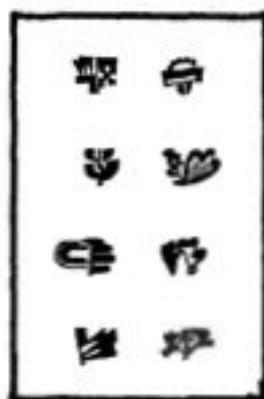


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ARMIES OF SPIES



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GESTAPO AT HOME

cause their victims were minor figures. George Bell, a Scotch engineer, was also a minor figure, but he was the agent of Sir Henri Deterding, the British oil king. Sir Henri and Adolf Hitler have had in common a plan to help themselves to Soviet Russia's vast oil fields. Their alliance went back to the time when Hitler had not yet become Chancellor but was fast getting there. Sir Henri, sensing an ally, contributed 4,000,000 Dutch gulden to Hitler's growing party. The alliance was so unsavory to a large public and the contribution so heavy that Sir Henri used as an intermediary the little-known George Bell.

Bell was warmly entertained by the Nazis, so much so that he learned a great deal about the very private lives of some of the most decadent of the Nazi hierarchy. When he drank much, as he often did, he talked much, too, and was likely to name names. Soon after the Reichstag fire in February, 1933, Bell added another secret to his collection. The next time he got drunk, he held forth on the theme that it was not the Communists who had set fire to the Reichstag. When he got home, a recollection of what he had been saying sobered him. He did not stop to pack. He managed to reach the border of Austria and crossed it. Austria was, of course, not yet part of the Reich.

But it was a "fever spot" of Gestapo activities. Bell was celebrating his escape in Buchholzen, in the Austrian Tyrol. One evening he had just had time to go to his room when two Benz cars filled with Storm Troopers in uniform dashed over the Austrian border and drew up at the inn where he was staying. Some troopers piled out of the cars and stormed into the inn. They broke into Bell's room and dragged him downstairs into the open, where the rest, too, could get at him. Bell tried to break through the ring about him, but he went down with bullets in his head,

chest, and stomach. The Storm Troopers got into their cars and escaped back to Germany.

Another man the Gestapo was anxious to silence was Berthold Jacob, a Jewish journalist who had been an affliction to Hitler even in the days of the German Republic. Hitler and his party were still arming secretly, and Jacob, as journalist, found out about it and insisted on printing the news. When Hitler became Chancellor, Jacob escaped from Germany. But he kept up his work against the Nazis.

He was a short man with bright black eyes, dark mustaches and a pointed little beard. Everything about him irritated Gestapo; even his nearness to the German border, for in the course of his work as editor of a little news syndicate he spent much time in Strasbourg and in Basle.

In Strasbourg Hans Wesseman came to see him. In the old days of the Republic Wesseman belonged to the German Social Democratic party. Jacob heard of him as a fighter against German militarism, also as a journalist. Now Wesseman proposed a working partnership with Jacob. He had traveled widely and had editorial connections, especially in London. Wesseman was so optimistic about their future together that he made several cash loans to Jacob, whose income was smaller than his influence as an anti-Nazi.

On March 8, 1935, Wesseman telephoned from Basle, Switzerland, to Jacob in Paris, telling him he had consummated an important connection for the syndicate and it needed only Jacob's signature in Basle. Jacob made ready to go there and told his wife he would be back in a day or two. He reached Basle the following afternoon and went to their rendezvous at the Restaurant of the Crooked Corner in *Greifengasse* in Little Basle. There he was joined by Wesseman and another man, and the three