italian people. Why?

Chapter 29. As an Italian opposed to the Nazis and the Fascist regime, would you have joined the underground in the sabotage in Spezia?

Chapter 33.

1. What were the goals of German counterespionage?
2. How did it operate?
3. How did Germany acquire propaganda outlets in Europe and elsewhere?

Chapter 34. Here S.K. explains why Italian fascism "has never fallen into the brutality and barbarism of Nazism." Is his explanation believable?

Chapter 35.

1. Why was a German army of occupation necessary in Italy if the countries were allies?
2. To what extent would the Italians resent the presence of the German occupation?
3. At the end of Chapter 35, S.K. brings up the idea of a negotiated peace. What is your opinion of the idea of a negotiated peace with Germany?

Chapter 37.

1. Do you agree with S.K.'s explanation of why it would be foolish for the underground in Italy to rise up against the German army of occupation?
2. What is S.K.'s hope for the future of Italy after the war has ended? Has Italy found the type of post-war government S.K. hoped for?

Please send your suggestions for a longer list of study questions and/or writing topics to us at info@ebooksforstudents.org. We are especially interested in writing topics that give you a chance to apply what you have been reading about. We love topics where you can state your own opinions on a topic from the book. We realize that the many of the questions we have provided involve the simple recall of facts, and do not give you a chance to apply your own ideas. Your teachers can provide these opportunities.

As you probably have seen, having a classroom debate before a writing assignment helps warm up the arguments you will need for your essays. Of course, preparing for a classroom debate in small groups gives everyone a chance to speak, not just the loud mouths who may dominate a classroom debate.

Send us your debate questions at info@ebooksforstudents.org and we will add them to this section of the book in our annual updates of our books.

Finally, we hope that you appreciate the efforts of your teachers and librarians in bringing full length books to you rather than the sorry scraps of information in standard textbooks. The textbook diet with six or eight topics on a single page does not provide the redundancy or repetition of facts needed for students to remember anything. In history textbooks, you do not see the new vocabulary words enough times to add the words to your working vocabulary. See the results of the textbook diet at the National Assessment of Educational Progress in Reading at http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_g12_2013/#/student-progress

12th graders today do not read as well as 12th graders in 1994 according to NAEP data. Thank you, sorry textbooks. And thank you, sorry state education departments which mandate a mile-wide, an inch-thick survey curricula in history.

Here is more exact information about the reading skills of 12th graders. You can change this situation

by reading more, and by asking your parents to lobby for better opportunities to read in your classes.

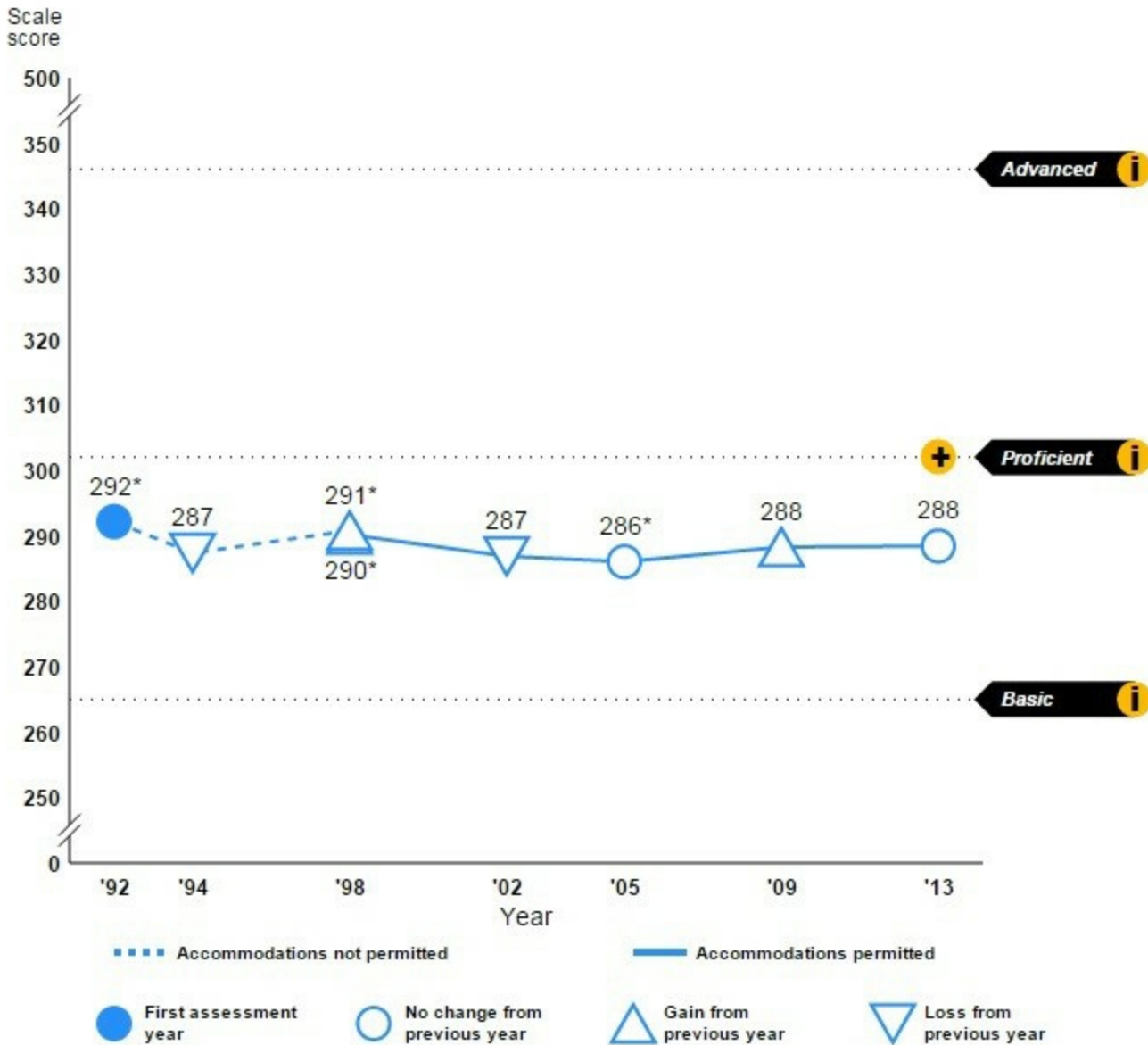
SUBJECT

READING ▼

Trend in average scores

Trend in percentile scores

Trend in twelfth-grade NAEP reading average scores ▼



* Significantly different ($p < .05$) from 2013.

▲ Hide Notes and Sources

NOTE: At grade 12, the NAEP mathematics scale ranges from 0 to 300, and the NAEP reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Changes to the mathematics framework in 2005 necessitated starting a new trend line for that subject at grade 12.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), various years, 1992–2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessments.

