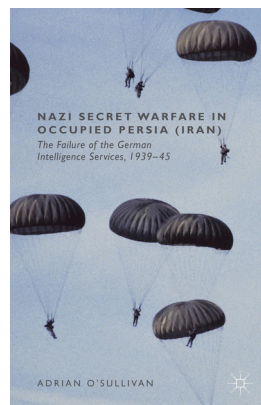
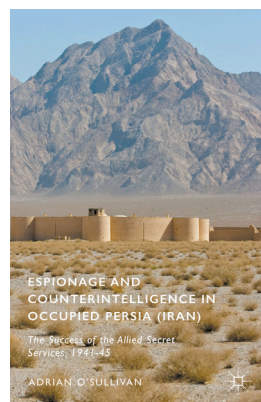




The six years of archival research underlying this thesis have also led to the publication of two companion books by Dr O'Sullivan which provide even greater detail about secret operations in wartime Persia.



Nazi Secret Warfare in Occupied Persia (Iran): The Failure of the German Intelligence Services, 1939-45
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**GERMAN COVERT INITIATIVES AND BRITISH
INTELLIGENCE IN PERSIA (IRAN), 1939-1945**

by

ADRIAN DENIS WARREN O'SULLIVAN

submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

HISTORY

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR TILMAN DEDERING
CO-SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR IAN VAN DER WAAG

JUNE 2012

German Covert Initiatives and British Intelligence in Persia (Iran), 1939-1945

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

SUMMARY

The narrative of German covert initiatives and Allied security-intelligence measures in Persia (Iran) during the Second World War has been neglected by postwar historians mainly because of the unavailability of records and the absence of an authoritative secondary literature. The elimination of this lacuna in the intelligence history of the region is long overdue. By 1941, the espionage activity and subversive potential of the large German expatriate community in Persia had become unacceptable to the British and the Soviets, leading them to invade and occupy the country in August of that year. After the expulsion of the German diaspora, two German intelligence officers continued active espionage and subversion operations as staybehind agents within the British zone. Their efforts were ultimately negated by the defeat of the Sixth Army at Stalingrad and the headlong retreat of Army Group South from the Caucasus. The operational planners in Berlin then changed their focus from subversion of the Persian polity to sabotage against the Lend-Lease supply route across Persia. Of fourteen special operations planned against Persian strategic targets in 1943 the Germans executed only three, all of which failed. The cause of such catastrophic failure was organizational and operational dysfunction at all levels of the two rival German intelligence services—the Abwehr and the Sicherheitsdienst (SD). Of equal significance was the robust British response to the Nazi threat, which resulted in the capture of all German operatives on Persian soil and the elimination of any hostile threat to the region. Particularly effective was the liaison between the Security Service (MI5) and the British security-intelligence authorities (CICI) in Tehran. Against all odds, German interest in the region never waned: as final defeat loomed, the destruction of Persian targets became for the ideologically motivated SD synonymous with the obstruction of postwar Soviet interests.

Key terms: Abwehr; British Intelligence; catastrophic failure; clandestine activity; counterintelligence; covert initiative; espionage; intelligence history; intelligence liaison; intelligence policy; intelligence service; intelligence strategy; Iran; organizational failure; Persia; sabotage; Second World War; security intelligence; Sicherheitsdienst; special operation; strategic deception; subversion; Tehran.

Adrian Denis Warren O'Sullivan

“German Covert Initiatives and British Intelligence in Persia (Iran), 1939-1945”

DLitt et Phil (UNISA, 2012)

Extracts from the external examiners' reports

Dr Kent Fedorowich (*University of the West of England*): "A wonderfully written, ambitious, and well-researched piece of work ... an excellent piece of highly original intelligence history."

Dr Wolfgang Krieger (*University of Marburg*): "[A] brilliant achievement ... a well-written and well-argued text which is a pleasure to read ... a first-rate piece of scholarship in intelligence history."

Dr André Wessels (*University of the Free State*): "Painstaking research and excellent analysis ... an original contribution to the historiography of the Second World War ... the story so well told in this thesis should be read by a much wider audience."

DEDICATION

For my daughter, Claire

QUOTATIONS

The intelligence struggle of World War II was a vast one,
vaster even than the shooting war because it reached into neutral countries.

*David Kahn*¹

The German, or rather the Nazi, intelligence services were defeated in World War II by two separate and distinct forces. One of these forces was internal jealousy and corruption. The other was Allied counterintelligence.

*Henry G. Sheen*²

Lied der Deutschen Iranreiter

*(Song of the German Iran Riders:
to be sung to the tune of the
Russian rider song "Tschorugja Husary")*

From the sky we came down
Onto desert and sand
To bring help to Iran
And to free their own land.
On to your steeds, fight the foe!
German Iran riders!

Chase the enemy!
Give your horse spur and heel!
German Iran fighters!

No wounds and no pain will e'er we feel
For we carry the Homeland in our hearts.
We men from the Great German Reich.

Berthold Schulze-Holthus
Negareh Khaneh (Boir Ahmedi territory)
*New Year's Eve 1943*³

-
1. David Kahn, "Intelligence in World War II: A Survey," *Journal of Intelligence History* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2001): 1.
 2. Henry G. Sheen, "The Disintegration of the German Intelligence Services," *Military Review* 29 (June 1949): 38-41.
 3. Satirical poem written for three SS men who could not ride, by an Abwehr officer who could. See Appendix C, In the steps of Wassmuss, 5th part of diary of Schulze, With the Boir Ahmedi I, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485, The National Archives (TNA).

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office); anti-aircraft
ABC	American-British-Canadian
Abw	Abwehr
Abw Z	Abwehr Zentralabteilung
Abw I H	Abwehr I Heer
Abw I L	Abwehr I Luft
Abw I M	Abwehr I Marine
Abw II J	Abwehr II Insurgenz
Abw II S	Abwehr II Sabotage
Abw II O MO	Abwehr II Orient Mittlerer Osten
Abw II OR	Abwehr II Orient
Abw II SO MO	Abwehr II Südost Mittlerer Osten
a.D.	ausser Dienst (retired)
ADC	aide-de-camp
ADSO, A/DSO	Assistant Defence Security Officer
“A” Force	Cairo-based unit responsible for Middle East strategic deception
AGEA	Arbeitsgemeinschaft ehemaliger Abwehrangehöriger (Association of Former Members of the Abwehr) [Abwehr veterans’ organization]
Agt	agent
AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
AOC	Air Officer Commanding
ALO	Area Liaison Officer
Amt VI	RSHA Foreign Intelligence Department
Amt Ausl/Abw	Amt Auslandsnachrichten und Abwehr [formal title of the Abwehr]
Amt Mil	Militärisches Amt (RSHA Military Department)
Ast	Abwehrstelle (Abwehr station) [became KdM after SD takeover]
B	Counterespionage [as in MI5 B Branch]
B1A, B1a	MI5 counterespionage section administering double agents
B1B, B1b	MI5 counterespionage analysis section
BA	Bundesarchiv [Berlin-Lichterfelde]
BA-MA	Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv [Freiburg]
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Bbg	Brandenburg
Bd., Bde.	Band, Bände (volume[s])
BFO	beat frequency oscillator
BL	British Library
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst (German Federal Intelligence Service)

Brig	Brigadier
C, “C”	Head of SIS (MI6)
Capt	Captain
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CBME	Combined Bureau Middle East
CI	Counterintelligence [OSS]
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency [USA]
CIC	Counter Intelligence Corps [USA]
CICI	Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq (and Persia)
CID	Committee on Imperial Defence; Criminal Investigation Department
CinC, C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
COI	Coordinator of Information [USA]
Col	Colonel
COS	Chief(s) of Staff
Cpl	Corporal
CREST	CIA Research Tool
CSDIC	Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre [Maadi, Egypt]
CW	continuous wave [Morse code]
CX	counterintelligence; SIS intelligence reports
DAF	Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front)
DB	Deutsche Bahn (German Railways)
DDMI	Deputy Director of Military Intelligence
D/F	direction finding
DGKS	Deutsche Gesellschaft für keltische Studien (German Society for Celtic Studies)
DIB	Director of the Intelligence Bureau [India]
Div	Division
DR	Deutsche Reichsbahn (German State Railways)
DRT	Deutsche Revisions- und Treuhand AG (German Audit and Trustee Company)
DSO	Defence Security Office(r); Distinguished Service Order
EG	Einsatzgruppe (Operational Task Force) [SS euphemism for extermination unit]
EK	Einsatzkommando (Operational Squad) [SS euphemism for extermination unit]; Eisernes Kreuz (Iron Cross)
EKI, EKII	Eisernes Kreuz I./II. Klasse (Iron Cross First/Second Class)
F	Communist subversion [as in MI5 F Branch]
f, ff	folio(s)
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation [USA]
FHO	Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East) [OKW military intelligence evaluation section]

FHW	Fremde Heere West (Foreign Armies West) [OKW military intelligence evaluation section]
F/Lt	Flight Lieutenant
fnu	first name unknown
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act [USA]
FOIPA	Freedom of Information—Privacy Acts [USA]
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FS	Field Security
FSchJgKp	Fallschirmjägerkompanie (Parachute Company)
FUSAG	First United States Army Group
Fw	Focke Wulf
G2, G-2	Divisional Intelligence Staff Officer
GAF	German Armed Forces
GC&CS, GCCS	Government Code and Cipher School
GENMISH	US Mission to the Persian Gendarmerie
Gen.St.Fr.H.	Generalstab Fremde Heere (General Staff Foreign Armies)
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei (Secret State Police) [RSHA Amt IV]
GFP	Geheime Feldpolizei (Secret Military Police)
GHQ	General Headquarters
GHQ ME	General Headquarters Middle East
GIS	German intelligence service(s)
GOI	Government of India
Gottfr.	Gottfried
GSI, GS(I)	General Staff Intelligence
GSI(c)	Original designation for SIME
GSO	General Staff Officer
GVP	Office of the Chief Military Prosecutor [Russia]
HM	His (Her) Majesty(’s)
HMG	His (Her) Majesty’s Government
HMI	Hisb Mille Iran (Persian National Party)
HMSO	His (Her) Majesty’s Stationery Office
HQ	headquarters
HUMINT	human intelligence (intelligence from human sources)
I	Insurrektion (insurrection) [as in I-Arbeit; sometimes written as J]
IA	Indian Army
IB	Intelligence Bureau [India]
i/c	in command of
Ic	German staff intelligence and security officer [approximates to G-2]

IDB	illegal diamond buying
INA	Indian National Army
IO	intelligence officer; interrogating officer
IP	Iran Parastan [political party]
IPI	Indian Political Intelligence
IR	interrogation report
ISK	Intelligence Service Knox [Abwehr Enigma decrypts]
ISLD	Interservice Liaison Department [= MI6 Middle East]
ISOS	Intelligence Service Oliver Strachey [Abwehr manual ciphers]
ISR	Iranian State Railway
IWG	International Working Group
IWM	Documents Collection, Imperial War Museum
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff [USA]
JIC	Joint Intelligence Committee
JICAME	Joint Intelligence Collection Agency Middle East
Ju	Junkers [German aircraft manufacturer]
K	Kampf (combat) [as in K-Einsatz]
KdF	Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy) [Nazi recreational organization]
KdM	Kommando des Meldegebietes (Command Report Area) [MilAmt outstation (formerly Abwehr <i>Ast</i>)]; Kameradschaftsdienst Marine (German Navy and Mercantile Marine Broadcasting Service)
KFK	Kriegsfischkutter (Armed Fishing Cutter) [= SKK]
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti (Committee of State Security) [USSR]
KO	Kriegsorganisation
KOI	Kriegsorganisation Iran [preoccupational Abwehr outstation in Tabriz]
KONO	Kriegsorganisation Nahost [Abwehr outstation in Istanbul]
KTB	Kriegstagebuch (War Diary)
LAC	Leading Aircraftman
Leit	Leitstelle (control centre)
LO	Liaison Officer
Lt	Lieutenant
Lt Col	Lieutenant Colonel
Maj	Major
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
ME	Middle East
MEC	Middle East Command
MECA	Middle East Centre Archive [St Antony's College, Oxford]
MEF	Middle East Forces

MEIC	Middle East Intelligence Centre
MEW	Ministry of Economic Warfare
MfS	Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Ministry of State Security [Stasi]) [East Germany]
MGFA	Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Military History Research Office)
MI2	Military Intelligence Dept 2 [Geographic information]
MI2a	Military Intelligence Dept 2a [Russia and Scandinavia]
MI5	Military Intelligence Dept 5 [colloquial designation for the Security Service]
MI6	Military Intelligence Dept 6 [colloquial designation for the Secret Intelligence Service]
MI9	Military Intelligence Dept 9 [Escape and evasion]
MI14	Military Intelligence Dept 14 [Germany]
Mil A	Militärisches Amt A [post-merger RSHA equivalent of Abwehr Z]
MilAmt	Militärisches Amt (RSHA Military Department)
Mil B	Militärisches Amt B [post-merger RSHA equivalent of Abwehr I West]
Mil C	Militärisches Amt C [post-merger RSHA equivalent of Abwehr I Ost]
Mil D	Militärisches Amt D [post-merger RSHA equivalent of Abwehr II]
MILINT	military intelligence
MIS	Military Intelligence Service
MO	Mittlerer Osten (Middle East); medical officer
MO4	SOE Cairo
MP	Member of Parliament; Military Police
M/T	motor transport
MWD	Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del (Ministry of Internal Affairs) [USSR]
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration [USA]
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Nest	Nebenstelle [Abwehr subsidiary station]
NCO	non-commissioned officer
NID	Naval Intelligence Department/Division
NKVD	Narodnyi Kommissariat Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) [USSR]
NSDStB	Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist Students League)
NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Social People's Welfare)
nu	name unknown
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OIC	officer in charge
OKH	Oberkommando des Heeres (High Command of the Army)
OKL	Oberkommando der Luftwaffe (High Command of the Air Force)

OKVR	Oberkriegsverwaltungsrat (Senior Military Advisor)
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces)
OR, O/R	Orient [Abwehr desk]; other ranks
OSS	Office of Strategic Services [USA]
OStJ	Officer of the Order of St John
PIB	MI5 policy section responsible for positive vetting
PA	Persian Army
PAG	Personenabwurfgerät (personnel dropping device or “live bomb”)
PAIC	Persian and Iraq Command
PAIFORCE	Persia and Iraq Force
PGC	Persian Gulf Command (December 1943 onwards) [USA]
PGSC	Persian Gulf Service Command (up to December 1943) [USA]
PIAW	Preventive Intelligence Arab World [original proposed title for SIME]
PICI	Strategic deception cover name for CICI
PICME	Political Intelligence Centre Middle East
PK	Partei-Kanzlei [BA file group]
Pol Arch	Politisches Archiv (Political Archive) [German Foreign Office archives in Berlin]
POLINT	political intelligence
POW	prisoner(s) of war
PP	Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr Papers [WCNA]
PR	preliminary interrogation report
Pte	Private
PTSD	post traumatic stress disorder
P/W	prisoner(s) of war
PWE	Political Warfare Executive
PzAOK	Panzerarmeeoberkommando (Panzer Army HQ)
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAOC	Royal Army Ordnance Corps
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
RDF	range and direction finding [radar]
Regt	regiment
RfA	Reichsstelle für (den) Aussenhandel (Reich Office of Foreign Trade)
RgI	Reichsgruppe Industrie (Reich Industry Group)
RM	Reichsmark [currency]
RN	Royal Navy
RNVR	Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
RS	Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt [BA file group]
RSHA	Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Administration)

S	Schulung (training [as in Amt VI S]); Sabotage (sabotage [as in S-Arbeit])
SA	Sturmabteilung [Nazi Party storm troopers (brownshirts)]
SAS	Special Air Service
SCI	Special Counter Intelligence [joint operation of MI5 and X-2]
SD	Sicherheitsdienst (SS Security Service)
SdF, Sf	Sonderführer (Special Officer)
SdF (B)	Sonderführer (Special Officer [with the equivalent rank of Lieutenant Colonel (or Major)])
SdF (G)	Sonderführer (Special Officer [with the equivalent rank of Sergeant])
SdF (K)	Sonderführer (Special Officer [with the equivalent rank of Major (or Captain)])
SdF (O)	Sonderführer (Special Officer [with the equivalent rank of Staff Sergeant])
SdF (Z)	Sonderführer (Special Officer [with the equivalent rank of Lieutenant (or Second Lieutenant)])
Sgt	Sergeant
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SI	Secret Intelligence [OSS]
SIGINT	signals intelligence (intelligence from the interception and analysis of signals)
SIME	Security Intelligence Middle East [= MI5, Cairo]
SIS	Secret Intelligence Service (MI6)
Sitrep	situation report
SK	Sonderkommando (special squad) [in the SS this was a euphemism for extermination squad, but not of course in the German Army (e.g. SK Bajadere)]
SKK	Seekampfkutter (Naval Combat Cutter) [= KFK]
SKL	Seekriegsleitung (Maritime Warfare Command) [German supreme naval HQ]
S/Ldr	Squadron Leader
SMERSH	Smert' Shpionam (Death to Spies) [Red Army counterintelligence] [USSR]
SNOPG	Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf
SO	special operations
SO1	Special Operations 1, originally the part of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) responsible for political warfare. In August 1941, SO1 was detached from SOE to become the Political Warfare Executive (PWE), a separate body under the Foreign Office.
SO2	Special Operations 2, originally the operational section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) responsible for covert operations. After the detachment of SO1 in August 1941, SO2 substantially became synonymous with SOE.
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SOLOC	Southern Line of Communications
SOM	Special Operations Mediterranean
SS	Schutzstaffel [Nazi Party security forces]
SSM	SS-Unterführer und Mannschaften [BA file group]

SSO	SS-Offiziere [BA file group]; RAF Middle East civilian intelligence officers
TIR	Trans-Iranian Railway
TNA	The National Archives [UK]
TR	technical interrogation report
TSS	Transit Security Section
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
USAFE	United States Air Forces in Europe
USAFIME	United States Armed Forces in the Middle East
USGPO	US Government Printing Office
USO	Unit Security Officer
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
V-Mann	Vertrauensmann (Abwehr agent)
VO	Verbindungsoffizier (liaison officer)
W Board	Strategic deception committee consisting mostly members of the JIC
WCNA	Whitman College and Northwest Archives
WDGS	War Department General Staff
WDSS	War Department Special Staff
WE	War Establishment
WHW	Winterhilfswerk (Winter Relief Organization)
WO	War Office; Warrant Officer
WPD	War Plans Division
W/T	wireless telegrapher/telegraphy [= radio operator/radio]
X-2	Counterintelligence [OSS]
XX Committee	Twenty Committee [interservice strategic deception committee in London]
XXX Committees	Thirty Committees [formed throughout the Middle East similar to XX Committee (e.g. 32 Committee in Tehran)]
Y	tactical SIGINT
Z	Zersetzung (subversion) [as in Z-Arbeit]
zbV	zur besonderen Verwendung (special purposes) [e.g. Lehrregiment Brandenburg zbV 800 (800th Brandenburg Special Purposes Training Regiment)]

I INTRODUCTION

“The Persian story is too good a one to remain hidden away... . The whole fascinating story remains to be told, with its gold, camels, mistresses, poison ... , dynamite, ... and the Tehran setting perfect for a film.”¹

This case study truly explores *terra incognita*, not only in a literal sense—for much of Persia (Iran) remains, even into the twenty-first century, geographically, culturally, and politically obscure to most Western readers—but also in a historical sense, for the narrative of Axis and Allied operations in the Persian theatre during the Second World War has been largely overlooked by postwar historians. Certainly it has never been constructed in one cohesive, scholarly monograph based, as this study is, on primary archival sources. Since 1945, and in increasing number since 1995, a significant aggregation of government records dealing with the internal security of wartime Persia has lain dormant in the national archives of Britain, the United States, and Germany. This thesis can therefore claim originality—and not in any clichéd sense—because it is truly the first comprehensive study of its kind to tell the untold story of wartime covert operations in Persia. From the outset, however, it needs to be stressed that this work is not primarily about Persia or the Persians. Rather it is about a secret war waged on Persian soil between German spies and saboteurs on the one hand and Allied spycatchers on the other. It is about the Persian theatre of operations and about the people—mostly young German, British, American, Russian, Polish, and Indian men—who found themselves operating in a harsh and unforgiving environment far from their homes and often against daunting odds.²

According to Gerhard Weinberg, “... far too much of the historiography of ... the course of World War II has been distorted as a result of the application of hindsight from the experience of the war.”³ What Weinberg does not say is that this same hindsight has also led to a peculiar kind of prioritization among historians which has prevented certain historical narratives from ever being written, let alone distorted. This is clearly how, apart from a handful of cursory, synoptical mentions in the secondary literature (mostly in official military histories, unofficial memoirs, and occasional heavily-censored newspaper articles), most of the history of German covert operations and Allied security-intelligence measures in Persia during the Second World War has been bypassed and has remained in the archives for over sixty years, barely touched.

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1. Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 3 July 1952, f 130a, KV 3/89, TNA; Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 30 December 1954, GB165-0042-3/7, Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford (MECA).
 2. For a well-written, richly illustrated basic introduction to the social experience of wartime Persia, I would strongly recommend Simon Rigge, *War in the Outposts* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life, 1980), 48-63, 76-99. Interesting memoirs by former service personnel may also be found in the Documents Collection of the Imperial War Museum (IWM): see, for example, 13556: 06/22/1 F. Shelton; 13164 B. Schonberg; 10786: PP/MCR/C49 A. M. Bell Macdonald; 9321 N. Collins; and 2164: 92/30/1 D. Drax. See also p. 14n59. Note: Throughout this study all page references preceded by the abbreviations p. or pp. are internal references.
 3. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy: The Road to World War II 1933-1939* (New York: Enigma, 2005), 14.

Indeed, scholarly interest in the Persian theatre *per se*, where—after the swift Anglo-Soviet invasion of 1941—no conventional battles were ever fought, has been negligible. Perhaps this is partly because declassification of the Allied records did not begin until the 1970s, continuing at a snail’s pace even today; the Axis records are of course scarce and fragmentary anyway.⁴ More likely though, it is because the strategic significance of Persia has been decontextualized and diminished by postwar historians. After all, the German-backed Rashid Ali coup in Iraq failed spectacularly in 1941, and the great strategic pincer movement Hitler envisaged in his War Directive No. 32 of 11 June 1941⁵ collapsed in 1942-43, effectively denying him the Asian gateways of the Suez Canal and the Caucasus.

Yet, such neglect belies the contextual significance of covert operations in Persia. Over the years since the war, as more and more files have been declassified and released into the public domain, we have become very aware of the Germans’ total failure as clandestine planners and operatives in other theatres, especially on the British home front, thanks largely to publications about the codebreakers at Bletchley Park and about the work of the XX Committee and the W Board.⁶ However, the files on Persia, open to historians and the general public since the 1990s, have been overlooked, despite the strategic importance of the region during the war. Especially between 1941 and 1944, the archival records show that Allied communications were repeatedly impregnated with a compelling sense of crisis and urgency in the face of successive Axis threats to the occupying forces and to the Persian polity and infrastructure. Such neglect also belies the hitherto unacknowledged fact—which this thesis documents with full archival support—that the Germans attempted to mount covert operations targeting Persia right up to the final months of the Second World War. No historian has adequately explained why this was so, nor has any monograph addressed many other vital, unanswered questions relating to German covert strategy in the Persian theatre.⁷

4. “No doubt, compared to other subject areas of twentieth-century German history the surviving files from intelligence organisations amount to no more than a sad trickle.” Wolfgang Krieger, “German Intelligence History: A Field in Search of Scholars,” *Intelligence and National Security* 19, no. 2 (2004): 186.

5. Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, ed., *Hitler’s War Directives 1939-1945* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004), 129-134.

6. See J. C. Masterman, *The Double-cross System in the War of 1939 to 1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972). For a dissenting view from one who felt that the work of the XX Committee was vastly overrated, see David Mure’s correspondence with various former wartime MI5 officers, none of whom agreed with him (2194: 67/321/1-3, IWM). See also David Mure, *Master of Deception: Tangled Webs in London and the Middle East* (London: William Kimber, 1980); *Practise to Deceive* (London: William Kimber, 1977); and p. 8n30.

7. See Krieger, “German Intelligence History”: 188-190, for a lucid explanation of why German historians have generally failed to engage with their own intelligence history, in the absence of any clear German “intelligence tradition,” and (*ibid.*, 195-196) why so few German spies have published memoirs.

The main difficulty with assembling a cohesive and scholarly narrative of secret warfare in Persia between 1939 and 1945 is to be found in the discontinuous and fragmentary nature of the archival records that have survived into the twenty-first century and that have been declassified for public consumption. Secret operations are of course supposed to be secret, but for how long do they have to remain a secret? What purposes could possibly be served by withholding seventy-year-old case files from historians investigating the failure of the Nazi secret services in a Persia which has since undergone such profound political, social, and cultural metamorphoses that no significant links with its wartime past can be said to exist? Nor can one identify any residual continuity between the Nazi secret services themselves and the modern, post-*Wende* Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), no matter how ideologically conflicted and compromised its origins may have been under the leadership of Reinhard Gehlen. It is only the British and American services that have a continuous past to nurture and protect, yet they, as the triumphant victors, surely have little to deny and little to fear by revealing names, places, events, intentions, and outcomes that led ultimately to such spectacular success in 1945.⁸

In some instances, particularly where deniability was a concern, there may even have been no written operational records in the first place. Beyond this, some of the records that do exist have undoubtedly been retained by the executive departments (such as MI5 and MI6) still nominally responsible for them, and may never see the light of day. Finally, many files that have—in fits and starts through the seven decades since the Second World War—been released into the public domain have been “weeded” to a degree that makes it difficult to identify people, places, and events with accuracy and consistency.⁹

The question of access to information is a crucial one, because this study—like all twenty-first century investigations into events that occurred in the 1940s—can only be driven by the archival records. It is no longer possible to compile an oral, eye-witness history of the secret war in Persia. Firstly—and most obviously—this is because seventy years later almost no living witnesses remain.¹⁰ Secondly, with the exception of Bill Magan, Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB)

8. For an informed discussion of the issues associated with the accessibility of British intelligence records, see Len Scott, “Sources and Methods in the Study of Intelligence: A British View,” *Intelligence and National Security* 22, no. 2 (April 2007): 185-205.

9. In his capacity as MI5’s official historian, Christopher Andrew’s occasional talks at Kew, available as a series of podcasts, are helpful to anyone seeking an introductory overview of recent Security Service document releases. According to Andrew, as of 7 February 2012, over 4,900 files have been released by MI5 in the KV series. See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/podcasts/>.

10. During my research for this study I succeeded in locating Gottfried Müller, the (now elderly) former Abwehr officer who led an operation against Kurdistan in 1943 (see pp. 106-112, 142-150), with a view to interviewing him. However, his son made it abundantly clear to me that any inclusion of Müller’s responses in my thesis would have to portray his father in a favourable light. Since Müller was a potentially hostile and contentious eye-witness who has in the past levelled dubious emotive accusations against the British authorities, alleging

Liaison Officer with the Defence Security Officer (DSO) Persia, individual security-intelligence officers like Joe Spencer, former DSO Persia, and his ADSO Alan Roger, were not permitted to retain—let alone publish—personal records of their wartime experiences. After the war, Spencer wrote: “Unfortunately I have no personal papers or notes from those days and have to rely on my somewhat faulty memory, as all my reports were handed over to the War Office, and I no longer have access to them, having left government service”¹¹ Unusually, Magan was given permission by MI5 to publish an approved memoir which included his Tehran experiences, but not until 2001.¹²

This is not to say that no linear records exist. But they are certainly not to be found in the German archives, where few records of either Abwehr (German Armed Forces Intelligence Service) or Sicherheitsdienst (SS Security Service [SD]) operations in the Middle East have survived. Out of a total of nineteen operations targeting the Persian theatre planned by the Abwehr and the SD, either alone or jointly, only one project has been preserved in a relatively comprehensive body of documents in the German archives: Operation MAMMUT, undertaken by Gottfried Müller against Kurdistan in June 1943.¹³ Here we find the original proposal Müller submitted to the Abwehr II planners, together with a treasure trove of miscellaneous memoranda and reports detailing the mission objectives, recruitment and training measures, equipment inventories, and postoperational outcomes. Unfortunately, all the remaining Abwehr, SD, and Seekriegsleitung (German Maritime Warfare Command [SKL]) operations investigated in this case study have had to be reconstructed painstakingly—much like a series of jigsaw puzzles with many missing pieces—on the basis of fragmentary, widely dispersed archival evidence found in Britain, the United States, and Germany. Indeed, the sparsity of recorded evidence pertaining to such covert initiatives, as compared with other aspects of Nazi activity, must be quite alarming for any scholar embarking upon a research project aimed at reconstructing a historical narrative of Middle East events. Truly, there is no “smoking gun” for intelligence historians to find

maltreatment of him and his men during their internment in Egypt, I decided not to employ him as a historical source. For more about Müller, see Gottfried J. Müller, *Im brennenden Orient* (Stuttgart: Bruderschaft Salem, 1974). My invitation to the family of Franz Mayr, who operated covertly in Persia for three years and whose activities are central to this study, remains unanswered.

11. Spencer to Bullard, 5 October 1959, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA. Seven years later, Spencer was sure that the Mayr papers were still held in the MI5 archives and could think of no possible objection to any serious author or student having access to them, but “the official attitude always tends to be very stubborn and obtuse concerning these things.” Spencer to Bullard, 21 November 1966, GB165-0042-3/11, MECA.
12. See William Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches: Experiences and Travels of an Intelligence Officer, 1939-1948* (Wilby, Norfolk: Michael Russell, 2001).
13. RW 5/271, Amt Ausland/Abwehr, Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (BA-MA), which can be cross-referenced with the lengthy interrogation of Müller at Camp 020 in WO 201/1402B, TNA. See also pp. 106-112, 142-150.

anywhere in the archives. Even the revelation within this dissertation, largely made possible by the surprising discovery of relevant fragments in the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (BA-MA), of Charles Bedaux's improbable, impractical plan to protect the Abadan refinery and the oil infrastructure of southwestern Persia from destruction at either German or Allied hands remains of purely academic interest, for Bedaux's preposterous scheme never even reached the formal planning stage, let alone implementation.¹⁴

In close cooperation with the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police [Sipo]), the SD maintained a central registry, which for fear of Allied air raids was moved in late 1943 from Berlin to Wartenburg in the Sudetenland. Smaller decentralized registries also existed at the branch and desk level. Towards the end of the war, the branches and desks of the SD scattered to various widely dispersed locations throughout what remained of the Reich. With them went their records. As ever more units disintegrated, with SD officers abandoning their posts and scurrying for cover and anonymity amidst the confusion of defeat, some may have taken documents with them or may have hidden them in secret locations to use as bargaining chips if captured by the Allies. Even today, it is conceivable that such caches might still exist, although their locations will probably remain forever undisclosed and their physical condition questionable. SS officers seem to have been instinctively aware that they would face harsh treatment if captured by the Russians, which increased the likelihood that they, unlike officers of the Abwehr, purloined documents to mitigate their predicament. What more likely happened, however, is that most of the now decentralized SD records were systematically destroyed before disbandment or were discovered by Soviet troops and spirited away to the Soviet Union, where they remain today, closed to historians until their increasingly improbable release by some future Russian government.¹⁵ Here too, their physical condition is doubtless poor and their organization

14. See pp. 123-132.

15. One theory is that SS Lieutenant General Heinrich Müller, Head of Amt IV (Gestapo), who defected to the Russians shortly before the end of the war, took with him a large assortment of RSHA files, which he handed over to Soviet counterintelligence (SMERSH). Certainly the central registry records were never recovered by the Western Allies. See the CIA memorandum of 9 December 1971 discussed by Timothy Naftali and others in "Record Group 263: Records of the Central Intelligence Agency—Records of the Directorate of Operations: Analysis of the Name File of Heinrich Mueller," RG 263—CIA Records, Declassified Records, International Working Group (IWG), <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/rg-263-mueller.html>. If the RSHA records are indeed still in Russian hands, it is difficult to understand the lack of political will in modern Russia to process and release such material. However, perhaps we should not be surprised, for Gabriel Gorodetsky, who has arguably had greater success since 1991 than any other Western historian in penetrating the Russian archives, has written that "research in the Russian archives is ... governed by a mixture of whim and bureaucratic hazard which undermines the process of research." See Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), xiv. Also Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Unresolved Issues of World War II: The Records Still Closed and the Open Records Not Used," in *Secret Intelligence in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jan G. Heitmann, Heike Bungert, and Michael Wala, *Cass Series: Studies in Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 23.

nonexistent. By contrast, it is safe to assume that any records captured by the Western Allies are by now in the public domain, catalogued and curated in accordance with modern archival standards.

Unexpectedly therefore, we possess a far clearer record of Near East and Middle East operations planned and conducted by the SD than of those initiated by the Abwehr. This is largely thanks to the existence in the US National Archives of a series of seven postwar situation and liquidation reports based largely on prisoner interrogations, which are essentially postmortem autopsies on the organization and war history of the SS and which are thus of immense importance for this study, especially Situation Report No. 8, which documents the entire history of SD and combined Abwehr/SD Persian operations in considerable detail, and Liquidation Report No. 13, which describes SD sabotage training and operations under Otto Skorzeny.¹⁶

On the Allied side, however, this case study has benefited immeasurably from the ready availability of a number of reliable British sources of Middle East situation reports, including CICI Persia counterintelligence summaries,¹⁷ CICI Baghdad Ib summaries and security-intelligence summaries, Middle East Intelligence Centre (MEIC) security summaries, Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) summaries, and Persia and Iraq Force (PAIFORCE) weekly intelligence reviews and special situation reports, as well as serial reports by the British minister, later ambassador (Sir Reader Bullard) and the military attachés at the British Legation, Tehran (Colonel H. J. Underwood and Major General W. A. K. Fraser). In general, the standard of reporting is excellent: the clear language, vivid description, logical exposition, consistent organization, and chronological continuity of these documents greatly facilitate the construction of a coherent linear narrative depicting wartime intelligence, counterintelligence, and security-intelligence operations in the region. At the same time, these reports also provide a contextual background by describing prevailing conditions within the Persian polity, such as tribal unrest, political sedition and subversion, endemic corruption, economic problems, bazaar attitudes, and infrastructural sabotage. Recently it has been suggested that such records are excessively “anglocentric” and have too often been used to present the achievements of British

16. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park (NARA); Liquidation Report No. 13, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI S, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 November 1945, RG 319, Entry 134A, Box 1, NARA.

17. Confusingly, the acronym CICI stood for Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq, even after the establishment in 1942 of a separate centre in Tehran, which should have been called CICP (Combined Intelligence Centre Persia), but never was.

counterespionage rather than the work of the German secret services.¹⁸ A reading of the present study, however, should quickly reveal its lack of biased presentation: no effort has been spared to present the work of the Abwehr and the SD, with reference to German sources whenever possible. It is through no fault of the present writer that the German records are sparse or that many of the German human sources were in captivity and under interrogation when they furnished their information. In fact, interrogation reports go a long way towards compensating for the lack of German records, for most covert operatives “sang like canaries,” once they had acknowledged the irreversibility of their capture and began to respond positively to the humane treatment accorded them by SIME officers. It is largely from these records that one may learn about the woeful inadequacy of Abwehr and—especially—SD recruitment, selection, training, planning, and deployment practices.¹⁹

Allied counterintelligence operations in Persia also yielded several significant Nazi corpora such as the captured Mayr documents and the Franz Mayr diary,²⁰ together with commentaries on these archival monoliths by security-intelligence analysts and the captured Abwehr staybehind agent Berthold Schulze-Holthus.²¹ Other single documents of note are the captured diary of SD parachutist Werner Rockstroh²² and the Radio Berlin broadcasts of the former SD staybehind agent Roman Gamotha,²³ both of which afford us a rare glimpse beyond the automaton-like stereotype of the Nazi stormtrooper and which for that reason alone merit inclusion in full as appendices to this study.

Single documents of great interest are to be found in all the archives. In the main Bundesarchiv collections at Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA) are such curiosities as letters from Himmler to Hitler concerning the deployment of agents Mayr and Gamotha in Persia,²⁴ as well as the service records of almost all the SS officers and other ranks sent there, formerly stored at

18. Notably by Emily Wilson, “The War in the Dark: The Security Service and the Abwehr 1940-1944” (PhD diss., Cambridge, 2003), 3.

19. See Table A-1 for a full list of interrogation reports cited in this study. For a history of the British POW interrogation system, including the Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Centre (CSDIC) at Maadi, Egypt, see Kent Fedorowich, “Axis Prisoners of War as Sources for British Military Intelligence, 1939-42,” *Intelligence and National Security* 14, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 156-178. For a brief but interesting discussion of rendition and the generally benevolent treatment of prisoners of war at Maadi, see Adam Shelley, “Empire of Shadows: British Intelligence in the Middle East 1939-1946” (PhD diss., Cambridge, 2007), 159-163. Regarding the American system, see Arnold M. Silver, “Questions, Questions, Questions: Memories of Oberursel,” *Intelligence and National Security* 8, no. 2 (1993): 199-213.

20. See p. 200n22.

21. The Mayr, Gamotha, and Schulze-Holthus files were not finally declassified by MI5 and released to the public until 2004. Without their release, this case study would not have been feasible.

22. See Appendix A2.

23. See Appendix A3.

24. Himmler to Hitler, Einsatz von SS-Führern im Iran, 22 May 1943, NS19/2235, Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA).

the Berlin Document Centre.²⁵ At the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv in Freiburg (BA-MA) may be found such important papers as the (fragmentary) memoirs and war diary of Erwin Lahousen²⁶ (including entries concerning the likely invasion of Persia through Transcaucasia in 1942), the previously mentioned file on Operation MAMMUT,²⁷ which targeted Persian Kurdistan, and various files on the Abwehr special-forces units (Brandenburgers), including some of Admiral Canaris's own memoranda.²⁸ But the overall scope of the surviving Abwehr and SD records is extremely limited and their potential for Middle East intelligence historians equally so. Consequently, it is difficult to share the unbridled enthusiasm of the American historian Ladislas Farago for what he overestimated as the scale of the—largely duplicated—German intelligence records held by the US National Archives at College Park, Maryland (NARA):

The German machinations in Persia in 1940-44 are fully covered ... , and I was given full access, not only to the papers of the Auswärtiges Amt, but also of the Abwehr and the Sicherheitsdienst. From them, the whole magnitude of the German manipulations became evident, probably even beyond their scope known to the British authorities.²⁹

In fact, thanks to their successful codebreaking³⁰ and the efficiency of SIME and CICI, the British had full measure of the Germans, and Farago's archival investigations seem to have been rewarded purely by his discovery at College Park of the Ettel papers—also to be found at Kew and at the Political Archive of the Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office) in Berlin (AA)—which relate to the evacuation and internment of the German diaspora in 1941, but not to any events after that and definitely not providing the “full coverage” to which Farago alludes.³¹

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25. See “Personenbezogene Akten” (series PK [Partei-Kanzlei], RS [Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt], SM [SS-Unterrführer und Mannschaften], and SSO [SS-Offiziere]), BA.
 26. Erinnerungsfragmente von Generalmajor a.D. Erwin Lahousen, MSG 1/2812, BA-MA; Auszüge Lahousen aus dem Kriegstagebuch der Abwehr-Abt. II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr, RW 5/497-498, BA-MA.
 27. Unternehmen MAMMUT, RW 5/271, BA-MA.
 28. MSG 158/8, MSG 158/38, MSG 158/50, RH 21-2/709, BA-MA.
 29. Farago to Bullard, 16 November 1966, GB165-0042-3/11, MECA.
 30. According to Hinsley, the British were reading both the Abwehr and the SD codes from 1941 onwards: “After the breaking of the Abwehr's Enigma in December 1941 Sigint became an even more valuable source of intelligence. The decrypts of the SD hand cipher—broken early in 1941 but read less regularly than the Abwehr's—threw light on the activities of Amt VI, the foreign section of the SD which was interested in the scope for political subversion and propaganda in the Middle East.” F. H. Hinsley and C. A. G. Simkins, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. 4, *Security and Counter-Intelligence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 163.
 31. SS Brigadier Erwin Ettel, a doctrinaire National Socialist, was the German minister at the Tehran legation, whose brief diplomatic career was brought to an abrupt end by the Anglo-Soviet invasion in 1941 and whom Abwehr agent Schulze-Holthus found most disagreeable, describing him as “a sort of fighting cockroach” whose sharp features spoke of energy and brutality. “Clever, but with the faults of excessive ambition, obstinacy, and inflexibility.” See Annex to Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 25, 28 May 1944, f 59a, KV 2/1485, TNA; Julius Berthold Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak in Iran: A Story of the German Intelligence Service* (London: Mervyn Savill, 1954), 11, 13; “Der Mann, der bei der Zeit Ernst Krüger war,” *Die Zeit*, 23 February 2006; Maria Keipert and Peter Grupp, eds., *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1871-1945*, vol. 1 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2000), 530-531; and Ernst Klee, *Das*

However, the American archives do possess significant collections of records pertaining to the activities of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) in Persia, the latter as part of Persian Gulf Service Command/Persian Gulf Command (PGSC/PGC), which was responsible for the Lend-Lease supply route across Persia to the Soviet Union.³² Also, at Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington (WCNA), are to be found the private papers of Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr, who headed OSS secret intelligence in the Middle East from May 1943 onwards and whose correspondence reveals a great deal about OSS networks in Persia.³³

However, this study is based primarily on a wealth of material discovered in the British archives—at The National Archives in Kew (TNA); in the India Office Records (IOR) at the British Library (St Pancras) (BL); in the Newspaper Collection at the British Library (Colindale); in the Documents Collection of the Imperial War Museum (IWM); and in the Middle East Centre Archive (MECA) of St Antony’s College, Oxford. All these archives offered up treasures beyond compare which, pieced together, tell the entire story of covert operations in Persia during the Second World War: documents of every imaginable genre—letters, diaries, memoirs, photographic collections, agendas, minutes, reports, articles, speeches, scholarly papers, newspaper and magazine articles, radio broadcasts, propaganda pamphlets, cartoons, cables, telegrams, ciphers, personality traces (or “lookups”), and personnel records. Yet, for all their abundance now, many of these documents of inestimable historical value, especially those held by the secret services, could not be accessed for sixty-odd years—not until the writing of this study. Originally because of the “Fifty-Year Rule” in Britain and the “Thirty-Year Rule” in the United States and Germany,³⁴ notwithstanding the slight alleviation of the access problem brought about by such interim measures as the Waldegrave Initiative³⁵ of 1993 and President

Kulturlexikon zum Dritten Reich: Wer war was vor und nach 1945 (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2007), 142. The Ettl Papers are located as follows: RG 242, NARA; GFM 33, TNA; R 27229, R 27322-27328, R 27330-27333 (Handakten Ettl), Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt (AA). They are probably best viewed at the Political Archive of the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin, where they are available as originals rather than microfilms.

32. Notably Record Groups RG 165 (Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs [WDGS/WDSS]), RG 218 (Records of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff [JCS]), RG 226 (Records of the Office of Strategic Services [OSS]), RG 319 (Records of the Army Staff), and RG 497 (Records of the Africa-Middle East Theatre of Operations), NARA.

33. Series 8 (OSS), together with additional declassified OSS records, Whitman College and Northwest Archives, Walla Walla (WCNA).

34. For a recent treatment of the issues surrounding the question of restricted access to historical sources, see “A Note on Sources,” in André Gerolymatos, *Castles Made of Sand: A Century of Anglo-American Espionage and Intervention in the Middle East* (New York: St Martin’s/Dunne, 2010), xv-xvi.

35. See Richard J. Aldrich, “The Waldegrave Initiative and Secret Service Archives: New Materials and New Policies,” *Intelligence and National Security* 10, no. 1 (January 1995): 192-197; “Did Waldegrave Work? The Impact of Open Government upon British History,” *Twentieth Century British History* 9, no. 1 (1998): 111-126.

Clinton's Emergency Order No. 12958³⁶ of 1995, many key documents have until recently been denied to scholars who were left so long to forage among isolated declassified fragments without historical sequence or context.³⁷ According to the official historian of MI6, the Waldegrave Initiative "challenged the traditional British supposition that all official matters were secret until the government specifically decided otherwise."³⁸ Yet the records of MI5 and MI6 were granted exemption from disclosure under subsequent legislation.³⁹ And so even today challenges may still be encountered, and denials of access continue.⁴⁰

One truly appreciates the plight of Sir Reader Bullard, former British minister and ambassador in Tehran, when he was preparing to write his memoirs in the early 1960s.⁴¹ Bullard was unable to locate or examine the Mayr papers and other CICI records, which were not ultimately declassified by MI5 until 2004. He was told that the documents he sought were not under Foreign Office control and appears to have been unaware that they in fact resided at MI5 (and—a few— at the War Office). However, according to the principles governing the "Fifty-Year Rule," the former head of a diplomatic post like Bullard who wished to publish memoirs was permitted by his former employer to see only the diplomatic telegrams and despatches he had sent from Foreign Office posts he had occupied, not classified security files.⁴² Though disappointed, Bullard appears to have accepted the necessity for such stringent measures:

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36. The full text of EO12958 is available online at Wikisource (http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Executive_Order_12958).
 37. To contextualize recent improvements in accessibility, it is worth reading an informed discussion that predates Waldegrave: Wesley K. Wark, "In Never-Never Land? The British Archives on Intelligence," *The Historical Journal* 35, no. 1 (March 1992): 195-203.
 38. Keith Jeffery, "A Secret History: Unravelling MI6's Past," *The Telegraph*, 22 September 2010.
 39. Ibid.
 40. While recently researching the section in this study on Charles Bedaux and the Abadan sanding/desanding operation (pp. 123-132), my application to the FBI (under the United States Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] of 1966, as amended by the Privacy Act of 1974, generally referred to as FOIPA [Freedom of Information—Privacy Acts]) for the release of Bedaux records was rejected outright on the grounds that, after "a search of the indices to our central records system at FBI Headquarters and all FBI field offices," the Bureau was "unable to identify responsive main records." A likely story!
 41. Reader Bullard, *The Camels Must Go: An Autobiography* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961). A wonderful read is *Letters from Tehran: A British Ambassador in World War II Persia*, ed. E. C. Hodgkin (London: I. B. Tauris, 1991). Fitzroy Maclean, who wrote the foreword, found the letters "immensely readable" and wrote of them "Bullard's letters give us his personal and unofficial view of events ... with all its attendant domestic and social as well as purely diplomatic problems."
 42. Problems associated with the British "Fifty-Year Rule" and the American "Thirty-Year Rule" as they affected writers like Bullard during the 1960s are discussed in D. C. Watt, "Restrictions on Research: The Fifty-Year Rule and British Foreign Policy," *International Affairs* 41, no. 1 (January 1965): 89-95. Watt speaks of the "contemptuous attitude" of Harold Macmillan, who "denied the existence of any public demand for access to materials within the Fifty-Year Rule period." With regard to the forging of documents, I have been unable to find anything in the British archival records that might lead one to doubt the authenticity of the Mayr papers. On the contrary, the fact that they were retained by the authorities for sixty-two years and then released in their entirety surely militates against any such notion.

There can never be any question of allowing a person sole access to any papers that are still classified. Other writers would naturally be furious if this rule were infringed. On the other hand, there is slender hope that the Mayr papers, for instance, would be released for general inspection, though why they should not I don't know. So long as they are kept secret, the Americans will say that we forged them or that they were forged and we stupidly took them for genuine.⁴³

It would be impressive if we could “connect the dots,” as it were: distilling from the mass of available archival evidence some grand, unified thesis, which shows conclusively, for instance, that the entire campaign of German covert initiatives against Persia was confounded by a coordinated resistance effort which the anti-Nazi, nationalist officers of Canaris's intelligence service sustained throughout the war. Unfortunately, though alluring, this scenario is not demonstrable, however much the failure of every single initiative ever planned or executed in the Persian theatre may arouse our suspicions. True, there is evidence in the records of sustained conspiracy at the highest level; however, there is no documented link between it and what happened—or failed to happen—operationally in Persia. Time after time we read that this or that operation was cancelled, but we never learn why, and never will, for the archival record contains no such explanations. All we can do in this case study, therefore, in the absence of the *Abwehr II Orient* war diary, which was kept in the Tirpitzufer offices of Hans-Otto Wagner and Werner Eisenberg⁴⁴ and was no doubt deliberately destroyed in 1945, is to assemble the cumulative facts of a series of failed initiatives, consider them individually in the light of largely circumstantial evidence, and catalogue the generally negative outcomes. Beyond that, it really is impossible to draw any definitive conclusions about the disparate causes of operational failure in Persia.

In the absence of living witnesses and being almost entirely reliant upon the primary archival records described above, one of the problems associated with any attempt to use secondary authors to delve beneath the surface of the factual narrative of covert warfare in the Persian theatre and to explore perhaps the motivations and perceptions of the leading players on its stage is the fact that so few of them registered their wartime experiences, impressions, and responses either at the time or in the years thereafter. The secondary literature on wartime Persia is extremely limited; the following paragraphs provide a brief survey of only the most useful works.

Among the German agents, Berthold Schulze-Holthus and Gottfried Müller have proven the most enlightening and analytical belligerents, for they alone published memoirs after the war.

43. Bullard to Spencer, 20 November 1966, GB165-0042-3/11, MECA.

44. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C7(d)(ii) Abw II/OR, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

Schulze-Holthus's *Daybreak in Iran* (1954)⁴⁵ is a thoroughly readable, remarkably objective account of his work as a seasoned, professional staybehind agent against intimidating odds after the Anglo-Soviet invasion in August 1941. After the war, Schulze-Holthus became an active member of the Abwehr veterans' organization (Arbeitsgemeinschaft ehemaliger Abwehrangehöriger [AGEA]) and, despite claiming to have never learned the art of writing,⁴⁶ contributed some interesting articles⁴⁷ about his prewar and wartime experiences to their inhouse magazine, *Die Nachhut*, which supplement and clarify what he wrote in his autobiography. Unfortunately, the more youthful Gottfried Müller's intensely subjective *Im brennenden Orient* (1974)⁴⁸ is marred by hyperbole, religiosity, and the writer's ill-concealed resentment towards the unidentified rivals whom he suspects of having pre-emptively sabotaged his Kurdistan operation and towards the British for having prematurely ended his war and—allegedly—maltreated him and his men for over two years during their captivity. Also of interest with general reference to Middle East covert operations are the memoirs of two former German spymasters: the head of Abwehr Kriegsorganisation Nahost (KONO), Major Paul Leverkuehn (*German Military Intelligence* [1954]), and the former head of SD Amt VI, SS Brigadier General Walter Schellenberg (*The Labyrinth* [1956]).⁴⁹

Among Allied diplomats who wrote about their wartime service in Persia, pride of place undoubtedly goes to Sir Reader Bullard, who served with distinction throughout the war as British minister (and later ambassador) to Persia and who wrote lucidly and vigorously after the war of his many years in the diplomatic service. He must be regarded as an unimpeachable source, and *The Camels Must Go* (1961)⁵⁰ is probably his most approachable and entertaining work. Unlike so many British career diplomats who came effortlessly to their ascendancy from privileged families, elite schools, and Oxbridge, Bullard's origins were humble. The son of a

45. See p. 8n31. The autobiography was ghosted by Paul Weymar (see Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 318), who one year later published a controversial biography of Konrad Adenauer, which was attacked in the American press when it was released in English translation (*Adenauer: His Authorized Biography*. New York: Dutton, 1957) for being inaccurate, untruthful, and incomplete. See "Tadel aus Kalifornien," *Der Spiegel*, 10 April 1957. Weymar's collaboration with Schulze-Holthus has never been the subject of such negative criticism; indeed, it was well received even by former adversaries like Joe Spencer, Alan Roger, Dick Thistlethwaite, and Sir Reader Bullard. See Spencer to Bullard, 16 September 1959, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA; Note by Mr Alan Roger, MBE, n.d., GB165-0199, MECA; Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 3 July 1954, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA; and Reader Bullard, "Review of *Daybreak in Iran: A Story of the German Intelligence Service*, by Bernhardt [sic] Schulze-Holthus," *International Affairs* 31, no. 3 (July 1955): 392-393.

46. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 318.

47. Most notably "Eine groteske Fälschung," *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 7 (9 April 1969): 18-26, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

48. See p. 3n10.

49. Paul Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954); Walter Schellenberg, *The Labyrinth: Memoirs of Walter Schellenberg* (New York: Harper, 1956).

50. See p. 10n41.

London docker and a grammar-school boy, he struggled to gain a decent schooling that would render him fit for a career in the Royal Navy, the teaching profession, or the civil service. There was little money in the family to support him in his quest, and he later described his efforts as a “curious steeplechase” in “a world where you flattened your nose against the window of the shop of learning without having the money to go in and make even a modest purchase.”⁵¹ The qualities that sealed his success in those early years—compulsive reading, hard work, tremendous energy, innate intelligence, linguistic proficiency, indefatigable resourcefulness, and above all a large measure of common sense—were to mark his conduct and progress throughout his years in the foreign service as a consular official, minister plenipotentiary, and ultimately ambassador, at a time when that title really meant something quite extraordinary.⁵² What is most striking about Bullard from the viewpoint of the intelligence historian is his abiding interest in intelligence and counterintelligence matters, which led him to lend the wholehearted support of the British Legation to the endeavours of DSO Persia throughout the war. As he wrote in retirement: “I take a great interest in espionage; I read all the serious books on the subject that I can get hold of.”⁵³

Another notable British diplomat who wrote about his wartime service in Persia is Clarmont Skrine (*World War in Iran* [1962]). However, Skrine has nothing of consequence to say about security or covert warfare, although he does provide a lucid and convincing justification for the inevitable Anglo-Soviet invasion, effectively countering Persian objections to the Allies’ use of *force majeure*. Skrine has also left us with a unique eye-witness account of Reza Shah’s final journey into exile.⁵⁴

Among the military commanders who served in Persia, the most accomplished writer is unquestionably Field Marshal Viscount Slim (see Figure 2-1), who—then a major-general—commanded troops of 10th Indian Division during Operation COUNTENANCE. His memoir *Unofficial History* (1959)⁵⁵ is by far the most vivid account of the Anglo-Soviet invasion. Slim is a gifted—if self-deprecating—humourist who writes quite extraordinarily well, and his account of the only military operation to be carried out on Persian soil during the Second World War is both readable and amusing. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the memoirs by the

51. Bullard, *Camels*, 44, 46.

52. Until relatively modern times Britain had only seven embassies, in only the largest countries; elsewhere there were legations. Beginning in the 1940s, this differentiation was gradually removed, and many ministers-plenipotentiary, like Bullard, became ambassadors. See <http://www.gulabin.com/britishambassadors/pdf/AMBS%201880-2010.pdf>.

53. Bullard to Seth, 10 September 1963, GB165-0042-3/11, MECA.

54. Clarmont Skrine, *World War in Iran* (London: Constable, 1962). See also “Sir Clarmont Skrine OBE (Obituary),” *Asian Affairs* 6, no. 1 (1975): 119.

55. William Slim, *Unofficial History* (London: Cassell, 1959).

generals who later commanded PAIFORCE, for whom Persia appears to have been little more than a way station in their army careers and about which they have written relatively little. Most significant are the memoirs of Field Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya (known fondly as “Jumbo”), who published *Eight Years Overseas* in 1951, in which he addresses the importance of Persian internal security and outlines his plans to counter a possible German invasion through Transcaucasia; his book was later supplemented by a slim memoir published half a century later by his son (*Where the Nazis Came* [2002]), who served briefly as a security-intelligence officer in Persia.⁵⁶ Less informative are the memoirs of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall (*Chief of Staff* [1972-1974]),⁵⁷ who headed Persia and Iraq Command (PAIC) from February to September 1943.

So much of intelligence work involves identity and personality.⁵⁸ This thesis therefore seeks wherever possible to transmute covert activity into overt narrative and to give the history of clandestine operations a human face, which involves identifying personalities and naming names.⁵⁹ The problem with official histories is that they do the opposite; indeed, under the injunctive terms of reference to which they must adhere, identities are normally to be concealed and names *not* named. A model example of this is Harry Hinsley’s magisterial history of covert warfare, *British Intelligence in the Second World War* (1979-1988), volume 4 of which provided important background material for this study, although there is minimal coverage of Allied

56. Henry Maitland Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas, 1939-1947* (London: Hutchinson, 1951); Patrick Maitland Wilson, *Where the Nazis Came* (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2002). A useful operational overview may be found in Henry Maitland Wilson, “Despatch on the Persia and Iraq Command Covering the Period 21st August, 1942 to 17th February, 1943,” *Supplement to The London Gazette*, no. 37703 (27 August 1946), 4333-4340.

57. Henry Pownall, *Chief of Staff: The Diaries of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Pownall*, ed. Brian Bond (London: Cooper, 1972-1974).

58. This is one reason why analytical paradigms of failure used by military historians, such as those evolved by Cohen and Gooch, need to be fundamentally reshaped if they are to be applied successfully to historical intelligence case studies. While borrowing from Cohen and Gooch’s layered approach to analysis, I have sought to place greater emphasis in my methodological approach on the failure of individual activities and tactical operations than on strategic failure. Furthermore, unlike theirs, my historiographical method is essentially inductive. Faced with a body of archival evidence, based on previously secret files, one needs to induce generalities from it, rather than to work deductively from theory towards the details. In intelligence history, there is little theory to work from anyway, whereas military historians can happily start with Clausewitz and drill down deductively from there. See in this connection Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 6-11 *passim*.

59. At this point, it needs to be stressed that this case study does not belong to the genre of social history. Despite the occasional mention of personal experiences, it makes no attempt to provide a comprehensive “bottom-up” narrative documenting the hardships endured by German and Allied combatants in the alien, challenging environment of wartime Persia. In fact, there awaits the social historian a significant body of largely anecdotal archival and published literature, penned mostly by British and American service personnel, and by visiting contemporary journalists and other travellers, which would doubtless provide sufficient source material for an interesting social case study. See p. 1n2 and, for example, Eve Curie, *Journey among Warriors* (London: Heinemann, 1943); Richard Goold-Adams, *Middle East Journey* (London: J. Murray, 1947); Cecil Keeling, *Pictures from Persia* (London: Hale, 1947); Quentin J. Reynolds, *The Curtain Rises* (London: Right Book Club, 1945); Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); and Edgar Snow, *People on Our Side* (New York: Random House, 1944).

security-intelligence operations.⁶⁰ The British, Indian, and American official histories of the Persian theatre have also provided a necessary context for covert operations that often hinged upon the military situation at any given time: *Paiforce* (1948),⁶¹ *Campaign in Western Asia* (1957),⁶² and *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia* (1952)⁶³ all reflect to a degree the internal-security situation within the theatre of operations, as well as external strategic pressures and scenarios from without. General official histories of importance to an understanding of such external pressures and of grand strategy in the Middle East and Central Asia are Playfair's *The Mediterranean and the Middle East* (1954-1988)⁶⁴ and the German official-history series edited by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Research Institute for Military History [MGFA]) entitled *Germany and the Second World War* (1990-2008),⁶⁵ of which volumes 1, 3, 4, 6, and 9.1 proved invaluable, given the dearth of primary sources on relevant strategy in the German archives. Very recently we have witnessed the release within one year of an official history of MI5⁶⁶ and an official history of MI6.⁶⁷ However, neither *The Defence of the Realm* (2010) by Cambridge intelligence historian Christopher Andrew nor Keith Jeffrey's *MI6* (2010) has much to say about covert warfare in the Middle East, and next to nothing about Persia.

Mention must be made here of the importance of Winston Churchill's *Second World War*,⁶⁸ which, while not an official history *per se*, has unquestionably come to enjoy the status of one. Volumes 3 (*The Grand Alliance*) and 4 (*The Hinge of Fate*) contain passages revealing

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60. F. H. Hinsley and others, *British Intelligence in the Second World War: Its Influence on Strategy and Operations*, 4 vols. (London: HMSO, 1979-1988). Volume 4 (Security and Counter-Intelligence) was published in 1984.
 61. United Kingdom, Central Office of Information, *Paiforce: The Official Story of the Persia and Iraq Command 1941-1946* (London: HMSO, 1948).
 62. Dharm Pal, *Campaign in Western Asia*, Official History of the Indian Armed Forces in the Second World War, 1939-45: Campaigns in the Western Theatre, ed. Bisheshwar Prasad (Calcutta: Combined Inter-Services Historical Section, India and Pakistan, 1957).
 63. T. H. Vail Motter, *The Persian Corridor and Aid to Russia*, United States Army in World War II: The Middle East Theater (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1952). According to Gerhard Weinberg, this is "the best account of the supply route." Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 284n74. This is probably an appropriate context in which to recommend Weinberg's book as the best strategic history of the Second World War, even though he has very little to say about Persia. However, Weinberg's account of Operation BLAU and subsequent events on the southern Russian front is masterly. See *ibid.*, 408-417, 420-425, 455-464.
 64. Ian S. O. Playfair and others, *The Mediterranean and the Middle East*, 6 vols., History of the Second World War (London: HMSO, 1954-1988).
 65. Germany, Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, *Germany and the Second World War*, 9 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990-2008), abbreviated in subsequent citations as *MGFA*.
 66. Christopher M. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorized History of MI5* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2010).
 67. Keith Jeffrey, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1901-1949* (London: Penguin, 2010).
 68. Winston S. Churchill, *The Grand Alliance*, vol. 3 of *The Second World War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1974); *The Hinge of Fate*, vol. 4 of *The Second World War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1950).

Churchill's perspective on operations in the Persian theatre, including the Anglo-Soviet invasion in 1941 and the circumstances of the Tehran Conference in 1943.

Ideally, the author of any archival study should accord to secondary literature a purely supplementary role. In a study of wartime clandestine operations in Persia, s/he has little choice in the matter, for the existing monographs on the region and the period—whether published as books or articles—have no literary integrity or significance as intelligence studies *per se*. Instead, they belong largely to such genres as diplomatic, political, or economic history; not even military historians have paid much attention to Persia, for it was never—except in August-September 1941—a theatre of active engagement. In other words, there is no extant *intelligence* history, but rather a literature of shreds and patches: brief mentions of this or that aspect of covert warfare in the region, sandwiched between memoirs and analyses of other historical phenomena. And, to diminish the value and contextual relevance of such monographs even further, there is a tendency for their nonspecialist authors to pay insufficient attention to detail: many works contain glaring inaccuracies, thrown into sharp relief when cross-referenced with the primary archival records. No more glaring an example of such lack of precision is to be found than in the literature that deals with the notional plot (Operation WEITSPRUNG) to assassinate or abduct the Big Three at the Tehran Conference in November-December 1943. The very absence of any objective, specialist literature on the subject has permitted the Russians to develop and disseminate a preposterous legend of intrigue and heroism, which disingenuously places the Soviet secret services in a favourable light with respect to an operation that arguably never took place.⁶⁹ However, wherever one looks in the general secondary literature, errors abound—names misspelled; ranks, service arms, and awards falsely attributed; dates, places, and events askew; German-language terms mistranslated; operational code-names muddled and inconsistent; personalities excessively stereotyped. All this attests, not so much to ill-informed authorship, as to a certain absence of the rigour that comes (or should come) with specialized historiographical discipline. It is somehow easier to adopt a cavalier attitude towards historical factuality when one's approach is general rather than nuanced.

Therefore, any writer (or reader) in search of an accurate assessment of the significance of events in the secret world of Axis and Allied operations in Persia needs to approach the extant monographic literature with extreme caution. Some studies are undoubtedly better researched and better written than others. A few—very few—have even been written by intelligence historians. Most, however, are seriously flawed in that they were neither written by specialized

69. See p. 219n96.

intelligence historians nor do they form part of a fully contextualized narrative and analysis of secret operations.⁷⁰ This is not to say that solid scholarship is the sole preserve of the *academic* intelligence historian. In fact, some of the finest monographs on secret operations in the Middle East have been published by a nonacademic writer, H. O. Dovey, a retired civil servant who served for four years in field security in the region during the war. Though not prolific, Dovey's articles have proven to be of greater intrinsic value to this dissertation than more extensive works with loftier intentions but less rigour.⁷¹

On the other hand, it should be noted that a number of what might be loosely categorized as “unprofessional” texts that mention covert operations in Persia have been deliberately excluded from this study; examples are, however, occasionally mentioned in footnotes within the specific contexts to which they refer. This “rogue literature,” generally unsourced and/or uncorroborated, and frequently poorly written or translated, of course needs to be approached with extreme caution, if at all. Frequently, these contributions have been written by authors with some particular axe to grind with respect to what they perceive as the unacknowledged heroic exploits of Nazi forces and agents in the region, which have no basis in reality.⁷²

Almost without exception, the monographs listed in the bibliography of this thesis are studies of something other than covert operations in Persia or the Middle East which nevertheless mention such events and/or the personalities involved in them parenthetically. There is little point in reviewing these works here. All that needs to be said is that the information they contain about either Allied or Axis operations is generally fragmentary,

70. An example would be S. Djalal Madani, *Iranische Politik und Drittes Reich* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1986), an interesting study undertaken by a political and diplomatic historian with full access to the British and German archives which by no means avoids covert activities, but which predates the release of the secret-service files necessary to establish context and authenticity. Madani is therefore compelled to rely heavily on such sources as Foreign Office records, Soviet secondary literature, and Schulze-Holthus's memoir, and thus for lack of available information tends to overplay the role and significance of Schulze-Holthus and the Qashgai tribe—as opposed to Franz Mayr and the *Melliun* movement—in subversive activities. The result is a skewed depiction of clandestine events (semi-archival, uncorroborated, and of course nonspecialist) which should caution any researcher who might think it straightforward to circumvent the problem of inaccessibility to records by seeking information in mirrored files. Cf. Wark, *Never-Never Land*: 201-202, on the paper trail left by the secret services.

71. H. O. Dovey, “Cheese,” *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 3 (1990): 176-183; “Maunsell and Mure,” *Intelligence and National Security* 8, no. 1 (1993): 60-77; “The Middle East Intelligence Centre,” *Intelligence and National Security* 4, no. 4 (1989): 800-812.

72. An example of this rogue literature would be Franz Kurowski, *The Brandenburgers: Global Mission* (Winnipeg: J.J. Fedorowicz, 1997), which is one of the worst popular histories I have ever read. The sections entitled “The Operation in Iran” (123-133) and “The Role of the Brandenburgers in Operation TIGER” (137-139) are littered with errors, contradictions, and exaggerations too numerous to list here. The source of some of Kurowski's misinformation appears to be David Littlejohn, *Foreign Legions of the Third Reich* (San Jose, CA: Bender, 1987), another popular work that requires cautious handling. However, I suspect that much of Kurowski's writing is original—in other words, pure invention.

superficial, nonanalytical, and—frequently—disjointed and inaccurate.⁷³ In many cases they contain nothing more than background “colour” that has helped contextualize some of the technical elements of this work. What therefore makes more sense is to review here the few monographs that are exceptional, in that they treat the secret world as phenomenal and present a cohesive linear narrative with accurate details occasionally supplemented by analysis and synthesis.

Perhaps the most useful work on Nazi operations in the Middle East to emerge in recent years is *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz* (2007) by Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers.⁷⁴ While interested mainly in anti-Semitic affinities between the Nazis and the Arab world, not only do these authors acknowledge the significance of Axis operations in Persia as far back as 1940, but they get the details consistently right. Names are spelled correctly, events are described accurately, and their work is based not on secondary literature or conjecture but on primary sources in the German archives. Naturally Mallmann and Cüppers portray only Axis (Abwehr and SD) undertakings; however, their methodology is knowing and measured with a degree of integrity that one might expect from professional historians of their calibre. Another interesting but far less meticulous contribution, unique in that it focusses exclusively on Axis and Allied intelligence and counterintelligence activities in Persia, is a recent article by Süleyman Seydi mainly about the KISS deception (1944-1945).⁷⁵ The paper’s merit lies primarily in the fact that it is rooted in the British archival records; its chief weaknesses are its failure to live up to the broad scope of its title, its tendency to see German covert activities in Persia as programmed rather than extemporized, and its frequent inaccuracies of detail. Furthermore, though an intriguing and successful double-cross sustained even beyond 1945, the KISS operation that constitutes Seydi’s main interest was a relatively insignificant sideshow that occurred late in the war and that probably had little effect on the German war effort—and even less on Persia.⁷⁶ It is distressing too that Seydi accepts uncritically the Soviet myth of a security

73. A typical example is Barry Rubin, *Istanbul Intrigues* (New York: Pharos, 1992), 61, which devotes but one (highly inaccurate) paragraph to “Berlin’s espionage efforts in Iran.”

74. Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Martin Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz: Das Dritte Reich, die Araber und Palästina* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007).

75. Süleyman Seydi, “Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Activities in Iran during the Second World War,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 5 (September 2010): 733-752. Unfortunately, Seydi is yet another writer whose synoptical skills are impressive, but who cannot seem to master the fine details, repeatedly misspelling Franz Mayr’s name (and several others) and getting many elementary facts wrong. For more about KISS, see pp. 138n71, 214n78, 256n73, 298. For a list of codenames and cover names, see Appendix E1.

76. See the KISS case officer’s conclusion that “if nothing else certain German officers were kept busy. No deception was attempted, the value of the information given was small, it merely reached Berlin more quickly than through their usual channels such as travellers, newspapers, and broadcasts. The Abwehr ... was probably

crisis at the Big Three conference in 1943. Not so Donal O’Sullivan, whose recent archivally-based study of Anglo-Soviet intelligence relations, *Dealing with the Devil* (2010), is sceptical about the WEITSPRUNG scenario and accurate in its treatment of the KISS double-cross. Since O’Sullivan’s focus is on cooperation between the British and Russian services, not on German operations, his chapter on Persia is limited to an appreciation of the KISS and WEITSPRUNG files, with only passing mentions of Franz Mayr and his close associates Roman Gamotha and Mohammed Vaziri.⁷⁷

Notwithstanding the recent publication of two monographs on Canaris, Oster, and the Abwehr—*Hitler’s Spy Chief* (2005) by Richard Bassett⁷⁸ and *Canaris* (2007) by Michael Mueller⁷⁹—Heinz Höhne’s authoritative *Canaris* (1979) remains unquestionably the best work on the subject.⁸⁰ On the activities of the Abwehr and the SD in general, David Kahn’s *Hitler’s Spies* (2007) is the most comprehensive work available,⁸¹ while two studies by Michael Wildt give a complete overview of the organization, operations, and personalities of the SD: *Generation des Unbedingten* (2003) and *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite, Mordeinheit* (2003).⁸² However, there are few mentions of the Middle East in any of these studies, and even fewer of Persia.

One unique contribution to Abwehr history is the work of the East German Julius Mader, a Stasi officer and prolific Marxist propagandist, whose antifascist interpretation of historical events angered former Abwehr officers familiar with his vitriolic style writing from a West German perspective in *Die Nachhut* at the height of the Cold War.⁸³ Their fury is

dissuaded from sending further missions [to Persia]” Brief summary of KISS case, September 1954, f 330, KV 2/1285, TNA. See also p. 121n20.

77. See Chapter 7, entitled “Casablanca East: Joint Anglo-Soviet Counter-Intelligence in Iran,” in Donal O’Sullivan, *Dealing with the Devil: Anglo-Soviet Intelligence Cooperation during the Second World War* (New York: Lang, 2010), 195-213. Unfortunately, O’Sullivan seems to have been misled about Gamotha’s postwar career by an unreliable 1970 article in *Der Spiegel* which claimed that Gamotha, whose age was given as 53, was still alive and in Egypt, training Fatah terrorists! See “Ersatz aus Budapest,” *Der Spiegel*, 10 August 1970. Such disinformation originated possibly as Israeli propaganda, probably as Soviet propaganda; the Russians did not officially acknowledge Gamotha’s death until 2001, when he was rehabilitated by the Office of the Chief Military Prosecutor (GVP). His ultimate rehabilitation constitutes additional evidence that he was indeed a Soviet agent. See Stefan Karner and Barbara Stelzl-Marx, eds., *Stalins letzte Opfer: Verschleppte und erschossene Österreicher in Moskau, 1950-1953* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009), 375, and pp. 216-224.
78. Richard Bassett, *Hitler’s Spy Chief: The Wilhelm Canaris Mystery* (London: Cassell, 2005).
79. Michael Mueller, *Canaris: The Life and Death of Hitler’s Spymaster*, trans. Geoffrey Brooks (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007).
80. Heinz Höhne, *Canaris* (New York: Doubleday, 1979).
81. David Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies: German Military Intelligence in World War II* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2000).
82. Michael Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003); Michael Wildt, ed., *Nachrichtendienst, politische Elite, Mordeinheit: Der Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2003).
83. Julius Mader, *Hitlers Spionagegenerale sagen aus: Ein Dokumentarbericht über Aufbau, Struktur und Operationen des OKW-Geheimdienstamtes Ausland/Abwehr mit einer Chronologie seiner Einsätze von 1933*

understandable, for Mader had attacked with poisoned pen their citadel and its revered late commander in passages such as this:

In the years that followed, especially in West Germany, kilograms of printer's ink and many tons of paper, as well as kilometres of celluloid, were used to falsify ... the historical truth about the criminal activity of the espionage and sabotage agency of Hitler's armed forces run ... by Admiral Wilhelm Canaris from 1935 to 1944 and to help disseminate concocted fables.⁸⁴

Mader even directly attacked the Abwehr veterans' organization (AGEA) and their journal (*Die Nachhut*),⁸⁵ asserting that they represented an uninterrupted continuity in the intelligence world between the Third Reich and the West German state, that they were pursuing a postwar programme of revenge conceived in 1944-1945, and that they were following orders issued for postwar deployment by the Third Reich monopolies, the Wehrmacht generals, and the Nazi Party. Mader enumerated ten memoirs published by former Abwehr officers, including Berthold Schulze-Holthus's autobiographical book about his years in Persia, claiming them to be part of an elaborate campaign of psychological warfare being conducted by West Germany and NATO: building blocks of a neo-Nazi legend that veiled the "real history" of the Abwehr.⁸⁶ Quite apart from his use of alien Marxist rhetoric, which tends to undermine his credibility, no matter how scholarly his research or how accurate his narrative might be, Mader appears to have had access to sources unavailable to Western historians, which is what makes his writing particularly problematic. Since few of Mader's more outrageous claims can be corroborated by evidence in Western archives, one is all too often forced to rely upon pure instinct as to whether this or that statement is based on historical fact or is itself a "concocted fable." Consequently, Mader's monograph, however intriguing, proved to have insufficient documentary validity for use in this study.⁸⁷

bis 1944 (Berlin: Verlag der Nationen, 1972). Responses to Mader's work (penned five years before he published his monograph), entitled "Zurückweisung einer Lüge von Jul. Mader" and "Blick in die Fälscherwerkstatt von Jul. Mader," are to be found in *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 2 (1 August 1967) and 3 (15 November 1967), MSG 3/667, BA-MA. For Mader's biographical details, see Helmut Müller-Enbergs and others, eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR: Ein Lexikon ostdeutscher Biographien*, 4th edition (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2006) (available online at http://www.stiftung-aufarbeitung.de/service_wegweiser/www2). Michael Mueller has said that, while Mader has been "roundly abused" in the West and his books must be treated with caution, they have "a solid foundation in information." Mueller, *Canaris*, 287n48.

84. Mader, *Spionagegenerale*, 6.

85. Mader fails to mention that, if it were indeed intended as propaganda, *Die Nachhut's* reach would have been extremely limited, as it was an unpublished inhouse organ distributed exclusively among members of AGEA; consequently, it would have had very few readers. Copies are difficult to obtain today; however, I succeeded in finding the entire journal on file at the Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg in MSG 3/667.

86. Mader, *Spionagegenerale*, 40-41.

87. An interesting but equally doctrinaire Marxist study of the SD, completed without access to any Western archives but with some reliance on what it terms "contemporary fascist" and "bourgeois" literature, is Alwin

Of the twelve doctoral dissertations consulted only the three most recent projects belong to the field of intelligence history; however, each of them has direct bearing on this case study and has proved useful in confirming that certain lines of enquiry or assertions were justifiable and in corroborating or supplementing certain facts. The first—Thorsten Querg’s “Spionage und Terror” (1997)—yielded detailed insights into the organization and brief history of the SD and more especially into the operations and personnel of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Administration [RSHA]) Amt VI (Foreign Intelligence Department).⁸⁸ The other studies—“The War in the Dark” (2003) by Emily Wilson and “Empire of Shadows” (2007) by Adam Shelley—were both completed under the supervision of Professor Christopher Andrew, official historian of MI5, at Cambridge University.⁸⁹ Together they provide some interesting descriptions of wartime MI5 operations at headquarters in London and at the regional level in Cairo. Disappointingly however, there is little mention of Persia and even less of Abwehr or SD operations in the Persian theatre.

It was a pleasure to spend time among the newspaper collections of the British Library at Colindale, reading the wartime British, American, and German dailies. While little specific information was to be gained from this reading, for the kind of operations that are the subject of this thesis were not normally disclosed to the public, it was an enlightening experience in that it made it easier to register such contextual phenomena as wartime public opinion and the intensity and pervasiveness of both Allied and Axis propaganda in moulding and bolstering that opinion.

The maps and charts that illustrate this study are original: they have been compiled painstakingly by the author on the basis of data found in the archives and occasionally in the secondary literature, with constant reference to an accurate, large-scale modern map of the region.⁹⁰ Most of the maps have been prepared on the basis of contemporary cartographic information found in a naval intelligence manual doubtless used in its original, internally

Ramme, *Der Sicherheitsdienst der SS: Zu seiner Funktion im faschistischen Machtapparat und im Besatzungsregime des sogenannten Generalgouvernements* (Berlin: Deutscher Militärverlag, 1970).

88. Thorsten J. Querg, “Spionage und Terror: Das Amt VI des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes 1939-1945” (Dr phil diss., Berlin, 1997). Unfortunately, Katrin Paehler’s detailed study of Schellenberg and the SD was not available to me at the time of writing. See “Espionage, Ideology, and Personal Politics: The Making and Unmaking of a Nazi Foreign Intelligence Service” (PhD diss., American, 2004). Also unavailable was Pherset Rosbeiani, “Das Unternehmen ‘Mammut’: Ein politisch-militärisches Geheimdienstunternehmen in Südkurdistan in den Jahren 1942/42 und seine Vorgeschichte,” (Dr phil diss., Berlin, 2011).

89. Wilson, “War in the Dark” (see p. 7n18); Shelley, “Empire of Shadows” (see p. 7n19).

90. *Iran 1:2 000 000: Map for Businessmen and Tourists (and Administrative Map 1:8 500 000)* (Budapest: GiziMap, 2006).

distributed form by the security forces in Persia during the period under study.⁹¹ Both manual drafting and computer software were employed in the production process.⁹²

Few photographs could be found of the personalities who inhabited the twilight world of wartime covert operations in Persia. Furthermore, only photographic images that are, to the best of the author's knowledge, in the public domain or protected by Crown Copyright have been reproduced in this study; every attempt has been made to respect the intellectual property rights of others and to comply with the terms of Crown Copyright, the Open Government Licence, and the United States Code. It was therefore decided to exclude from the study any images that might be subject to copyright restrictions or where ownership is unclear. Wherever conditions apply, a credit line has been shown; the absence of any credit line generally implies that an image is deemed to be in the public domain and copyright-free.

This is neither the time nor the place for a protracted scholastic debate about whether Iran should be called *Iran* or *Persia*, or about the synonymity of the terms *Near East*, *Middle East*, *Western Asia*, *Central Asia*, and even *true Middle East*. It is the historian's task to record the usage and linguistic register of past cultural and political contexts, not to reflect the currently perceived incorrectness of terming Iran, *Persia*. Not even Iranians (or Persians) can agree about that. Suffice it to say that there have been innumerable disputes in the past; lengthy scholarly essays have been published on the subject.⁹³ Even so, with consistency and authenticity as overriding concerns, this dissertation adheres throughout to the terminology (and orthography) preferred by Allied service personnel, administrators, diplomats, and politicians writing in English during the Second World War. Since this case study is based almost entirely on their written record, it is important to employ the terminology found in those primary archival sources

91. United Kingdom, Naval Intelligence Division, *Persia*, Middle East Intelligence Handbooks 1943-1946, 5, Geographical Handbook Series prepared for use in HM Service during the Second World War (Gerrards Cross: Archive Editions, 1987). Another useful geographical source consulted was found at College Park: Plan for operation of certain Iranian communication facilities between Persian Gulf ports and Tehran by US Army forces, 3 December 1942, RG 218, Geographic File 1942-45, Box 176, NARA.

92. *Adobe Photoshop CS2*, version 9.0.2, copyright 1990-2005 Adobe Systems Incorporated; *OmniGraffle Pro*, version 5.0, copyright 2000-2008 The Omni Group; and *Microsoft Organization Chart for Mac 2004*, version 11.0, copyright 2004 Microsoft Corporation.

93. For example: Abdol Hossain Hamzavi, *Henceforth Iran* (London: Cooper, 1936); C. G. Smith, "The Emergence of the Middle East," *Journal of Contemporary History* 3, no. 3 (July 1968): 3-17; Nikki R. Keddie, "Is There a Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4, no. 3 (July 1973): 255-271; Alford Carleton, "'Near East' versus 'Middle East,'" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 6, no. 2 (April 1975): 237-238. In the narrowest sense, of course, "Persians" are the inhabitants of the province of Fars (originally Pars), from which the term *Farsi* (Parsi) is derived. The substitution of "F" for "P" is an Arabicism; Arabic has no "P" phoneme.

(minutes, reports, correspondence, cables, and decrypts), if only to avoid confusion.⁹⁴ Most of the Britons and Americans who did that writing thought of the country we now call *Iran* as *Persia*, and of the population as *Persian*, not *Iranian*. They largely ignored the 1935 decree of Reza Shah that his country and his people should be renamed *Iran* and the *Iranians*. During the 1940s—indeed until quite recently in the West—most Anglophones thought that way, without any sense of their terminological choices being colonialist, anachronistic, patronizing, inaccurate, or—to use the current buzzphrase—politically incorrect.

With the Germans, the preferences were reversed. In most German-language documents of the period, the preferred term was *Iran*, not *Persien* (Persia). This is also true of contemporary translations from German into English; the Allied translators tended to preserve the original German term *Iran*, rather than translating it into English as *Persia*. But not always. Inconsistently perhaps, the Germans tended to call Iranians, *Perser* (Persians); this inconsistency is to be seen frequently in the documents, and is transmitted—unaltered—in this study. Also, a certain ambivalence is apparent even among postwar German writers; it is reflected for instance in the title of a 1951 book called *Das andere Iran: Persien in den Augen eines Europäers*.⁹⁵ Since most Germans were far less familiar with the region than their British counterparts, their terminology and nomenclature has been approached with caution and amended where necessary.

With characteristic common sense, it was Winston Churchill who, on the eve of the Anglo-Soviet invasion in 1941, insisted on use of the term *Persia* instead of *Iran*, in order to avoid “dangerous mistakes [that] may easily occur through the similarity of Iran and Iraq. In any cases where convenient, the word ‘Iran’ may follow in brackets after Persia.”⁹⁶ Consequently, all regional formations (for example: PAIC, PAIFORCE, and CICI Persia)⁹⁷ were thereafter named for Persia, not Iran; one also spoke of the “Persian theatre of operations,” the “Persian corridor,” and—of course—the “Persian Gulf.” While more likely to use *Iran* and *Iranian* than the British, the Americans too dubbed their formations “Persian” (for example: PGSC and PGC).⁹⁸ American ambivalence in this matter can be seen in the title chosen by one American general for

94. The tribe that figures prominently in the narrative is the Qashgai tribe of southwestern Persia. Today the preferred spellings are *Qashqai* or *Qashqa'i*; however, the common contemporary spelling was *Qashgai* (less frequently *Kashgai* or *Gashgai*), so that is the form I have used throughout the study.

95. Edmund Jaroljmek, *Das andere Iran: Persien in den Augen eines Europäers* (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1951).

96. Churchill, “Grand Alliance,” 479. Otto Skorzeny (and his translators) fell into this very trap in two different editions of his memoirs, referring in separate contexts to Iraq instead of Iran in connection with the southern Persian oilfields and the Qashgai tribe. See Otto Skorzeny, *Skorzeny's Special Missions* (London: Hale, 1957), 28; Otto Skorzeny, *My Commando Operations: The Memoirs of Hitler's Most Daring Commando*, trans. David Johnston (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 1995), 201. The title of this case study reflects Churchill's preference.

97. See List of abbreviations and acronyms (pp. xvii-xxiv) for the full forms of these acronyms.

98. Persian Gulf Service Command (PGSC) was renamed Persian Gulf Command (PGC) in December 1943.

his 1943 article in *National Geographic Magazine*: “Iran in Wartime: Through Fabulous Persia ...”⁹⁹

This study originally intended to make one notable concession to current political correctness and to the official Iranian nomenclature enacted in 1935.¹⁰⁰ The terms *Iran* and *Iranian* were to be preferred in connection with distinct entities, appointments, and subjects of the Iranian polity. For example, the indigenous army was to be referred to as the *Iranian* Army, not the *Persian* Army;¹⁰¹ the *Majlis* as the *Iranian* (not the *Persian*) parliament, and so forth. However, since the study relied so heavily on non-indigenous sources, it soon proved awkward and inconsistent to reflect this preference, so the idea was dropped.

For the purposes of a monograph dealing with covert operations in Persia during the Second World War, one or two technical terms associated with intelligence studies and intelligence history in general need defining here more precisely in terms of the work done by both Allied and Axis operatives in that specific region at that specific time. For example, *security*—a somewhat comprehensive term, subject to a number of different interpretations—was described at the time in its widest sense as the safeguarding of the state against attempts to lower the value of its war potential, whether by treason, espionage, sabotage, propaganda, carelessness, or political agitation. It fell broadly into three main subdivisions:

- (a) *Passive or protective security*. The conception and enforcement of such static measures and of such legislation as may be necessary to safeguard secrecy and the safety of installations and lines of communication.
- (b) *Political or internal security*. The provision of accurate intelligence on political movements and agitation so that the competent authorities may receive timely warning should any action be considered necessary to protect the state from the effects of such movements or agitation.
- (c) *Counterintelligence*. The detection, penetration, and neutralization of enemy espionage, sabotage, and propaganda organizations or of any subversive political bodies controlled by such organizations, together with certain special activities connected with the deception of the enemy.¹⁰²

99. John N. Greely, “Iran in Wartime: Through Fabulous Persia, Hub of the Middle East, Americans, Britons, and Iranians Keep Sinews of War Moving to the Embattled Soviet Union,” *National Geographic Magazine* 84 (August 1943): 129-156. Major-General Greely headed the original US military mission to Persia in 1942.

100. Reader Bullard, *Britain and the Middle East: From Earliest Times to 1963* (London: Hutchinson, 1964), 127; I. C. B. Dear, ed., *The Oxford Companion to World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 874.

101. The initials *PA* (Persian Army) were regularly appended by British writers to the names of Persian (Iranian) Army personnel; however, this may have been simply to avoid confusion, because the initials *IA* normally meant “Indian Army.”

102. See Memorandum on counter-intelligence in the Middle East area with special reference to Iraq and Persia, f 3a, KV 4/223, TNA. Cf. the more concise definition of *security* given by the British wartime Security Executive in HD(5)E, 26 October 1942, CAB 93/3, TNA, quoted by Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence*, vol. 4, 3: “the defence of national interests against hostile elements other than the armed forces of the enemy: in practice against espionage, sabotage and attempts to procure defeat by subversive political activity.”

It can therefore be seen that the frequent use of the term *security intelligence* as a synonym for *counterintelligence* is misleading, for the former is a much broader concept, encompassing protective security and internal security, as well as operations against enemy operatives and networks. Thus it becomes clear that the role of CICI as depicted in this study was essentially that of a security-intelligence service rather than a counterintelligence or counterespionage service. This is not to suggest that its role was any the less operational than that of a counterintelligence agency; on the contrary, as has been pointed out by the Head of “A” Force, the strategic-deception unit of Middle East Forces (MEF), Dudley Clarke, “the value of intelligence is in exact proportion to its operational utility: ... the word ‘security’ used as an adjective can conveniently be substituted for ‘operational’.”¹⁰³

Unfortunately, there is a general misconception about the English term *agent* (German: *Agent*), as prevalent during the Second World War as it is today. Too seldom do people make the nice distinction between that term and *intelligence officer*. Strictly speaking, most of the personalities engaged in active espionage and security-intelligence work in Persia were not *agents*, but *intelligence officers* and *security officers*. Technically, none of the Abwehr and SD staybehinds—Schulze-Holthus, Mayr, and Gamotha—was a German *agent*, although they are so described throughout the records. These men were active *intelligence officers*: serving members of armed-forces or police organizations with military ranks, as were their counterparts in the Allied security services. Most of those sent out to join them as members of Operations FRANZ and ANTON, whether in the role of saboteur or W/T operator, were not agents either; they were serving soldiers of the Wehrmacht or the Waffen-SS on covert overseas duty (i.e. special forces). Only the ANTON and MAMMUT mission guide/interpreters, Farzad and Ramzi, were true *agents*: what the Abwehr called *Vertrauensmänner* (lit. men who could be trusted): *V-Männer* or *V-Leute* for short. In the German records, the operations in which these men participated are generally called *Unternehmen*; in the Allied records, they are referred to synonymously and inconsistently as *operations*, *undertakings*, *expeditions*, and *missions*, the choice of variant being stylistic rather than technical. One solution to this semantic mess, as the title of this study suggests, is to use the term *initiatives*, which leaves nicely open the question of whether or not the Germans executed their operational plans or, as was usually the case, cancelled them.

The problem with military and other indications of rank is that they change, sometimes confusingly. Allied and Axis promotions came thick and fast after 1939, especially with the

103. The role and control of secret intelligence in support of both operations and security, Private papers of D. W. A. Mure, 2194:67/321/3, IWM.

ever-increasing rates of attrition as the war wore on. Therefore, throughout this study preference has been shown for the use of first and family names to identify personalities, devoid of rank or title. In military records, of course, first names are rarely given; many hours have been spent on tracing them. Where this has proved impossible, the abbreviation *fnu* (first name unknown) is occasionally shown or, if the personality is mentioned repeatedly, the known rank is shown in place of the first name (e.g. *Colonel Putz*). Where ranks and titles are given, usually in the first instance, they are shown in the text unabbreviated and as they were at the time. Subsequent promotions or final forms of address are only shown where the recipient is mentioned in that subsequent context; last-minute temporary promotions, as given to Abwehr mission participants immediately prior to their departure, or those promotions liberally dispensed in the final year of the war, are shown appropriately. German ranks have generally been translated into English, where necessary with an indication of service branch if not clarified *a priori* by the context (e.g. *Navy Captain* as opposed to *Army Captain*). Luftwaffe ranks are translated as contemporary British infantry equivalents with the prefix *Air Force* rather than as Royal Air Force equivalents; thus *Major der Luftwaffe* becomes *Air Force Major* instead of *Squadron Leader* (corresponding more or less to US Army Air Force ranks at the time). SS ranks are expressed as contemporary British infantry equivalents with the prefix SS (for example, *Obergruppenführer* becomes *SS General*; *Unterscharführer*, *SS Corporal*). Commonly used SS rank abbreviations found in the records (e.g. *Ogruf* and *Uscha*) are not shown at all, as they will be unfamiliar to most English-language readers. If in doubt, Table E-1, a simplified table of comparative ranks compiled by the author, may prove useful.

Among commissioned ranks, the chief anomalies are the rank of *Oberführer* (senior colonel) in the SS, for which there is no true equivalent, and the non-correspondence among general-staff ranks, caused in part by the fact that the Germans had *colonel-generals*, but no *brigadiers*, giving rise to such false cognates as *Generalleutnant* and *Generalmajor*, which translate as *Major General* and *Brigadier* respectively. Non-commissioned ranks are always tricky to translate, because the various services of the German armed forces had more non-commissioned grade-levels than were commonly found in the armed forces of other nations, particularly in the case of the German navy. Consequently, for simplicity's sake, some of these grades have had to be grouped somewhat arbitrarily. In any other cases where doubt lingered as to the correct term to use when translating Nazi forms of address, ranks, titles, and functions, the terminologies prescribed for the Nuremberg trials and by the Canadian Department of Justice for

war crimes documentation were considered authoritative.¹⁰⁴ Failing that, the final arbiter was common sense! For administrative units, David Kahn's practical method of indicating successive levels in the Third Reich bureaucracy has been adopted throughout (see Table E-2).

While at least half of this thesis deals with German intelligence history, it has been written in English for submission to a British Commonwealth university; it is therefore intended for comprehension by readers who may have no knowledge of German. For this reason, throughout the study, English-language translations of all German texts, published or unpublished, have been provided—many translated by the author. However, where original documents are only available in German, the bibliographical data remain in German. Where both German and English versions of a publication exist, only the English-language version is quoted and/or cited in the bibliographical data, although the author normally consulted both versions. Most of the quoted texts have been preserved in their original form. However, light editing has been performed on some documentary material, in order to preserve orthographic and typographical consistency and correctness throughout the work.¹⁰⁵ This proved to be particularly necessary with some wartime documents that had obviously been produced in stressful circumstances and with meagre resources—especially translations from various languages processed by linguists whose skills and practices were clearly somewhat less than expert or professional.

This case study is essentially driven by information discovered in primary archival records, cited consistently and accurately in accordance with *The Chicago Manual of Style* (15th edition)¹⁰⁶ in the extensive bibliographical footnotes. Few of these records have ever been described or analyzed in published works. However, to provide readers with a link wherever possible between unpublished and published historical material, the footnotes also fulfil another purpose, functioning as a selected inventory of secondary literature relevant to those subjects featured in the primary documents. Throughout the work, use of the first person has been restricted to the footnotes and to the front and back matter.

It may be said that one of the disadvantages of compiling an original case study on the basis of government records is that it is impossible to introduce one's work with—to borrow from the terminologies of medical and social-sciences research—a qualitative “research

104. Germany (Territory under Allied Occupation, 1945-1955, US Zone) Military Tribunals, *Trials of War Criminals before the Nürnberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10, Nürnberg, October 1946-April 1946*, vol. 11 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1950); Government of Canada, Department of Justice, Gloss-95: Glossary for War Crimes Documentation, 1 March 1995 (unpublished).

105. The British and American typewriters and teleprinters used by Allied forces personnel of course had no *Umlaut* (¨) keys, which frequently led to inaccuracies in the spelling of German names in reports, correspondence, and cables. Wherever possible, I have consulted the German records for the correct spellings and have amended them accordingly.

106. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

synthesis” or “systematic review of the literature,” for no pre-existing assumptions, conditions, or investigations exist to be synthesized. In such circumstances, it is therefore to be hoped that the brief survey of selected sources in this introduction will compensate adequately for this writer’s inability to preface his work with any scientific standards or reference points in a field hitherto neglected and unploughed.

2 GERMAN PREINVASION ACTIVITIES AND THE ALLIED INVASION

2.1 German regional interest and the growth of the Nazi diaspora

“Hitler had no plans for conquering the Middle East—
a project which looked attractive only on small-scale maps.”¹

Although he may never have elaborated a plan, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that Adolf Hitler never had any interest in invading Asia through Persia. The reality is that he indeed—occasionally—expressed such an interest, but that he had other priorities. Once he had chosen to invade Soviet Russia on a massive scale, his commitment of enormous numbers of Axis forces to the Russian front effectively precluded the possibility of his launching any other major invasions.² Hitler would never have allowed expansionist scenarios of, for instance, filling the *Lebensraum* of central Persia with German colonists, to be fulfilled at the cost of his overriding obsession: the annihilation of the Soviet Union.³ It was therefore unthinkable that he would ever have permitted German forces desperately needed on the Russian front to be diverted to a military enterprise aimed at the destruction of British influence east of Suez and the joining of hands with the Japanese. However much Germany might have benefited from acquiring new sources of oil in Persia or from destroying British lines of communication with India and the Far East, Hitler’s priority remained the conquest of Stalinist Russia. Once that goal was finally put beyond his reach by the staggering defeat of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad, necessitating the withdrawal of Heeresgruppe Süd (Army Group South) from the Caucasus, Hitler appears to have lost all interest in Persia and to have never mentioned the region again.⁴

1. A. J. P. Taylor, *English History, 1914-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 521.

2. “It was the attack on Russia which prevented Hitler from undertaking a major intervention in the Near East at that time. At all costs Hitler wanted to finish the Russian invasion before attacking the Near East.” Mohamed-Kamal El-Dessouki, “Hitler und der Nahe Osten” (Dr phil diss., Berlin, 1963), 140. In 1940, “when the Army General Staff (OKH) suggested an operation against Turkey and on to the Middle East,” Hitler said: “This question ... can only be considered after Russia has been eliminated.” Andreas Hillgruber, “The Third Reich and the Near and Middle East, 1933-1939,” in Uriel Dann, ed., *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1919-1939* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1988), 275. Even before BARBAROSSA, with Russia still an ally, Hitler appears to have been hesitant to expand into the region, for fear of upsetting Stalin or even the Japanese. On 26 September 1940, for instance, Hitler discussed with Admiral Raeder the question of “whether perhaps one could make an expansion in the direction of Persia and India appetizing to the Russians.” At which point, as though perceiving a logical connection, Hitler went on to discuss Germany’s new alliance with Japan. See Max Domarus, *Hitler: Speeches and Proclamations 1932-1945*, vol. 3: The Years 1939-1940 (Wauconda, IL: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2004), 2096. For a commonsensical overview of Hitler’s global ambitions, I recommend Dietrich Aigner, “Hitler’s Ultimate Aims: A Programme of World Dominion?” in *Aspects of the Third Reich*, ed. H. W. Koch (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1985), 251-66; meanwhile, Hillgruber’s interpretation is concisely presented in Andreas Hillgruber, *Germany and the Two World Wars*, trans. William C. Kirby (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 49-51.

3. For a lucid discussion of German imperialist ideology and the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum*, see Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 231-258.

4. While the consensus among military historians is that the German surrender at Stalingrad marked merely the beginning—and the destruction of German armour at Kursk the fulfilment—of the strategic *Wende* (turning point) on the Russian front, it is the defeat at Stalingrad and retreat from the Caucasus that had the most telling effect on German covert operational planning for Persia in 1943.

The history of German interest in Persia before the Third Reich is relatively easy to trace, for it is not a long one.⁵ During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries occasional short-term missions to Persia were carried out by individual German states, adventurers, scholars, and merchants. The first commercial treaty between Persia and the *Zollverein* was signed in 1857, to be followed by a Prussian diplomatic mission in 1860. As Germany's power grew in the latter half of the nineteenth century, Persia saw it as potentially advantageous to offset the traditional influences of Russia and Britain in the region with increased German interest; however, Germany's response to any Persian suggestion of closer relations was generally evasive or negative because of the special relationship Bismarck had established with Russia. He had no wish to interfere with Russian hegemony in the region and was anyway generally opposed to colonial expansion. However, by the 1880s, Bismarck had modified his view, claiming that the expansionist colonial policies of other powers forced Germany to take similar action unless she wished to be excluded from world trade. By 1881, much of the goods passing through Russia to Persia were German. In 1885, a German legation was established in Tehran as a concession to German commercial interests, but little else happened until the turn of the century to indicate that there had been any increase in German influence in the country.

It has been suggested that the effort to subjugate Persia to modern German interest was continuous: that it began in the Wilhelmine period, was intensified during the First World War with the appearance of Wassmuss in southwestern Persia, was continued during the Weimar period, and was subsequently perfected by the Nazis.⁶ The truth is that, until the Nazi takeover in 1933, German expansionism in the region was circumstantial and opportunistic rather than programmed; consequently, it evolved pragmatically in response to such initiatives as Reza Shah's ambitious modernization programme in the fields of communications, education, finance, and administration, seizing opportunities and fulfilling Persian needs as and when they arose. For a while around the turn of the century a unified policy towards the Ottoman Empire—

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5. There is of course an extensive literature of German Middle East strategy. I found the following works *inter alia* most helpful in connection with German interest in Persia from the nineteenth century onwards: George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran 1918-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1949) and Nancy Leila Sadka, "German Relations with Persia, 1921-1941" (PhD diss., Stanford, 1972). Also, a useful summary of intense German interest in Ancient Persian culture, which predated the Nazi influx, is provided by Stefan R. Hauser, "German Research on the Ancient Near East and Its Relation to Political and Economic Interests from Kaiserreich to World War II," in *Germany and the Middle East 1871-1945*, ed. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2004), 161-162, 170-171. A well-informed study of increasing German regional interest perceived as a threat to the Soviet Union is Miron Rezun, "The German Threat to the U.S.S.R. in Iran and the Soviet Response," in *The Soviet Union and Iran: Soviet Policy in Iran from the Beginnings of the Pahlavi Dynasty until the Soviet Invasion in 1941*, Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales Collection de Relations Internationales 8 (Alphen aan de Rijn: Sijthoff & Noordhoff International, 1981).
 6. See Lenczowski, "The Growth of German Influence in Iran," in *Russia and the West*, 145-166.

Imperial Germany's so-called *Orientpolitik*—which certainly influenced certain interested enterprises and individuals to undertake initiatives in the region as a whole. However, as Persia was a Shia Muslim state—not Sunni Muslim like Turkey—and lay beyond the Ottoman aegis, it remained on the periphery of German policy towards the region, which by preference targeted such areas as Anatolia and Mesopotamia.⁷

By the end of the nineteenth century, only one German firm (Wönckhaus) had established itself permanently in Persia, with agencies in Bandar Abbas and Bushire, where the first German consulate was opened in 1897—curiously with only six local German residents to serve—and was headed by Wilhelm Wassmuss from 1909 onwards.⁸ While Wassmuss may have achieved heroic status among some southern Persian tribes for his plucky opposition to the British during the First World War, Germany remained completely cut off from Persia throughout that war, which nullified whatever relations it had established before 1914. Consequently, Germany was forced from 1921 onwards to gradually reinstate its trading links and other interests in Persia entirely from scratch. To put things in perspective, by the time the Weimar Republic came to an end in 1933, Germany's share in Persian foreign trade was only 8%, as opposed to Russia's 28%, Britain's 23%, and America's 12%.⁹ It is therefore incorrect to consider the evolution of German policy towards and interests in Persia as a continuum, especially when one considers the lacuna created by the Great War.

To a certain extent, Germany also became involved in Persian affairs during the Weimar period by default: no other world power was free to render assistance. In the words of the British minister in Tehran at the time:

Where else could the Persians go? American stock [after the dismissal of Dr Millspaugh] was at a discount, British and Russian experts could not be thought of, the French and the Italians were not people to be treated seriously, and none of the smaller European nations enjoyed sufficient prestige.¹⁰

7. Sadka, "German Relations," 18-19.

8. Ibid., 26. Wilhelm Wassmuss (1880-1931), a career diplomat, led the tribes of southwestern Persia in revolt against the British during the First World War. His role among the Persian tribes is often likened to that of T. E. Lawrence during the Arab Revolt. Two good English-language sources on Wassmuss are Christopher Sykes, *Wassmuss: The German Lawrence* (London: Longmans Green, 1936) and Peter Hopkirk, *On Secret Service East of Constantinople: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire* (London: John Murray, 2006).

9. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 156. Useful economic statistics are also to be found in Bernd Philipp Schröder, *Deutschland und der Mittlere Osten im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1975), 232-236; Heinz Glaesner, "Das Dritte Reich und der Mittlere Osten: Politische und wirtschaftliche Beziehungen Deutschlands zur Türkei 1933-1939, zu Iran 1939-1941, und zu Afghanistan 1933-1941" (Dr phil diss., Würzburg, 1976), 200 passim; and Lukasz Hirsowicz, "The Course of German Foreign Policy in the Middle East between the World Wars," in *Germany and the Middle East, 1835-1939: International Symposium, April 1975*, ed. Jehuda L. Wallach (Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University, Faculty of Humanities, Aranne School of History, Institute of German History, 1975), 175-179.

10. Clive to Chamberlain, 13 January 1928, E 597/591/34, FO 371/13064, TNA.

Once the Nazis came to power in 1933, German strategic interest in Persian raw materials and industrialization intensified strongly. So too did German attempts to deploy regular and covert agents for the gathering of intelligence and the establishment of contacts and networks, in preparation for war, invasion, and occupation. According to Sadka, it was not coordinated: “German policy in Persia between 1933 and 1939 mirrors the factionalism and lack of direction which characterized the National Socialist state.”¹¹ According to Lenczowski, on the other hand, Nazi policy in Persia was “characterized by consistency and dynamism.”¹² He goes on:

... it is difficult to differentiate clearly between the general activities of the Weimar and the Nazi periods. Hitler’s advent to power in 1933 added only new impetus to their already existing policy. In his bid for world hegemony the German dictator assigned an important role to Iran. During the Nazi period German methods were simply bolder than before, but the overall aim—to entrench the Germans in Iran—remained essentially the same.¹³

The entrenchment proceeded according to “a sort of meticulous method or master plan”:

... first, prepare the way by dominating the transport system; second, use it for your capital investments and flow of goods; third, with the economic situation well in your grip, gain political influence; fourth, absorb the country within your military sphere.¹⁴

While the country’s mineral resources, specifically iron and copper, remained unavailable for export to Germany until construction of the Trans-Iranian Railway (TIR) was completed in 1938,¹⁵ there was a potential demand in Germany for Persian agricultural products. The Shah’s expansive policies in agricultural education and research had produced many opportunities for German agricultural experts to find employment in Persia, especially those with overseas experience. It was thought that the application of German know-how to the cultivation of medicinal plants, for instance, would prove invaluable to the Persians ... and to the Germans, who had recently succeeded in producing an effective aircraft lubricant from castor-oil plants, which could be grown on an industrial scale in Persia.

11. Sadka, “German Relations,” 162. Caution needs to be exercised when reading Sadka, who tends to downplay the influence of the Nazi Party among German expatriates, denying that they constituted a “menace,” providing a comparatively low estimate of the number of resident Germans in Tehran (490), and denying the existence of a Nazi or pro-Nazi fifth column. Sadka is also unwisely critical of Lenczowski, who had first-hand experience of the Anglo-Soviet occupation during three years as Press Attaché at the Polish Embassy in Tehran, and who is generally to be considered a fine scholar and a reliable and knowledgeable source.

12. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 152.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Access to Persian oil could of course only have been gained by outright military conquest. Output was reserved for the British Empire and France. See Robert L. Baker, *Oil, Blood, and Sand* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1942), 31.

There was even mention of the vast, empty Persian *Lebensraum*, and how it might be settled by German colonists in closed agricultural communes which could set an example of good husbandry for Persian peasants. And it would be a secure environment for German settlers too: “The Germans need have no political fears, for Germany does not border on Persia as Russia and the British Empire do.”¹⁶ Much of this was of course idealistic nonsense, for most of the Persian interior was infertile and uninhabitable because of its extreme climate. And the failure after only four years of Wassmuss’s model German settlement at Chahgudak, established with German government funding when he returned to Persia after the First World War, should have been a sobering deterrent to such foolish dreaming:

The farm at Chahgudak ... is indeed a mournful relic of a great man. There is a sort of melancholy, a prompting of some heavy sense, common to any empty farmyard on a hot, still day. The machines, dull and silent, were rotting in the sheds. The great wagons, useless and ponderous It was very queer to see a European farm in the midst of this desert¹⁷

However, during the 1930s, neither extreme climate nor systemic corruption prevented significant numbers of Germans from perceiving Persia as a land of opportunity, particularly because of its emptiness, its rapid modernization under Reza Shah, and its future industrial potential. They flooded in, establishing a large expatriate community organized according to National Socialist principles. In terms of the acquisition of intelligence, it is not clear where their loyalties lay nor who their spymasters were. In addition to German diplomatic and consular officials, some of whom were regular intelligence officers operating under diplomatic or consular cover, no fewer than seven competing Nazi organizations acted as conduits, clearinghouses, and repositories for the intelligence gathered by Germans in Persia. Aside from the two main agencies with a strategic interest in the region, the Abwehr and the SD, there were also such entities as the Auslandsamt (German Foreign Office); the Aussenpolitisches Amt der NSDAP (Foreign Affairs Office of the Nazi Party) under Alfred Rosenberg; the Auslandsabteilung der NSDAP (Foreign Department of the Nazi Party), later renamed the Auslandsorganisation der NSDAP (Foreign Organization of the Nazi Party) under Rudolf Hess; the Büro Ribbentrop (Ribbentrop Bureau), later renamed the Dienststelle Ribbentrop (Ribbentrop Office); and the Forschungsamt (Research Office) of Hermann Göring. Each agency

16. F. Dümke, “Die Balkan und Orientländer als Rohstoffquelle für die deutsche Industrie,” *Der neue Orient* 7/8 (1936): 17.

17. Sykes, *Wassmuss*, 272.

undoubtedly had its own particular methods and modes of gathering information and supplying it to Berlin.¹⁸

In general, Nazi Germany's main interest in infiltrating the country and cultivating positive relations with Persia was political rather than economic; it was mostly about ensuring that Persia's political orientation remained anti-Soviet.¹⁹

The opportunity for Germany lay in the efforts of Reza Shah to escape to a certain extent the strong influence of his two powerful neighbours, the British Empire and the Soviet Union, through limited ties to Germany. In these efforts he was aided by the rivalry of the neighbouring Great Powers and the partial British support of the German initiatives of 1937-38.²⁰

Even at its zenith, the exchange of goods between Germany and Persia amounted to only about 1% of the total respective imports and exports of the two countries:

Although Germany did deliver industrial installations to ... Iran, and also disregarded certain economic "pin pricks"—such as the prohibition of German imports in ... 1938—the purpose, like that of German propaganda activities, was to encourage Iran to join the Anti-Comintern Pact—a goal that was not achieved in the end.²¹

The vexed historiographical question of continuity versus discontinuity in German foreign policy has little relevance to what occurred in Persia during the transition from the Weimar Republic to the early years of Nazi power. However, it is important to understand why this was so. Why is it difficult to connect Persia with the great debate that reached its climax among German historians during the 1980s about whether Nazism was a unique historical aberration and the Holocaust a singular event—which occurred with the connivance of the German people, who wittingly chose to follow a *Sonderweg* (special path)—or part of the inexorable continuum of German history?²² The answer is that, in the absence of any

18. Ribbentrop's organization probably most closely paralleled Hitler's interests, but it had little interest in the Middle East; its agents had little or no secret service training. See Höhne, *Canaris*, 540. The Auslandsorganisation, on the other hand, was active in Persia before the Nazi takeover of 1933. Meanwhile Rosenberg's Aussenpolitisches Amt was the only Nazi organization with a definite policy towards Persia, advocating total economic control over the region. See Sadka, "German Relations," 103-109, 113-114. For an excellent overview of the various competing agencies with Asian interests, see Milan Hauner, "The Professionals and the Amateurs in National Socialist Foreign Policy: Revolution and Subversion in the Islamic and Indian World," in *Der 'Führerstaat': Mythos und Realität: Studien zur Struktur und Politik des Dritten Reiches*, ed Gerhard Hirschfeld and Lothar Kettenacker (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 316-325.

19. One of the principal arguments I make in this study is that this ideologically conceived "anti-Bolshevik" expediency was the common factor—in lieu of any clearly defined policy—which propelled Nazi operational priorities for Persia before and during the Allied occupation and which led the SD to plan covert initiatives against Persia as late as 1945. See pp. 291-294.

20. Hillgruber, "Third Reich," 279. The 1937-38 initiatives included a German-Iraqi weapons delivery agreement which received British approval.

21. Ibid.

22. The highly politicized debate, which began in the 1960s and later became known to the general public as the *Historikerstreit* (historians' quarrel), remains largely unresolved among contemporary German historians, split

unequivocal Nazi policy on the Middle East, it was inevitable that a distinctly pragmatic—responsive rather than programmed—approach should have characterized German diplomacy and settlement in the region and German-Persian political and economic relations. It remained important to Hitler, at least up to 1938, not to disturb either the sleeping Russian bear or the sleeping British bulldog—the two Great Powers within whose spheres of influence Persia lay. To that end, any stiffening of the pre-existing, relatively flexible approach was avoided. Consequently, when the Nazis took over in Berlin, there appears to have been no perceptible evolution or change in foreign policy or in the implementation of policy at the regional level in Persia. For the German expatriate colony, it was “business as usual.” The only significant change that did occur was the introduction of Nazi organizational techniques among the expatriates and a growing pressure on members of the diaspora to conform to Nazi attitudes, to support Nazi institutions, and ultimately to join the Nazi Party itself—all of which had little to do with foreign policy, continuous or discontinuous.

It has already been shown how the Nazi diaspora in Persia grew exponentially during the latter half of the 1930s.²³ Ultimately, even Sadka concedes that Nazi Germany had progressively extended its control in many areas of Persian economic activity, “establishing a political leverage which was ready for use when the war broke out in September 1939.”²⁴ Persia definitely witnessed a significant and growing influx of all manner of Germans right up to the time of the Anglo-Soviet invasion. Many came as “tourists” and “travelling salesmen,” and the numbers were astonishing.²⁵

In the single year 1936-1937, 778 Germans arrived ... under various pretexts. In the same year only 446 Germans left the country More than a hundred of [the 332 who remained] were “tourists.” In 1937-1938, 819 Germans came to Iran, and again many of them remained in the country. This “tourist” traffic continued even after the outbreak of war in Europe. By August 1941, the number of Germans in Iran reached two thousand.²⁶

more or less equally along the left-right political axis and an equivalent historiographical divide that pits functionalists against intentionalists. In keeping with his view that Hitler continued a form of Wilhelmine expansionist foreign policy, the rightist historian Andreas Hillgruber, generally considered the leading proponent of intentionalist theory, argued that there was no caesura in German foreign policy until 1945. See, for example, Andreas Hillgruber, *Kontinuität und Diskontinuität in der deutschen Aussenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1969). A good example of functionalist analysis is H. W. Koch, “Hitler’s ‘Programme’ and the Genesis of Operation ‘Barbarossa,’” *The Historical Journal* 26, no. 4 (1983): 891-920. Though already twelve years old, the most useful overview to date of postwar German historiography probably remains Ulrich Schlie, “Today’s View of the Third Reich and the Second World War in German Historiographical Discourse,” *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 2 (2000): 543-564. For an earlier, succinct analysis of the *Historikerstreit* in relation to the implementation of Nazi foreign policy, see Geoffrey Stoakes, *Hitler and the Quest for World Dominion* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986), 224-239.

23. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 162.

24. Sadka, “German Relations,” 164.

25. Estimates of the number of Germans in Persia prior to the Anglo-Soviet invasion vary widely. See p. 37n31.

26. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 162.

By December 1937, the German expatriate colony had evolved to a point where the head of the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth), Baldur von Schirach, felt it worthwhile to visit the country in order to establish a Nazi youth movement there.²⁷ By mid-1938, the Germans had become noticeably more politically active, with increased use of commercial cover for their agents. In September of that year, a number of Germans who had been given special training were said to be trying to establish themselves in Tehran with a view to stirring up trouble in India. As we shall see, the principle justification given for the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Persia in 1941, for instance in the press, was that Persia was awash with Germans: contractors, “technical” advisers, business managers, commercial representatives, diplomats, consular staff, educators, missionaries, and sundry other “tourists” and long-term residents. Even the medical profession was used as cover for conspiratorial Nazi activities; for instance, the Party *Ortsleiter*, Professor Siems, who worked as a physician at the English Hospital in Tehran, frequently undertook visits for undisclosed purposes to Tabriz and the Russian frontier. However, most Nazi agents were under commercial cover, the most prominent among them being Count Eugen von Mensdorff-Pouilly, the Škoda representative in Tehran, who was thought by the British to have been the chief SD agent in the country.²⁸

We will never know for certain how many members of the large German diaspora in Persia performed covert intelligence-gathering tasks alongside their nominal or cover duties.²⁹

27. During his visit, Schirach was received by Reza Shah. Baldur von Schirach, *Ich glaubte an Hitler* (Hamburg: Mosaik, 1967), 227.

28. Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA. Abwehr IO Berthold Schulze-Holthus was introduced to Mensdorff by Franz Mayr as a “completely reliable” SD man, although Schulze-Holthus subsequently learned that “the blond youth” had spent time in a concentration camp for “moral lapses.” In Tehran the lapses apparently continued, for Mensdorff became the lover of the notorious Helen Stürmer, who, according to Schulze-Holthus, worked “indiscriminately for all intelligence services.” Stürmer, who was also known to Siems and to Ettl at the German Legation, worked in Tehran officially for the Soviet Intourist agency, which rendered her suspect to both men and which should have chastened Mensdorff (see also p. 45n57). Shortly before the invasion, presumably at Mayr’s recommendation and with the authority that the Abwehr major then still enjoyed over a junior SS officer, Schulze-Holthus sent Mensdorff with “considerable money” from Tabriz on a reconnaissance mission to the Soviet border, from which he never returned. During the period of his subsequent arrest and internment in Australia, where he became a camp leader, Mensdorff informed a fellow internee that he was a Nazi agent and “had been sent to Persia to act as such.” Thistlethwaite to Assistant Director of Military Intelligence, Melbourne, Australia, 29 June 1944, f 99a, KV 2/1480, TNA. See also Commentary on those “Franz Mayr Documents” ... written by Berthold Schulze or directly connected with him (based on Schulze’s interrogations), Document 218n8, f 96b, KV 2/1480, TNA; R 27330, AA.

29. From Ettl’s papers we can clearly identify some of the leading personalities in the Nazi diaspora, for Ettl recommended many for decorations a few months before the Allied invasion. This “Who’s Who” of notable Nazis in Persia included Heinz Hercksen (senior political leader of the Ortsgruppe Teheran) and his deputy, Hermann Müncheberg; Hellmuth Wagner, Persian representative of the Kraft durch Freude (Strength through Joy [KdF]) organization; Walter Reimann, head of the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (National Social People’s Welfare [NSV]) and Winterhilfswerk (Winter Relief [WHW]) organizations; Rudolf Scheidt, Party treasurer; Gottfried Eissfeldt, head of the Party’s legal department and Tehran cell leader; Alfred Tizmer, head of the Party’s economics department; Ernst Krüger, responsible for the welfare of German seamen detained in

Undoubtedly, for a minority this would have been their primary objective, while for the majority it would have been merely a sideline, although it is clear that they were all highly organized along Nazi Party lines, according to the *Blockwart* system (with a total of twenty-six blocks throughout Persia), and many were undoubtedly enthusiastic National Socialists, only too willing to lend a hand in Germany's war effort.³⁰ Apart from the thirty-odd members of the legation staff, the 925 registered Party members were controlled by area groups. While estimates as to the true size of the entire German colony in Persia varied considerably, it is clear that all were tightly organized by the Nazi Party, whether Party members or not. Each German expatriate was required to participate in the activities of at least one of the organizations sponsored by the Party (e.g. men in the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* [German Labour Front (DAF)] and women in the *Frauenschaft*). DAF activities were not innocuous and had nothing to do with labour: members practised military drill (called *sport*), rifle shooting, and even grenade throwing. In Tehran the Party held daily meetings at the Brown House and ran a German school (for non-German children too), as well as a summer club in Shemiran (North Tehran). There were German bookshops and no fewer than twenty-six shops selling German newspapers and magazines. At least seven cafés were said to be patronized exclusively by Germans. There were German hairdressers, a German riding school, German garages and transport companies, and German hotels. When the Party arranged a showing of the film *Sieg im Westen* (Victory in the West) on 27 March 1941, it was attended by 1,300 Germans from all over Persia, including about 300 women and children.³¹

neutral Persia; and, perhaps most prominent of all, Max Müller, head of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front [DAF]), who stayed behind in hiding after the invasion, only to disappear without trace in 1943, after the Russians caught him trying to cross the Turkish border. Iran (alphab.), 1941-1944, Handakten Ettel, R 27330, AA; Iran I 6 g, February 1943, WO 208/1588A, TNA. Madani, *Iranische Politik*, 264-265, actually identifies and names several secret agents unknown to me among the German expatriates; however, Madani, who draws his information entirely from uncorroborated Soviet secondary literature (S. L. Agaev, *Germanskij imperializm v Irane* [Moscow: Izd. Nauka, 1969]), cannot be seen in this instance as a reliable source.

30. Appendix to Tehran Military Attaché's Summary No. 12, 15 June 1940, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

31. In the literature estimates vary greatly. See, for example, Slim, *Unofficial History*, 181—"Persia was harbouring over three thousand Germans, who, thinly disguised as diplomats, technical advisers, engineers, and businessmen, were, with the full connivance of the Persian authorities, working tirelessly and with some success against us"; Sadka, "German Relations," 163—"of a colony of 490 in Tehran, less than 200 were Party members in 1940"; Reader Bullard, "Persia in the Two World Wars," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 50, no. 1 (1963): 12—"By 1939 there were in Persia perhaps 600 Germans, many of them in positions of influence"; Edwin M. Wright, "Iran as a Gateway to Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 20, no. 2 (January 1942): 367—"Reports spoke of 700 Germans being in Tehran alone"; Skrine, *World War*, 76—"The number of Germans resident in Persia, reported in May 1940 to be about seven hundred, was estimated by the Commander-in-Chief India on 29th July 1941 at between two and three thousand persons, many of them active fifth columnists"; Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 162—"By August 1941, the number of Germans in Iran reached two thousand"; Engert (US Chargé on 1 June 1940), in Sadka, "German Relations," 224—"Some 300 alleged German commercial travellers have recently arrived in Iran via Russia making a total of approximately 2000 male German nationals of whom about 1500 are said to be in Tehran"; Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 161—

It remains unclear how much of the intelligence these Germans gathered would have been channeled towards military intelligence (Abwehr) headquarters in Berlin and how much towards the more political SD. At this stage in the war, there was virtually no cooperation between the two services. For instance, the two SD officers who had been under cover in Persia since November 1940 as agents of the SD were initially unaware of their Abwehr counterpart's existence. Early in 1940, the German minister in Tehran, Johann Smend, was recalled to Berlin and was replaced by SS Brigadier Erwin Ettel, a doctrinaire National Socialist, who was personally acquainted with Hitler and who had formerly been the Junkers agent in Tehran. Up to the time of Ettel's appointment, most intelligence work in Persia appears to have been largely directed through the Party organization. Ettel, however, together with his assistant Dr Hubert Müller,³² saw to it that the Tehran legation became the hub of German intelligence activities and, marking a progression from rank amateurism to relative professionalism, was in direct contact with the first "professional" SD agents, Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha, from when they arrived in Persia in November 1940.³³ Typically, both officers were provided with commercial cover of a kind that would permit unrestricted travel for their espionage and subversion: in October 1940, Mayr and Gamotha were placed with the Nouvelle Iran Express transport firm (part of the Schenker organization); thanks to Ettel's influence, Gamotha was subsequently (June 1941) also accredited as a journalist with the Transocean news agency. However, Ettel, whom Mayr would later characterize as "a stupid bureaucrat,"³⁴ was clearly in no position to coordinate or facilitate the covert activities of these officers, and in some respects even impeded them. Consequently, the three potentially dangerous intelligence officers in Persia—Schulze-Holthus, Mayr, and Gamotha—were left very much to their own devices, without any ability to convince a largely disinterested Abwehr and SD in Berlin of the strategic importance of the region and of

"Some two thousand Germans had to be run to ground and taken into charge or under observation"; O'Sullivan, *Dealing with the Devil*, 196 (based on a Russian source)—"More than 6,500 Germans worked in Iran"; Madani, *Iranische Politik*, 256—"In Tehran there were about 1,200 permanent German residents, about 900 of whom were active Nazis." Maisky, the Soviet ambassador to Britain, convinced Stalin that there were at least 10,000 Germans in Persia. See Eden-Maisky interview, 10 July 1941, FO 371/27230, TNA, cited in Martin Kitchen, *British Policy towards the Soviet Union during the Second World War* (London: Macmillan, 1986), 91. See also p. 39n37.

32. "A young Nazi, sabre-scarred, blatant, and successful." Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA.
33. Of course, as can be seen from the description of their training and their tradecraft (pp. 195-197), neither Mayr nor Gamotha were true professionals in any absolute sense, although Gamotha ultimately became one briefly during the Cold War.
34. CICI Persia Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Neither Mayr nor Schulze-Holthus had any respect for Ettel, yet a contemporary neutral (American) observer described him as an "extremely fast-thinking, quick-deciding, capable, and efficient individual, with apparent authority from Berlin to make many of his own decisions." Pancheha to Wolf, 16 August 1941, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 334, NARA.

their need for support in the form of general intelligence, communications equipment and infrastructure, funds, and reinforcements.³⁵ Yet, without overestimating their potential, it was these three men who, had the Allies not undertaken their preemptive invasion in August 1941, could have subverted the Persian polity and could have laid the groundwork for covert operations that would have posed a grave threat indeed to the Allied lines of communication and supply between the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and the Far East, especially in the event of Soviet collapse and a German invasion launched through Turkey and/or Transcaucasia. Meanwhile, the military attaché at the British Legation in Tehran, Lieutenant Colonel H. J. Underwood, kept the entire German diaspora under general surveillance and, by July 1941, had formed a very clear idea of the organization and disposition of its members, together with a rough idea of who the “bad hats” were.³⁶ Prior to the Allied invasion and the subsequent establishment of CICI Tehran, of course, Underwood was solely responsible for providing CICI Baghdad with whatever security intelligence on the German threat to Persia he could obtain. Although Underwood appears to have been aided in this lonely, daunting task by nothing more than the meagre resources of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in the region, he ultimately succeeded in supplying Colonel E. K. “Chokra” Wood’s organization in Baghdad with the crucial evidence of Nazi malfeasance that the War Cabinet needed to justify an invasion.³⁷

2.2 Anglo-Soviet invasion and occupation

“Not for the first time, the two Great Powers drew a line across the map of Persia, somewhere about its middle, dividing it into spheres of influence or, in this case, of occupation.”³⁸

“Our object should be to make the Persians keep each other quiet while we get on with the war.”³⁹

Germany secured “uncontested supremacy” in Persia in four areas: in communications, in industrial investment (in tandem with Reza Shah’s policy of industrial expansion), in trade (between 1933 and 1941 German-Persian trade increased almost ninefold), and in cultural and political penetration.⁴⁰ The final stage of the “master plan”—the absorption of Persia into Germany’s military sphere—was of course pre-empted by the Allied invasion of the country in

35. Ibid.

36. Underwood was also SOE field commander for Persia, and possibly even worked under double cover for MI6 (ISLD). Memorandum on SOE activities in Arab Countries, Persia, Egypt and Cyprus, HS 7/85, TNA. For more about the coalescence of SOE and ISLD in Persia, see p. 272 passim.

37. A comprehensive study of the degree of German infiltration in Persia on the eve of the Allied invasion is to be found in an SOE appreciation, possibly authored by Underwood himself, perhaps with input from R. C. Zaehner of ISLD: The political situation in Iran, 16 August 1941, HS 7/85, TNA.

38. Slim, *Unofficial History*, 181.

39. Churchill to Stalin, 30 September 1941, f 90, FO 371/27233, TNA.

40. Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 152-162.

August 1941. Any suggestion that the Anglo-Soviet operation was an avoidable, egregious violation of a neutral state fails to take into account the fact that the Germans were poised to complete this fourth stage of their plan when the Allies carried out a pre-emptive strike: they invaded Persia and expelled the German expatriate colony. London and Moscow really had no choice. The German presence in Persia, astride the lines of communication between the British Middle East and British India, and immediately to the rear of the Red Army in Transcaucasia, was politically provocative and strategically unacceptable: invasion was inevitable.

One month before the Allied invasion, there was nothing tentative or apologetic about the categorical strategy formulated by the British War Cabinet Joint Planning Staff in response to Operation BARBAROSSA and the threat the Germans now posed to the security of the Middle East and the British lines of communication east of Suez:

The loss of our position in the Middle East would be a disaster of the first magnitude. ... the political effect, especially in the Moslem world, would be grave.

But consequences even more dangerous to our war effort might result. If the Axis were to obtain access to the Indian Ocean for their naval forces, the effect on our vital communications in that area would be disastrous, while Iranian oil and the Abadan refinery are essential to us. Our present position in the Middle East affords a defence in depth to the shores of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Even if we could withdraw without a crippling loss of men and materials, no other line promises the same security for these vital interests.⁴¹

In view of the gravity of the strategic situation, it is clear that the Allies had to act swiftly to buttress the northern flank of their defences and choke off potential German access to the Persian Gulf by occupying Persia. The decision reached jointly by Britain and the Soviet Union to invade Persia in August 1941 was not taken lightly by the Allies—especially Churchill and Eden—nor was it of any real surprise to the Germans, who appear to have been resigned to its inevitability months before either the British or the Russians became committed to the idea.⁴² There were three sound strategic reasons for the invasion (security of oil supply, security of the Lend-Lease route, and security of lines of communication) and one declared justification for it (the scale of the malevolent Nazi diaspora).⁴³ This is not to say that these factors were in any

41. War Cabinet Chiefs of Staff Committee, Minutes of 266th meeting, 29 July 1941, CAB 79/13/16, TNA.

42. “The Morale of the Troops,” in Ralf Blank and others, *German Wartime Society 1939-1945: Politicization, Disintegration, and the Struggle for Survival*, trans. Derry Cook-Radmore and others, Germany and the Second World War 9/1, edited by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Research Institute for Military History), Potsdam, Germany (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008) (*MGFA*, vol. 9/1), 51. Schulze-Holthus in Tabriz had prior knowledge of the intended entry of Russian troops and transmitted a signal to Tehran; according to him there was no reason whatever why the German colony should not have been fully prepared for the invasion. Interrogation Report No. 1, 27-28 March 1944, f 4sb, KV 2/1484, TNA.

43. According to Sir Reader Bullard, “the two Powers ... tried to induce the Shah to eject most of the non-official Germans, who constituted, we thought, a danger to his country as well as to us.” Bullard, “Persia”: 12-13.

way contradictory; however, the former undoubtedly played a more significant role in the joint decision-making process than the latter. If anyone had any serious objections at the time to what might have been perceived by propagandists—but not strategists—as the bulldog and the bear ganging up on the helpless peacock, then they had no time to voice them, for the joint Anglo-Soviet military operation was precisely planned, flawlessly executed, and over in a blink.⁴⁴ More importantly though, it was clear that the action was taken preemptively against Germany, not against Persia—which had military significance only as an arena and not as a power—to fill a void that would otherwise have been filled by the Germans. It was essentially a common-sense move, the only possible logical move, for the alternative was unthinkable: the loss of Britain’s link with her empire east of Suez, the loss of Russia’s link with her American sources of war materiel, the loss of vast reserves of oil, and ultimately perhaps the loss of India, as the Germans linked arms with the Japanese and U-boats cruised the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean unimpeded.⁴⁵

Under the overall command of Lieutenant General Edward Quinan (see Figure 2-1), Operation COUNTENANCE began on 25 August 1941, when British and Indian troops of 10th Indian Division crossed the Persian-Iraqi frontier at Qasr-i-Shirin, advancing in four days via the Pai-i-Tak Pass to Kermanshah.⁴⁶ Little resistance was encountered, although there were some clashes in Khuzistan, where 8th Indian Division, advancing from Basra, captured the Abadan refinery and the ports of Khurramshahr and Bandar-i-Shahpur after encountering occasional

44. One dissenting voice, for instance, was the British diplomat Oliver Harvey, who saw the invasion as an act of naked aggression and noted in his diary that both Eden and Churchill were rather ashamed of themselves about it. John Harvey, ed., *The War Diaries of Oliver Harvey, 1941-45* (London: Collins, 1978), quoted in Kitchen, *British Policy*, 93.

45. Perhaps the clearest exposition of the facts of the case has been provided by Clarmont Skrine in *World War*, 79-81. An interesting insight (behind the scenes, as it were) into the weighty decisionmaking at the highest levels that preceded the invasion is provided by Gabriel Gorodetsky, *Stafford Cripps’ Mission to Moscow, 1940-42* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 209-215. For an explanation of the Soviet view of the need to invade and occupy Persia, see Rezun, “German Threat,” 379-383.

46. The literature on Operation COUNTENANCE is not abundant. In addition to the official histories—Pal, *Campaign in Western Asia* (see p. 15n62) and United Kingdom, *Paiforce* (see p. 15n61)—I would recommend two highly readable books: Compton Mackenzie, *Eastern Epic* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1951) and Bill Slim’s *Unofficial History* (see p. 13n55). Churchill’s unique synopsis is to be found in *Grand Alliance*, 377-384. For a remarkably unbiased Persian narrative, see Faramarz S. Fatemi, *The U.S.S.R. in Iran: The Background History of Russian and Anglo-American Conflict in Iran, Its Effects on Iranian Nationalism, and the Fall of the Shah* (New York: Barnes, 1980), 13-42; another balanced Persian view, based on the British records, is to be found in F. Eshraghi, “Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 1 (January 1984): 27-52, and “The Immediate Aftermath of Anglo-Soviet Occupation of Iran in August 1941,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 20, no. 3 (July 1984): 324-351. A concise operational overview may be found in Archibald P. Wavell, “Despatch on Operations in Iraq, East Syria and Iran from 10th April, 1941 to 12th January, 1942,” *Supplement to The London Gazette*, no. 37685 (13 August 1946), 4098-4101.

pockets of stiff resistance.⁴⁷ Under the overall command of General Dmitri T. Kozlov (see Figure 2-1), the Russian 44th, 47th (commanded by General Vasili V. Novikov [see Figure 2-1]) and 53rd Armies, numbering approximately 40,000 men, which swept in from Transcaucasia and Central Asia, were virtually unopposed and occupied the northern provinces.⁴⁸ The British and Russian forces met at Senna (100 miles west of Hamadan) and Kazvin (100 miles west of Tehran and 200 miles north east of Hamadan) on 30-31 August 1941. While the Allies were confident from the start that they would prevail, according to Sir Reader Bullard, it was the swiftness of the Persian collapse that was unexpected:

It had not been expected that any great show of resistance would be made, owing to the low state of morale in the Persian armed forces, due to underfeeding, underpayment, lack of training in modern warfare, and an almost total absence of supply arrangements; but the rapid and complete demoralization of the Persian troops, even of those not engaged in operations, came as a general surprise.⁴⁹

Naval operations accounted for more casualties than land operations, including the Persian naval commander, Admiral Bayandor, who was killed. All the small gunboats that constituted the Persian navy were sunk or captured. Several Axis merchantmen moored at Bandar Shahpur were seized and despatched to India; one was scuttled by its German crew. On the morning of the invasion, the Shah, obviously shocked, sent for the British and Soviet representatives and asked them what their governments wanted. Bullard simply referred him to the following British statement, delivered to Ali Mansour, the Persian prime minister, earlier that morning:

It is evident that the Persian Government attach greater importance to retaining those German nationals in Persia than they attach to meeting the wishes of His Majesty's Government. ... The Persian Government must bear full responsibility for the consequences of their decision.⁵⁰

Three days later, the Shah issued the order to cease fire, not that there had been much firing. The British immediately ended hostilities; the Russians, however, continued bombing

47. Approximately 19,000 British and Indian troops constituted the British invasion force. The major formations were 8th and 10th Indian Divisions, 2nd Indian Armoured Brigade, and 9th Armoured Brigade. Motter, *Persian Corridor*, 10.

48. Ibid.; Marshall L. Miller, "How the Soviets Invaded Iran," *Armed Forces Journal* 124, no. 7 (February 1987): 30-34. General Wavell's successful postinvasion meeting with General Kozlov on 15 October 1941 no doubt paved the way for effective liaison and coordination of British and Soviet interests in Persia for the years to come. See Harold E. Raugh, *Wavell in the Middle East, 1939-1941: A Study in Generalship* (London: Brassey's, 1993), 250. Allied military commanders in Persia are listed in Tables B-3, B-4, and B-5.

49. Bullard to Eden, Annual political report for 1941, 17 June 1942, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, British Library (BL). The Persian armed forces opposing the Allies numbered over 125,000 men. Klaus Jaschinski, "Das deutsch-iranische Verhältnis im Lichte der alliierten Invasion in Iran 1941," *Comparativ: Zeitschrift für Globalgeschichte und vergleichende Gesellschaftsforschung*, no. 1 (2004): 170. For a survey of the state of the Persian armed forces and for a general account of the invasion and occupation from a Persian perspective, see Kaveh Farrokh, *Iran at War, 1500-1988* (Oxford: Osprey, 2011), 264-282.

50. Bullard to Eden, Annual political report for 1941, 17 June 1942, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

undefended Persian targets for several days, later claiming that they had failed to stop because of internal communication problems. After an exchange of letters between the Allies and the Persian government, the zones of occupation were ultimately defined as follows:

The British zone of occupation was to be bounded by a line running north and east of Kermanshah and Kurramabad and of the oilfields of Masjid-i-Sulaiman, Haftkel, and Gach Saran, and ending at Bandar Dulaim on the Persian Gulf; ... British troops were already in occupation of Hamadan, the Aveh Pass, and Sultanabad. ...

The limits of the Russian occupation: ... the line runs from Ushni through Zenjan to Qazvin, then up to the Caspian, whose southern shore it follows, then through Babul, Zirab, Semnan, and Shahrud, and north to Aliabad, on the frontier.⁵¹

The real reason for Reza Shah's subsequent abdication in favour of his oldest son was not, as some have said, because the Allies asked or forced him to leave, but because he misinterpreted the advance of Soviet forces on 16 September towards the outskirts of Tehran, which, as previously agreed, had not been occupied, as the start of a coup to overthrow him. In reality, the Russians were moving up merely to accelerate the process of evicting the German diaspora, which had stalled because of Persian noncooperation.⁵² Reza Shah's voluntary exile marked the end of his rigid policy of maintaining Persian neutrality: the real reason for Persian reluctance to expel the Nazi diaspora. On 27 September 1941, he and eight members of his immediate family embarked at Bandar Abbas on the SS *Bandra* and left Persia forever. At Bombay the party transferred to an 11,000-ton liner, the SS *Burma*, chartered exclusively for them, in which they sailed, escorted by a British diplomat,⁵³ on a ten-day voyage to Port Louis, Mauritius, where they would remain until the spring of 1942. At his own request, after attempts to settle him in Canada failed, Reza Shah ultimately moved to Johannesburg, where he lived quite comfortably until dying of complications from heart disease at the age of 66 on 26 July 1944.

51. Ibid. For a map showing the line of demarcation between the occupation zones, see Figure D-1.

52. The British occupied the southern suburbs, while the Russians surrounded the rest of the city. Bullard, "Persia": 13. See also Skrine, *World War*, 82.

53. Clarmont Skrine, who has described the journey. See Skrine, *World War*, 83-87.

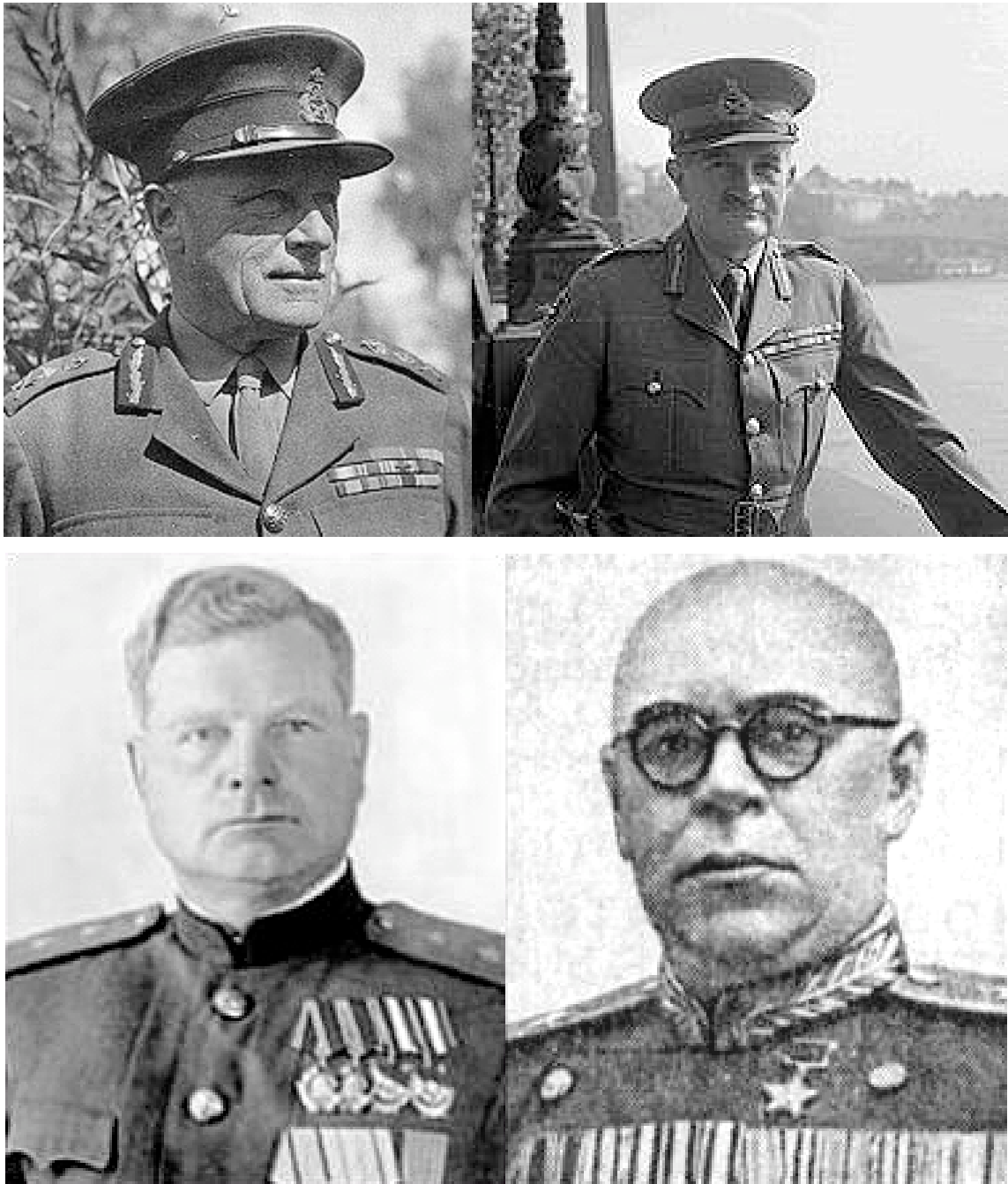


Figure 2-1. *Operation COUNTENANCE* commanding generals. Edward Quinan (upper l) i/c PAIFORCE, who planned the invasion; William Slim (upper r) i/c 10th Indian Infantry Division, whose units spearheaded the British assault; Dmitri T. Kozlov (lower l) in overall command of Red Army forces in Transcaucasia; and Vasilii V. Novikov (lower r) i/c Soviet 47th Army.

After the invasion, the expatriate Germans who took refuge in the German Legation in Tehran remained confident that, within a month or two, German forces would have entered Persia, and they would themselves once again be free. So convinced were some of this that they had paid their house rent in advance, pending their imminent return. However, the Allies had already decided that, while the German women and children could be repatriated to Germany via Turkey, the men of the diaspora without diplomatic status were to be shipped to Australia, where

they would be interned for the duration of the war.⁵⁴ Accordingly, on 17 September, Erwin Ettl and his legation staff left for Germany via Tabriz, together with several hundred German women and children.⁵⁵ Unwisely, Ettl decided that they should leave Persia via the Russian zone of occupation, instead of exiting through Iraq; the consequences of his unilateral decision were unpleasant:

The journey of this convoy, for which transport was only provided with the greatest difficulty by the Persian authorities, was slow and difficult; and there is little doubt that the travellers were treated extremely badly by the Russian forces through whose lines they passed, especially when they reached the frontier, where the Russians seized all the foreign currency and most of the personal belongings of the non-diplomats and all the luggage of the members of the legation which was not with its owners in the diplomatic cars.⁵⁶

In the days and weeks that followed, the remaining German men without official status or cover were rounded up separately by the British and the Russians. Those detained by the British—the majority—were destined to spend the rest of the war in Australian internment camps; it is not known what happened to the adventurous or foolhardy few who were caught in the Russian zone. On 14 October, British security noted: “out of some 70 Germans whom the Russians were particularly anxious to seize, 59 are now in their hands.”⁵⁷ They subsequently reported that the total number of German internees held by the British was approximately 500, the great majority of whom had been in the country for several years and had little security importance.⁵⁸ Incidentally, the Allies took steps to ensure that any Jewish German nationals resident in Persia were not scooped up by Ettl and forced to return to an uncertain fate in Germany. It was therefore decided to allow a number of German Jews “known or believed on good grounds to be hostile to the Nazi regime” to remain at least temporarily in the country.⁵⁹

After the war, Winston Churchill summarized the outcome of the campaign as follows:

All arrangements with the Russians were smoothly and swiftly agreed. The conditions imposed on the Persian Government were, principally, the cessation of

54. Most were interned at Loveday, near Adelaide, South Australia, under conditions that the International Red Cross described as satisfactory in every respect. Auswärtiges Amt, Kult E/Nf. (Zv.), 26 February 1942, R 27330, AA.

55. A second group of men, women, and children was despatched by the British from Tehran on 29 November 1941; wisely they circumvented the Soviets, travelling via Baghdad and Turkey to Vienna, where they arrived on 11 December after what they described as a smooth and pleasant journey. Winkler to Melchers, Aufzeichnung, Abschrift R 273/42, 16 December 1941, R 27330, AA.

56. Bullard to Eden, Annual political report for 1941, 17 June 1942, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

57. Appendix to MEIC Summary No. 632, 14 October 1941, WO 208/1560, TNA. According to the German records, the total was 60. The discrepancy may be attributable to the fact that one female, the notorious Helen Stürmer, an Interpol employee thought by the Germans to be a Russian spy, was included on the German list, along with 59 males. Liste der von den sowjetrussischen Besatzungsbehörden im Iran internierten deutschen Staatsangehörigen, Abschrift Kult E/Nf(Zv)4838, f 387497, R 27330, AA. See also p. 36n28.

58. Appendix to MEIC Summary No. 635, 17 October 1941, WO 208/1560, TNA.

59. Bullard to Eden, Annual political report for 1941, 17 June 1942, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

all resistance, the ejection of the Germans, neutrality in the war, and the Allied use of Persian communications for the transit of war supplies to Russia. ...

The creation of a major supply route to Russia through the Persian Gulf became our prime objective. With a friendly government in Teheran ports were enlarged, river communications developed, roads built, and railways reconstructed. Starting in September 1941, this enterprise, begun and developed by the British Army, and presently to be adopted and completed by the United States, enabled us to send to Russia, over a period of four and a half years, five million tons of supplies.⁶⁰



Figure 2-2. *Operation COUNTENANCE: objective achieved, 4 September 1941.* A soldier of 8th Indian Division stands guard at the AIOC Abadan refinery. (Photo courtesy of the Imperial War Museum, Collection No. 4700-32)

While providing important background information, this chapter has shown that the invasion of Persia never became a priority for Hitler because military success in Russia eluded him; for the Allies, on the other hand, the invasion and occupation of Persia became inevitable as the expatriate German colony in Tehran and elsewhere constituted an increasing threat to British and Soviet interests in the region and far beyond. The removal of the German diaspora in September 1941 enabled the British and, after Pearl Harbour, the Americans to operate a transportation corridor across the country on an unprecedented, immense scale and in relative security, bringing desperately needed war materiel to the Soviet Union.⁶¹ This then was the Persia that became between September 1941 and May 1945 the arena for various unsuccessful covert activities carried out by the German secret services. Their failure at the organizational,

60. Churchill, *Grand Alliance*, 384.

61. For a contemporary appreciation of the challenging logistical situation that presented itself to the Americans when they entered the arena, see Edwin M. Wright, "Gateway to Russia": 367-371.

systemic, and individual levels is the subject of subsequent chapters. It is first necessary, however, to understand how the covert forces that Berlin deployed (or planned to deploy) were organized, recruited, and trained.

3 ORGANIZATION, RECRUITMENT, AND TRAINING OF GERMAN COVERT FORCES

3.1 Organization of the German intelligence services

“We usually know more about intelligence failures than successes.”¹

With a notable dissenting voice,² the harsh consensus among the few who have written about the Abwehr as an organization, rather than about the character and personality of its leaders,³ is that its operational record in the Second World War was one of unmitigated failure, surprising in view of the service’s size, reach, resources, and potential. Most spectacular were its failures in Britain and America, where few German spies were permitted to operate at any time during the war. As for the Near and Middle East, it was Abwehr II, responsible for subversion and sabotage, that took significantly more interest in the region—particularly in 1943—than any other branch of the service.⁴ In Persia, despite much planning by that branch, only one professional Abwehr agent, Major Berthold Schulze-Holthus of Abwehr I Luft (Abwehr I Air Intelligence [Abw I L]), a self-appointed staybehind, functioned for a significant length of time (1941-1944), yet even he was severely restricted in his movements and communications for most of that time, working futilely as a tribal military adviser rather than as an active spy.⁵ Most of the evidence gathered in this regional case study confirms that the general view among historians of the Abwehr and the rival—but much smaller and less experienced—SD as failed intelligence organizations is appropriate.

This is not to say that the Germans performed equally incompetently in all areas of covert activity. As the procurer and evaluator of tactical field intelligence on the Russian front, for

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1. Keith Jeffery, “Intelligence and Military History: A British Perspective,” in David A. Charters, Marc Milner, and Brent J. Wilson, eds., *Military History and the Military Profession* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1992). Cf. Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 5-57, which attributes the catastrophic failure of some military organizations to their systemic inability to learn, to anticipate, and to adapt, all of which my thesis shows to be attributable to the Abwehr and the SD.
 2. Luran Paine, *German Military Intelligence in World War II: The Abwehr* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 37-38, according to whom the Abwehr was “bizarrely successful.” On the other hand, Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies*, 236, says that Canaris failed “to build the Abwehr into a successful organization” but “let his agency drift, especially in comparison with the zealous SD.”
 3. A notable example of an attempt to filter the history of the Abwehr through the prism of its leader’s personality is Oscar Reile, *Macht und Ohnmacht der Geheimdienste: Der Einfluss der Geheimdienste der USA, Englands, der UdSSR, Frankreichs und Deutschlands auf die politischen und militärischen Ereignisse im zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich: Welsermühl, 1968). To some extent, this is also true of Michael Howard’s description of the German intelligence services (Michael Howard, *Strategic Deception in the Second World War* [New York: Norton, 1995], 45-52), which, according to Howard, relies heavily on a 1945 confidential report by Hugh Trevor-Roper in CAB 154/105, TNA.
 4. “The Abwehr, and particularly Abwehr-Abteilung II under Erwin Lahousen Edler von Vivremont, ... extended from South America to South Africa, to the Near and Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and India. Most of its operations were aimed at supporting local uprisings and national movements against the British Empire and the Soviet Union The thinking and strategy behind it all make an exciting tale” Mueller, *Canaris*, xv.
 5. For more about Schulze-Holthus, see pp. 100-102, 152-159, 224-232, 288n7, 290.

instance, Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East [FHO]), subordinate to the Oberkommando des Heeres (High Command of the Army [OKH]), not to the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces [OKW]) or its military-intelligence branch, the Abwehr, operated as effectively as any Allied field-intelligence service in any Second World War theatre. So much so that FHO's zealous chief, Reinhard Gehlen, was able to convince the Americans of his value as an intelligencer and to parlay his way into forming, almost seamlessly and largely with former FHO personnel, what was ultimately to become the postwar West German intelligence service, the BND.⁶ However, underlying the daily functioning of the Abwehr in its larger role as Germany's principal agency of espionage, counterespionage, subversion, and sabotage was a paradoxical dilemma: how could the staff officers of the Abwehr, most of them staunchly loyal to Wilhelm Canaris and his clandestine policy of resistance to Nazism, possibly conduct operations with a view to German success, yet Nazi failure?

Sharing their chief's political and ethical views, and those of his deputy, Hans Oster, meant that these officers could hardly permit 100% of the operations they planned and executed to succeed. Nevertheless, complicating this was the fact that the Abwehr leadership cadre was composed mainly of nationalists: implacably anti-communist and dedicated to the demise of the Soviet Union. However, as it grew increasingly evident that defeating Stalin was beyond Germany's capacity, it became important for the Abwehr staff to preserve a certain facade of efficacy, behind which their *Gegenarbeit* (resistance work) might be done. Erwin Lahousen, former head of Abwehr II, has described how he and his brother officers thus teetered perilously on the sword's edge between simulated loyalty to the Führer and real loyalty to the nation, from the earliest days of the Reich, and how Canaris demanded no less from the men around him:

It is difficult to convey even a rough idea of the tremendous mental strain caused by such resistance work, partly involving nerve-racking little battles and partly in *deliberately taking the ultimate risk*.

As one of the few surviving close confidantes of Canaris, I feel obliged to point out the clear distinction between members of our circle and those who did not become resisters until 1944 or even later. We—and there were many of us—adopted a clear position on Hitler and the Nazis *from the very first day of the war*, and in many cases even *earlier* than that.⁷

6. For further details about Gehlen and FHO, see E. H. Cookridge, *Gehlen: Spy of the Century* (New York: Random House, 1971); Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 429-442; and Jeffrey T. Richelson, *A Century of Spies: Intelligence in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 197-204. On the genesis of the postwar Gehlen Organization, see Gerolymatos, *Castles Made of Sand*, 113-116.

7. Bericht des Generalmajor Lahousen: Geheimorganisation Canaris, 65, MSG 1/2812, BA-MA. Lahousen's italics. To learn more about the importance of Lahousen and his role as head of Abwehr II until August 1943, see Harry Carl Schaub, "General Lahousen and the Abwehr Resistance," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 19, no. 3 (June 2006): 538-558. Of particular interest is the section on Abwehr struggles with the RSHA (546-548), though it is quite wrong of Schaub to assert that the Abwehr was

It is clear from Lahousen's archived memoir that, from even before the war, Canaris's Abwehr confidants were required to display a deliberately misleading optimism vis-à-vis the OKW general staff under Wilhelm Keitel, the operations staff under Alfred Jodl, the army leadership in general, and the field commanders, as one way of ensuring that their intelligence reports would be received with credulity while their true intentions remained concealed. Thus Canaris was able to create an "espionage system for the purpose of augmenting German conquests, while secretly opposing the leadership which planned those conquests."⁸

It is then in the paradoxical context of Canaris's grand deception and the precariousness of the Abwehr's anti-Nazi position that we must seek a partial explanation in this study for the service's failure to execute almost all of its planned covert operations in Persia between 1941 and 1945. However, it is equally important to recognize that the flawed way in which the German military intelligence system was structured contributed to its own inevitable failure. In other words, the German military intelligence system failed not just operationally but also organizationally.

According to Paul Leverkuehn (POLLUX, POLSTER), who served as head of the wartime Abwehr outstation in Turkey (KONO), the greatest weakness of the whole German intelligence system was the way in which intelligence was evaluated and used, which resulted from the way in which the OKW was organized, not through any fault of the Abwehr itself.⁹ From 1942 onwards, Hitler assumed supreme command of the armed forces; consequently, he involved himself in routine OKW matters "of which he knew little and where he could, and did, do considerable damage to the German military effort."¹⁰ The OKW was made to function "in a role for which it had not been designed," relinquishing its responsibility for operational control on the Russian front to the OKH. Thus the Abwehr was required to serve two masters: the OKW and the OKH, or, as Leverkuehn put it: "... we had two supreme staffs, both commanded by the same civilian, fighting two independent and separate world wars."¹¹ As a result, and also thanks to the refusal of Göring and Himmler to accept its decisions and priorities, the primary operational tasks of the OKW—planning and control of the German armed forces and the

outnumbered by its opponents; Schaub was apparently misled by the notion that the Abwehr was in conflict with the entire RSHA, whereas its true antagonist was Amt VI alone. See p. 84n111.

8. Paine, *German Military Intelligence*, 37.

9. For more about Leverkuehn's work at KONO, see Burkhard Jähncke, "Lawyer, Politician, Intelligence Officer: Paul Leverkuehn in Turkey, 1915-1916 and 1941-1944," *Journal of Intelligence History* 2, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 69-87. Interestingly, Jähncke also examines Leverkuehn's lifelong friendship with the founder of the US Office of Strategic Services (OSS), William J. Donovan. See also Herbert Rittlinger, *Geheimdienst mit beschränkter Haftung: Bericht vom Bosphorus* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1973), 158-163.

10. Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 70.

11. *Ibid.*

strategic direction of Germany's war effort—gradually became impossible. It is only natural that any thorough evaluation by the OKW of Abwehr intelligence soon became equally impossible. Indeed, “there was no special branch of the OKW detailed exclusively to deal with this militarily extremely important duty.”¹² In practice, therefore, the Abwehr—designed to be a unified interservice agency—was compelled to serve the three service commands separately and directly, without any remit of course to supply the fourth combat arm—the Waffen-SS (SS Armed Forces)—with military intelligence. Thus a flawed system was allowed to proliferate at a crucial phase of the war and remained in place until the creation of the Militärisches Amt in the first half of 1944.¹³

The [OKH] would thus receive information which had been neither evaluated nor sifted as it should have been at a higher level. Such information would be passed, still in its rougher form, to one of its two intelligence offices [FHW (Fremde Heere West [Foreign Armies East]) or FHO].

... It was in fact a most unsatisfactory system. ... Indeed, when one considers the chaos that existed in the organization of the Armed Forces at the highest level, it speaks volumes for the devotion and efficiency of Abwehr officers and General Staff officers alike, that German intelligence functioned as well as it did.¹⁴

To understand better the mechanics of such systemic failure, it is necessary first to gain an overview of the organization of the Abwehr and of its rival, the SD.¹⁵ The OKW under Field Marshal Keitel was Adolf Hitler's military staff. It was responsible for the general conduct of the war, the financial control of the three service ministries, and the arbitration of any disputes arising among them, the control of supplies and production, and certain aspects of economic warfare. One of its five departments, the Amt Auslandsnachrichten und Abwehr (Foreign Intelligence and Defence Department [Amt Ausl/Abw]), commonly known as the Abwehr, under the command of Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, was the OKW intelligence service, responsible primarily not for the analysis of military intelligence but for its acquisition by means of positive espionage, as well as for counterespionage and sabotage. Intelligence was obtained by the Abwehr overtly and covertly. Responsible for the open and licit acquisition of information was the relatively small Amtsgruppe Ausland (Foreign Intelligence Division), headed by Leopold Bürkner, who controlled the activities of German military attachés at overseas embassies and legations. The covert work of the rest of the Abwehr, which accounted for most of its activity, was under the administrative control of Hans Oster, a fierce and courageous opponent of

12. Ibid., 71.

13. The Militärisches Amt was officially established by Himmler with effect from 1 June 1944.

14. Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 71-72.

15. There were of course other German intelligence services besides these two. They are listed on p. 33.

National Socialism.¹⁶ While Bürkner remained at his divisional post until the end of the war, both Canaris and Oster were ultimately removed from office and executed by the SS at Flossenbürg concentration camp during the final weeks of the war.¹⁷ The Abwehr organization itself was absorbed into the SD in June 1944, when it became known as the Militärisches Amt (Military Department [MilAmt or Amt Mil]), although its remaining officers—those who were not purged after the dismissal of Canaris and Oster—were not required to join the SS and retained their existing service ranks and affiliations.¹⁸



Figure 3-1. Place of execution and memorial to those executed at Flossenbürg on 9 April 1945. (Photographs by the author).

One unique element of Abwehr wartime organization was the so-called *Kriegsorganisation* (lit. war organization [KO]), a kind of active-espionage outpost-cum-

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16. “Hans Oster was a man after God’s own heart, of impeccable character, great lucidity, and iron nerve in the face of danger.” Attributed to Fabian von Schlabrendorff by Terry Parssinen, *The Oster Conspiracy of 1938: The Unknown Story of the Military Plot to Kill Hitler and Avert World War II* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003).
 17. They were murdered by the SS, together with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, General Friedrich von Rabenau, and three other prisoners, on 9 April 1945. It is said that the condemned men could already hear distant American artillery fire when they died. The inscription on their memorial at Flossenbürg reads: “While resisting dictatorship and terror, they gave their lives for freedom, justice, and human dignity.” See Figure 3-1.
 18. The best contemporary source of general information about the Abwehr and the SD is an MI5 counterintelligence manual dating from July 1944 to be found at College Park in RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 2, NARA. An earlier MI5 manual dated August 1942 is located at Kew in WO 208/5272. The best secondary source on German military intelligence remains Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies* (see p. 19n81). On the SD, including Amt VI (Foreign Intelligence Department), see Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst* (see p. 19n82). For details of the organizational consequences of the SD takeover, see the documentation, including the text of Hitler’s original directive, reproduced in “Das Todesurteil über die Abwehr: Der Führerbefehl vom 12.2.1944,” *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 11-12 (15 February 1971): 18-20, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

network maintained in certain neutral or unoccupied countries, such as Turkey for instance, where Paul Leverkuehn was in command of Kriegsorganisation Nahost (KONO).¹⁹ However, as an organizational constituent the KO deserves little more than a passing reference in this study, because the Persian variant (Kriegsorganisation Iran [KOI]), synonymous with the work of Berthold Schulze-Holthus of Abw I L, under cover as German Vice-Consul in Tabriz, existed virtually in name alone until August 1941 and instantly ceased to function once the Allies had occupied the country. That Abwehr I should have sought to maintain such outstations and networks at all appears to have been due to their view that wartime espionage was viable and significant, a view with which the British did not concur, generally giving priority to counterintelligence, security intelligence, signals intelligence, subversion, deception, and sabotage over active espionage against Germany:

The Germans believed rather naively in the efficacy of spies in wartime, unlike the British who fairly early accepted the fact of the immense difficulty and danger inherent in trying to ferret out the answers to intelligence questionnaires in enemy territory in time of war.²⁰

Theoretically, in accordance with the *Gleichschaltungsprinzip* (principle of forcible assimilation into pre-existing structures) applied so effectively in other acquisitional manoeuvres by the Nazis, the KO networks served as proxy or prefabricated intelligence organizations to be incorporated instantly and seamlessly into the military administration of a newly conquered territory (e.g. Persia) after a German invasion. The pre-existence of a KO and its agent networks could greatly facilitate and accelerate the assimilation of an occupied country by the German intelligence, counterintelligence, and security organizations.

The genesis of Germany's other covert force, the much younger SD, was very different from that of the Abwehr. Originally formed as a party political security-intelligence organization, with close connections to the German police system and the secret police (Gestapo), the SD was ill suited to play the positive intelligence role it increasingly sought, especially in the fields of military intelligence and sabotage. Consequently, the SD spent most of its existence attempting to keep pace with and rival the older, more professional, and much larger Abwehr, not always successfully. Although some were highly educated professionals, particularly lawyers, the proletarian and *petit-bourgeois* origins of many SD officers often

19. For more about the KOs, see Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 242-248. After the creation of the Militärisches Amt in June 1944, the KOs were redesignated *Kommandomeldegebiete* (Command Report Areas [KdM]). For a criticism of inefficient methods and lack of discipline at the KO level, see Interim report on the case of Wilhelm Kuebart, Camp 020, August 1945, KV 2/410, TNA (also in RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA). On the history of KONO, see Oscar Reile, *Geheime Ostfront: Die deutsche Abwehr im Osten, 1921-1945* (Munich: Welsermühl, 1963), 338-344.

20. Mure, *Practise to Deceive*, 49.

appeared to hamper them in the presence of socially superior Abwehr officers, who tended to have upper-middle-class, if not aristocratic roots. This was particularly evident in Persia, where on at least two occasions the Abwehr staybehind agent Berthold Schulze-Holthus (SABA), of distinguished Prussian provenance, successfully asserted his superiority over SD officers,²¹ one of whom was also a staybehind, distinctly to his own advantage, with significant implications for the chain of command in the field.

Until it was merged with the SD—in other words for all but the last year of the Second World War—Abwehr operations were divided among four branches: Abteilung I (espionage), Abteilung II (sabotage and subversion), Abteilung III (counterespionage and security), and Abteilung Z (administration).²² Branches I and III were subdivided along service lines, with separate desks for army intelligence (I Heer [Abw I H] and III Heer [Abw III H]), naval intelligence (I Marine [Abw I M] and III Marine [Abw III M]), and air-force intelligence (I Luft [Abw I L] and III Luft [Abw III L]). Each division also had a number of general and “technical” desks, such as I Wirtschaft (general economic information with particular reference to the production of war materials), Ig (secret writing, photography, and forgeries), Ii (W/T communications), III Wirtschaft (war production security), and III F (counterespionage). Agents of these two branches operating in the field were normally controlled by one of the service desks; in Persia, for instance, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, who was a Luftwaffe Russia specialist, originally responsible for providing intelligence on airfields in southern Russia and Transcaucasia, was an agent of Abw I L and answered technically to that desk in the first instance until the time of his capture in 1944, even though as a staybehind agent his role had metamorphosed into that of a military advisor to tribal insurgents. The remaining operational branch, Abwehr II, which initiated most of the covert parachute missions planned and/or launched against Persia during the Allied occupation, was organized along different lines and was not divided into service groups.²³ Instead, a simple distinction was made between sabotage operations and insurgency operations, and the branch was divided into groups II S and II J accordingly, with the addition of a number of administrative and technical groups, such as IIa (personnel) and II Technik (bombs and apparatus), and a constellation of geographical desks arranged by region. Abwehr II’s Persian operations were normally planned and controlled by the Middle East desk run by Hans-Otto Wagner, a civilian *Sonderführer (K)* (special officer with the

21. Franz Mayr and Martin Kurmis.

22. In a sense, the first three branches resembled the British MI6, SOE, and MI5 respectively. For a schematic overview, see Figure B-1.

23. See Figures B-2 and B-3.

rank equivalent of major).²⁴ It should be noted that, while it would normally have been his unique task, the work of establishing of a pro-Nazi fifth column in Persia was not undertaken by Wagner because the SD agent Franz Mayr (MAX, RABBI), without any training whatsoever in insurgency operations, had already taken that task upon himself.

With the SD annexation of the Abwehr, when the rump Abwehr²⁵ was gradually grafted onto—not merged with—Amt VI (SD Auslandsnachrichtendienst [Foreign Intelligence Service of the SD]) during the summer and autumn of 1944, it was reconstituted as the Militärisches Amt²⁶ with responsibility for the acquisition and evaluation of strictly military intelligence and with the following eight branches: Mil A (administration [corresponding to the former Abw Z]), Mil B (operational intelligence—West), Mil C (operational intelligence—East), Mil D (sabotage and subversion), Mil E (communications), Mil F (FAKs and FATs), Mil G (documents), and Mil I (deception). The desks of Abwehr I that had previously handled Near and Middle East intelligence, including Persia, were now included in Mil C (headed by Werner Ohletz). His branch was split into two groups: Mil C/Beschaffung (intelligence gathering)—divided into geographic desks (C/FO [Far East], C/OS [Southeast], C/R [Russia], and C/SK [Sweden])—and Mil C/Sichtung (intelligence evaluation [headed by Berthold Schulze-Holthus's former Abw I L control, Richard Bechtle])²⁷—divided into three service desks (C/H [Army], C/L [Air Force], and C/M [Navy]).²⁸

24. Holtsman to CO, X-2 Germany, Activity of Sonderführer Dr Wagner, 23 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA. Wagner was a senior special officer with the rank of Sonderführer (K). Special officers, who wore unique insignia, were to be found in all branches of the German army and were ranked (and paid) according to five grades: (B) equivalent to Lieutenant Colonel (or Major), (K) equivalent to Major (or Captain), (Z) equivalent to Lieutenant (or Second Lieutenant), (O) equivalent to Staff Sergeant, and (G) equivalent to Sergeant. Many were former regular soldiers, some First World War veterans, some even quite elderly, who were recalled to active duty in order to provide valuable expertise. These special grades were introduced in 1937, with no military training required; however, in 1942, special officers above grade O were required to complete a basic training course in order to be accredited to the reserve officers' list. This is why Wagner disappeared temporarily from Abw II OR, relinquishing his desk to the hapless Captain Markevic. See p. 65n57. For further details about special officers, see Adolf Schlicht and John R. Angolia, *Die deutsche Wehrmacht: Uniformierung und Ausrüstung 1933-1945* (Stuttgart: Motorbuch 1992); Rudolf Absalon, *Die Wehrmacht im Dritten Reich* (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt 1998), 161, 183ff.

25. The “rump Abwehr” was what remained of the organization after the detachment of Bürkner's Abteilung Ausland and the operational units responsible for battlefront intelligence and deception.

26. The organizational restructuring as it trickled down through the system is best traced in the following series of documents released sequentially by Hitler, by Himmler and Keitel jointly, by Keitel, and finally by Kaltenbrunner: Befehl Hitlers zur Schaffung eines einheitlichen deutschen geheimen Meldedienstes, 12 February 1944, RH 2/1929, BA-MA; Gemeinsame Weisung des Reichsführers-SS Himmler und von Generalfeldmarschall Keitel zur Schaffung eines einheitlichen deutschen geheimen Meldedienstes gemäss dem Befehl Hitlers vom 12.2.1944, 14 May 1944, RH 2/1929, BA-MA; Weisung des Generalfeldmarschalls Keitel zur Neugliederung des militärischen Abwehrdienstes ab 1.6.1944, 22 May 1944, RH 2/1537, BA-MA; Befehl des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD, Obergruppenführer Kaltenbrunner, zur Durchführung des Befehls Hitlers vom 12.2.1944, 23 May 1944, RH 2/1929, BA-MA.

27. Towards the end of the war and shortly before his death, Air Force Major Richard Bechtle became one of a group of anti-Nazi Abwehr officers in Belzig who resisted the authority of the SD and essentially ceased

The former Abwehr II became Mil D, headed after October 1944 by Otto Skorzeny, who concurrently remained head of sabotage and training for the SD, but who appears to have had little to do with the day-to-day running of Mil D, especially during the final months of the war, when he became preoccupied with last-stand commando operations. Even so, the universally unpopular Skorzeny, detested by “all who knew him and were not merely his yes-men,” always found time to hound any Abwehr officer to cross his path whom he suspected of having had a hand in the July 1944 Plot or of evidencing the merest whiff of defeatism.²⁹ In theory at least, Skorzeny now found himself responsible for managing a much larger brief than before the annexation. Indeed, as a general consequence of unification, SD heads now generally found themselves with greater responsibilities; Abwehr leaders, with fewer. However, as defeat loomed, the scope and resources for operations became increasingly restricted, which no doubt made the theoretically increased responsibilities less onerous in reality than they might have been in more fortuitous circumstances. Mil D was organized uniquely, much as it had been in its former embodiment as Abwehr II.³⁰ Its administrative group dealt with personnel and financial affairs; it also maintained the branch registry and records. Sabotage operations were controlled by four regional desks: Mil D WS (Italy, South America, Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula), Mil D WN (Western Europe, Scandinavia, and North America), Mil D OS (Balkan countries and the Near/Middle East [including Persia]), and Mil D O (Russia, Finland, and the Baltic states). There were also desks for such activities as evaluation and planning, air force liaison, and sabotage materiel.³¹

working for them; in this respect he was trusted completely by the Mil C head, Werner Ohletz, who found him to be of great help. Bechtle’s hatred of the Nazis stemmed from their seizure in 1933 of his family publishing and printing business (Bechtle Verlag & Druck of Esslingen), for the facile reason that “it was not Nazi enough.” Described by Ohletz as “physically worn out,” Bechtle died while still on active duty on 2 October 1944. For more about Bechtle, see Schulze-Holthus’s account in Personnel of the Far East Section in Berlin, 31 October 1945, f 4a, KV 3/195, TNA; Appendix III, Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA; and <http://www.bechtle-online.de/chronik/>. By 1945, according to Schulze-Holthus, only one officer remained at the Persian desk: a young marine subaltern (Oberleutnant der Marine-Infanterie) named Schäfer, who had experience of Persia but nothing to do. See p. 62.

28. Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA; Personalities of the MilAmt HQ, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 17 October 1945, f 10a, KV 3/195, TNA; Situation Report No. 29, MilAmt Abteilung C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 12 March 1946, f 19a, KV 3/195, TNA. When the former staybehind Schulze-Holthus, newly promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, returned from Persia in late-1944 after being repatriated by the British, he was appointed to the Mil C Vienna station (KdM Wien), which had only a single source remaining in Persia. See Mil C operational intelligence in the East, f 5a, KV 3/195, TNA.

29. Werner Ohletz, former head of Mil C, said after the war: “Skorzeny was the most hated man in the whole MilAmt.” Appendix III, Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA.

30. See Figure B-4.

31. Auger to Stimson, 22 August 1945, RG 319, Entry 134A, Box 1, NARA.

In function, the Militärisches Amt was no more successful in its secret intelligence role than the old Abwehr had been. The most obvious cause of this continued failure was the uninterrupted rivalry with Amt VI, prolonged by the fact that the former Abwehr units remained separate entities from—rather than being merged with—the SD organization. However, this did not prevent the SD from trying to infiltrate its own officers into the MilAmt organization whenever it could, although Werner Ohletz, the head of Mil C, was largely able to resist such moves, thanks in part to the fact that he always remained on good terms with Schellenberg, the head of Amt VI. Another reason for failure was the retention of too many officers at the outstations, for whom the takeover by the SS meant little more than a change of name. Also, as the former Abwehr members experienced a humiliating takeover and stared at imminent defeat on all fronts, their morale, efficiency, and productivity inevitably deteriorated. Faced too with desperate shortages of manpower, equipment, and all other kinds of resources and infrastructure, their operational effectiveness naturally declined. Perhaps most damaging of all was the tendency of desk officers to believe—even at such a late stage in the war—that their long-established sources had not been compromised; consequently, their analysis of intelligence became insufficiently critical. They simply could not bring themselves to believe that their agents might have been turned and doubled by the Allies.³²

As we have seen, the Abwehr staybehind agent in Persia, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, was a representative of Abw I L, the air-force desk of the Abwehr's operational intelligence branch, and nominally in charge of the entire Abwehr wartime organization for preoccupation Persia (KOI). Before the Anglo-Soviet invasion of August 1941, Schulze-Holthus was a “legal” agent under diplomatic cover as vice-consul at the German Consulate in Tabriz. By contrast, the other two staybehinds, the young SS (SD) lieutenants Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha (MORITZ), were “illegals” operating under commercial cover for Amt VI—a rival organization to Schulze-Holthus's, which had at the time of the occupation no liaison with the Abwehr at all. Amt VI, headed by Walter Schellenberg from late 1941 onwards, is the only RSHA department with any relevance for this case study. Originally intended as an active political intelligence service charged with the primary duty of collecting political information on behalf of the Nazi Party, which clearly set it apart from the Abwehr, Amt VI continuously and progressively encroached upon the Abwehr's sphere of responsibility for the acquisition and dissemination of military intelligence, for foreign espionage and counterespionage operations, and for sabotage and

32. Situation Report No. 29, MilAmt Abteilung C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 12 March 1946, f 19a, KV 3/195, TNA.

subversion. Finally, as has already been described, from the spring of 1944, with the rump Abwehr failing and the power of Himmler at its zenith, Amt VI coexisted with the Militärisches Amt and assumed sole responsibility for all covert foreign operations.

Quite differently from the Abwehr, Amt VI was organized mainly in geographical groups (*Ländergruppen*), whose areas of responsibility were redistributed several times during the course of the war (see Table B-1). Each *Ländergruppe* was further subdivided into *Referate* [desks] with numeral suffixes. In the case of VI C, which was responsible for Persian operations for most of the war, the subdivisions up to late 1944 are shown in Table B-2. As has already been shown, Abwehr staff who had formerly controlled agents and covert operations in the Near and Middle East were not absorbed into the existing SD *Ländergruppen*. One reason why the two foreign-intelligence organizations remained separate was that, in order to preserve the Abwehr's existing overseas stations and their networks, the new head of MilAmt, an Abwehr colonel named Georg Hansen, succeeded in convincing the RSHA and Amt VI chiefs Kaltenbrunner and Schellenberg that, by keeping the two organizations functioning independently of each other, the Allies would be all the more confused and deceived.³³ However, since Abwehr Persian intelligence operations had formerly concerned internal conditions and clandestine activity within Persia, not the overt battlefield operations which were all that the former Abwehr Orient desk was now permitted to deal with in its new role as Mil C SO, its staff now found themselves drifting abandoned and rudderless in the absence of any clear remit. And this is how the former staybehind agent Berthold Schulze-Holthus found the staff of the Vienna station (KdM Wien) when he returned to active duty there after repatriation from British captivity in late 1944.³⁴

Meanwhile, VI C underwent a major reorganization in September 1944. It was reduced to four branches, each with its own desks, as may be seen in Figure B-5. These final changes have no other significance than to indicate the growing confusion on all fronts, but especially in the East. Particularly noticeable is the sudden development of interest in the Far East (VI C 4). It had by now become apparent that information on that theatre was badly lacking, and the attitude towards the failing Japanese themselves was hardening, even in official circles. Specialists with the necessary background were now introduced into the branch, and plans were hastily laid for

33. Interim report on the case of Wilhelm Kuebart, August 1945, KV 2/410, TNA (also in RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA). Civilian Abwehr employees, however, were incorporated into the SD. After only two months in command of the former Abwehr departments in MilAmt, Hansen was arrested and removed from his position in the wake of the Stauffenberg plot, leaving Schellenberg in sole charge of the combined Amt VI/MilAmt. Colonel Putz of Abw II, who was close to Hansen, also disappeared around the same time. See also p. 67n62.

34. Extract from US Forces in Austria detailed interrogation report, 31 October 1945, f 4a, KV 3/195, TNA.

the despatch of agents to the Far East, but of course these changes came far too late to be effective.³⁵

3.2 Problems and personnel of Abwehr I and Abwehr II Orient/Südost

“The Abwehr was for me the most sad and disappointing military organization which I have known as a soldier.”³⁶

“Forget your work, and instead collect around you men on whom you can depend at the time of the inevitable defeat.”³⁷

Unquestionably, the main problem experienced by the Abwehr in planning and executing covert operations in Persia during the Second World War was the growing assertiveness of the SD, initiated by Heydrich and, after his assassination,³⁸ continued by Kaltenbrunner and Schellenberg. Amt VI—an ideologically driven *political* intelligence service—seemed relatively impervious to the increasingly unfavourable military situation on the southern Russian front, while, the Abwehr—a more realistic, more pragmatic *military* intelligence service—became ever more sensitive to the inescapable fact that, after Stalingrad/Kursk and the retreat from the Caucasus,³⁹ Persian operations had been stripped of any potential strategic significance and could thenceforth be nothing more than diversionary tactical manoeuvres (side shows). Faced with such general adversity and inevitable defeat, compounded by such specific problems with operational infrastructure as shortage of suitable manpower, equipment, supplies, and transport, as well as the growing distance between German airbases in southern Russia and potential dropzones in Persia, there seems to have occurred an understandable sagging of the collective will among Abwehr planners to mount any more *Ferneinsätze* (long-range operations). The figures speak for themselves: of the twenty operations planned by the Abwehr between 1941 and 1945, only three were actually executed, and only one without intervention and takeover by the

35. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

36. Wilhelm Kuebart, former general staff officer and Abwehr I lieutenant-colonel, in Interim report on the case of Wilhelm Kuebart, Camp 020, August 1945, KV 2/410, TNA (also in RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA).

37. Comment by Werner Eisenberg, then Abw II OR desk head, to Murad Ferid in early 1943 on hearing that the German armies were in headlong retreat from the Caucasus, Interrogation Report (Dr Murad Ferid), 11 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

38. The best source on the elimination of Heydrich is Callum MacDonald, *The Killing of SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

39. The order to retreat from the Caucasus was issued on 1 January 1943; the surrender at Stalingrad was completed by 2 February 1943; the German offensive at Kursk had ended by 16 July 1943.

SD.⁴⁰ Even the one operation that the Abwehr mounted alone (MAMMUT) was quite possibly sabotaged by the SD.⁴¹

By 1943, Abwehr I was in general decline. The branch was staffed predominantly by First World War veterans (average age over 50); no younger officers were available, because policy dictated that they be sent to the front. These older men were apparently not particularly intelligent, nor had they any knowledge of foreign languages or cultures. When suitable young officers were occasionally found and recruited, they were given at most six weeks' training, for no Abwehr I intelligence-officers' training establishments (as opposed to Abwehr II sabotage schools) existed. According to one perceptive and reliable contemporary witness,⁴² the Abwehr's corruption and decay had gone too deep, and it had lost all control over its outstations, which had become completely autonomous. So seldom were orders sent out from Berlin, that the outstations were not accustomed to receiving them and generally ignored them. When Wilhelm Kuebart visited Paul Leverkuehn at KONO in Istanbul in November 1943, he found a total absence of any organization, "everything being run by completely haphazard methods." Yet Kuebart exempted KONO from his harsh criticism of other outstations: many officers were totally unqualified for their work; many had an insufficient sense of duty and honour, mostly striving to look after their own interests; and many desk officers were leading an "easy existence," sleeping with the station secretaries—which lowered their prestige and posed an obvious security risk.⁴³

With regard to the work of Abwehr I field agents, Kuebart thought that the V-men were recruited without any foresight; quantity was more important than quality in their selection, thereby justifying and preserving the positions of their case officers. Such agents cost time and money, but achieved no results. Besides, no attempt was made to corroborate agents' reports; on the contrary, Abwehr I and the OKH were only too glad to receive intelligence of any kind and were usually in no position to insist on corroboration. Agents' training also seemed to be bungled almost everywhere, for their handlers had insufficient experience to function as effective trainers. Another problem was equipment: providing agents with weapons and clothing, together with all other kinds of equipment and materials, often caused lengthy operational

40. The problems of planning and execution are further discussed on pp. 115-122.

41. The mission leader, Gottfried Müller, was convinced that someone had definitely done this. Clearly, one must suspect the SD as the likely culprits, for it is inconceivable that the Abwehr would have scuppered their own mission. See pp. 149, 185-187.

42. Wilhelm Kuebart, the head of Abw I H for one year until the July 1944 attempt on Hitler's life, in which he was implicated.

43. Appendix 8 (b), Interim Report on the case of Wilhelm Kuebart, Camp 020, August 1945, ff 91-93, 95, KV 2/410, TNA (also in RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA).

delays. And when this hurdle had been overcome, insertion became a problem; there was always an acute shortage of aircraft to fly Abwehr I missions: “While we reckoned that the Allies put some 300 aircraft daily at the disposal of agents, we often had to wait three months or more for one single machine.”⁴⁴

Most importantly, Kuebart found internal security at Abwehr I headquarters to be lax; clearly no need-to-know principle was applied:

I often got the impression ... that I did not belong to a secret service but to some propaganda department. Everyone seemed to know everything, and each man told what he knew. It was positively astounding how quickly incidents at [headquarters] reached the ears of [outstations] by unofficial routes.

The same applied to the filing of secret documents. For example, when I tested a file, I found 23 secret papers alone missing. ...

In conclusion, I must state that the Abwehr, in the form in which I got to know it, was at its last gasp, due to complete disorganization, corruption, and disintegration. It probably received its death blow when the SD took over.⁴⁵

During the war, Abwehr I, whose remit included active espionage operations in Persia, never succeeded in running more than two agents in that vast country: Berthold Schulze-Holthus, who was nominally controlled by Abw I L, and Konstantin Jakob (KASSAKOWSKI, JAVAD, ESKANDAR KHAN), supposedly run by Abw I M, who lost track of him in 1941 after the Allied invasion. The operational desk officers responsible for these agents were Air Force Major Richard Bechtle, who controlled Schulze-Holthus, and Navy Lieutenant⁴⁶ Schäfer, who controlled Jakob. Like Schulze-Holthus, Bechtle was an air-force intelligence officer whose area of expertise was Russian airfields and who had later become responsible for all intelligence concerning the Soviet air force. How he came to assume responsibility for Persia is unclear; it was possibly because Persian operations were originally seen as an extension of the southern Russian campaign, or more likely because Abwehr I were simply unable to find appropriately trained personnel to evaluate reports from that region. Schäfer, on the other hand, was highly qualified for his job: a fluent Farsi speaker, he had been the prewar director of Lufthansa operations in Tehran.⁴⁷

Perhaps equally if not more qualified was Lieutenant-Commander Gideon Werner Schüler ([Dr] WÖHLER), a naval reserve officer in his early fifties who handled Persian intelligence for Abwehr I M SO, the naval intelligence department that functioned as the Abwehr I centre for Persian active espionage until the arrival of Schulze-Holthus in Tabriz, at which

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Schäfer was actually a marine officer (Oberleutnant der Marine-Infanterie). See also p. 56n27.

47. Personnel of the Far East section in Berlin, 1 September 1945, f 4a, KV 3/195, TNA.

point his control, Richard Bechtle of Abw I L, began taking an interest in Persian affairs. According to Schüler, there appears to have been no liaison between Abw I M and Abw I L on Persian intelligence, and there was definite tension between Abwehr I and II—and between the Abwehr and the SD—on Persian operations.⁴⁸ Before the war, Schüler had managed his own aircraft-parts business in Tabriz, where he was acquainted with Schulze-Holthus's brother-in-law and became fluent in Farsi. Schüler attempted to organize Persian quislings in Germany and to run various Persian agents during the war, but none of his projects seems to have been successful. At least three of the agents Schüler despatched to Persia via Turkey appear to have been intercepted and interned. Unable to tolerate the SD takeover of his section, Schüler ultimately engineered his own transfer to Turkey (Izmir) in the summer of 1944, where he remained until the end of the war.⁴⁹

Had Wilhelm Kuebart spent any time at all outside Abwehr I, he might have formed a more favourable opinion of the service, for Abwehr II was a much more efficiently run branch than Abwehr I, especially with regard to operational planning. The chief planning officer responsible for Abwehr II Persian operations was Special Officer Dr Hans-Otto Wagner (Dr WENDEL[L]), a man so extraordinarily gifted and capable that it is worth examining his career in greater depth at this point, for, if there was ever a moving, unifying force behind Abwehr Middle East planning, then it was Wagner, who is never mentioned in the literature. The repeated failure of the service to execute Wagner's plans must be weighed against Wagner's own achievement in elaborating such plans under extremely inauspicious circumstances, and not least in the face of increasing levels of hostility and interference from the SD. It is hardly surprising that, towards the end of the war, Wagner appears to have abandoned the pointless exercise of planning missions to Persia, turning his attention instead to India and Afghanistan, and the provision of technical support for Subhas Chandra Bose (see Figure 3-2) and the Indian National Army.⁵⁰

Hans-Otto Wagner, a native of Cologne, is described by a former colleague as “a man of very high calibre, gifted with a true scientific mind, possessing an extensive knowledge of history, geography, and politics, and devoted to his work in Abwehr II.”⁵¹ Wagner, who

48. CSDIC (WEA) BAOR final report on Gideon Richard Werner Schüler, 28 January 1946, f 78z, KV 3/89, TNA.

49. Ibid.; Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 25, 28 May 1944, f 59a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

50. Bose's work with the Abwehr is described in Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 186-189.

51. Weissmiller to Saint Washington, Activities of Dr Wagner @ Dr Wendell, United States Forces European Theater, OSS Mission for Germany, 31 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA; GIS Activity in the Near East, 27 July 1945, X1682, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 468, NARA. Special Officer Wagner should not be confused with two prominent Wagners who served in Abwehr I, namely: (1) Admiral Canaris' old friend,

graduated from Berlin University in 1928 with a doctoral thesis on ethnic minorities in Czechoslovakia,⁵² was a founding member of the elitist Deutsche Gesellschaft für keltische Studien (German Society for Celtic Studies [DGKS]), based at Berlin University, and had been moving in well-connected intellectual circles since the 1920s. In October 1930, Wagner became chairman of the Bund der Vlamenfreunde (League of Friends of the Flemings), which fostered connections between the universities of Berlin and Ghent, and in 1932 he began publishing a periodical entitled *Deutsch-Flämische Rundschau*. Wagner was also a personal friend of the highly influential Dr Werner Best of the SD, a fellow member of the DGKS, who later became a close associate of Heydrich and Himmler and ultimately, with the rank of SS Lieutenant General, Reich Commissioner for Occupied Denmark.⁵³ It is possible that Wagner was recruited as a minorities expert by the Abwehr directly from the DGKS; at the beginning of the war, DGKS members were particularly sought after for various special operations concerning ethnic minorities, such as work on Irish and Breton affairs, by the Propaganda Ministry, the German Foreign Office, and the Abwehr. In addition to his work with the Sudeten Germans and the East Belgians, Wagner had been in contact with the Breton independence movement since the mid-1920s. It is therefore not surprising that in 1940 the Abwehr placed him in charge of all Breton and Flemish affairs on the Western front, perhaps with the connivance of his powerful friend Best, who functioned as Chief of the Civil Administration of Occupied France until 1942.⁵⁴ Best appears to have taken a particular interest in minority issues, especially the cause of Breton

Colonel Dr Otto Wagner (Dr DELIUS), most notably head of KO Bulgarien (Abwehr I Bulgaria War Organization), who, unusually for an Abwehr officer, also held the rank of SS captain, and who played a major role in the foundation and evolution of the postwar Arbeitsgemeinschaft ehemaliger Abwehrangehöriger (Abwehr Veterans' Association [AGEA]); and (2) Colonel Dr Hans-Georg Wagner, head of KO Schweden (Abwehr I Sweden War Organization).

52. Hans-Otto Wagner, "Aussenhandel und Handelspolitik der Tschechoslowakei, 1919 bis 1926" (Dr phil diss., Berlin, 1928). Wagner subsequently published a collection of articles on the Sudetenland by various authors entitled *Von Kampf und Arbeit der Sudetendeutschen*, published on behalf of the Grenzlandstiftung der Vereine deutscher Studenten (Borderland Foundation of the Associations of German Students) (Berlin: Bernard & Graefe, 1930). The collection included an article by Wagner entitled "Die deutsche Industrie in den Sudetenländern" (34-41). One contemporary source described Wagner as "one of the key figures of recent folklore research." See Thomas Müller, "Der Gau Köln-Aachen," in Jürgen John, Horst Möller, and Thomas Schaarschmidt, *Die NS-Gaue: Regionale Mittelinstanzen im zentralistischen "Führerstaat"*, Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte (Sondernummer) (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2007), 327.
53. For more about Best, see Keipert and Grupp, *Biographisches Handbuch*, vol. 1, 137-138.
54. Working with or under Wagner in Occupied France as minorities subversion specialists were the following Abwehr officers: Alfred Toepfer, Friedrich Carl Marwede (later head of Abw II O/SO), Friedrich Scheuermann, and Alfred Kehrl. In France, Wagner also worked cooperatively with Leo Weisgerber, who represented the Ministry of Propaganda. See Müller, "Gau Köln-Aachen," 327. Dealing with the Flemish (East Belgian) question also brought Wagner into contact with the notorious Belgian fascist and anti-Semite Staf De Clercq. See GIS activity in the Near East, 27 July 1945, X1682, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 468, NARA.

independence, which he enthusiastically supported despite opposition from the German military authorities in France.⁵⁵

Sometime after the fall of France, probably towards the end of 1940, Wagner for no known reason relinquished his position as an Abwehr minorities expert and was transferred to Abwehr II, where he took over the Oriental affairs desk (including the Middle East) and retained that position until the winter of 1944-1945, when his department was dissolved, and he was transferred to Leitstelle West (MilAmt HQ West) under Captain Helmers.⁵⁶ Such continuity, interrupted only by a brief period of compulsory military training,⁵⁷ surely testifies to Wagner's competence. Working closely with such capable Abwehr II planners as Colonel Putz and Werner Eisenberg, Wagner survived many wartime organizational changes and "shuffles" without any change to his terms of reference, not least the absorption of the Abwehr into the SD and the creation of the Militärisches Amt in 1944. Wagner seems to have been an extremely competent intelligence professional, shrewd enough to survive the perilous service politics of the later war years by steering a neutral course between the extremes of anti-Hitler resistance and SS ideology. It was perhaps fortunate for Wagner that his "oriental" field of expertise and his ultimate responsibility as liaison officer for the Indian National Army (INA) leader, Subhas

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55. There is an extensive literature on German involvement with dissident minorities before and during the war, with several mentions of Wagner's activities. See *inter alia* Robert Fisk, *In Time of War: Ireland, Ulster, and the Price of Neutrality, 1939-45* (Brandon: Deutsch, 1983), 346; Daniel Leach, "'A Sense of Nordism': The Impact of Germanic Assistance upon the Militant Interwar Breton Nationalist Movement," *European Review of History* 17, no. 4: 629-646, and "Bezen Perrot: The Breton Nationalist Unit of the SS, 1943-5," *e-Keltoi: Journal of Interdisciplinary Celtic Studies* 4 (February 2008): 10; Joachim Lerchenmueller, *Keltischer Sprengstoff: Eine wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studie über die deutsche Keltologie von 1900 bis 1945* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 384, 388, 391, and "Keltologie," in Frank-Rutger Hausmann, ed., *Die Rolle der Geisteswissenschaften im Dritten Reich, 1933-1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag 2002), 149-150; Eckard Michels, *Das Deutsche Institut in Paris 1940-1944: Ein Beitrag zu den deutsch-französischen Kulturbeziehungen und zur auswärtigen Kulturpolitik des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993), 99. Students with work experience outside Germany (e.g. Wagner) were a preferred recruiting source for the Abwehr. See Jan Zimmermann, "Alfred Toepfers 'Westschau'," in Burkhard Dietz and others, eds., *Griff nach dem Westen: Die "Westforschung" der völkisch-nationalen Wissenschaften zum nordwesteuropäischen Raum (1919-1960)*, vol. 2 (Münster: Waxmann, 2003), 1071. Leach describes Wagner as "passionately interested in minority nationalism" and "particularly influential in organizing secret meetings" between Breton nationalists and Nazi potentates. See Leach, "Sense of Nordism": 636-637.
56. Weissmiller to Saint Washington, Activities of Dr Wagner @ Dr Wendell, United States Forces European Theater, OSS Mission for Germany, 31 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA. One uncorroborated source states that Wagner was a Palestinian German; if so, this might explain why he was transferred from France to the Orient desk, although Palestine operations were normally handled by his colleague Werner Eisenberg, and I cannot find any other evidence to suggest that Wagner was not a genuine *Kölscher* (native of Cologne).
57. See p. 56n24 regarding compulsory military service for special officers. One uncorroborated source even goes so far as to maintain that Wagner's office was permanently closed in 1943 when he was "busted" to private and sent to the Russian front, which is simply not supported by archival evidence from more reliable sources like Murad Ferid. Of course, an ingenious IO like Wagner might have delighted in authoring disinformative legends of this kind. In fact, he was merely replaced temporarily by a Captain Markevic, who proved most unsatisfactory and whom Putz described as "officious and incompetent." Camp 020 interim report on the case of Fred Hermann Brandt, January 1945, f 73a, KV 2/752, TNA.

Chandra Bose (see Figure 3-2)—and as control for his protégé and close personal friend Abdul Ghani (a prominent Afghan whom he intended to use as a key agent in long-term projects he planned for Afghanistan)—kept Wagner relatively distanced from affairs closer to home. However, after the radio link he had established with Bose’s help between Germany and India (Station MARY) was infiltrated by Soviet agents,⁵⁸ there was no operational work left for Wagner to do, so he was transferred at the end of 1944 to an administrative position with Leit West, where one can only assume that he served out the few remaining months of the war.⁵⁹

Wagner’s closest associate at Abw II OR was Captain Dr Werner Eisenberg (EISEN, EISENHAUER, EICHE, EIDAM, ODYSSEUS, ZIDAN), another personality of considerable interest, who joined the service to make use of his experience during the First World War in a telephone-tapping unit. While Wagner’s political philosophy remains obscure, Eisenberg wore his “heart on his sleeve,” professing anti-Nazi views and taking a realistic view of the military situation as it deteriorated from 1943 onwards. In civilian life, Eisenberg was a lawyer and director of various companies. Though neither a linguist nor a seasoned traveller, he was considered by his colleagues to be a most efficient and fast worker. This was fortunate because, not only did Eisenberg continue to practise law after joining the Abwehr, but, as a reserve officer, he was also required to serve periodically as Army Staff HQ duty officer at Zossen (45 km outside Berlin). Apparently, this interfered greatly with his routine and frequently prevented him from dealing with urgent matters promptly. It would often happen, for instance, that Eisenberg’s mail was forwarded from the Tirpitzufer to Zossen, just *after* he had left Army Staff HQ and was on his way back to Berlin. While Wagner specialized in Persian and Afghan operations, Eisenberg was responsible for Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and Palestine. There seems to have been an easy, cooperative relationship between the two officers; their remits frequently overlapped in accordance with changing circumstances and the fortunes of war.⁶⁰

58. From Station MARY “the German Staff (Fremde Heere West) used to receive quick and correct answers as to the disposition of the British troops in India.” GIS activity in the Near East, 27 July 1945, X1682, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 468, NARA.

59. Weissmiller to Saint Washington, Activities of Dr Wagner @ Dr Wendell, United States Forces European Theater, OSS Mission for Germany, 31 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA. Wagner’s fate after his transfer to Leitstelle West is unknown; all that is recorded is the frustration of an Allied counterintelligence officer during the following summer, whose marginal annotation reads: “WHERE IS HE?” SCI Twelfth Army Group to CO, X-2 Germany, 23 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA. Original upper-case letters.

60. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C7(d)(ii) Abw II/OR, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.



Figure 3-2. *Meeting at Abw II OR.* This rare photograph is the only surviving image of Colonel Putz (second from left), with Abw II head Erwin Lahousen at the extreme right. Next to Lahousen, wearing spectacles, is the INA leader, Subhas Chandra Bose. The other two men are senior officers of the Japanese Secret Services.⁶¹

In overall command of Abw II OR was Lieutenant Colonel Putz ([Dr] PAUL[I], ZWILLING) (see Figure 3-2), about whom the records tell us little, other than that he was very helpful to everybody, especially those of inferior rank.⁶² One of Putz's most important functions was facilitating the OKW planning approval process, whose rigidity and bottlenecks may have accounted for at least some of the many cancellations of Abwehr II covert operations targeting Persia. Every plan had to be submitted in the first instance by Wagner or Eisenberg to Putz, who, if he approved it, then forwarded the plan to Lahousen. With his approval, the plan would then be submitted to Canaris, who, if in favour, would sign it and submit it for final OKW approval by Keitel. In the case of Operation MAMMUT, for instance, this process took at least two months. Prior to obtaining OKW approval, it was also necessary to ensure Luftwaffe aircraft availability and to secure formal air force (Oberkommando der Luftwaffe (High Command of

61. Mader, *Spionagegenerale*, 233.

62. *Ibid.* Despite repeated references in the primary sources to Putz as head of Middle East operations (he is seldom if ever mentioned in the secondary literature), his first name remains unknown. After 1944, however, there is no mention of Putz in the records at all. The cause and circumstances of Putz's abrupt disappearance from the Abw II/Mil D organization are not given and remain a mystery. As his friend Mohammed Hussain Qashgai, who is said to have been "obviously deeply attached" to Putz, stated one month after the July 1944 coup attempt, Putz was close to Georg Hansen, one of the chief organizers of the Stauffenberg plot, so it is possible that Putz was implicated and executed. Qashgai was certainly convinced that Putz had been removed, "not only because of his friendship with Hansen, but also because he himself was always inveighing against the SD in very strong and rash terms." If so, then it is curious that Wilhelm Kuebart, who was also close to Hansen, who barely escaped execution himself, and who must have known Putz, never mentions him, not even in connection with Kuebart's incarceration in the Lehrterstrasse Prison and at Gestapo HQ, where he met many of those implicated in the plot. Conversation with Mohammed Hussain Qashgai, 23 August 1944, KV 2/1941, TNA; CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 24z, KV 2/1942, TNA. See also p. 59n33.

the Air Force [OKL]) approval of planned aerial insertions. Here Abwehr II could encounter the most serious bottleneck of all, for the air-force unit tasked with clandestine aerial insertions (Gartenfeld's special-operations squadron) was heavily oversubscribed and was forced to prioritize requests from client organizations.⁶³ Increasingly this appears to have led to top priority being given to SD operations and to operations behind Russian lines.⁶⁴ If a flight over neutral Turkish airspace was necessary, permission had to be obtained directly from the Führer himself. At that point, the length of time required and the outcome became anyone's guess.

3.3 Problems and personnel of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA), Sicherheitsdienst (SD), and Amt VI C

*"The Reichsführer-SS is our conscience."*⁶⁵

VI C, which was responsible for SD Persian operations from 1941 until the final months of the war, had certain unique features among the *Ländergruppen* of Amt VI. It was the only group to preserve its designation intact throughout its history, during the course of which it underwent fewer territorial modifications than any other geographical group. Most significantly, in 1941, it absorbed the Near and Middle East from VI B. From then on, VI C covered the widest sphere of all the Amt VI groups, and from the start of the Russian campaign, it remained throughout the war the most important operational group, bar none, primarily because of its responsibility for the Soviet Union.⁶⁶

It must be remembered that foreign intelligence was a new venture on the part of the SD; prior to the war the service had made no preparations at all for an espionage, counterespionage, or subversion function either within Europe or outside it, with the exception of eastern Europe and the Balkans. Amt VI therefore began its functions under enormous initial disadvantages, which were not alleviated by the uncooperative attitude of its rivals, the Abwehr and the German Foreign Office, nor by the relative weakness of its original department head, Heinz Jost, who was portrayed by his successor, Walter Schellenberg, as follows:

63. See pp. 181-189.

64. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. According to the MAMMUT group leader, Keitel's signature was pure formality and did not indicate that the field marshal had any interest in the operation or in the region targeted. Of course, such disinterest may simply have served to delay approval even longer.

65. The motto of SS Captain Martin Kurmis, leader of the ANTON expedition. Coupled with the official SS motto, "My honour is loyalty," it is indicative of the stultified thinking of such doctrinaire SD officers as Kurmis, Kurt Schuback, and Heinz Tunnat, who were largely responsible for the planning, execution, and failure of Operations FRANZ and ANTON. Quoted by Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 195.

66. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

... a worn-out, tired, lazy individual lacking initiative or the will to work, who was active at the most for three or four hours a day. During these hours he read a few reports, which he mostly passed on without appreciation or criticism and permitted a small number of individual [advisors], who had often been waiting weeks for an interview, to bring various matters before him. Because of his inability to say “no,” ... his subordinates worked without direction, needlessly duplicating their work.⁶⁷

An added complication in a race-based service—the SS, which drew many of its recruits from the xenophobic working and lower-middle classes—was the shortage of pure-Aryan personnel with the necessary background knowledge of foreign countries and foreign languages. This was of particular concern to the staff of VI C, since it dealt with such (at the time) exotic Far-Eastern lands as Japan, China, and the Dutch East Indies. In fact, at the beginning of the war, no prepared plans whatsoever existed for Amt VI operations in those far-flung regions, nor even in such less remote Middle Eastern countries as Turkey or Syria. The recruitment by the SD of Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha, the two young SS officers sent out to Persia in 1940 by Amt VI, serves as an example of how rare Aryan talent was spotted and enlisted by means of the higher-education system. When the Nazis acceded to power in 1933, the process of *Gleichschaltung* (forcible assimilation into pre-existing structures) was applied to the student unions and fraternities of the German universities, which were replaced accordingly by the prefabricated Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (National Socialist German Students’ League [NSDStB]) established in 1926, whose head (*Reichsstudentenführer*), Gustav Adolf Scheel, became an SD officer in September 1934 and, together with Reinhard Höhn, subsequently succeeded in recruiting at the universities many of the young lawyers and other professionals who formed the leadership cadre of the SD. Scheel did this in part by assembling gifted *Reichsgeförderte* (state-sponsored) university undergraduates in *SS-Mannschaftshäuser* (SS fraternity houses), which offered them extracurricular SS indoctrination and training while being scrutinized for leadership potential. In April 1940, Mayr, who had studied law, and Gamotha, who had studied medicine, were in fact members of an elite group of thirteen exceptional students or former students serving in the armed forces who had been selected in this way. They were summoned to Abwehr headquarters, where they were transferred to the SD with (in Mayr’s case) substantive rank equivalency (from *Leutnant* to *SS-Untersturmführer*) as the culmination of a kind of individualized recruitment *Gleichschaltungsprozess*. However, while guaranteeing the intellectual and ideological integrity (and racial purity) of such recruits, the

67. Reinhard R. Doerries, *Hitler’s Last Chief of Foreign Intelligence: Allied Interrogations of Walter Schellenberg* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 80.

Scheel-Höhn system did little or nothing to ensure their suitability for covert espionage operations overseas.⁶⁸

It was not until after the launch of Operation BARBAROSSA in June 1941 that VI C became important, for the German intelligence services—both the Abwehr and the SD—seem always to have had a problem dealing with more than one *Schwerpunkt* (priority) at a time. For instance, in the first years of the war, the Near and Middle East were not considered important operational theatres and were therefore entirely neglected. After BARBAROSSA, however, VI C became responsible—in 1942—for the initiation and control of ZEPPELIN, a large-scale operation involving the recruitment, training, and deployment of Russian prisoners as special forces on the Eastern Front. Again, since this became VI C’s top priority, all other activities including Persian operations were eclipsed and became secondary considerations. Consequently, when ZEPPELIN ultimately failed, it was too late to exploit other territories such as Persia to remedy the deficiency because no adequate planning had been done.⁶⁹

With the dismissal of Jost and his replacement by Schellenberg came a change in the leadership of VI C, which arguably had a greater impact on the group than the appointment of the new *Amtschef* (department head) himself. The incumbent group leader, SS Lieutenant Colonel Vollheim, who had been implicated in an alleged financial scandal involving Jost, was replaced by the dynamic Heinz Gräfe (KÖCHIN). He was a lawyer with a security-police background, described by his superiors in 1938, however, as “an intellectual with distinctly pacifist tendencies” who, while a student activist at Leipzig University and a member of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für studentische Selbstverwaltung und Hochschulreform* (Working Group for Student Self-Government and University Reform), had, like many in the prefascist *Völkisch* movement, opposed Nazism before the 1933 takeover.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, upon Hitler’s accession to power, Gräfe appears to have experienced an extraordinary epiphany after personally meeting Reinhard Heydrich, completing a political *volte-face* and joining the SA on 15 June 1933, the SS

68. Himmler and SS hostels, f 97b, KV 2/1480, TNA. See also Lutz Hachmeister, “Die Rolle des SD-Personals in der Nachkriegszeit: Zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung der Bundesrepublik,” in Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 348-350. The induction of this group took place at the Tirpitzufer rather than on SS premises probably because it would have been improper for the men, as serving Wehrmacht members, to report directly to the SD or Amt VI administration without having first been formally discharged from the Wehrmacht, not individually from their units but as a group in the secure environment of Abwehr headquarters. It is yet another indication of how the SD could already prevail upon the Abwehr long before the “takeover” in 1944.

69. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

70. Gräfe’s early career, including his intellectual growth, political journalism, and correspondence, are discussed at length in Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 105 passim. For an introduction to the *Völkisch* movement in general and its relationship to Nazism, see Uwe Puschner, “‘One People, One Reich, One God’: The *Völkische Weltanschauung* and Movement,” *German Historical Institute London Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (May 2002): 5-28.

on 21 December 1933, and the Nazi Party on 1 May 1937 (although Heydrich curiously told Gräfe that it was not necessary for SD officers to do so).⁷¹ Gräfe's main interest was in the East, and that interest was granted full scope: he became chiefly responsible for Operation ZEPPELIN, mobilizing Soviet ethnic minorities, especially in the Caucasus, against Bolshevism.⁷² It is also likely that Gräfe originated the renowned (but possibly compromised) scheme to obtain secret documents from the British Embassy in Ankara using the agent Elyesa Bazna (CICERO), who was controlled by the German police attaché, Ludwig Moyzisch, mentioned elsewhere in this study as Franz Mayr's contact in Turkey.⁷³ Gräfe proved to be a leader of ability and enterprise; it was chiefly due to his clear sense of purpose and direction that VI C developed considerably during 1942-1943. Gräfe seems to have been a very popular leader too. Devoted to his work and to those under his command, Gräfe—probably against regulations and quite unnecessarily—accompanied the men of the FRANZ mission all the way to their Persian dropzone.⁷⁴ It was perhaps unfortunate that the work of VI C should have depended so much upon the exceptionally strong personality and hands-on management style of Gräfe, who was promoted to full SS Colonel on 1 January 1944, for he, together with Dr Karl Gengenbach of III A, was killed less than a month later in a car accident while on official business in Bavaria.⁷⁵ Thus the group lost its driving force and, until the appointment of Albert Rapp at the end of 1944, it lacked throughout that year the direction it had previously enjoyed. Erich Hengelhaupt acted as temporary group leader until the summer, when Karl Tschierschky was appointed. However, in the late autumn, Tschierschky was summarily dismissed “for inefficiency” and was succeeded by Rapp.⁷⁶

Lest it be thought that these young SD leaders remotely resembled their Abwehr counterparts (notably Wagner, Eisenberg, and Putz), who were much older and more experienced, professional military intelligencers, accustomed under Canaris's leadership to

71. Beförderung des SS-Sturmbannführers Dr Heinz Gräfe, SS-Nr. 107.213, zum SS-Obersturmbannführer, 15 April 1943, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 43, NARA; see also Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 162-163.

72. For details about Gräfe's role in Operation ZEPPELIN, see Klaus-Michael Mallmann, “Der Krieg im Dunkeln: Das Unternehmen ‘Zeppelin’ 1942-1945,” in Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 325-346. For a general overview of ZEPPELIN, see Perry Biddiscombe, “Unternehmen Zeppelin: The Deployment of SS Saboteurs and Spies in the Soviet Union, 1942-1945,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 6 (September 2000): 1115-1142.

73. See p. 86.

74. According to Copy letter from SIME No. 500/4/7, 15 August 1943, to MI5, f 32z, KV 2/1477, TNA. However, according to one of the FRANZ parachutists, Gräfe flew with the group only as far as Simferopol. See Appendix A2.

75. Beförderung des SS-Sturmbannführers Dr Heinz Gräfe, SS-Nr. 107.213, zum SS-Obersturmbannführer, 15 April 1943, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 43, NARA; see also Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 384. Kurt Schuback, who ran the Persia desk under Gräfe, was also in the accident, escaping with a thigh fracture. SIME Report No. 3, SIME/P5919, March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA.

76. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

conducting operations with precision and dignity,⁷⁷ it should be noted that the Amt VI leaders were in fact nothing more than mass murderers in uniform. All had atrocious pasts that make Walter Schellenberg seem a blushing choirboy. Like the disgraced Heinz Jost, whom Schellenberg had relieved and who had then commanded Einsatzgruppe A in the rear of the northern Russian front between 29 March and 2 September 1942, and Heinz Gräfe himself, who had commanded Einsatzkommando V/1 in Poland in 1939, Gräfe's successors at VI C were all unsavoury characters with much blood on their hands, all having served in extermination units at some time in their SD careers.⁷⁸ Hengelhaupt had served with EK/Paris from 1940 to 1942, Tschierschky had been on the staff of EG/A from 1941 to 1942, and Rapp had commanded Sonderkommando 7a between February 1942 and 28 January 1943. Another murderous individual, Helmut Looss, who had also commanded SK/7a, became the last known head of Mil D before the German surrender.⁷⁹ On aggregate, these men had been complicit in the brutal deaths of thousands, possibly tens of thousands of innocent people, mostly Jews.

Fortunately for the Persia desk (VI C 12 [1941-1944]) and the short-lived Persia branch of the Militärisches Amt (VI C 3 [1944-1945]), continuity was provided throughout the war by the consistent leadership of Kurt Schuback, who became closely identified with all SD initiatives in the Near and Middle East, though continuity was all he contributed.⁸⁰ Schuback, a born

77. "Human decency was the guiding principle on which [Canaris] worked and upon which he insisted that his officers also should work." Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 200. However, it would be quite wrong to assume that all members of the Abwehr and such subordinate formations as the Geheime Feldpolizei (Secret Military Police [GFP]) were devoid of fanatical Nazis and incapable of brutal behaviour; on the contrary, the GFP worked closely with the SS death squads behind the Eastern front and elsewhere. Other known hotbeds of Nazism within the Abwehr were Abw III and the legal department. See Heinz Höhne, "Canaris und die Abwehr zwischen Anpassung und Opposition," in *Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus: Die deutsche Gesellschaft und der Widerstand gegen Hitler*, ed. Jürgen Schmädke and Peter Steinbach (Munich: Piper, 1985), 408-410.

78. The terms *Einsatzgruppe* (Operational Task Force [EG]), *Einsatzkommando* (Operational Squad [EK]), and *Sonderkommando* (Special Squad [SK]) were bland euphemisms disingenuously employed by the SS to mask their heinous crimes against humanity (i.e. exterminations or mass-killing operations of astounding proportions). See Government of Canada, Department of Justice, Gloss-95: Glossary for War Crimes Documentation, 1 March 1995 (unpublished). The EGs, EKs, and SKs mentioned here were all nothing other than death squads. In the Abwehr, on the other hand, the term *Sonderkommando* (e.g. SK Bajadere) was not euphemistic but functionally accurate. It usually denoted a company-strength Brandenburger special-forces unit tasked and trained to carry out a specific covert mission or series of (military) special operations.

79. Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 246n11, 332-333, 551. From Wildt's collection of essays it is clear that most of the SD leadership cadre were both brutal and brainy; many held doctorates or other professional qualifications and were drawn to Nazism during their student years. One Abwehr officer who knew Looss at MilAmt describes him as follows: "He was clearly the liquidator of the old Abwehr and wanted to make Mil D a completely SS organization... Looss was anxious to have Mil D swallowed up by Amt VI S ... and worked hard to nazify the personnel under his command. He was continuously on the lookout for subversive elements within Mil D, but could not detect any. Actually, the majority of Mil D personnel were anti-Nazi." Intermediate interrogation report CI-IIR/44, 18 January 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

80. For someone as important in the Amt VI hierarchy as Schuback, there is curiously little to be found about his functions or his personality in the records, other than that he had an unpleasant one. The Qashgai Brothers, for example, thought Schuback was "a very bad type like ... Kurmis [leader of the ANTON expedition], fanatical

Hamburger who joined the Nazi Party in May 1937 and the SS (SD) in January 1939, had never travelled outside Europe, had no knowledge of Farsi or Arabic, and knew nothing of the region. Described in his youth as a good athlete and holder of the *Deutsches Reichssportabzeichen* (German Reich Sports Medal), Schuback made his early career as a Hitler Youth leader. According to euphemistic SS jargon, he “distinguished himself” with the Königsberg SD detachment in the leadup to the invasion of Poland and while serving in an extermination squad there. In early 1940, Schuback was seconded to Riga on special assignment for the SD where he again performed “especially well, carrying out excellent intelligence work under the most difficult circumstances.” On his return from the Baltic, Schuback was promoted to SS captain and assigned to VI C. That is all we know about Schuback’s career from the existing records, other than the fact that he remained at his desk until the end of the war and ultimately attained the rank of SS major.⁸¹ We do know that his deputy, Heinz Tunnat, a career Criminal Police detective, was also brutally conditioned, having served in an SS extermination squad in Byelorussia.⁸²

If one reads between the lines of the various documents describing the service records of these two SD officers in charge of Persian subversion and sabotage operations, it is clear neither Schuback nor Tunnat were in any way qualified for the positions they held at VI C 12 and VI C 3. Clearly too, both were fully indoctrinated anti-Bolshevists and anti-Semites with bloody pasts: in other words, stereotypical SS ideologues. Logically, this in turn suggests that neither officer brought to the operational Persia desk any significant measure of enlightenment or imagination. While we will never know how much planning and executive autonomy they were granted by their group commander, Gräfe, it is likely that it was Schuback and Tunnat who were largely responsible for the failure of Amt VI to recognize and empathize with the needs and priorities of the SD’s agent in place, Franz Mayr, and the Abwehr’s staybehind Berthold Schulze-Holthus. It is therefore to the fundamental incompetence of Schuback and Tunnat that one must partially ascribe the failure of Operations FRANZ and ANTON. Later, their inability to establish a good working relationship (when he returned from Persia) with Roman Gamotha, with whom Schuback frequently quarreled, doubtless also deprived VI C 12 of expert insights into the situation in the field that Gamotha might have provided, and which might have led to better decisionmaking. Naturally, this begs the question of whether Gamotha would have been

and brutal.” Interrogation Report No. 3, 7 April 1944, f 24a, KV 2/1941, TNA. Another source states that Schuback “had a nervous manner in talking.” SIME Report No. 3, 13 January 1945, 62a, KV 2/402, TNA.

81. See various documents in SSO/103B, BA; also Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 96.

82. See various documents in PK/R91, BA; RS/G344, BA; and RG 263, Entry ZZ-16, Box 52, NARA. See also Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 96.

cooperative or might even have exploited the situation to deceive and misinform his desk rivals, not least because, unbeknown to them, he was—as we shall see—probably working in the interest of the Soviet Union.

There was very little connection between the impressive paper organization of Amt VI in 1939-1940 and the actual work it carried out. No special importance was attached by it to the Middle East as a theatre of espionage activity in the early days of the war, in spite of the obvious advantages offered by Turkey and Persia as neutral countries from which special efforts could be launched against the fertile field that the Middle East countries offered for espionage and subversion. There was no subtle reason for this lack of interest; it merely reflected the general weakness and inefficiency of the department and its inability to appreciate the situation. There was no well-defined Amt VI policy on the Middle East, nor were there sufficient trained personnel to create one. It was not until the summer of 1940 that the department made its first attempts to penetrate the Middle East, which bore all the hallmarks of haphazard and futile early methodology, although the end results proved better than Jost's poor leadership warranted.⁸³

It is in this context that the first two agents of Amt VI—Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha—were despatched to Persia, where they arrived in October 1940. Their activities are discussed in detail elsewhere in this study. However, it needs to be said at this point that their improvisational work and the way in which they were initially abandoned by their department are characteristic of the inefficiency and lack of methodical professionalism that plagued Amt VI in its early work. By the time Schellenberg and Gräfe had taken control of Amt VI and VI C respectively, the Russian campaign had begun and the Rashid Ali coup had been thwarted in Iraq, one immediate consequence of which was the Anglo-Soviet occupation of Persia, an event for which both Mayr and Gamotha were ill-prepared. The unfortunate reaction of Amt VI was to consider their agents lost, without even considering the possibility that the two men might have taken it upon themselves to become staybehinds. And so Amt VI abandoned them to their fate without any alternative plan, assuming that they would have been captured or killed, and not even attempting to communicate with them until the unexpected arrival more than a year later of a message transmitted by Mayr via Tokyo, known as Mayr's "bolt from the blue." So, by the time of the reorganization of VI C in 1941, all that VI C 12 had to show by way of achievements

83. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. Because no relevant SD policy documents are to be found in the archives, one should of course not assume that there was no policy. However, the absence of any such documents *coupled with* frequent documented statements by contemporary Allied intelligence officers that there appeared to be no policy is surely proof enough that there was none.

were two outposts in Turkey and two ill-trained but enthusiastic agents in Persia who were soon to disappear. The desk had no plans for the future exploitation of either country.⁸⁴

Why was this? Certainly the rival Abwehr seems to have been more predisposed towards vigorous action. After the Anglo-Soviet occupation, the Abwehr was equally unaware of the fate of its own representative in Persia—Berthold Schulze-Holthus of Abw I L—and remained ignorant of his activities during the winter of 1941-1942. However, the Abwehr chose to pursue an entirely different and independent approach from Amt VI to further operations in Persia after the occupation. The Abwehr at least made an effort to recruit and train members of the Persian diaspora in Germany for specific overseas expeditions, while the SD did nothing more than despatch one young subaltern to Turkey as a military attaché (to assist Ludwig Moyzisch) with the vague task of using Ankara as a base for the penetration of Middle East countries. Whether SS Lieutenant Waldemar Fast had the ability to do this and whether his remit extended as far as Persia remains unclear, although it seems unlikely since there is no record of his ever having generated any covert activity in the Persian theatre of operations.⁸⁵ Certainly there appear to have been no other more specific SD plans in preparation, though it should be remembered that at this precise time German armies were already penetrating deep into Russian territory. As a result, the Eastern Front (specifically Gräfe's Operation ZEPPELIN) became an exclusive priority for Amt VI. As for VI C, it presumably attached little importance to Persian operations in the expectation that the country would be taken by military force anyway, without the need for any political subversion.⁸⁶

What then happened changed the course of the entire war: the German Sixth Army failed to take Stalingrad, and the British Eighth Army counterattacked Rommel successfully at El Alamein. The negative consequences for VI C were direct and immediate, as both theatres were under the group, and the group had staked everything on German military success. As a result, “the failure found the [group] forced to improvise when improvisation should not have been necessary.”⁸⁷ Yet, in the midst of calamity, Franz Mayr's message arrived in Berlin:

A ray of hope in the critical closing months of 1942 came from Tokyo, whence arrived by a most circuitous route ... the message from Mayr “lost” in Persia since 1941, informing the [group] that both he and Schulze[-Holthus], the

84. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

85. A Palestinian German, Fast was remarkably well travelled, having served previously (1939-1941) in Tel Aviv, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, New York, and Buenos Aires. In the SD such an unusual cosmopolitan profile would have marked Fast as an ideal field agent. O'Brien to Robertson, 9 April 1945, f 52a, KV 2/402, TNA.

86. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

87. Ibid.

former I-Luft representative in Persia, had been actively engaged in preparing the ground in that country for further exploitation provided speedy help was forthcoming. The importance of this independent activity of Mayr and Schulze[-Holthus] in Persia cannot be minimized when it is examined in the light of the general war situation in 1942. The German armies were fighting in the foothills of the Caucasus and at the gates of Egypt. Had either army been able to break through, all the elements which precipitated the rapid fall of Norway, France, and the Low Countries in 1940 were operative in Iran, the vital link between Russia and the Western Allies. The success of the fifth column prepared by Mayr in the north and Schulze[-Holthus] in the south depended either on the success of the military operations or on speedy help by parachute operations. As events turned out, the autumn of 1942 saw the turning point in the military sphere which was not balanced by effective action by either Amt VI or the Abwehr in Iran. Nevertheless, Mayr's message offered an opportunity, and 1943 saw the attempt to take advantage of it.⁸⁸

In other words, the arrival of Mayr's "bolt from the blue" brought about a sudden strategic awareness in the midst of defeat, on the part of both the SD and the Abwehr, of Persia as a slender, vulnerable link between the Allies. Realizing that they had, after all, active and energetic representation in the country, both services promptly set about exploiting the unexpected windfall. But, unfortunately for them, nearly every judgement call they made during the planning process proved to be incorrect, and at almost every stage in the execution of their plans, everything went wrong.

When some of Mayr's documents fell into the hands of British security intelligence in November 1942, the threat that his subversive activities posed was certainly diminished. However, Mayr's operations were rendered even less dangerous by the incorrect interpretation of the situation by both the SD and the Abwehr. The cooperation that had existed between the two services in Persia had forced a corresponding degree of cooperation on the part of the same authorities in Berlin, and the operations carried out to exploit the situation became a joint effort. In this case, however, union was far from being strength, as the traditional rivalry simply could not be overcome, and Amt VI appears to have succeeded in carrying out what would be termed today a "hostile takeover" of the joint operations, assigning a purely subsidiary role to the Abwehr participants. More disruptive, however, was the rift that emerged between Berlin policy and Tehran tactics:

It is a curious and significant feature of events in Persia at this time that where Mayr and Schulze[-Holthus] had met with no little success in establishing good relations with the tribes and fomenting a potentially dangerous fifth column within the country during the period in which they acted singly without help from Berlin, the situation generally deteriorated when they succeeded in their primary object of establishing contact with Berlin. The main reason of course lay in the

88. Ibid.

fact that the policy adopted by Berlin did not agree with that which had been in operation for over a year in Persia.⁸⁹

For his part, Mayr tried to impress upon Amt VI the fact that the situation in Persia called for political exploitation, whereas Amt VI remained convinced that, as the country was a supply line to Russia, what was called for was sabotage. All Mayr wanted was one efficient clandestine W/T operator; what Amt VI and the Abwehr ineptly sent him was an entire special-forces sabotage team (FRANZ), which even included a ranking Waffen-SS W/T operator (Hans Holzapfel [RAHIM]) who was incompetent, and which was led by a Waffen-SS officer (Günther Blume [LUTFULLAH]) who knew little or nothing about sabotage. And to the Abwehr's Schulze-Holthus was sent another SS sabotage team (ANTON)—the last thing he needed. It was led by the mentally unbalanced Martin Kurmis (PARVIS) (normally a desk officer at VI C 12), who upon arrival most unwisely chose to challenge the veteran air force major's authority. In Kurmis's charge were two young Waffen-SS W/T operators (Kurt Piwonka [SHAHPUR] and Kurt Harbers [FEREJ]) and a Farsi interpreter (Homayoun Farzad)—not at all what Nasir Khan's military advisor required to placate the disillusioned and restive Qashgai tribe. Guns and gold would have been much more to the point.⁹⁰

One is almost at a loss to explain such ineptitude on the part of the VI C 12 and Abw II O/SO desk planners. However, knowing the intelligence and savoir-faire of the chief Abwehr II planner, Hans-Otto Wagner, it seems most unlikely that he was instrumental in elaborating the detailed plans for these expeditions, although it is clear that he was the originator of at least one of them (Operation FRANZ).⁹¹ What seems more likely is that, since the SD was to provide most of the personnel involved, VI C was at some point tasked to finalize the operational plans. The fundamental error that the Amt VI planners made was to not listen to the agents in the field with respect to the optimal, essentially political goals of the FRANZ and ANTON missions. Neither Mayr nor Schulze-Holthus had called for sabotage teams, yet one or more Amt VI staff officers must have arbitrarily decided that sabotage was nevertheless to be the primary objective of both operations. Amt VI seems not to have valued the considerable achievement of Mayr in single-handedly developing a Persian fifth column, nor that of Schulze-Holthus in maintaining the

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid. For more about Nasir Khan, see Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran, 1941-1979*, vol. 2 (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 261-266.

91. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

support of Nasir Khan and his large tribe for the German cause.⁹² Amt VI seems to have been blind to the fact of Franz Mayr's self-concept as a political-intelligence officer specializing in subversion, with the unique set of political priorities that such a role demands. Instead they evolved two purely military plans aimed at inflicting damage on physical infrastructure, instead of supporting the two political agents in the field with funds (gold), equipment, and communications expertise. Perhaps this basic misunderstanding is a measure of how the SD, in its eagerness to usurp the military-intelligence role of the Abwehr, had by this time metamorphosed from a political intelligence service into a quasi-military one.

The course of events after the FRANZ and ANTON missions landed on Persian soil are described in detail elsewhere in this study.⁹³ Suffice it to say here that both missions ran into trouble from the very start. Both Mayr and Schulze-Holthus were shocked by the choices made in Berlin and struggled to come to terms with the situations that subsequently presented themselves. Both envisaged their labours of the past two years being rapidly undermined and undone by the unsuitable and inept young men sent to join them, none of whom achieved anything substantial during their time in Persia, eventually succumbing to capture by the British. With the exception of the eccentric and troubled Martin Kurmis, none of this was due to any fault of their own; any blame for their failure would have to be attributed to the planning officers at Amt VI and their inability to appreciate local priorities. Yet again, the SD seems to have been able to accommodate only one *Schwerpunkt* at a time.⁹⁴

Another issue at the RSHA was that of internal security: there appears to have been little adherence to the "need to know" principle. Hodayoun Farzad—who accompanied the ANTON expedition as their interpreter and guide, having volunteered for the mission through the Abwehr, not the SD—was highly critical of the lack of security at Amt VI. According to Farzad, fourteen people in the Delbrückstrasse office knew about ANTON without having any reason whatsoever for doing so. One of the office girls asked Farzad various questions about Persia, which he did not wish to answer. The girl immediately told Farzad not to be so discreet, because she already knew that he was to be sent to the Qashgai, and she wanted to know all about Nasir

92. For more about Franz Mayr and the *Melliun* organization, see pp. 200-207. For details of the crucial personal relationship between Schulze-Holthus and the Qashgai *il Khan* upon which the continuance of Nasir Khan's ever more reluctant support for Germany depended, see Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 157-269, and pp. 229-232.

93. See pp. 132-137, 152-159.

94. To this leitmotiv of operational failure—the inability of the German intelligence services to handle conflicting priorities—should be added the fact that, with the war situation now going against Germany, the hitherto pro-German Qashgai and Bakhtiari tribes were less disposed to cooperate with the German representatives—especially the Qashgai, to whom Schulze-Holthus had had to make many unfulfilled promises in Germany's name.

Khan's harem. Farzad therefore told her some romantic nonsense about tribal life, and she was "quite happy." On another occasion, the man who supplied Farzad with shoes for the mission intimated that he knew the team were going to Persia and even exactly where they were to land. One typist even divulged the mission date to Farzad in return for a packet of cigarettes. The only reassurance he ever received was the casual comment, "*Bei uns ist alles dicht* (There are never any leaks around here)." When he took the matter up with the Abwehr, complaining that such SD indiscretions were at odds with the Abwehr's insistence on secrecy, the Abwehr officer seemed genuinely pleased at catching the SD out and said he would report the matter. However, Farzad, frightened that the SS might take action against him for criticizing them, persuaded the Abwehr not to name any names. But he was told that "the Führer himself had ordered the strictest secrecy," so the matter would have to be reported.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, the Abwehr informed the mission leader, Martin Kurmis, that Farzad had made these criticisms, which led to tension between the two men before the mission had even departed.

This incident is eclipsed, however, by Farzad's suspicion that homosexuality may have been the root cause of the laxity, at least in the ANTON mission office at Amt VI:

Everyone refused to mention anything about Mayr's signals, even to the Qashgai Brothers. However, there was a rather fat boy aged fifteen or sixteen who worked in Kurmis' office. He seemed fairly well informed and one day asked Farzad where the village of Kafar was. Farzad was rather surprised and said he did not know. The boy then brought out a map of southern Persia and pointed to a place near Shiraz, which Farzad realized was Ghavar and not Kafar. The boy said that this place was on the "front" in the war between Nasir Khan and the government, at which Farzad asked whether the Germans had this information from Mayr. The boy said they had and that they received telegrams regularly from Mayr. He pointed to a cupboard where he said they were kept. Farzad commented that Kurmis was always calling people homosexuals and thought it possible that the boy had all this secret information because Kurmis himself was one.⁹⁶

If Farzad's instincts and perceptions were accurate, who knows what other secrets had been compromised in the past and how widespread such behaviours were within Amt VI as a whole? Certainly, in the context of security, the ever professional Schulze-Holthus had a jaundiced view of an intelligence service run by the SD, not the Abwehr:

One day, when they were in Persia, Farzad asked Kurmis what he thought of British intelligence. Schulze was standing by and exclaimed that the "British Intelligence Service" should be a school for the Germans and that their own intelligence was "eine Katastrophe."⁹⁷

95. Spencer to Kellar, 29 May 1944, f 58a, KV 2/1469, TNA.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

From the minutes of a regular meeting of desk heads held shortly after the appointment of Ernst Kaltenbrunner as head of the RSHA, we get a clear picture of the general lassitude and flagging morale that seems to have pervaded the staff at Amt VI as Nazi Germany embarked upon its relentless two-year unravelling. It is a startling document, for it reveals—as early as January 1943—what would today be termed a “corporate culture” of indolence and apathy not popularly associated with SS institutions, and it suggests that Schulze-Holthus’s contemptuous view of the German intelligence service under SS influence as catastrophic was well founded. At the meeting, department head Walter Schellenberg berated his staff, in particular his desk chiefs, in no uncertain terms:

The department head [Schellenberg] declared that, despite all the improvements in the running of Amt VI, he was totally dissatisfied with the performance of its workforce. He did not overlook the fact that the war was making more and more demands on everyone. From all of us he required toughness, determination, and endurance. If soldiers at the front were expected to have staying power, then we at home must demonstrate that we are their equals and must show total commitment to our service responsibilities. He failed to see any evidence of such wholehearted commitment. During a formal talk at Reichsführer-SS headquarters, he had assured Himmler that everything was fine at Amt VI. Today, however, he was not so sure that this was the case. One reason for this uncertainty was a telephone conversation he had unintentionally overheard in which an older SS officer was participating. The substance of the conversation lacked any trace of loyalty or trustworthiness, especially since upon subsequent investigation what was said by this officer turned out to have no basis whatsoever in fact. Things simply could not be allowed to go on like this. In future, the department head will ruthlessly eliminate anyone who fails to carry out his duty to the very end, whether he be an *Angestellter* [employee] or a *Beamter* [civil servant]. Anyone who does not feel up to the task should inform either the department head or his group head. An exchange will then be arranged. Even arriving late for work and lounging around in the canteen during office hours was strongly condemned by the department head. We should use those fighting at the front as our role models. At the end of the working day we should be asking ourselves whether we have truly fulfilled our duty to the German people and the state. The department head believes that nobody can answer that question with a resounding “yes.” Of course some desk heads spare no effort to carry out their duties to the end. The majority, however, are happy to let the few hardworking ones piggyback them. What he had said, stressed the department head, applied to everyone, from the group heads right down to the youngest shorthand-typist. First and foremost, the group and desk heads must act as role models for their subordinates in every way and direct them towards our common goal.⁹⁸

That such an admonitory pep talk should have been necessary—with two years of warfare still to go—at the Amt VI group-head and desk-head level is surprising. Of course, one needs to bear in mind the increasing stress levels experienced by people working for the SD in

98. Organisation und innerer Dienstbetrieb im Amt VI, Auslandsnachrichtendienst, 1941-1943, f 77, R 58/482, BA.

Berlin at that time, caused by relentless Allied air raids, day and night; by rationing and shortages; by the frequent loss of comrades and loved ones; by the increasing disbelief with which the intelligence they acquired and analyzed was received,⁹⁹ and not least by the omnipresent threat of losing one's desk job and being posted to an *Einsatzgruppe* or, worse yet, to a Waffen-SS unit on the Russian front.¹⁰⁰ But most telling of all must have been the increasing evidence around them of failure and defeat. Most of those working at the RSHA, many of them quite young (Schellenberg himself was only in his early thirties), had been the most enthusiastic, ideologically driven of Nazis. Yet, rather than being among those most motivated to prosecute the war zealously to the very end, it is they who in their disillusion seem to have been most susceptible to apathy and defeatism,¹⁰¹ much more so than their Abwehr counterparts, many of whom had begun the war with a healthy scepticism about its likely outcome which they sustained throughout the war years. Realism and disillusion also came quickly to Amt VI perhaps because, as members of the foreign intelligence service at the very centre of Germany's wartime communications network, its security-cleared staff had instant access to all the bad news and were thus more aware than others of the increasing hopelessness of their cause.

Some have taken an even harsher view of SD "culture," suggesting that, from the outset, Amt VI was populated entirely with "rogues and criminals."¹⁰² At the very least, the officials of Amt VI may be seen as opportunists who subscribed disingenuously to SS ideology, seeking to turn any situation to their own advantage and to advance their careers.¹⁰³ Roman Gamotha is perhaps the most obvious example; however, many others, including Kaltenbrunner,

99. In a classic case of wanting to shoot the messenger, Hitler even called Schellenberg a traitor because of his intelligence reports. See Querg, "Spionage und Terror," 369n855. In theoretical terms, this is a clear example of Christopher Andrew's assertion that the foreign intelligence services of authoritarian regimes serve dictators as "mechanisms for reinforcing [their] regimes' misconceptions of the outside world." In providing Hitler with accurate appreciations, Schellenberg was therefore—at his peril—neglecting one of the principal functions of the SD, which had in fact become the sycophantic generation of distorted but politically correct intelligence analyses. See Christopher Andrew, "Intelligence, International Relations and 'Under-theorisation,'" *Intelligence and National Security* 19, no. 2 (2004): 179.

100. This was the dreaded *Bewährungsprozess*, which required SD desk officers to "prove themselves" by serving in one of the SS liquidation (mass-killing) units operating in German-occupied areas in the East and the Balkans.

101. Many RSHA officers also appear to have been positioning themselves early on for the immediate postwar resumption of their professional intelligence and security careers, which most succeeded in achieving "within months of the war's end" according to Siegfried Beer, "Von Alfred Redl zum 'Dritten Mann': Österreich und ÖsterreicherInnen im internationalen Geheimdienstgeschehen 1918-1947," *Geschichte und Gegenwart: Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 16, no. 1 (1997): 10.

102. According to Reinhard Spitzzy, former SS officer and Abwehr *Sonderführer* (special officer)—an unusual combination—who worked for both Canaris and Ribbentrop, quoted in Querg, "Spionage und Terror," 364n850. See also Reinhard Spitzzy, *How We Squandered the Reich*, trans. G. T. Waddington (Wilby, Norwich: Russell, 1997).

103. Alluding to the words of the Horst Wessel Song, Willi Brandt once said of Germany's officials: "They all quickly learned to march 'ranks closed, with silent solid steps,' but to keep their traps shut and protect their own interests." See "Ein masslos unterschätzter Teufel," *Spiegel Spezial*, no. 2 (1989), 12.

Schellenberg, and Skorzeny, may certainly be observed manoeuvring adroitly and self-seekingly through the labyrinth of internal politics among the RSHA intelligentsia. It could even be argued that Schellenberg was himself responsible at Amt VI for the very situation he deplored, by encouraging pragmatism and individualism among his young officers rather than the ideological conformity that had marked the early years of the service:

During the early days of the SD, its officers were among the most loyal, unscrupulous, and fanatical members of the SS. ... However, as the war progressed, Schellenberg made more and more changes to the personnel policy in his department, favouring the recruitment of increasing numbers of scientific and technical types because they could ... make rational, calculated decisions in response to changing circumstances. In individual cases, if it was to their advantage, they would even ignore the prevailing Nazi ideology.¹⁰⁴

Schellenberg ended his collective rebuke of January 1943 by addressing yet another problem that apparently plagued Amt VI: the lack of cooperation among the ten-odd groups that made up the department. His words, “*Die Zusammenarbeit der Gruppen lässt das erforderliche Verständnis vermissen,*” are best translated as “the groups lack any understanding of how to cooperate,” or possibly even “there is little sympathy among the groups for the idea of cooperation.” “As human beings and as colleagues,” Schellenberg continued, “we must confront each other, learn to understand each other, and support each other.”¹⁰⁵ According to Otto Skorzeny, rigid compartmentalization was a source of gross inefficiency at Amt VI. Skorzeny, who headed VI S and was responsible for sabotage and agent training, was unable to retain operational control over the men he had trained if their sabotage missions also involved political subversion. In such cases, operational command passed to the political desks responsible for the region in which the men were to be deployed (e.g. VI C 12 or VI C 14 for Persia). VI S was only asked for assistance when “there was a need to supply additional material or a new group.” Skorzeny found this arrangement most unsatisfactory. “To send people on a mission and then make them continue that mission under different leadership was not the way to handle the matter.”¹⁰⁶

104. Querg, “Spionage und Terror,” 363-364. The skills-set of the typical young SD officer has been identified as consisting of “assertiveness, flexibility and promptness, efficiency and purposefulness, scientific thinking, strategic planning, historical and political awareness, effective stress management, desensitization, icy objectivity, the suppression of situative emotions, denunciation strategies, and pronounced male-bonding characteristics.” See Lutz Hachmeister, “Die Rolle des SD-Personals in der Nachkriegszeit: Zur nationalsozialistischen Durchdringung der Bundesrepublik,” in Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 357.

105. Organisation und innerer Dienstbetrieb im Amt VI, *Auslandsnachrichtendienst*, 1941-1943, f 77, R 58/482, BA.

106. Otto Skorzeny, *For Germany: The Otto Skorzeny Memoirs*, ed. Craig W. H. Luther and Hugh Page Taylor (San Jose, CA: Bender, 2005), 130.

It is hardly surprising that the lack of intraservice cooperation should have led in the final year of the war to complete fragmentation of the constituent groups of Amt VI. When we read in the records of planning initiatives, training events, operational tasks, communications networks, and organizational meetings, it is important to remember that the RSHA was never *physically* monolithic: all such manifestations of intraservice activity became increasingly difficult to implement as the war drew towards its inevitable end and the various RSHA departments and departmental groups began splitting like cells and distributing themselves around the Reich in locations far from each other, linked only by an underresourced and failing communications and transport infrastructure. By mid-July 1943, Himmler took steps to ensure the safety of vital departmental records by instructing all administrative heads to relocate their registries outside Berlin, which of course only led to further fragmentation at the departmental level.¹⁰⁷

By October 1943, long before the final flight from the capital, the RSHA was already scattered around Berlin in over thirty separate office premises. While Kaltenbrunner and his headquarters staff occupied the Prince Albrecht Palace at Wilhelmstrasse 102, not far from Hitler's Reichskanzlei—and later his bunker—the headquarters of Amt VI had been located since early 1941 in the “Aryanized” former Jewish Seniors' Home at Berkaerstrasse 32 in Schmargendorf. Also at this address were the following units: VI A, VI B, VI C 4-13, and VI D, while VI C 1-3 and VI C Z were housed in a lakeside villa on the outskirts of Berlin in the affluent garden suburb of Wannsee, near Potsdam, where the SS had acquired ownership of a substantial number of large properties, many of them expropriated from “transported” Jewish families. The Amt VI villa was located a few doors to the north of the Wannsee-Institut (later Havel-Institut), where Amt VI W/T operators and other field agents received their radio training (see Figure 4-15).¹⁰⁸ Towards the end of the war, Amt VI offices were to be found scattered far and wide, mostly at the periphery of the Reich: in Vienna, Styria, Tyrol, Thuringia, Silesia, and Bohemia.¹⁰⁹ It is not possible to measure the extent to which these decentralized posts were able or even felt compelled to communicate with each other—probably very little. However, it has been shown elsewhere in this study that, with Germany's overseas interests virtually nonexistent and its borders shrinking rapidly, there was little work left for a foreign intelligence service to do.¹¹⁰ It is paradoxical that, once the unification of the German intelligence services had been achieved, the irreversible decentralization process caused largely by the threat of Allied bombing

107. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 698-699.

108. Dokument L-219, Geschäftsverteilungsplan des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes: Amt VI Auslandsnachrichtendienst, 1 October 1943, ff 334-349, R 58/840, BA.

109. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 700-701.

110. See p. 119.

was already well under way. Thus, the new, combined service found it difficult if not impossible to coalesce physically or communicatively, and, when coupled with the sheer quantitative impossibility of the “tiger” (Amt VI) swallowing the almost division-strength “elephant” (Abwehr), the unification process was effectively neutralized.¹¹¹ Notwithstanding Hitler’s decreed unification of the intelligence services in 1944, there was no real merger of the rump Abwehr (Militärisches Amt) and the SD; after the war the Allies recognized this, excluding MilAmt officers from being declared war criminals, unlike SD officers.¹¹²

3.4 Lack of joint interservice cooperation and coordination

“Each [service], in fact, went so far as to pretend that the other did not exist.”¹¹³

“Skorzeny hated army officers and declared at every opportunity that for him there was no such thing as an army officer’s code of honour; it was only a cloak for cowardice in the face of the enemy.”¹¹⁴

Unquestionably, when Wilhelm Canaris still had a free hand in intelligence matters, the Abwehr enjoyed its fair share of intelligence successes early in the war in Europe: in Poland, France, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and the Balkans.¹¹⁵ Further afield, however, the service’s wartime achievements were marred by critical intelligence failures—in Russia, North Africa, and the Middle East. Greater regional expertise might have helped. It was, for instance, most unfortunate that Persia and Kurdistan were generally understood by the Germans, even the Abwehr, to be part of the Arab world—a fundamental error that in itself indicates how ill-prepared they were for any meaningful activity in the region.¹¹⁶ Ignorance aside, however, in Persia the single most significant factor contributing to operational dysfunction was undoubtedly the lack of interservice cooperation and coordination between the Abwehr and the SD. In fact, it could be said that attempted or improvised joint cooperation on covert operations in Persia

111. The metaphor is Kahn’s in *Hitler’s Spies*, 269; cited by Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten*, 705. According to Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies*, 250, 268, “the number of persons in the Abwehr on an average totalled more than 13,000,” while the SD numbered fewer than 4,000, of whom even fewer worked for Amt VI. See p. 50n7.

112. It was the activities of the SS mass-killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*) for which Amt III, Amt VI, and Amt VII officers were held to be responsible that caused them to be categorized as members of a criminal organization. See *Judgement of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals* (London: HMSO, 1951), 83; also Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 27-28.

113. Franz Mayr in SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f 79b, KV 2/1479, TNA.

114. Werner Ohletz in Appendix III, Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA.

115. Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence*, vol. 4, 301.

116. SS regional research experts at the Forschungsstelle Orient (Amt VI G) also seem to have been incapable of distinguishing between Sunni and Shia Islam, which was to them of little consequence anyway, as they were probably only interested in inflaming anti-Semitism in the region. See Harald Möller, “Wie die SS sich einmal mit dem Koran beschäftigte und dabei auf Iran stieß,” *Orient 2* (2004): 332; Liquidation Report No. 12, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI G, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 21 October 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

proved to be an infallible guarantee of German failure. Conversely, had there been no attempt at cooperation, there might have been greater success in the region, certainly for the Abwehr. In this paradoxical context then, the problems of cooperation and coordination between the Abwehr and the SD need to be examined on three distinct levels. First, there was the rivalry between the two services at headquarters level in Berlin, characterized by irreconcilable political and ideological differences and compounded by conflicting operational priorities. Second, the relationship between their two socially and temperamentally disparate representatives in the field—Schulze-Holthus and Mayr—was tenuous at best, to which was subsequently added the personality conflict between Schulze-Holthus and the mentally unstable leader of the SD's ANTON expedition, Martin Kurmis. Finally, at a liaison level, both headquarters themselves experienced technical communication problems and policy conflicts with their field representatives at the local level, which further contributed the general lack of operational cooperation and coordination.

Immediately after the Allied invasion of Persia, during the winter of 1941-1942, the situation was that both Amt VI and the Abwehr had representatives hiding in Persia with neither service aware of their location nor able to make contact with them. Subsequent operations depended entirely on the personal initiative of the agents themselves, Schulze-Holthus and Mayr. Initially, the relationship between the two men was functionally cooperative, if not exactly cordial. In the spring of 1942, they agreed to divide Persia between them. Schulze-Holthus would deal with military intelligence; Mayr, with political intelligence. This arrangement was ultimately transformed by circumstances into a geographical one whereby the former's role became that of military advisor to the most powerful tribal warlord in Persia, Nasir Khan of the Qashgai (BALDER), while the latter was to restrict himself to fostering a Persian fifth column and organizing a political espionage network.

There appears to have been no cooperation whatsoever between Amt VI and Franz Mayr with regard to the planning and execution of Operation FRANZ, which was intended by Mayr to supply him with field-agent support and communications equipment, whereas it was clearly conceived and planned by headquarters as a sabotage mission. Mayr requested two men; the SD sent him six. When Mayr subsequently transmitted to Berlin Schulze-Holthus's request for a mission to the Qashgai, he received the ominous reply that plans were already under way, without any indication of the nature of the expedition or its personnel. Again, what Schulze-Holthus ultimately received when the ANTON party arrived in Qashgai territory was not the Abwehr party with the W/T set and money that he had requested, but instead a hostile SD officer commanding a three-man sabotage squad.

We know from the records that FRANZ and ANTON were originally Abwehr schemes; Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II initiated the planning of both operations.¹¹⁷ How is it then that both expeditions were subsequently taken over by the rival Amt VI, long before the Abwehr itself was taken over by the SD? The answer would appear to lie at least in part with the flawed communications system used by Mayr and Schulze-Holthus to send messages to Berlin and with the situation at the German Embassy in Ankara, the main conduit for Tehran-Berlin communications. While Mayr was responsible for forwarding Schulze-Holthus's messages to the best of his ability, he naturally employed SD rather than Abwehr channels and contacts to do so. Thus Schulze-Holthus's requests intended for the Abwehr must have ended up on the desk of Ludwig Moyzisch, SS police attaché in Ankara, instead of with Paul Leverkuehn, who headed the Abwehr outstation (KONO) in Istanbul. From Moyzisch the messages were then presumably conveyed to the RSHA in Berlin, not to the Tirpitzufer, and so what began as realistic Abwehr initiatives were, more by accident than design, quickly transformed by the RSHA opportunists into SD extravaganzas.¹¹⁸

Franz von Papen, the former German chancellor whom Hitler had appointed ambassador to Turkey—so important was it to him that neutral Turkey should not join the Allies—witnessed this dysfunction within the intelligence community at close quarters in Ankara with an ambivalence born of frustration and resignation, for he was powerless to intervene in the turf wars between the SD and the Abwehr, even within his own embassy. After the war, Papen wrote:

[The] Abwehr was only one of a number of competing and overlapping agencies. ... The work of these agencies, however was uncoordinated, and they were always getting in each other's way. In Turkey their rivalry went so far that they denounced each other's agents to the Turkish police. ... Canaris was unable to put an end to this ridiculous situation.

Moyzisch ... was attached to my Embassy in the nominal capacity of commercial attaché, but was really the representative of the Gestapo and the *Sicherheitsdienst*. It may be asked how such an appointment came to be made after my insistence, before coming to Turkey, that the Gestapo should not be allowed to meddle in my affairs. Once the war had broken out, it was difficult to resist demands that the intelligence service of the secret state police should be represented in Ankara, and in the end I had to give way. Moyzisch was under my orders for administrative purposes, but I did not see his reports, nor would they have interested me. He took no part in the diplomatic affairs of the Embassy.

... If anyone was going to be made to look foolish, I preferred it to be the Gestapo rather than the Abwehr.¹¹⁹

117. First detailed interrogation report, Z43/1043/16, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

118. For an account of the communication methods used by Mayr, see pp. 201-202.

119. Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, trans. Brian Connell (London: Andre Deutsch, 1952), 481, 510. For more about Papen in Turkey, see Karl-Heinz Roth, "Berlin-Ankara-Baghdad: Franz von Papen and German Near East

Such dysfunction should not be taken as evidence of a lack of cooperation between the two staybehinds in Persia, nor of a lack of conscientiousness on Mayr's part. He was hardly in a position to ensure that his Abwehr counterpart's messages would reach the Abwehr rather than the SD; just getting word to Berlin was all that he could hope for. Mayr's fears for Schulze-Holthus and the Qashgais that the ANTON expedition would be as wrongly planned and executed as the FRANZ operation had been were no doubt genuine and proved to be well founded. Mayr's conception was still that the situation in Persia lent itself to political exploitation, while Berlin thought only in terms of special operations of the military kind. And, once they had succeeded in wresting operational command from Abwehr II, the Amt VI leaders seem to have made no attempt to require any cooperation or coordination between the leader of the ANTON expedition, Martin Kurmis, and Franz Mayr. Instead, Kurmis proved to be fanatical, impetuous, and intransigent, encouraged it would seem to operate autonomously, and even ready—most unwisely—to challenge the authority of the wily and experienced Schulze-Holthus.

Probably as a face-saving measure rather than a genuine gesture of solidarity, guidelines were ultimately agreed upon by the SD and the Abwehr with respect to future operations in Persia. This was despite the fact that, when Mayr's first "bolt-from-the-blue" message had arrived, both services had claimed that the right to exploit the unexpected situation was equally theirs. According to the new guidelines, all future expeditions to Persia were to be under joint control—a factor that would greatly weaken their effectiveness, not least because the new guidelines were agreed to disingenuously by the SD, who, having thereby acquired access to the Abwehr planning process, promptly strongarmed their way into a command role and imposed their prime objective on the missions: sabotage.¹²⁰

In reality, well before the official 1944 takeover, the SD never had the least intention of cooperating with the Abwehr, which they perceived to be a rival—and politically suspect—organization. When forced by circumstances in the field into joint operations with the Abwehr, the SD simply exploited the resources offered them by their rivals, benefiting greatly from Abwehr planning expertise, while assuming command roles and determining mission objectives themselves. Though initial Abwehr planning of these expeditions under the supervision of Putz and Wagner¹²¹ was as meticulous as one might expect, the modification of the original plans and

Policy during the Second World War," in *Germany and the Middle East 1871-1945*, ed. Wolfgang G. Schwanitz (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2004).

120. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

121. In planning ANTON, Wagner would have had recourse to the additional expertise of Schulze-Holthus's department, Abw I L, where Oberkriegsverwaltungsrat (Senior Military Advisor [OKVR]) Dr Emil Hurr,

their execution by the SD proved disastrous because of a combination of factors: disregard of field agents' clearly enunciated priorities and requests, excessive numbers of mission personnel, inappropriate choice of leaders and personnel, lack of personnel training, inappropriate choice of mission objectives, and ultimately—in the case of Operation FRANZ—a poorly executed, inaccurate parachute drop, which resulted in damaged equipment, delays, and a lengthy forced route march across the salt desert.

Finally, it is worth noting that, in the general context of the jurisdictional rivalries that Adolf Hitler is known to have encouraged in order to ensure overall control himself, there was in Persia at least one instance of lack of cooperation between the Abwehr and the German Foreign Office with regard to the provision of diplomatic and commercial cover for Abwehr agents overseas. In this case, the dispute reached such proportions that it could only be resolved by Canaris himself. Under commercial cover, the Abwehr had despatched Walter Gräwer to Tehran in February 1941 on an important military reconnaissance mission in advance of a planned German invasion from Iraq and the Caucasus, only to have their officer completely undermined by SS Brigadier Erwin Ettl at the German Legation, who took steps to have Gräwer returned to Germany after the expiry of his three-month visa. Gräwer's attempt to establish himself at Bandar Shahpur, where he was to set up a W/T station, was rendered impossible by Ettl's impounding the necessary technical equipment at the legation. Canaris was not pleased and rescinded Gräwer's recall; however, any subsequent escalation of the incident was avoided when the Allies occupied Persia a month later, and Gräwer was deported to Australia.¹²² Clearly, though, disgruntlement lingered at the legation, for when Schulze-Holthus left Tehran to evade capture, negligently abandoning in an adjacent building 50 kg of dynamite about which he had failed to inform the minister, Ettl was furious. His ensuing cable to Berlin,¹²³ however, merely persuaded Ribbentrop to exclude in future only active Abwehr saboteurs from diplomatic cover rather than all Abwehr officers, which is undoubtedly what Ettl would have preferred.¹²⁴

former Near East representative of Merck, acted as Richard Bechtle's advisor throughout the war on all questions concerning the Middle East. For more about Hurr, see Appendix III, Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA.

122. See miscellaneous correspondence in ff 294757-294765, 294768-294770, GFM 33/463, TNA; Liste der in Loveday/Südaustralien internierten Deutschen aus Iran, Auswärtiges Amt, Kult E/Nf(Zv)4964, 17 February 1942, R 27330, AA.

123. Ettl to AA, 27 August 1941, f 294766, GFM 33/463, TNA.

124. Memorandum by Ritter, 11 September 1941, in Norbert Müller and others, eds., *Das Amt Ausland/Abwehr im Oberkommando der Wehrmacht: Eine Dokumentation*, Materialien aus dem Bundesarchiv 16 (Koblenz: Bundesarchiv, 2007), 233.

3.5 Problems of training and suitability

“The majority ... had already proved their worth in battle ..., but they did not necessarily possess those characteristics which make a good agent.”¹²⁵

“Harbers and Piwonka were efficient operators and technicians but otherwise received no special training for their mission. They did not even do any parachute jumping.”¹²⁶

Since no Abwehr special-forces units were deployed in Persia during the Second World War, our interest in them is limited in this study to the role they played in the recruitment and training of individuals destined for clandestine insertion by air, land, or sea in the Persian theatre. This is not to say that there were no plans to include Brandenburg units among the German forces poised to invade Persia in early 1943.¹²⁷ However, those military plans were negated by the German defeats at El Alamein, Stalingrad, and Kursk. While discussion of the archival records pertaining to the German invasion that never happened might be fascinating, it would be largely irrelevant in this context. Also, specific instances of recruitment and training experienced at first hand by individual operatives in preparation for deployment in Persia are dealt with elsewhere in this section, together with a discussion of some of the associated problems encountered by both the Abwehr and the SD. In this section, therefore, what needs to be provided is an overview of the way in which the recruitment of Persian nationals and others was effected by Abwehr II and then transitioned into a training process facilitated by the Abwehr II special-forces establishments at Meseritz (now Międzyrzecz, Poland) and Quenz (Brandenburg). It needs to be stressed that, contrary to the popular notion that Otto Skorzeny and VI S were the originators of special-forces training in Germany, both these Abwehr training schools predated Skorzeny’s Oranienburg-Friedenthal SD special-forces training centre, although some SD agent training, including W/T training, was provided by the SD at Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen on a relatively small scale prior to the appointment of Skorzeny to VI S, but not before 1943.¹²⁸

125. Franz Mayr and Ernst Köndgen on the quality of SD mission personnel in SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f 79b, KV 2/1479, TNA.

126. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA. Also in f 53a, KV 2/1485.

127. Given the lack of material in the German military archives on the Brandenburg (800) and Kurfürst (805) “special-purposes training regiments” (their cover designation), the best secondary source on Abwehr special forces is Helmuth Spaeter, *Die Brandenburger zbV 800: Eine deutsche Kommandotruppe* (Munich: Angerer, 1982). See also p. 161n146. What records have survived are mostly about Brandenburger operations on the Russian front and behind Soviet lines. See, for instance, MSG 158/50, RW 49/139-147, and RW 49/597-403, BA-MA. Of pictorial interest is a wonderful snapshot album in MSG 158/45, BA-MA, depicting the exploits of an elite Brandenburger company. In MSG 158/8, BA-MA is a file about the airborne Brandenburgers—an elite within an elite—which provides a clear picture of just how close they came to Persia in 1942.

128. The chronology of special-forces and agent training is incontestable: Quenz (Abw II) was opened in 1940, Meseritz (Abw II) in 1942, Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen (VI F) in 1943, and Oranienburg-Friedenthal (VI S) in 1944.

By April 1944, British security intelligence in Persia had already assembled a coherent and accurate narrative of how the Abwehr recruitment process worked that filtrated ethnic Persians into the Brandenburger training schools:

It appears that when Russian troops entered Persia, many Persian students in Germany remembered stories which they had heard of Russian behaviour in their country in the last war and were hoodwinked by German propoganda about Russian atrocities. Several of them were so indignant that they wrote letters to Hitler and other Nazi leaders, demanding to be allowed to serve in the German Army. ... Dr Wagner of the Abwehr, who was then working under the covername of WENDEL, therefore wrote himself to all Persians in Germany—to those who had not written letters as well as to those who had—inviting them to a meeting in Berlin. Thanks to the promises of Shahruckh that they would all be given important posts when the Germans entered Persia, many of the students accepted the offer and went to train at Meseritz. Here the Free Corps formed a part of the Sonderkommando BAYADER [*sic*], which included other peoples like Uzbeks and Indians.¹²⁹

Many of these Persian students were in fact orphans who had been living in Germany for at least seven years; consequently they lacked family connections in Persia and were desperately poor, making their recruitment relatively easy.¹³⁰ However, the Free Corps was not to last; none of these recruits served in it for more than nine months. It seems that when they dispersed, some returned to student life, some joined or rejoined the German armed forces, and some remained in Abwehr service as members of Hans-Otto Wagner's cadre of potential Abwehr II agents, a few of whom were actually deployed in Persia in 1943 as parachutists on account of their linguistic and/or cultural skills.¹³¹ Others were trained and held ready, but never left Germany, as mission after mission was cancelled.

In 1942-1943, the Regenwurm Camp at Meseritz was where Abwehr II stationed their ethnic special forces, maintaining them essentially as a reserve of trained talent on which they could draw when staffing *Ferneinsätze* (long-range operations) with interpreters and guides. For roughly a year, the term *Meseritz* seems to have become more or less synonymous within the Abwehr with the Brandenburger holding or training unit that was stationed there until the spring of 1943: Sonderkommando (Special Squad [SK]) Bajadere, a multicultural, multilingual unit comprising 30 Persians, 5 Azeris, 10 Uzbekis, 40 Tadjikis, 10 Turkomans, 100 Indians, and 70 Germans.¹³² According to Hans-Otto Wagner, the camp started at the beginning of April 1942 with a few volunteers and was to be brought up to strength with more foreign volunteers in due

129. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA. Also in f 53a, KV 2/1485.

130. Ibid. See also p. 177.

131. E.g. Korel, Köndgen, and Farzad.

132. Second interrogation report on Ernst Köndgen, 7 September 1943, f 10b and CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, f 38a, WO208/1588B, TNA.

course. These men wore German Army uniforms with a sleeve flash in their national colours (e.g. green-white-red horizontal bars for Persia). They were trained by regular officers and NCOs of the 4th Brandenburg Regiment, some of whom had linguistic qualifications, and by other external trainers, in order to provide expert assistance to German troops advancing south and invading any Caucasian or Transcaucasian country. The unit was dissolved in April 1943, once it had become clear that there would likely be no Transcaucasian invasion, most of its members being absorbed into the 2nd Battalion of the 4th Brandenburg Regiment and sent to fight partisans in Yugoslavia.¹³³ Thus, while mentioned frequently in the records, Meseritz and SK Bajadere were significant for only about one year in the history of the Abwehr (April 1942-April 1943). The demise of Meseritz was brought about not only by the worsening strategic situation and the contraction of the operational theatre in the East, but also by the reorganization of the Brandenburgers under direct OKW command and the creeping encroachment of the SD upon Abwehr operational control, along with the establishment of SD special-forces training establishments under the command of Otto Skorzeny.

During its relatively brief existence, Meseritz was also used to provide special agent training to unique individuals, like the Qashgai Brothers for example. According to Ernst Köndgen, one of the two Abwehr II men who parachuted into Persia with the SD-led FRANZ expedition, the Qashgai Brothers were given a special officers' training course at Lagow, near Meseritz, in August and September 1942. Lieutenant Maus and Lieutenant Friedrichs-Mayer trained the brothers in infantry weapons and tactics.¹³⁴

133. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C12(b) Sonderverband Brandenburg: Meseritz, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

134. Second interrogation report on Ernst Köndgen, 7 September 1943, f 10b, WO208/1588B, TNA. Malek Mansur Qashgai and Mohammed Hussain Qashgai were the two younger brothers of Nasir Khan Qashgai who fled from persecution by the regime of Reza Shah in 1931 to pursue university studies in England (Mansur at Magdalen College, Oxford and Hussain at Reading) and ultimately in Berlin. Befriended and recruited by Colonel Putz of Abwehr II, the Qashgai Brothers became important Abwehr assets, underwent military training, and were commissioned as lieutenants in the German Army. However, after encountering hostility from Heinz Gräfe and Kurt Schuback of VI C, who were meddling increasingly in Abwehr Persian affairs, and possibly also to avoid the intensifying Allied air raids, the brothers ultimately moved to Turkey, where they finally placed themselves under British orders in February 1944. They then attempted to travel to Persia on their own initiative but were intercepted by British security in Aleppo, detained, and thoroughly interrogated. A month later and thirteen years after going into exile, the brothers were finally returned to Persia after being held in Cairo pending Nasir Khan's delivery of Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group into British custody. It is thought that their mother Bibi played a significant role in persuading the *Ilkhan* to comply with British demands in order to secure her sons' return to the tribe. SIME Report No. 3, March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA; CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 24z, KV 2/1941, TNA. There was incidentally a fourth Qashgai brother, the "flamboyant and restlessly active" Khosrow Khan Qashgai (LOKI), who did not, according to Bill Magan, "cut much ice." Khosrow, who fancied himself as a soldier, remained in Persia during the war and acted as an intermediary for Nasir Khan, Schulze-Holthus, Franz Mayr, and others. See Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 261-266; Magan to Pilditch, 3 February 1981, GB165-0199, MECA.

The most important Abwehr II T training unit was the sabotage school at Quenz, a rural estate about 5 km outside the town of Brandenburg, near the Quenz lake and surrounded by a high wall. When one trainee in only the second group of Brandenburgers to train there arrived at Quenz in April 1940, everything was still under construction. The trainees themselves were expected to lend a hand, building weapons ranges and testing trenches where not long before cows and sheep had peacefully grazed.¹³⁵ Eventually there were ranges for firing rifles and pistols, a laboratory, a *Sprengbunker* (high-explosives testing bunker), railway installations, a locksmith's workshop, a playing field, a quay for boats, a gymnasium, and barracks. Models and mockups of bridges and traffic installations were also constructed and used for training purposes. Lectures were given on how to build up agent networks, how to behave during interrogation, how to approach objects suitable for sabotage, and how to carry out small sabotage.¹³⁶ Many aspects of explosives training were covered, including types of materials and the demolition of such targets as bridges, industrial installations, power stations, railway infrastructure, ships, cables, and W/T stations. Students were also given extensive weapons training on rifles, pistols, machine pistols, and machine guns. Map reading and navigation were also taught. Field trips were arranged to the large railway works at Kirchmöser¹³⁷ and the nearby Arado aircraft factory to acquaint trainees with the practical possibilities and requirements of railway and industrial espionage. The full training course for Brandenburger special forces normally lasted for about three weeks; however, selected mission participants generally took one-week crash courses.¹³⁸ The property at Quenz appears to have been developed to replace the original Abw II sabotage school at Berlin-Tegel. The chemical factory in which the Tegel school was housed was ultimately bombed and destroyed by fire, some time before the summer of 1943, after which all sabotage training was given at Quenz.¹³⁹

135. "Ein Meisterspion berichtet," *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 31-32 (1 February 1975): 24, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

136. An informative contemporary guide to small sabotage is the OSS Simple Sabotage Field Manual, 11 September 1943, RG 226, Entry 215, Box 8, NARA.

137. The sabotage of railway infrastructure rather than locomotives and rolling stock must have been the subject of these trips to Kirchmöser, for nothing would have remained of the locomotive shops, which were disassembled and shipped to the newly acquired *Lebensraum* of Ukraine some time in 1942, never to be reassembled there nor returned to Brandenburg. This is but one example of how far-reaching the reversal of German fortunes at Stalingrad was. The Kirchmöser railway yards were subsequently converted into a large factory for tanks and spare parts, staffed by POWs and foreign workers, which is presumably what the Abw II trainees would have encountered when they visited. See Sieglinde von Treskow, *90 Jahre Stahl aus Brandenburg—Zeitzeugen berichten: Dokumentation zum Symposium* (Bad Münstereifel: Westkreuz, 2005).

138. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C7(d)(iii) German espionage and sabotage centres: Abw II/T, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

139. Camp 020 report, 18 January 1944, f 75a, KV 2/752, TNA.

In general terms, German agent recruitment practices seem to have been informed by a conviction that mass assault was—as in battle—more effective in espionage than the selective insertion of high-grade agents. The Germans generally did not expect more than a very small proportion of the large numbers of agents they recruited to escape detection or succeed in establishing themselves in positions of value. However, even the majority, who would in the nature of things be caught almost as soon as they arrived, could perform a very useful function. Their very numbers would tend to bear down on the security defences of the country concerned, and in this sense these low-grade agents, without realizing it themselves, could fulfil the purpose of a decoy. The detection, pursuit, and capture of the majority of the agents would so stretch the resources and distract the attention of Allied security-intelligence forces that the remaining minority might remain secure.¹⁴⁰ As the head of SIME, Brigadier Raymond Maunsell, noted in 1942:

The fact that a number of agents in the Middle East are of a low type, almost untrained and have arrived at their objective ill prepared and equipped, has raised the suspicion that they cannot be genuine agents of the Abwehr. It is too readily assumed that the Abwehr is a powerful and efficient machine turning out first class, intelligent and determined agents, fully prepared and equipped. This is not our experience, and I repeat emphatically that we believe that the level of efficiency of the Abwehr is extremely low. I only speak of its activities in the Middle East as of course I am unaware of its efficiency in other parts of the world.¹⁴¹

In specific terms, the problem with Persian operations was that neither Berlin nor Istanbul station seemed able to recruit and train sufficient numbers of low-grade agents to convert the trickle of Abwehr and SD parachutists, agents, and couriers destined for Persia into the flood required to ensure the security of a few. To use twenty-first-century terminology, the German intelligence services became too severely “underresourced” to implement their policy of wholesale insertion. Their already shallow talent pool of potential Middle Eastern operatives with adequate linguistic and cultural skills for their own efficacy and survival began to shrink rapidly—along with Germany’s positive political image in the region—after 1942-1943, when

140. The German organization of triple-crossing, 2 July 1942, KV 4/197, TNA. According to Wilson, “War in the Dark,” 101, although some Abwehr IOs apparently recruited their agents directly, the use of talent spotters was the preferred method. Wilson also points out that the Abwehr’s use of “low-grade, poorly motivated agents” was prevalent and that Abwehr recruiting methods more or less ensured that only such agents could be enlisted. The service seldom used proof of Nazi ideological commitment as a recruiting criterion. On the other hand, blackmail was common, while the chief motivation for most agents was money. *Ibid.*, 102, 104-105. See also p. 289.

141. Maunsell to Petrie, 9 October 1942, KV 4/197, TNA.

the tide turned against Hitler in North Africa and the Caucasus, and many Persians became unwilling to serve as Axis agents.¹⁴²

By contrast, an article published in the *Daily Telegraph* of 21 July 1942 provides a general description of how German covert agents were apparently being trained according to a comprehensive, uniform system coordinated by Hitler's headquarters and "synchronized with military movements." The propagandistic article details the recruitment and training of operatives as follows:

To be accepted as candidates [agents] must have a high standard of fitness, a clean political record, and the ability to speak the language of the country where they are to operate without the slightest accent.

[During his] long training course ... [the trainee] is instructed by old experts ... the Oriental course by Dr Hans Grobba, former German minister to Baghdad ...

For the second stage of his training the candidate is posted to the Intelligence Corps and subsequently to the Pioneer troops, where he is instructed in sabotage methods and destruction, microphotography, coding, and in the transmission of information, from radio to the treatment of carrier pigeons and making invisible ink.

Then he goes to a naval or air group for map reading and drawing, parachuting and landing from a U-boat.

He must learn to land by parachute carrying sensitive instruments and photographic apparatus without damaging them. He must be able to launch a rubber dinghy and he must be capable of reaching a given destination by compass.¹⁴³

In reality, the training given to designated covert operatives preparing for active service in the Persian theatre was anything but standardized or uniform. It varied widely, depending on such factors as service branch (e.g. Abwehr I, Abwehr II, or SD), military or civilian background, primary covert role (e.g. political agent, W/T operator, or saboteur), ethnic origin (e.g. German or non-German, including linguistic expertise), type of insertion (e.g. parachute drop or land entry), priority of operation (e.g. urgent, long-term, or postponed), available training facilities (e.g. Quenz, Meseritz, Oranienburg, or the Havel-Institut), and stage in the war (e.g. pre-BARBAROSSA, post-Stalingrad, etc).

This explodes yet another popular myth about German military planners and trainers, namely that they prepared their men for action according to an established system of precepts and norms based on sound pedagogical theory, continually ameliorated by the meticulous logging of operational successes and failures, which would at all times override such

142. Even higher-grade agents, like Schulze-Holthus, Mayr, and Gamotha, were originally trained as Russia experts; only at the last minute were they hastily and inadequately retrained as "orientalists."

143. From the Press Section, 21 July 1942, f 164a, KV 3/87, TNA. The article originally appeared in the London-based German newspaper *Die Zeitung*. The "Intelligence Corps" presumably means the Abwehr; the "Pioneer troops," the Brandenburgers.

considerations as the personalities of those giving and receiving training. In fact, there was no such body of theory, and there appears to have been a complete lack of the ability to learn from one's operational mistakes, as is evidenced, for example, by the continued issuing of counterfeit currency to covert operatives despite past blunders in that regard.¹⁴⁴ The approach to training, therefore, was essentially pragmatic, improvisational, and haphazard; it seems to have become even more so, as the war progressed, Nazi fortunes ceased to prosper, and German resources were ever more stretched to the limit (e.g. the chronic shortage of large long-range aircraft [Focke-Wulf Fw 200 (Condor) and Junkers Ju 290] capable of return flights to Persia).¹⁴⁵ The fact that some operatives themselves complained of poor operational planning and of their being ill-trained for the tasks that they faced in theatre is indicative that all was not well, at least in the area of Persian operations.

It should not be surprising that such problems existed, for the senior staff of the Abwehr responsible for planning and training were themselves often poorly qualified for the organizational work they had to do. Take linguistic expertise, for example. At headquarters level, there was a significant lack of linguists of all kinds, including specialized interpreters and translators. Not one of the senior officers of Abwehr II, for example, had ever been in any of the Near Eastern countries. At least one conference attended by the various branch heads—Hans Piekenbrock (Abwehr I—Espionage), Erwin Lahousen (Abwehr II—Sabotage), and Franz-Eccard von Bentivegni (Abwehr III—Counterespionage)—and Rashid Ali Gailani, the ousted Iraqi leader, had to be abandoned because there was no means of communication between the parties present. The three German colonels spoke no Arabic, Gailani no German, and no one had even thought of arranging for an interpreter.¹⁴⁶

One thing is clear, however: whatever problems the Abwehr may have faced when preparing for so-called *Ferneinsätze* (long-range operations), the challenges faced by the SD were significantly greater. Until the appearance of Otto Skorzeny in 1943, it was impossible for the SD to match the quality of agent training and recruitment found in Abwehr II because they did not have in place a special-forces contingent like the Brandenburgers, which served the Abwehr II planners as a wide and deep reservoir of talent—already screened, selected, and at least partially trained to carry out covert missions anywhere in the world and to train others:

144. For more about elementary mistakes, often fatal, made by the Abwehr and the SD in equipping their agents, see Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 281-284.

145. See pp. 61-62, 68, 183.

146. GIS activity in the Near East, 27 July 1945, f 76a, KV 3/89, TNA. Cf. Michael Handel: "The Germans were reluctant to entrust positions of military responsibility in intelligence to men who, in civilian life, had acquired a knowledge of a foreign country or language but otherwise had no military background." Michael I. Handel, "Intelligence and Military Operations," *Intelligence and National Security* 5, no. 2 (April 1990): 23.

What sort of men did this new force require, and where did they come from? The first precondition was that they should be volunteers, then versatility, quick reactions, the gift of improvisation, a high degree of individual initiative ... coupled with a strong team spirit; and besides these things, an albeit restrained sense of adventure, tact when dealing with foreigners, and of course physical stamina. Other priority requirements were a high level of linguistic expertise and cultural awareness to such a degree that a man could pass himself off as a British officer or a Soviet soldier. ... Ultimately, the men should have a solid military training and should know how to remove or plant explosive charges (in order to protect or destroy installations).¹⁴⁷

This pool of pretrained candidates for covert operations had been recruited by Abwehr II largely from Germans who lived in border regions on which Hans-Otto Wagner was an expert, ethnic enclaves outside Germany, and generally overseas. Initially, Sudeten Germans and Upper Silesians formed the core of the Brandenburgers. They were subsequently joined by Germans from the Baltic, the Balkans, South Tyrol, Palestine, South-West Africa, and other countries (including the Arab nations and Persia). They were originally led by older reserve officers, some with First World War and Free Corps experience. Unlike younger active-duty officers, these older men had usually served overseas or had academic backgrounds as orientalists, ethnologists, Eastern European linguists, Indologists, etc.¹⁴⁸ Most importantly, from 1939 onwards these special forces were able to gain hands-on experience through deployment as small teams in tactical commando operations¹⁴⁹ as far afield as the Arctic Circle (Finland) and Iraq (assuming that certain heroic narratives depicting Brandenburgers aiding Rashid Ali's forces in 1941 are true). In late 1941, they came closer than any other German unit to entering Asia through Transcaucasia.¹⁵⁰

The SS, on the other hand, had no choice but to recruit their personnel for covert operations mainly from the Waffen-SS; in other words, they selected "racially pure" young soldiers with plenty of ideological zeal and conventional infantry or signals experience, but seldom any of the specialized qualifications and know-how of the Brandenburgers or seasoned V-men at the disposal of Abwehr II. It was not until July 1942 that the RSHA took its first significant step into the arena of commando-style covert warfare by forming, on Himmler's orders, a section to deal with sabotage and political subversion known as Unternehmen OTTO (or OTTOLAGEN), which was subsumed under VI F. In August 1942, to train operatives for

147. Dietrich F. Witzel, "Kommandoverbände der Abwehr II im Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Militär-geschichtliches Beiheft zur Europäischen Wehrkunde*, no. 5 (October 1990): 6-7.

148. Ibid.

149. *Ferneinsätze* (long-range operations).

150. 4. Fallschirmjägerkompanie (4 Parachute Company [FSchJgKp]). These were the airborne Brandenburgers, who would probably have been used to execute Operation ABADAN, together with Sonderverband Felmy. See pp. 130-131.

special clandestine operations overseas, the SS established a special training company called the SS Sonderlehrgang at Block 43 of the SS barracks within the perimeter of Sachsenhausen (Oranienburg) Concentration Camp, north of Berlin. Approximately 120 trainees were drawn from various SS depots throughout Germany. The majority were NCOs with active-service experience in the Waffen-SS, mostly on the Russian front. Although most if not all of the men, including even the permanent staff, realized that the tasks which they would have to perform would be of a special nature, they had no idea what this might entail. Two of the staff directly in charge of the three training platoons, SS Second Lieutenant Otto Schwerdt and SS Staff Sergeant Günther Blume were subsequently designated to lead operations (BERTA and FRANZ respectively) against Persia. The special training company were given W/T, infantry, small-arms (including British weapons), and sapper training. They also attended daily one-hour English classes. The members of the FRANZ expedition, who trained at Oranienburg between August 1942 and mid-February 1943, stated that the training they received was unexceptional and could be considered normal infantry training. Shortly before their departure for Persia, FRANZ and ANTON mission members (together with the two Abwehr members of Operation FRANZ, Karl Korel and Ernst Köndgen) were transferred from Oranienburg to the Havel-Institut at Berlin-Wannsee for advanced W/T training and were then deployed on signals training exercises to other parts of Germany, Poland, and France, where they attempted to simulate long-range transmissions from Persia.¹⁵¹

By August 1943, Himmler had become dissatisfied with the performance of VI F and the Oranienburg unit and disbanded it, forming in its place VI S under Otto Skorzeny, who appointed mostly his own officers and from then on controlled all SD special-forces and agent training, with a strong emphasis on sabotage. Despite his relatively junior rank, Skorzeny rapidly rose to a position of power and influence within the SS (and at Führer HQ) after liberating Mussolini in late-August 1943 in a daring and heroic commando raid on an Alpine mountaintop. This operation was highly propagandized in the German media at a time when the nation was becoming demoralized as its fortunes on the battlefields were being reversed. Equally quickly, Skorzeny gained a reputation among those with whom he worked and dealt, especially within the SD, for odious behaviour. The records describe him variously as bad-tempered, impatient, ruthlessly ambitious, jealous, vengeful, and arrogant. He is also said to have been “full of

151. SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f 79b, KV 2/1479, TNA; A Note on the Sicherheitsdienst, 9 December 1943, f 79c, KV 2/1479, TNA.

extravagant ideas but lacked the intelligence to work out the practical plans for their execution,” leaving much of the detailed work to his able adjutant, Karl Radl.¹⁵²

Skorzeny’s training establishments, together with all recruitment measures, were administered by VI S 3, based first at Berlin-Berkaerstrasse and from May 1944 onwards at Schloss Friedenthal, near Oranienburg, on the northern outskirts of Berlin. When the RSHA was evacuated from Berlin in January 1945, Skorzeny moved his headquarters to Hof in Bavaria, together with the main training school, where it was ultimately dissolved after only eighteen months of existence. The main school at Friedenthal, a so-called *A-Schule*, is where most agents for SD covert operations in such countries as Persia were trained—in sabotage methods, demolitions, signals, and weapons. The training methods were determined by VI S 3, which received individual progress reports on each trainee after completion of each course to determine his/her future attachment and deployment. Training was given to both sexes and many nationalities; a section of the camp was devoted to W/T training for females only. Besides Friedenthal itself, there were satellite schools at nearby Oranienburg and Sachsenhausen, adjacent to the notorious concentration camp. Friedenthal was also used as an assembly point for agents awaiting overseas deployment.¹⁵³

When Otto Skorzeny burst upon the SD training scene early in 1943, he brought with him a range of innovative ideas about how to train men for covert missions overseas. They were “to receive the most comprehensive training possible to enable them to be used at any point and for any purpose.”¹⁵⁴ Significantly for potential sabotage operations against Persian railway and port infrastructure, “the syllabus even included the driving of railway engines and the handling of motor-boats.”¹⁵⁵ There was also parachute training, language training, and instruction on technical targets. Unlike those around him, especially the perhaps less imaginative—or less motivated—Abwehr planners, Skorzeny purposefully sought out information in interrogation reports about British training and instruction methods, because he realized that the immense

152. Liquidation Report No. 13, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI S, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 November 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

153. *Ibid.* Other VI S 3 training schools were located at Neustrelitz, The Hague, Deventer, Badenweiler, Heinrichsburg, Bad Toelz, and Berlin-Lichterfelde (for German personnel only). At one point, VI C were asked to send agents to the Netherlands for W/T and sabotage training; trainees there were of many nationalities and are known to have included a number of Arabs. It is not known how many agents VI C actually sent there rather than to Friedenthal.

154. Skorzeny, *Special Missions*, 32. Apart from Skorzeny, no one else in the SD leadership seems to have recognized that there was anything wrong with the existing ways in which men were selected and prepared for overseas missions. Nowhere in the archival records could I find it raised as an issue. The same goes for the Abwehr. The operatives themselves, however, told a different story. Under interrogation, most of them revealed just how casual their recruitment had been and how superficial their preparation.

155. *Ibid.*

scale and intense level of covert activity on the part of the Allied clandestine services had endowed them with invaluable empirical knowledge which they did not hesitate to build into their training measures. If the Allies could learn from their mistakes, then Skorzeny and the SD could too.¹⁵⁶

No doubt, the agent training provided by VI S 3 to members of Skorzeny's commando units and certain individuals selected for special operations was more thorough, systematic, and superior to that provided to regular Abwehr agents and to SD agents trained by VI F before Skorzeny's time. However, Skorzeny's commando training unit¹⁵⁷ was not formed until August 1943, and his training school at Schloss Friedenthal, near Oranienburg north of Berlin, did not formally open its doors until May 1944.¹⁵⁸ By that time, while Abwehr training had become fully merged with that of the SD, Persia had become a low-priority target for clandestine operations, and few agents, if any, were being prepared for service in the Persian theatre.

The only units we know to have been trained by VI F were the FRANZ group, which parachuted into Persia near Qum on 22 March 1943, and the ANTON group, which dropped into Qashgai territory on 17 June 1943.¹⁵⁹ The former we know to have been no match for British security intelligence and to have achieved none of its major objectives besides the delivery of one W/T transmitter. The latter, while remaining relatively elusive for eight months, achieved no objectives and positively seethed with indiscipline and interpersonal strife. Clearly, one is tempted to speculate about how these groups might have benefited from the Skorzeny curriculum, had it been available to them.

When in 1943 the SD entered the arena of long-range covert operations in Persia, they appear to have acknowledged only one priority: sabotage. Yet the technical sabotage training they afforded their saboteurs was negligible. Günther Blume, for instance, who was tasked only to organize (i.e. not to carry out personally) sabotage attacks against bridges on the Trans-Iranian Railway as part of Operation FRANZ/DORA, was trained at Berlin-Grünwald for a mere two weeks before being sent to Persia.¹⁶⁰ The choice of targets was limited strictly to bridges; all other potential forms of sabotage, such as attacks on railway lines, tunnels, pipelines, industrial plants, and miscellaneous small sabotage, were ruled out for one reason or another. Tunnels, for

156. *Ibid.*, 32-36.

157. SS-Sonderlehrgang zbV Friedenthal (SS Special Purposes Training Unit Friedenthal).

158. Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI S, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 November 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

159. According to the leader of Abwehr II's Operation MAMMUT, an unnamed SD operation was planned in 1943 for Kurdistan. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

160. At the time, no sabotage training was available at Oranienburg. Haylor to Kellar, Blume—Sabotage Instruction, 31 March 1944, f 24a, KV 2/1483, TNA.

instance, were rejected for three reasons: (1) too much explosive would be required; (2) drilling would be necessary, and Blume had no drills; and (3) derauling trains in tunnels might cause a temporary obstruction, but tunnels can be cleared more quickly than bridges can be rebuilt. Such targets were only discussed theoretically at Grünewald; no practical instruction was given. There were no field trips to similar bridge sites in Germany, demonstrations were only carried out against a two-foot wall, and a few British hand-grenades were thrown, to what purpose one cannot fathom. The instructors at Grünewald, who had previously served in Waffen-SS engineering battalions in Russia, laying mines and building bridges, had neither sabotage experience nor any knowledge of chemistry; consequently, no laboratory instruction was given in the preparation of explosives. Finally, Blume received no approach-to-target training at all; left to his own initiative, the only approach he seems to have been able to devise was a frontal assault with 100 mounted Bakhtiari tribesmen, the tactical appropriateness of which is highly questionable. Gaining the cooperation of the tribal leaders might anyway have proven beyond Blume's ability, for he was clearly a simple soldier, not a silver-tongued diplomat, and had no knowledge of how to negotiate with Persians. Also, no mention was ever made during his training of Allied countermeasures and responses, and how to deal with them. Consequently, Blume was initially forced to eliminate all but unguarded bridges from his list of targets, until he came up with the idea of attacking in force.¹⁶¹ Blume's technically formidable targets were probably entirely beyond his competence; had he ever been unleashed upon them, without blowing himself up first, it is doubtful whether he could have inflicted any significant damage.

However, the profiles of the ANTON group members suggest that no level or quality of technical training can offset the paramount importance of selecting *suitable* personnel *before they are trained*. SS Captain Martin Kurmis was evidently chosen hastily and at the last minute to lead the ANTON group from among office staff at Amt VI after having been approved as suitable for service in Persia. He was soon forced to forfeit his command to the more assertive, experienced, and mature staybehind agent who challenged and outranked him, Air Force Major Berthold Schulze-Holthus. Schulze-Holthus, almost twenty years older than Kurmis, was adamant in his view that the younger man was not a suitable choice as leader of any covert operation. Nevertheless, in a report on Kurmis's suitability for "colonial service" dated 29 August 1940, Kurmis's commanding officer with the Tilsit SD detachment had evaluated him as "totally in possession of the necessary characteristics for colonial service," while specifically

161. Report on sabotage interrogation of Günther Blume by Lt J. S. Crompton at Cairo on 24 November 1943, f 9a, KV 2/1483, TNA.

lauding Kurmis's ability "to handle people of any age or nationality in an appropriate manner."¹⁶² Yet Kurmis, whose mental state gradually but relentlessly deteriorated throughout Operation ANTON, especially when subjected to the stress of close confinement while in tribal captivity, culminating in his second-attempt suicide soon after his arrest by the British, exhibited none of the qualities enumerated by his former CO, such as intelligence, versatility, energy, and endurance. Indeed, as Schulze-Holthus pointed out when subsequently interrogated, Kurmis was "fanatical, unstable, and bad-tempered."¹⁶³ He was "the last type of man to send to tribal country and, from the very first, he set up bad feeling between the ANTON group and their hosts."¹⁶⁴ From the beginning, Kurmis had managed not only to antagonize the tribesmen, but to quarrel with his Abwehr interpreter,¹⁶⁵ who could have helped him greatly to cultivate local contacts, and to refuse any advice from Schulze-Holthus himself.¹⁶⁶

The other members of the ANTON group were two young Waffen-SS W/T operators, both corporals: Kurt Piwonka, 22, and Kurt Harbers, 19,¹⁶⁷ who under interrogation lied about being members of the SS, claiming to be infantry signallers in the service of the Abwehr, which is the pretence they maintained even with Schulze-Holthus—one wonders how they could possibly have got away with their fiction under the vigilant gaze of such a wily character.¹⁶⁸ Piwonka was already married and from Vienna; he appears to have adopted an urbane cynicism and veil of sophistication which belied his young age. Harbers, on the other hand, was youthful in the extreme. However, unlike Piwonka (who had also served in Russia and been wounded three times) but like so many SS youths, Harbers had been emotionally damaged by "horrors" experienced while serving on the Russian front. Piwonka appears to have been chosen originally to command the group, for which the SD would no doubt have made him an officer; both the Abwehr and the SD were in the habit of promoting agents before sending them on overseas missions, partly to enhance their status in the eyes of indigenous populations. When Martin Kurmis was, at the last minute, given command of Operation ANTON, a potential conflict between him and the resentful Piwonka was instantly set up. Tensions were heightened by the

162. Der Führer des SD-Abschnitts Tilsit, 29 August 1940, R 58/ZR642/A17, BA.

163. The Schulze Case, 20 July 1944, f 67a, KV 2/1486, TNA.

164. See CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA. Also in f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

165. Even before the expedition had left Crimea, Kurmis had apparently already threatened to shoot Homayoun Farzad, the interpreter. *Ibid.*

166. The Schulze Case, 20 July 1944, f 67a, KV 2/1486, TNA.

167. Harbers was originally recruited for the FRANZ mission and underwent training with that group. See *inter alia* CICI Persia Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

168. For more about their subterfuge, see pp. 152-154.

excessive drinking that everyone except the Muslim Farzad indulged in; according to Farzad, the SS men did not handle alcohol well.

We know from statements by Schulze-Holthus that Harbers and Piwonka were efficient W/T operators and technicians but otherwise received no special training at all for their mission, not even parachute training. Farzad, the group's interpreter, also jumped without any training; as a result, he broke a rib when his parachute opened and, reacting instinctively to the unexpected pain, nearly unbuckled his harness in midair. Piwonka sprained an ankle, and Harbers was badly bruised. Berlin's policy of sending such inexperienced youths to Persia (Harbers had never been to a foreign country in his life except the Russian front) was as much opposed to Schulze-Holthus's views as to those of the Qashgai Brothers and Franz Mayr.¹⁶⁹

The FRANZ group also suffered in part from a poor choice of leader, but for reasons more closely related to inadequate training than personal unsuitability. SS Second Lieutenant Günther Blume was described by his interrogators as "a good North German type," with a sense of humour and not entirely blinded by SS and Nazi propaganda.¹⁷⁰ However, he had received no special-operations training at all at Oranienburg and, as has already been mentioned, only two week's special training in sabotage at Amt VI headquarters in Berlin-Grünewald.¹⁷¹ It seems that the *real* saboteur, an unquestionably suitable leader and a friend of Blume's, SS Second Lieutenant Otto Schwerdt, a tough, highly decorated Waffen-SS veteran of the Eastern Front, was being withheld in Germany, so that he could command a second, follow-up mission to Persia (Operation BERTA), which was eventually cancelled when news of the capture of the FRANZ group reached Berlin.¹⁷² Indeed, since Blume suspected that the British had mined many strategic assets in preparation for the expected German invasion in 1942, and since he doubted the adequacy of his training, it is very unlikely that he would ever have attempted a sabotage attack. In fact, Blume was saved from his predicament by his superior in Tehran, Franz Mayr,

169. Spencer to Kellar, 29 May 1944, f 58a, KV 2/1469, TNA; CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA, also in f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA. Regarding the Qashgai Brothers, see p. 91n134.

170. Appendix A, CICI Persia Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Also in f 64ab, KV 2/1478, TNA.

171. See pp. 77, 99-100, 102, 133, 137. Interrogation of Günther Blume, 8 September 1943, f 1a, KV 2/1483, TNA. Blume claimed that he had received "a very sketchy ... training. His party arrived towards the end of the course which ... normally lasts four weeks. He himself only had from five to ten hours instruction." SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f 79, KV 2/1479, TNA.

172. Described by Berlin as "a thorough-going soldier and an exceptionally well-trained sabotage expert," Schwerdt never reached Persia but soon distinguished himself as one of Skorzeny's daring airborne commando raiders who rescued the fallen dictator Benito Mussolini from Italy on 12 September 1943. Mayr, Franz @7031, cover name RABBI'I, f 64c, KV 2/1478, TNA.

who did not feel the time was politically right for sabotage operations, and who therefore arbitrarily ruled out any such action.¹⁷³

In fact, it was none other than Mayr who told his British interrogators that, in his opinion, the Abwehr possessed better material [i.e. personnel] than the SD. Abwehr men were better trained and their selection for any particular mission was more carefully carried out. The majority of the SD men trained at Oranienburg had already proved their worth in battle and were considered trusted SS men, but they did not necessarily possess the characteristics that made a good secret agent. Interestingly, Mayr's interrogators responded with their own perceptions of the relative strengths of the SD and the Abwehr personnel on the FRANZ mission. They found the two Abwehr members to be the most suitable men of the party, better types for this particular operation than any of the SD members.¹⁷⁴

The interrogators described the senior NCO of the FRANZ group, SS Staff Sergeant Hans Holzapfel, aged 29, as a "very poor type." Until he obtained a job as a W/T operator at SS headquarters in Düsseldorf, he had drifted from butchering to casual labouring and back again. As a wireless technician he seems to have been utterly incompetent: he was never able to make contact with Berlin, and he never once ciphered a message correctly in spite of frequent demonstrations by others. The interrogators took this as a clear indication of Holzapfel's lack of intelligence. Meanwhile, crippled by his traumatic experiences serving with the Waffen-SS in Russia, SS Corporal Georg Grille (HASSAN), aged only 19, suffered already from rheumatism and heart palpitations, and appears to have been brainwashed with SS ideology to the point of robotism. Described as a "naive boy," the fourth SS member of the group, SS Corporal Werner Rockstroh (KARIM), also aged 19, had never been outside Germany before and had never seen active service. "He loves the life of a soldier and the idea of comradeship and discipline as no doubt depicted in books and life in a home station."¹⁷⁵ Clearly the most intelligent and literate of the SS men, Rockstroh kept a personal diary during the mission until the group set off from Siah Kuh for Tehran—where their troubles began. This journal reveals Rockstroh's boundless, youthful enthusiasm and zest for living, which is quite touching; it also provides a rare, occasionally tense narrative of a clandestine German airborne operation in the *terra incognita* of central Persia, allowing us a unique insight into the challenges the soldiers faced and the

173. Interrogation of Günther Blume, 8 September 1943, f 1a, KV 2/1483, TNA.

174. SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f 79, KV 2/1479, TNA.

175. Appendix A, CICI Persia Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Also in f 64ab, KV 2/1478, TNA.

interpersonal dynamics of the group.¹⁷⁶ It seems, however, that Rockstroh's lack of restraint and good judgement was subsequently called into question: when the group reached Tehran, he abused Persian hospitality—an unforgivable error—by attempting to seduce the wife of his host. Mayr, the senior officer, appears to have tried to get Rockstroh out of town by assigning him to espionage duties in northern Persia. However, with British security everywhere and the dragnet closing in on the group, Mayr instead decided to keep Rockstroh under close control and surveillance by moving the youngster into his own home.

Contrasted with these relatively unsuitable and unstable individuals were Abwehr corporals Ernst Köndgen (W/T operator [ABDULLAH]) and Karl Korel (interpreter [SHUKRULLAH]), low in rank but infinitely better trained and more suitable for overseas covert operations than the boys from the Waffen-SS. Arguably the most talented leader, Korel died of typhus shortly after landing in Persia; although the group did everything they could for him, including finding him a doctor, they lacked the proper medicines to cure him. What little we know of Korel's personality must be pieced together from Berthold Schulze-Holthus's memoir,¹⁷⁷ Franz Mayr's memory, and Werner Rockstroh's diary. It seems that Korel and Köndgen had originally been carefully selected by Hans-Otto Wagner and trained to drop into Persia as a two-man Abwehr support team (IRA) for Mayr, but the SD became jealous and possessive (Mayr was an SD officer, after all), insisting on a joint, much larger sabotage operation by four Waffen-SS soldiers, in addition to the two Abwehr agents. When he discovered from Korel the high-handedness of the SD in this matter, Mayr was furious.¹⁷⁸

Korel was a 38 year-old Sudeten German: an experienced Abwehr agent who had worked for Ferrostahl in Persia, had met both Berthold Schulze-Holthus and Franz Mayr before the Allied invasion, and “knew the country backwards.” As one might expect from an Abwehr linguist, Korel's skills were impressive: he could speak, read, and write Farsi, and had a speaking knowledge of Yiddish, Arabic, and several Caucasian languages. Before being discovered and recruited by the Abwehr, Korel was an interpreter at the German Foreign Office. It was Korel who saved the mission by finding the radio set that was dropped off-zone, and it was Korel who took only two days to locate Mayr amidst a population of 800,000 people in

176. See Appendix A2.

177. “A thin young man in a blue cheviot tweed. ... Beneath the worn jacket of the tutor, the clerk, and the schoolmaster, beat a warm heart ready to understand the whole world.” Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 22-25. Mayr, who thought Korel was probably a Sudeten German, said he was older than the others, probably in his forties, and could pass as a Persian. Summary of information: The arrest of Franz Mayr, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA. For Rockstroh's observations, see Appendix A2.

178. Mayr was also angry because the SD had changed the original Abwehr code name for the expedition (BERTA) to FRANZ, which, he felt, was an insecure name, being his own first name. See Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA.

Tehran. Mayr himself had a very high regard for Korel's qualities. Had he not contracted typhoid fever, he might have single-handedly altered the outcome of the entire mission.¹⁷⁹ While studying to be an architect, Korel's companion Köndgen, aged 22, had originally joined the Luftwaffe with hopes of becoming an inflight radio operator; instead, he was sent to Russia on a D/F mission. The interrogators described him as "more intelligent than first impressions would convey" and, not without a touch of irony, "inclined to take advantage of any relaxation of discipline or privileges allowed him by an interrogator."¹⁸⁰

It is clear then from an examination of the personalities associated with the ANTON and FRANZ expeditions that, at an individual level, inadequate training and unsuitability for covert work placed SD personnel in Persia at a great disadvantage when compared with the better trained and more carefully selected agents of the Abwehr. Collectively, the men despatched by Amt VI were essentially SS soldiers with military or police backgrounds; they were neither trained nor experienced as clandestine agents. Even SD officers like the staybehind agents Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha, who—unwittingly perhaps—embarked in Persia upon lengthy professional careers in the secret world, extending even into the Cold War period, arrived in Gilan in 1940 virtually untrained and were forced to improvise every move they made. Contrast them with their experienced Abwehr counterpart, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, a canny lawyer, a Russian affairs expert, a trained translator and interrogator, and a seasoned intelligencer; in short, a very bright, resourceful professional, accustomed to leadership and not tolerant of fools, who adapted swiftly to his staybehind role and performed it with a considerable amount of imaginative improvisation and diplomatic skill. However, the unsuitability of Schulze-Holthus for the covert role ultimately thrust upon him in Persia after the Allied invasion consisted in the fact that he was a trained military intelligence officer: neither an agent of subversion nor a saboteur. His expertise was limited to Soviet air-force intelligence and espionage against the Soviet Union, together with the requisite linguistic skills. He had originally been inserted in order to conduct and coordinate regular active espionage operations against Soviet forces in southern Russia and Transcaucasia within the framework of an established Abwehr outstation (KOI) in northwestern Persia, not to extemporize as tactical and legal adviser to a southern tribal chieftain (Nasir Khan). Fortunately for Schulze-Holthus, having been an infantryman and ordnance officer in the First World War and a successful lawyer between the wars, he was able to make himself useful to the Qashgai *il Khan* (supreme leader), who needed a military man with

179 Ibid.

180. Appendix A, CICI Persia Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Also in f 64ab, KV 2/1478, TNA.

a knowledge of legal procedures and negotiations to deal with claims lodged by his tribal subjects and neighbouring tribes more urgently than he needed gold and guns from Berlin.¹⁸¹

One operation in particular can be studied as a model of Abwehr planning, recruitment, and training at its most thorough: Operation MAMMUT, an Abwehr II espionage/sabotage/subversion operation involving the cooperation of Fremde Heere Ost (Foreign Armies East [FHO]) and to a lesser extent Abwehr I, but in which the SD played no part.¹⁸² Fortunately, the captured expedition leader, Gottfried Müller (PANTHER) of Abwehr II, was extremely forthcoming under interrogation and has provided us with an exceptionally detailed record of his operation from the initial planning stage until its untimely end.¹⁸³ Great care was taken from the start to recruit suitable personnel for all phases of MAMMUT. All were required to meet the following criteria: linguistic ability (Persian, Kurdish, and Arabic); geographical and cultural knowledge (including awareness of Kurdish tribal areas and customs); desert navigation skills; expertise in such fields as oilfield and refinery technology, medicine, agriculture, and engineering. Regular recruiting sources for the Abwehr appear to have been the Dolmetscherlehrabteilung (Interpreters' Training Unit [Berlin]), the Dolmetscherkompanie (Interpreters' Company [Meissen, Hamburg, and Vienna]), and the Brandenburgers' special-operations training camp at Meseritz, where non-Germans, especially orientals, were trained by Wehrmacht personnel—mostly Brandenburgers—for ventures in Africa, the Middle East, and Russia. When Müller first approached the Abwehr with his preliminary proposal in December 1942, he asked Hans-Otto Wagner whom he should approach in order to recruit personnel for his operation and was cautioned by Wagner, who always maintained close liaison with Meseritz, that the Brandenburgers would probably withhold their members for operations of their own. Nevertheless, by the end of April 1943, Müller had succeeded in recruiting ten men whom he considered sufficiently qualified to participate in the first and second phases of the mission: five (Fritz Hoffmann [MAKI], Georg Konieczny [UHU], Herbert Schmidt [LÖWE], Rudolf Keleita [ZEBRA], and the experienced Otto Grüning, who transferred one month later to the SD) he found at the Interpreters' Training Unit, including four Farsi linguists and an Arabic linguist; one

181. The relationship between suitability for assigned roles (e.g. with parachutists) and adaptability to assumed roles (e.g. with staybehinds) is further dealt with on pp. 286-287.

182. Other than a sinister one, that is, for Müller became convinced that his group had been deliberately dropped off-zone and quickly captured because his mission had been sabotaged by rivals—presumably the SD (who else?). For operational details, see pp. 142-150, 181-187.

183. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Operation MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. So “textbook” was the planning that the rare luxury of crossreferencing can be indulged in too, for the German military archives have preserved a surviving, informative file on MAMMUT, which appears to have been used as an operational training manual for the Lehrregiment Kurfürst: RW 5/271, BA-MA.

(Staff Sergeant Dr Vorndran, who later transferred to the SD) he found at the Interpreters' Company in Meissen; and for three, including his younger brother (Hans [Johannes] Müller [SEEHUND], Dr Karl-Heinz Oehler [MARABU], and Karl Schmidt [WIESEL]), Müller arranged transfers from various Wehrmacht units in Germany, Greece, and Russia. While almost all had received basic military training and had since attained various levels of proficiency in their service roles, the range of prewar occupational skills they had to offer was impressive, broadly covering such diverse fields as business, medicine, engineering, and of course foreign languages.¹⁸⁴

Despite the efforts to recruit only the most suitable mission personnel, the Abwehr clearly had difficulty locating a Kurd with local and regional expertise. The eleventh man, who did not join the MAMMUT group (then training in Carinthia) until 28 April 1943, thus missing most of the training programme, including the parachute jump, was crucial to the success of the mission: the Kurdish V-Mann Rashid Ramzi (BÄR). The reason for his late arrival was that, despite repeated efforts by Hans-Otto Wagner and Werner Eisenberg of Abwehr II, and Paul Leverkuehn at KONO in Turkey, it had proven difficult to find a suitable Kurd to accompany the mission, not merely as an interpreter but also as a reliable adviser, guide, and contact man able to liaise effectively with Sheikh Mahmoud and other tribal leaders. To be successfully embedded, such a man had to be pro-German and a Kurdish nationalist with considerable political savvy. Even when eventually found by Leverkuehn, Ramzi came with a *caveat*. His motivation was thought to be questionable, so Müller subjected him to a series of interviews during which he was bombarded with questions (in Farsi) by Hoffman and Konieczny and (in English) by Müller. Only when Müller deceived Ramzi into believing that the Führer himself had personally authorized the mission to facilitate the creation of an independent Kurdistan, did Ramzi agree to join the mission, albeit reluctantly and unenthusiastically. However, awkward questions lingered about his prior association with a Kurdish activist in Beirut who was thought to be a British agent, a man for whom Ramzi apparently never lost his affection and admiration.¹⁸⁵

Very late in the day, shortly before the group's departure for the Crimea, it was felt that a symbolic initiation to cement Ramzi's tenuous bond with the group might alleviate the concerns of all; therefore, Müller held a flag ceremony to celebrate Ramzi's declaration that he would approach his student friends in Kurdistan and would establish a new Kurdish national party with

184. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Operation MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

185. Ibid. Ramzi studied at the American University in Beirut for three years and was presumably fluent in English. Vortragsnotiz, 26 June 1943, f 20, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

their help. A Kurdish national flag, especially made for the occasion, was hoisted, and the expedition members pledged mutual loyalty and comradeship. Müller and Ramzi made speeches, during the course of which Müller repeated his lie about having received direct orders from the Führer. Müller expressed his appreciation for Ramzi's assistance and collaboration, while Ramzi in his turn vowed loyalty and expressed his gratitude to the Germans. Nevertheless, Müller never entirely trusted Ramzi. He issued strict orders that Ramzi was never to be left alone, either in Berlin or elsewhere; Konieczny and Hoffmann were instructed to escort him everywhere. He was generally kept in ignorance of the preparations for the mission and of the competent German authorities behind it, but this seems not to have bothered him; throughout his time in Germany, Ramzi showed a marked lack of interest in plans and preparations and refused to wear German uniform. According to Müller, his only contributions to the party's efforts were to give advice on the best places to land parachutists and containers and to help Müller's fiancée, Susanne Buttig, sew Kurdish national costumes. Ramzi failed to submit the names of any Kurdish friends or any patriotic Kurds who might have furthered the mission's cause. It was not an auspicious beginning to such a vital relationship and in a sense marked the beginning of the unravelling of Müller's cause.¹⁸⁶

Although Ramzi's subsequent performance after landing in Kurdistan was to prove generally satisfactory to Müller, it certainly appears that he was far from an ideal choice for such a key role.¹⁸⁷ Of course, just how well Ramzi might have acquitted himself and how loyal he might have been had the operation ever moved beyond the insertion phase remains moot. At any rate, his inclusion in the MAMMUT group is some measure of how shallow the regional talent pool was upon which the Abwehr was compelled to draw in the last two years of the war. By 1943, having no foot left in North Africa or the Middle East, with a tangential diplomatic presence only in neutral Turkey, and with a scattered reserve of quarrelsome and generally mediocre Persian expatriates as their sole recruiting reservoir in Germany and occupied Europe, the Abwehr was clearly underresourced, especially when it came to locating as rare a talent as a trustworthy Kurdish nationalist with political stature and linguistic skills.

With the exception of Ramzi, the training given to the extended MAMMUT group (including men selected to participate in the second phase of the operation) was comprehensive and thorough, though noticeably inadequate in the key areas of espionage tradecraft and

186. Ibid. Apparently clothes rationing caused many difficulties with the preparation of costumes.

187. In a postscript to the 1979 online edition of his memoirs, Müller eulogizes Ramzi, who had died "mentally deranged" some ten years previously. However, Müller's opinion of Ramzi was clearly moderated by his sense of responsibility for the fact that Ramzi had suffered a mental breakdown during his captivity. See "Im brennenden Orient (14 Bruderschaft Salem)," *ETIKA/Völkerverständigung*, 5.5.2003, <http://www.etika.com>.

parachute training. In the latter instance, the provision of only one equipment demonstration and one practice jump gives rise to the suspicion that, if the intention of Müller's rivals was, as he later claimed, to sabotage the aerial insertion, then they had perhaps already begun to interfere with it at the training stage.¹⁸⁸ Training included the following areas of emphasis: (1) instruction in the geography, economics, communications, ethnology, dialects, and tribal customs of Kurdistan; (2) discussions of the latest Kurdish news items to illustrate the type of information to be collated and passed on to the Abwehr; (3) instruction in general sabotage and oil sabotage; (4) instruction in W/T, signals, and ciphering; (5) instruction in map reading, celestial navigation, and sextant location; (6) general physical and military training, including parachuting; and (7) instruction in tropical medicine. Training materials included Müller's anecdotal account of his 1936 visit to the region, a War Office report on traffic and communications in Iraq, and Archibald Hamilton's book on the construction of the road named after him and bridges (which were mission sabotage targets) between Rowanduz and the Persian frontier.¹⁸⁹

Apart from instruction in W/T operating and associated ciphering skills, little agent training *per se* (i.e. in military-espionage tradecraft and political-subversion stratagems) was included in Müller's selective curriculum, which did not reflect the transformation of the primary role of the MAMMUT mission from sabotage to active intelligence-gathering and subversion, as defined and required by FHO (Kuebart) and Müller's branch head, Lahousen. Müller appears to have all but ignored their instructions in his reluctance to abandon his original role of saboteur and to have reinterpreted the mission as primarily a *sabotage reconnaissance* operation, shaping the training measures to that end. Consequently, a heavy emphasis was placed on sabotage training, such as the Abwehr routinely provided for its V-men. However, the MAMMUT team completed few of the other agent-training courses normally taken by Quenz trainees, such as self-defence and tradecraft, although they were instructed in the use of secret inks. This may have been because Müller, himself a trained Abwehr intelligence officer with some regional experience (in Turkey), felt that he alone could carry the mission on the strength of his own training without delegating espionage functions to his subordinates. Alternatively, he may have felt that he could give his subordinates more relevant and effective agent training in the field and on the job than could have been supplied by Quenz, especially given the time constraints under which he was operating.

188. With hindsight, Müller certainly thought so. See Müller, *Im brennenden Orient*, 166-167.

189. Archibald Milne Hamilton, *Road through Kurdistan: The Narrative of an Engineer in Iraq* (London: Faber & Faber, 1958). The photograph of a Hamilton bridge in this book was used at Quenz as the model for instructing mission participants in demolition methods. See also p. 122n21.

The events were held at various venues, as shown in Table C-2, which provides an outline of the training programme implemented between December 1942 and June 1943. It can be seen from the table that most training events were held in the Tyrolean and Carinthian Alps, probably because Müller had lived for some time in Austria and was familiar with the areas in question, recognizing that they offered conditions approximating to those found in the Zagros Mountains of Persian and Iraqi Kurdistan. Bodental was a tiny farming community high up in the Caravanche Mountains of southern Austria, near the Slovenian frontier. So remote was this place that the group had to hike for four hours from the nearest railway station to the KdF chalet where they lived and trained.¹⁹⁰ Apparently the men were so exhausted from the rigorous physical training to which Müller subjected them—gymnastics every morning and route marches or mountain climbs every afternoon—that they had great difficulty staying awake during Karl-Heinz Oehler’s celestial navigation lectures, which were usually given outdoors under the night sky. However, according to Müller, “he and every other member of his group were able, at the close of the lectures, to apply their knowledge to any single mathematical problem of location.”¹⁹¹

The one area where pre-mission preparation appears to have been relatively adequate, for both Abwehr and SD operatives, was W/T training, which the SD provided at Oranienburg Concentration Camp Barracks and at the Havel-Institut at Berlin-Wannsee, and the Abwehr at Belzig. Even so, it is necessary to distinguish between *military* W/T training (and experience) and *mission-specific* W/T training. Most if not all those selected for *Ferneinsätze* (long-range operations) in Persia as designated W/T operators had seen service as signallers in the Abwehr or the Waffen-SS. They were therefore already thoroughly trained, experienced, and—with the notable exception of Hans Holzapfel, the ranking W/T operator with the FRANZ mission—highly competent *military* W/T operators and technicians. Consequently, all they required before being deployed on covert operations in Persia was training in how to adapt to and familiarize themselves with *mission-specific* clandestine procedures, codes and ciphers, local transmission/reception conditions, and equipment types they were to operate. Yet the SD squandered the human resources at their disposal, providing superfluous military W/T training to experienced signallers for months and months, when they could have been more effectively and productively trained in other aspects of special operations, such as languages, parachuting,

190. *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy [KdF]) was the recreational organization run by the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front [DAF]).

191. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Operation MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA..

fieldcraft, tradecraft, weapons training, celestial navigation, unarmed combat, physical fitness, etc. By comparison, the thorough mission-specific training provided during the same time period by Abwehr II for Operation MAMMUT participants wasted no time and no resources. Importantly too, Gottfried Müller staged the MAMMUT training events in remote rural locations far from the fleshpots of Berlin—an important consideration when preparing young men for rigorous duty.

For example, the training provided by the SD for members of the FRANZ and ANTON expeditions consisted of a six-month course in the Berlin area, during which no other training was provided. For the first five months, from August 1942 to February/March 1943, military W/T training was provided on army equipment at Oranienburg and was perceived by the participants—trained and experienced Waffen-SS operators—as “not very difficult” and merely a “refresher course.” For the final month of the course, however, the trainees were transferred to the Havel-Institut at Wannsee, where the training became mission-specific, international, and given on SD equipment of the type that would be used in the field. For the final simulation exercise, the trainees dispersed in pairs to East Prussia, Poland, and France to test their skills at transmitting and receiving over long distances.¹⁹² No mention was made to any of the men of sabotage, nor was any sabotage training given. It seems that only the mission commanders were briefed and trained, albeit perfunctorily, in anything other than W/T operation; the men did not even receive any parachute training.¹⁹³

Contrast with this the concentrated, mission-specific W/T training provided by the Abwehr for members of the MAMMUT group, which took place at Berlin-Matthäikirchplatz on 16-28 March 1943 and at Bodental (Carinthia) on 6-15 April and 22 April-7 May 1943, with an additional two-week course for two expedition members at the Brandenburger Signals Company (Berlin-Krumme Lanke) in March 1943. Additionally, the mission leader himself was a fully trained signaller and claimed to be the best W/T operator in the party. He had received thorough training at the Heeresfliegerschule (Army Flying School) and at the W/T school for Abwehr agents at Dornbach, near Vienna. However, the training of the MAMMUT group in codes and

192. Incidentally, it was from this point onwards that the ANTON group members exchanged their SS uniforms for army uniforms, presumably to establish their cover legends as Abwehr men to facilitate contact with Schulze-Holthus. It is unlikely that the FRANZ participants did so, as they were intending to reinforce an SS officer. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485.

193. *Ibid.*

ciphers seems to have been somewhat superficial; the group members did not have sufficient practice at Bodental to leave them with a sound working knowledge of the subject.¹⁹⁴

The disparity between the levels of recruitment and training within the two services, first rivals, then later—after Heydrich’s assassination—merged into one service, is significant because in Persia they attempted to bury their differences and collaborate, without any success. The threat to the Allies in Persia was always present; however, in the view of the British security-intelligence service, the Allies were favoured by the fact that no whole-hearted policy was ever decided upon and carried out faithfully by all the Germans concerned, whether in Persia or in Berlin:

The very attempt at collaboration between the Abwehr and the SD added to the weakness of the German effort, owing to the great divergence of views on what should be done. Furthermore, *the choice of personnel sent out by plane from Germany was not always happy*. If an example is wanted to show how little the Abwehr and SD were really able to cooperate or to trust one another, the ANTON expedition is a perfect one. Kurmis, Harbers, and Piwonka are all now known to have belonged to the SD, but Schulze[-Holthus] was never allowed to know this and only discovered when informed during his interrogation that the others had professed to being members of the rival organization.¹⁹⁵

In summary, the operational planners at Amt VI, including even special-operations “expert” Otto Skorzeny, seem not to have recognized the fact that military training, even of the kind imparted to special forces, is not synonymous with field-agent training or saboteur training. Not only did the Waffen-SS indoctrinate their young soldiers with an ideology that guaranteed a rigid mind-set and a racially-based sense of superiority—a dreadful handicap for any would-be covert agent—but they despatched them from Berlin without any training in intelligence gathering or espionage tradecraft. Even in such quasi-military fields as sabotage and parachuting, their preparation was woefully inadequate. As has been shown in this chapter, the most extensive training given to Abwehr and SD teams designated for Persian operations was in the area of communications (wireless telegraphy) and ciphers. It should be noted that, in this as in every other curricular initiative, training provided by the Abwehr was more thorough than that provided by the SD.

Having now surveyed the complex historical evolution of various branches of the Abwehr and the SD, together with the nexus of problems associated with the German secret

194. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, E20 Training, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

195. Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA. My italics. In his autobiography, however, Schulze-Holthus portrays himself as knowing from the moment of their arrival that the ANTON parachutists were SD, not Abwehr. See Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 246-263.

services at the organizational, operational, and individual levels, and having scrutinized various states of dysfunction and disarray, illustrated by instances of inefficiency and incompetence—in Berlin and in the field—that greatly impaired the chances of German success in the region, it becomes possible to undertake an informed archival investigation of each of the covert initiatives executed or planned against Persia by the Abwehr and the SD between 1941 and 1945, all of which ended in failure.¹⁹⁶ It also becomes possible to examine in realistic terms operational problems associated specifically with the aerial insertion of operatives and the communications problems they experienced.

196. See Table C-1.

4 GERMAN COVERT INITIATIVES

“It is as if the combination of orientalism, rebellion, and sabotage in Lawrence of Arabia had caught the German imagination.”¹

The history of Germany’s wartime interest in Persia may be divided into four phases.² During the first period, which lasted from the outbreak of the war until the end of the French campaign, Germany was no more engaged in Persia than in any other country in which it had political, economic, and cultural interests. Nor, however, was it deterred in any way by the outbreak of war in Europe from continuing to pursue its expansionist policies and interests in Persia along the same lines as before the war. In fact, interest in the orient in general was no doubt stimulated by the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on 24 August 1939, and by the earlier acquisition by the Nazis of the significant Persian assets of the giant Czechoslovakian industrial conglomerate Škoda when they annexed Bohemia and Moravia in 1938.

The second phase, which spanned the period between the fall of France in 1940 and the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Persia in August 1941, was one of generally heightened interest, primarily due to the imminence of BARBAROSSA, although that operation was kept a complete secret from even high-ranking German diplomats, and secondarily due to the Rashid Ali Gailani coup in Iraq.³ During this phase, Air Force Major Berthold Schulze-Holthus (SABA), an agent of Abw I L and Russia expert, worked under diplomatic cover as vice-consul in Tabriz, where he established a number of contacts who would later prove useful to him when he became a fugitive staybehind agent. Schulze-Holthus’s covert mission was to provide intelligence on Transcaucasia and Persia in preparation for an eventual German invasion from the north. His work included, for example, identifying likely locations for German airfields. Meanwhile, geologist Friedrich Kümel was travelling the length and breadth of Persia (ostensibly) gathering

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1. GCCS to “C”, CX/MSS/S21, German Intentions South of Caucasus, 17 September 1942, HW 14/52, TNA.
 2. Much of the information that forms the basis of my analysis of German wartime strategy in this chapter is to be found in the material provided by E. L. Spencer, DSO Persia, in CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. For a comprehensive overview of German covert initiatives that targeted the region, see Table C-1 and Figure D-1; for a useful chronology of key events beginning with the arrival in Persia of Mayr, Gamotha, and Schulze-Holthus, see Appendix E4.
 3. There is an undated note in the German Foreign Office files concerning the existence of a strategic plan for Abwehr activities in the Middle East, probably dating from immediately before the coup (March 1941) and probably authored by Canaris, which has unfortunately not survived. See El-Dessouki, “Hitler,” 97, 167n33. After the failure of the coup, Gailani and Mohammad Amin al-Husayni, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, escaped to (and subsequently from) Tehran, finally making their way separately via Turkey to Berlin, where they both spent the rest of the war. By then, Gailani’s political capital had of course been expended; however, the Mufti remained politically active, attempting to curry favour with Hitler (who treated him with courtesy but with no great enthusiasm for the Arab cause), broadcasting propaganda, and recruiting expatriate Middle Easterners for various ethnic Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS formations. For more about this sidebar to the history of the region, see *inter alia* “Bündnispartner der Achse: Der Mufti in Berlin,” in Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 105-120.

mineralogical data; at some point he was recruited by Schulze-Holthus to do much more than that.⁴

The third phase began in August 1941 and ended with the failure of the German summer offensive (Operation BLAU) in 1942. It was a time when German interest in Persia, however clandestine, became perhaps most obvious to the Allies. Consequently, it elicited from the British in Persia an organized response in the form of a greatly strengthened, Tehran-based security-intelligence force, in the face of possible Russian collapse in the Caucasus and a subsequent invasion of the Middle East by German forces from Transcaucasia. However, neither the speed of the German advance in southern Russia nor the knowledge at the disposal of the German intelligence services seem to have been great enough to give any real direction to Berlin's efforts. True, Persians were actively recruited and trained in Germany for Middle East deployment, but they were never used in force, although they were held in reserve for future operations.⁵ No attempt was made to discover what had already been achieved in terms of recruiting Nazi sympathizers among the Persian population by the staybehind German agents already in the field—Mayr, Gamotha, and Schulze-Holthus—and to coordinate future covert initiatives with them.

The British security-intelligence staff in Tehran could only conclude that:

... although the SD had taken the trouble of getting Mayr and Gamotha out to Persia, and although war with Russia had broken out, Berlin was so confident of victory farther west that it did not see any reason for organizing espionage, sabotage, or a fifth column in Persia. In this case it must have been completely misinformed about the nature of Anglo-Russian relations and the strategical importance of Persia.⁶

When the imagined collapse never came but was supplanted by the Russian victory at Stalingrad early in 1943 and the German retreat from the Caucasus—which would ultimately end in Berlin—the fourth and last phase of German interest in Persia began. By now, however, while undoubtedly heightened, the intentions of the German intelligence services had become very different from those espoused in the three earlier periods. Expedient sabotage of the Trans-Iranian Railway (TIR) and interference with Lend-Lease supplies to the Soviet Union had effectively replaced such earlier priorities as political subversion and preparation for invasion and occupation.

4. See pp. 227-228. For additional details, see Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 128, 135-137. Schulze-Holthus is compared with Wassmuss in "Wassmuss und sein Nachfolger: Die Freundschaft südpersischer Nomaden für einen deutschen Geheimagenten," 13 December 1952, MSG 120/49, BA-MA.

5. Most only received basic infantry training with the Brandenburgers, never progressing to advanced agent training. For further details, see pp. 90-91.

6. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

An interesting exchange of letters between staff officers in Cairo and Tehran in the summer of 1943 indicates that the British were fully aware of the change of emphasis: “As the war progresses into Europe, it is likely that the Germans will be taking progressively less interest in information from Persia,” wrote Colonel Dudley Clarke at GHQ MEF to Brigadier J. W. “Jim” Kenny at GHQ PAIFORCE. “It seems to me that their interest in PAIFORCE is far more in the sabotage line than in the collection of information, the former including, of course, attempts to create trouble among the tribes, etc.”⁷

Two months later, however, a slightly dissenting voice was heard from the Deputy Director of Military Intelligence, India:

There is positive evidence that the German interest in Persia ... is by no means decreasing. The direct armed threat has disappeared, but the very existence of this command is proof that an indirect threat is still very much present.

The demands of the German Secret Service continue to be for military information. Only recently, such demands have been made covering the location and identification of units; the tonnage handled at ports; the amount of aid to Russia; the routes by which it goes.

German agents operating further east or northeast use Persia and Iraq as a route to reach the Taurus Express and thence Turkey and further west. ...

The fact that German agents and suspected saboteurs are still in Persia and that parachutists have been dropped from time to time is direct evidence of a German interest.⁸

It is paradoxical that, as Germany’s military strategy in southern Russia switched from offensive to defensive, it was accompanied by a converse change in operational intelligence strategy in Persia, from defensive to offensive.⁹ During this final period between early 1943 and April 1945, the Abwehr and the SD actually showed much more interest in Persia than hitherto. Whereas—before 1943—it had been hoped that oil and railway installations would be preserved intact for the arrival of the German invasion forces, they now became important targets for sabotage. The more general strategic aims of organizing a fifth column and gathering political—as well as military—intelligence were thus scrapped for the narrower tactical objectives of sabotaging the TIR and interfering with the Allied lines of communication and supply. Such targets called for the deployment of small tactical teams of trained saboteurs, rather than individual political agents trained in subversion.

Another reason for the increased, more aggressive activity of German intelligence during phases 3 and 4 was the establishment and improvement of communications between the SD network in Persia and Berlin. When one of Franz Mayr’s couriers, a Tehran merchant and

7. Clarke to Kenny, 27 July 1943, f 1a, and 6 August 1943, f 3a, WO 201/2853, TNA.

8. “A” Force, October 1943, f 11a, WO 201/2853, TNA.

9. See pp. 263-264 for more about Clausewitz and the offence-defence relationship.

smuggler named Feruz (Firouz) Khalilnia (KARIM KHAN), arrived in Turkey in the autumn of 1942 and delivered messages from Mayr, he established the first successful communications link between Mayr and Ankara—and thence Berlin. Although Khalilnia returned to Tehran from Turkey in early December with much needed funds,¹⁰ but without any messages for Mayr, Berlin from this point on began communicating with Mayr via the German naval radio programme, *Kameradschaftsdienst Marine*, sending him coded signals embedded in the regular messages for German seamen. The idea of using this method of communication had first been suggested by Mayr himself, in a message transmitted to Berlin via the Japanese Legation in Tehran before it was closed on 23 April 1942; however, it took at least eight months for Berlin to implement his idea. When they did, they employed a code invented by Mayr himself which the Japanese had transmitted to Berlin before their expulsion from Persia. However, although Mayr and the SD in Berlin had no other option, using couriers and radio broadcasts was a cumbersome and unreliable mode of communication. Consequently, from the end of 1942 onwards, Berlin made the provision of W/T (radio) equipment and operators a tactical priority to be included among the primary operational objectives of all subsequent expeditions to Persia. It became one of the main reasons for the intensification of German covert operations in 1943.¹¹

It is easy to see how, after the capture of Franz Mayr and the parachutists of the FRANZ mission, in the light of intelligence revealed during their interrogations, the British security authorities in Persia came to the following conclusions about the fourth phase of German interest in the region and how it affected German covert operations:

The failure of Berlin to appreciate Persia's significance early enough and to organize communications between Germany and agents in Persia, together with the rivalry between the two secret services finally produced a policy which, although in keeping with general German strategy, the authorities in Berlin had not sufficient information to execute successfully.¹²

By the end of 1943, German strategy had become relatively transparent to the Allies in Persia. Reports were constantly received of unknown Axis agents operating in the region; however, upon investigation, most of these turned out to be either false or based on stale

10. 10,000 tomans. No money was provided for Schulze-Holthus's Abwehr operations. It has to be assumed that Khalilnia's only contact at the German Embassy in Ankara, described by him as "blond and Persian-speaking," was Ludwig Carl Moyzisch, the SS police attaché (under cover as commercial attaché), who would have forwarded Khalilnia's intelligence directly to the RSHA in Berlin and would have had little interest in (or possibly knowledge of) Abwehr operations in Persia. Khalilnia does not appear to have been in contact with the Abwehr Near East *Kriegsorganisation* (KONO) run by Paul Leverkuehn. See CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA; Extract from DSO Syria's Interrogation Report No. 1 on Firouz Khalilnia, 8 December 1945, f 24, KV 2/1317, TNA.

11. Ibid.

12. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

intelligence concerning agents already captured. Consequently, CICI Tehran were able to draw the following conclusions, which establish that Persian unrest was now perceived to be a more potent threat to internal security than German initiatives:

(1) German espionage and sabotage movements in this country have been severely damaged and the back of the Persian fifth column has been broken.

(2) One German group remains in the south against which plans are being carried out.

(3) The tribal situation has reached stalemate with the advantage in tribal hands. There is unlikely to be any alteration until next spring.

(4) The approaching menace to security is the unknown temper of a depressed people being driven towards desperation through starvation and disease.¹³

The same situation report then outlines CICI's interpretation of current German strategy:

The German plan we now consider would be to concentrate on the plain reporting of military strength in this country and political agitation of unruly elements. We think the approach of winter and the Russian advance about the Crimea has made parachute landings impracticable, and for infiltration of agents an overland route must be used. They might employ Persians returning from Germany, but they are notoriously unreliable and we doubt if they could do much harm. Our immediate tasks are therefore to eliminate the German group with the tribes and keep a watchful eye on agitation among the people.¹⁴

Subsequent events proved this operational analysis to be accurate and the proposed response to be appropriate. In other words, during the fourth phase of German interest in Persia, German strategy ceased to exist and was effectively replaced with a narrow range of tactical options which virtually eliminated the covert insertion of German personnel. It is worth noting that it was during this period (in the summer of 1944) that the Abwehr was grafted onto the existing SD organization under Kaltenbrunner and Schellenberg, who, in the absence of any defined strategy, inherited a bleak, virtually unworkable operational legacy. According to Schulze-Holthus, who returned to Germany from Persia in late 1944, those who by then remained at the Militärisches Amt (Mil C) working at the bankrupted Persia desk,¹⁵ particularly a young marine lieutenant named Schäfer, had absolutely nothing to do:

13. Extract from General Security Situation in Persia, BM/1622, November 1943, f 44b, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

14. Ibid.

15. Also responsible for Persian operations at this time were two former Abwehr civilian officers: Dr Hans-Otto Wagner (until the winter of 1944-1945, when he was transferred to Leitstelle West [HQ West]) and Dr Emil Hurr. See Weissmiller to Saint Washington, Activities of Dr Wagner @ Dr Wendell, United States Forces European Theater, OSS Mission for Germany, 31 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA and Notes on Mil Amt C and other departments of RSHA, Report on information obtained from ... Ohletz, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA respectively. Also see my description of the organization of the German intelligence services, pp. 49-60. Another, largely autonomous SD team at the RSHA under Roman Gamotha was working simultaneously on plans for an expedition to northern Persia, with Gamotha—probably a Soviet mole—doing his utmost to obstruct and delay the operation. It is unlikely that there was any communication or coordination between the two sections. For further details, see pp. 165-168.

His main concern was to re-establish connections with the only remaining agent in Persia, Konstantin Jacob. Because he had no means of doing this, and since they did not know that Jacob had been arrested in the meantime, the “section” was completely dead.¹⁶

Thus, by late-1944, the sum total of German strategic interest in Persia had been reduced to this: one young subaltern at Mil C vainly attempting to establish contact with a fugitive lone agent somewhere in the vastness of southwestern Persia, without knowing that he had already been captured, and one Russian mole at VI C (Roman Gamotha) engaged in the process of sabotaging the SD’s sole remaining operational plan, and soon to be arrested by the Gestapo.¹⁷

Whether executed or not, the flurry of operational plans generated by Abwehr II in the winter and spring of 1942-1943 may have been motivated in part by an organizational shakeup that occurred around that time within the Abwehr special forces. The gradual phasing out of Meseritz, the dispersal of SK Bajadere, the passing of the Brandenburgers to direct OKW command, and the imminent likelihood of transfer to conventional frontline combat duty suddenly faced by many of the highly specialized personnel, all no doubt contributed to heightened creativity within Abwehr II. Ironically, many of these trained saboteurs were confronting the probable curtailment of their sabotage role precisely when sabotage became the primary operational priority for the Abwehr, as the role of covert forces in Persia shifted after Stalingrad from advance support for a Transcaucasian German invasion force to destruction and disruption of the Lend-Lease supply route to the Soviet Union. However, there is no ready explanation as to why Abwehr II (and the SD) planned so many operations against Persia in 1943 yet never executed them.

It is not difficult, however, to assemble a list of possible causes. Clearly, there were policy and priority conflicts between the two services and little cooperation or coordination. Also, there was an acute shortage of available long-range aircraft with specially trained crews for such clandestine drops. Funding may also have been an issue, as we know from the case of Wolfgang Kirchner, whose request for RM 500,000 to meet the costs of carrying out WERWOLF was flatly denied, either by the Abwehr II *Zahlmeister* (paymaster), by branch head

16. Extract from US Forces in Austria detailed interrogation report, 31 October 1945, f 4a, KV 3/195, TNA.

17. Konstantin “Conny” Jakob, formerly Schulze-Holthus’s companion, who since leaving the Qashgai had been in hiding somewhere in tribal territory, was arrested on 2 April 1945 at Osfarjan (Usburjan), near Shahreza, south of Isfahan. A commercial agent in Persia since before the war, Conny Jakob was the last remaining German operative in Persia. While on the run, he appears to have survived by working as a blacksmith; he was discovered in possession of firearms, documents, and radio equipment. The ANTON group found his engineering skills useful but did not take him seriously as an agent; he was very popular with the tribes, who protected him, enabling him to elude British security for so long. See CICI Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 217, 10 April 1945, WO 208/1569, TNA; Capture of German agent, Military Attaché Report Iran R-38-45, 11 April 1945, RG 319 Entry 85 Box 958, NARA.

Lahousen, or even by Canaris himself.¹⁸ At SIME, there was a theory that the Germans were simply running out of agents:

The Germans can ill afford to lose their trained agents, and the danger of such a loss would be increased by any attempt to introduce them overland through Turkey, while the dropping of agents by parachute is fraught with hazards that render such a method unlikely as the winter advances. It is therefore considered that, though a German effort to introduce further agents may not yet be discounted, the type of agent likely to be sent will not be of a high standard.¹⁹

Certainly, there seems always to have been an acute shortage of suitably trained and *experienced* operatives, as can be seen from the mediocrity of those actually recruited and deployed. The bungling of the three executed operations has to be attributed to lack of *experience* as much as to poor personnel selection or inadequate training. It is also possible that the Abwehr and/or the SD were persuaded by deceptive intelligence at a strategic level that the British forces in the region were far stronger than they actually were.²⁰

Is there any value in studying so many aborted projects? The simple answer to that question is: yes, of course there is. With no successes to study, it is only from these failures that we can reach a better understanding of why the Abwehr and the SD achieved so little in the Middle East. The truth is that no less effort was expended by Berlin on cancelled operations than on executed ones. The roles of both services were simply never conceived by them as being anything more than those of planning, recruiting, equipping, and training. Once an expedition left Germany or German-occupied territory, both the Abwehr and/or the SD relinquished all operational control over its members, leaving them to adhere individually to the mission objectives and to respond pragmatically to whatever situations confronted them in the field. Insertion and communication remained grey areas, where every effort was made to maintain control over aerial drops and W/T communications. In practice, however, there was clearly an

18. First detailed interrogation report, Z43/1043/16, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

19. Middle East Summary No. 161, 22 December 1943, f 86x, KV 2/1480, TNA.

20. The extent to which the Abwehr and the SD may have been deterred from mounting covert operations in Persia by Dudley Clarke's bogus order of battle (CASCADE)—by the notional threat of PAIFORCE in general and the notional strength of Tenth Army in particular—cannot be measured. At one point, "A" Force HQ employed at least four PAIC battalions to do nothing but move around dummy tanks, regiments, and aircraft. Report on visit to Egypt, 20.3.42-17.4.42 by Major T. A. Robertson, 7 May 1942, f1x, KV 4/234, TNA. Unfortunately, no documents appear to have survived which might indicate whether the deceptive intelligence successfully passed to Berlin from the Middle East by notional "A" Force agents concerning the PAIFORCE order of battle was actually distributed to the Abwehr II or Amt VI operational planning staff. However, it is surely reasonable to assume that the Berlin planners of sabotage and subversion may have been led by such false intelligence to view Persia as bristling with British forces and therefore as a far more hostile operational environment for covert missions than it was factually. It has been suggested that, even if Schellenberg and other Amt VI (or Abwehr) officers had suspected strategic deception, they would never have revealed their suspicions, for they would have feared denunciation, posting to the Russian front, or even execution, had they exposed such widespread gullibility and incompetence in the German intelligence services. See Mure, *Practise to Deceive*, 202. See also p. 18n76.

awareness in Berlin that, especially at a very long range, many unpredictable factors, such as adverse weather and atmospheric conditions or faulty equipment, might come into play which would effectively preclude any central command-and-control function. In the case of the SD, one additional factor might have been of consequence: ideological preconditioning of participants. Young SS officers and men were, in a sense, *pre-controlled*: they were expected to behave predictably and to need little supervision. However, what actually happened to the SD members of the FRANZ and ANTON expeditions shows that their programmability handicapped them under field conditions. Under stress, ideological conditioning was quickly replaced by individual coping behaviours in all of the men except one. Incapable of adapting, Martin Kurmis had no choice but to commit suicide.

4.1 Operation RUVANDIZ-SCHLUCHT

Unternehmen RUVANDIZ-SCHLUCHT (Operation ROWANDUZ GORGE) is said to have been a detailed scheme originally submitted to Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II by Paul Leverkuehn of KONO in Istanbul for a 2-3-man parachute team to carry out the demolition of bridges on the 185 km-long, strategic asphalt road, known even today as the Hamilton Road, constructed by the British in northeastern Kurdistan between Erbil, Iraq and the Persian frontier in 1927-1932.²¹ Rowanduz was—and remains today—in a geopolitically sensitive area of Iraqi Kurdistan, close to the borders with Persian and Turkish Kurdistan, accessed by way of the course of the River Rowanduz, flowing through several spectacular, narrow gorges and transecting no fewer than five mountain ranges. So important was control of this route to the Turks that, four years after the First World War, they occupied the town of Rowanduz until driven out by an intensive campaign of aerial bombardment by the Royal Air Force, after which the British Army moved in, occupying Rowanduz from April 1923 until the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq in 1932.²²

The strategic significance of this ancient caravan route, originally planned as a narrow-gauge railway line rather than as a road and first surveyed by W. J. Moffat, a British railway engineer, concerned trade and administration. At the time, the British felt that the construction of a new road would have a pacifying and unifying influence on the Kurds:

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21. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. For a detailed account of the building of the Hamilton Road, see Hamilton, *Road through Kurdistan* (see p. 109n189). Originally published in 1938, this book was used by the Abwehr II planners as reference material and to instruct the members of the MAMMUT expedition.
 22. See *inter alia* The development of air control in Iraq, October 1922, AIR 19/109, TNA.

All great nations, past and present, have found roads essential for maintaining law and order. Once highways have penetrated a region, the wildest people are pretty sure to become peaceful simply by copying civilized modes of life. Moreover, empires that rely purely on military conquest usually fail to hold their people together for long.²³

Furthermore, the new route would greatly reduce the time required to travel between Europe and the Persian capital, which until then could only be accessed by lengthy, circuitous routes: from Russia by rail through the Caucasus to Tabriz or by ship from Astrakhan to the Caspian coast of Mazanderan; from the Mediterranean via Kirkuk, Baghdad, and Basra; or from the Persian Gulf, usually after a lengthy voyage from Europe via the Suez Canal. Instead, it would now be possible to travel from Europe by rail as far as Nisibin (Turkey) and thence by road to Mosul and Erbil. Reza Shah readily agreed to finance the construction of the Persian section of the road between the frontier and Tabriz. He clearly realized that reducing Persia's reliance on the Transcaucasian route to Tabriz meant reducing Russia's influence (i.e. meddling) in the troublesome region.

Berlin's intention to cripple such vital infrastructure seems to have been a strangely counterproductive plan. In 1941, one would have thought that the Germans would have sought to protect the gorge bridges rather than destroy them, for they would have been essential to any Wehrmacht troop movements to and from northwestern Persia over the Gardaneh-ye-Shinak Pass (1785 m). Surely the Germans should have sought to capitalize on the extraordinary engineering achievements of the British instead of nullifying them. Perhaps this is why the plan was abandoned. After his capture, Gottfried Müller stated that he had at one point considered using this plan for his own Operation MAMMUT; however, he never explained why he decided against it.²⁴ At any rate, the Rowanduz Gorge operation was never executed.

4.2 Operation ABADAN

Throughout the Second World War, the great Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) refinery on Abadan Island (80 km long by 3 km wide), then the largest in the world, constructed between 1909 and 1913, bounded on the west by the Shatt al-Arab waterway, which formed the border with Iraq, and on the east by the Bahmanshir outlet of the Karun River, some 50 km from the head of the Persian Gulf, was one of the Allies' most vital strategic assets, yet one of its most vulnerable. In 1940, when there appeared to be a strong possibility that the Soviets might attack

23. Attributed to A. S. Clay, Director of the Iraq Public Works Department in 1927. Hamilton, *Road through Kurdistan*, 54.

24. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

oil infrastructure in the region, Britain developed detailed plans for the occupation and defence of the Abadan and Kermanshah refineries, based on technical information supplied by AIOC, from which the defensive weaknesses of the installations became painfully evident.²⁵ The Abadan refinery was especially open to attack from the air, for its pipes and vessels contained such highly volatile fluids and gases under extreme pressure that just one accurately placed bomb might have sufficed to ignite a fire that would have engulfed the entire plant in minutes. Also, its immense size effectively ruled out the use of camouflage.²⁶

Abadan's fuel output of approximately 100-200 thousand barrels daily, amounting to an estimated 10 million tons annually, together with known regional oilfield reserves of between 4 and 5 billion barrels, was of incalculable importance to the Allied war effort, even though transportation posed a significant logistical problem until the Mediterranean was opened to Allied tankers from 1943 onwards.²⁷ In July 1941, the Joint Planning Staff of the War Cabinet portrayed the strategic significance of Abadan as vital:

If the Abadan refinery were destroyed, even if that at Suez remained, it is not too much to say that our whole position in the Middle East would dry up for lack of oil, as the tankers required to supply the Middle East and India in addition to our other requirements do not exist.²⁸

However, had the Germans attacked the refinery and its storage facilities by air, land, or sea, its destruction would have been swift, for it was only lightly defended by ground forces.²⁹ Yet, whatever the consequences for the Allies, the refinery was of equal potential importance for the German war effort, because of Germany's sole dependence on Romanian and synthetic oil. As long as there existed the remotest chance that German armour might break out of southern Russia and Transcaucasia and sweep down into northern Persia, as would become very likely

25. Yair P. Hirschfeld, *Deutschland und Iran im Spielfeld der Mächte: Internationale Beziehungen unter Reza Shah, 1921-1941* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1980), 268.

26. According to the findings of Frank W. Lane, an AIOC official who conducted a detailed study of the Abadan refinery and oilfield region for the British General Staff in 1940. See Richard A. Stewart, *Sunrise at Abadan: The British and Soviet Invasion of Iran, 1941* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 19. In human terms, the immense size of the Abadan refinery is best gauged from the 1942 AIOC census, which recorded the total population as 110,000, of whom 28,000 were AIOC employees (an increase of 3,000 over 1940). See Khorramshahr Consulate Diary, 19 February 1943, IOR/L/PS/12/3528A/Pol Ext Coll 28 File 115 Pt 1, BL; Appendix II, Military Report on the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's (South Iranian) Oilfield Area 1940, General Staff India, Military Department Records, IOR/L/MIL/17/15/24, BL.

27. "War Nears Center of Huge Oil Supply," *New York Times*, 27 April 1941; "Iran," *New York Times*, 20 July 1941; "Allied Troops Get New Fuel Sources," *New York Times*, 13 May 1943.

28. Policy for Defence of the Persian Gulf Area, GCS (41) 241st Meeting, 11 July 1941, CAB 79/12/41, TNA.

29. As late as 1943, Guy Liddell wrote in his diary: "If the Germans had the sense to write off 25 planes and could hit the power station and in particular the turbines, they would undoubtedly cripple our war effort for many months. There are very few AA guns, practically no planes and no RDF." Liddell Diaries, vol. 8, 2 August 1943, KV 4/192, TNA.

during the great Wehrmacht summer offensive of 1942 (Operation BLAU), then Hitler needed Abadan to be preserved intact.

Initially, until driven from the Levant in July 1941, Göring's air forces were within easy range of Abadan and had to be restrained from launching raids on the refinery from Vichy-held Syrian airfields, similar to those mounted successfully by the Italians against the Haifa and Bahrain refineries in 1940. Later, unknown to the Germans—but suspected by them³⁰—the comprehensive British Tenth Army scorched-earth devastation plan, part of Plan WONDERFUL, would have denied everything to the Wehrmacht, had they actually invaded Persia.³¹ Abadan would have been pre-emptively destroyed. Ironically, therefore, at a crucial point in the war during the summer of 1942, with both sides desperately thirsty for petroleum, the Axis and the Allies faced the same peculiar dilemma: to demolish or not to demolish this vital installation. In July 1942, the First Sea Lord, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, saw any resolution as requiring a “grave” decision to be postponed to the last minute:

... the decision to destroy this essential refinery should remain for as long as possible in the hands of the War Cabinet and should not be delegated to anybody until the approach in real force of the enemy to Abadan makes it essential that delegation should be made.³²

On the German side, improbably, it was none other than the canny Franco-American millionaire-tycoon Charles Eugene Bedaux (see Figure 4-1), close friend of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor,³³ who presented the Abwehr with an original technical solution to the Abadan problem, which they ultimately attempted to implement with a full-scale covert operation against Persia.³⁴

30. “It was ... assumed that the British would destroy their refineries and wells, in the same way that they had destroyed other important sources of military supplies when forced to retreat.” Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 8.

31. Oil Installations, Annex H to Tenth Army Operation Instruction No.29, Policy for Demolitions under Plan “Wonderful,” 27 June 1942, WO 201/1369, TNA. Interestingly, British denial plans targeted oil installations not only in Persia and northern Iraq, but even as far away as Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, which indicates that the British fully expected the Germans to advance beyond the Persian Gulf into the Arabian peninsula.

32. Oil Denial Schemes in the Middle East and Persia: Memorandum by the First Sea Lord, GOS 42 199(O), 8 July 1942, CAB 80/63/49, TNA.

33. For more about Bedaux's connection with the Windsors, see *inter alia* Martin Allen, *Hidden Agenda: How the Duke of Windsor Betrayed the Allies* (London: Macmillan 2000).

34. The projected operation does not appear to have been assigned a code name; to make for easier reading, I have dubbed it Operation ABADAN.



Figure 4-1. *Charles Eugene Bedaux, 1934.* (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-107447]).

Bedaux appears to have first become associated with Abadan in June 1938, when he was contracted by AIOC in his capacity as a production engineer to survey the refinery.³⁵ According to one source, Bedaux subsequently reported to Lord Cadman, president of AIOC, that he was “worried about the safety of the oil facilities if there was war. He discussed with Lord Cadman his plan to fill the refineries and pipelines with fine sand to protect them against damage by bombing.”³⁶ During his survey, Bedaux acquired an intimate, comprehensive technical knowledge of the Abadan installations; furthermore he retained all the relevant technical documents, drawings, and maps, which he stored securely—or so he must have thought—at the Amsterdam offices of Bedaux Internationale. One wonders if AIOC or the British authorities could possibly have permitted Bedaux to retain such sensitive material; presumably not, in which case he had clearly committed an indictable breach of security. In 1940, under the Seyss-Inquart regulations on enemy property in the Netherlands,³⁷ Bedaux Internationale and the Abadan files

35. Jim Christy, *The Price of Power: A Biography of Charles Eugène Bedaux* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1984), 125; Janet Flanner, “Annals of Collaboration,” *The New Yorker*, 22 September-13 October 1945, 1/33, wrongly dates Bedaux’s visit to Abadan as occurring in 1935.

36. Christy, *Price of Power*, 199.

37. SS Lieutenant General Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Reich Commissioner of the Netherlands, decreed in the Enemy Property Decree (VO 26/1940) of 27 July 1940 that any Dutch company owned by a foreigner residing outside the Netherlands could be declared enemy property. Such assets had to be registered with the Netherlands branch of the Deutsche Revisions- und Treuhand AG (German Audit and Trustee Company [DRT]) in The Hague, which administered all Jewish and enemy property, thereby essentially allowing registered companies to be looted. See Gerard Aalders, *Nazi Looting: The Plunder of Dutch Jewry during the Second World War* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), 109-110. Bedaux’s statement to his interrogators that “any company owned by a foreigner residing in France could be declared to be enemy property” is therefore accurate. See Report by

were confiscated by the Germans; the documents were not returned to Bedaux's brother Gaston for safekeeping until two years later. Of course, it is unthinkable that the Abwehr would not have accessed the information on Abadan and have copied it at some time during the intervening eighteen months.

When the Italians bombed Haifa in July 1940—or so the story goes among several secondary authors³⁸—Bedaux is said to have reiterated his concerns about Abadan's security, either deliberately or indiscriminately, when in the company of German guests at Chateau de Candé. His voice carried as far as Berlin, for he was summoned to a technical consultation at the Tirpitzufer. But, if we follow the archival record of confiscations, together with Bedaux's own narrative in the available Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) interrogation records, it is clear that he was not brought to Berlin until October 1941, when the Abwehr needed him to interpret the Abadan material that they had presumably been poring over for about a year.

At this time, Bedaux was still trying to devise a means of regaining control of the Bedaux companies and documents which had been sequestered by the Germans. It was in this context, rather than that of the Italian raids, that he had mentioned to German guests and friends whom he was entertaining at Candé the problem of protecting the Persian Gulf oil refineries from possible destruction. In other words, Bedaux was seeking a *quid pro quo* arrangement: Bedaux Internationale would be restored to his control in exchange for his clarifying the information about Abadan that the Germans, specifically the Abwehr, had confiscated but presumably could not fully interpret or implement.

Early in October 1941, Bedaux was informed that he was required in Berlin regarding the oil refineries. Once in Berlin, he was approached at his hotel by many Germans who were never presented to him by name (presumably intelligence officers or agents).³⁹ On the third day after his arrival, as if testing the waters, Bedaux asked if he might be permitted to visit the US Embassy. He was told that it would be inadvisable to do so since it might give his visit a political

Leonard Greenburg: Charles Eugene Bedaux ... Trading with the Enemy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 27 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 14, NARA.

38. Notably Christy, *Price of Power*, 235, who claims Bedaux "brooded" over the destruction of the Haifa refineries and then resolved that Abadan should be saved. Alternatively, Flanner suggests that Bedaux was alarmed when he learned from his Candé guests that Germany intended to bomb Abadan during the summer of 1941. See Flanner, "Annals," 2/41.

39. Flanner, "Annals," 2/42, maintains that Bedaux also conferred with Albert Speer during his Berlin visit; however, any covert Abadan operation would surely have been well beyond Speer's remit, so their meetings likely dealt with other industrial issues or possibly with Josef von Ledebur's transfer (see p. 128nn40-41). Christy, *Price of Power*, 238-239, would have us believe that Bedaux failed to discuss his Abadan proposal with anyone in Berlin and that the month-long trip was a monstrous waste of Bedaux's time. This does not concur with the Abwehr account, as provided by Paul Leverkuehn of KONO (see p. 128n41); however, it may be the impression that Bedaux disingenuously sought to leave with his American interrogators.

aspect, whereas he was in Germany merely as a technician. During his month in Germany, while discussing the protection of oil refineries, Bedaux claimed that he frequently stated that he lacked certain technical information which was in the files of Bedaux Internationale in the Netherlands, no longer under his control. Five months later, in March 1942, the Abwehr brokered a deal with the Seyss-Inquart administration in The Hague, according to which all the Bedaux Internationale files would be removed to Paris, where they would remain under sequestration until they were examined “by the proper German authorities.” On or around 20 May 1942, the files arrived in Paris. After examination—by a German officer who happened to be one of Bedaux’s closest friends⁴⁰—the files were then transferred to the offices of the French Bedaux company, managed by his brother Gaston, thus bringing all Bedaux companies except the Dutch organization under French control. The archival records do not show whether, at any stage in the transfer process, any Abadan files were removed or copied by the Abwehr. So much for Bedaux’s version of events, as stated during various interrogations after his arrest in Algeria on 13 January 1943 on charges of trading with the enemy. Nowhere in these available FBI records does Bedaux provide detailed information about what happened during the discussions he had with the Abwehr planners, nor why he returned to France empty-handed.

To discover how the Abwehr actually handled Operation ABADAN, we must turn to the narrative provided by the head of KONO in Ankara, Paul Leverkuehn, who wrote:

When the German armies reached the Caucasus ... the Mosul oilfield and the great Anglo-Iranian installations ... looked very close indeed. ... Since this refinery and these wells ... were vital to the oil supply of Europe, the Abwehr was set the task of evolving a plan which would prevent [its] destruction [by the British].

... A technically completely novel plan was therefore evolved—the *système d’ensablement*—the “sanding-up technique”—whereby the refinery and the wells were to be put temporarily out of action while still in the possession of the British; in other words, an attempt was to be made to sabotage an act of sabotage. This technique, in simple terms, envisaged the filling of borings, wells, derricks, conduit pipes, etc., with sand⁴¹

40. An Austrian nobleman, Major Count Josef von Ledebur was Bedaux’s representative in Germany between the wars and a close personal friend. It is interesting to note that Bedaux appears to have had sufficient influence with the Abwehr in 1942 to have succeeded in negotiating von Ledebur’s transfer from active duty on the Russian front to Paris, where he became enemy property custodian—a feat not easy to accomplish. It is likely that the demand for von Ledebur’s transfer was part of the *quid pro quo* associated with Operation ABADAN. See Flanner, “Annals,” 1/32, 2/42-43; Report by Leonard Greenburg: Charles Eugene Bedaux ... Trading with the Enemy, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 27 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 14, NARA.

41. While Leverkuehn omits any mention of Bedaux’s name in this connection, the fact that he uses the French term *système d’ensablement* indicates it is Bedaux’s technique that he is describing. Leverkuehn was a lawyer and a prewar acquaintance of General William “Wild Bill” Donovan, head of OSS. He is generally considered a reliable source on the history of the Abwehr, one of the best in fact, as is illustrated by Wilson, “War in the Dark,” 6. See Paul Leverkuehn, *Der geheime Nachrichtendienst der deutschen Wehrmacht im Kriege* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1964), 158-160. The English translation quoted here is from Paul Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, trans. R. H. Stevens and Constantine FitzGibbon (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson,

The sheer scale of such an operation would have been enormous, especially since it contemplated the “sanding-up” (and subsequent “de-sanding”) of not only the Abadan refinery, but also the Mosul oilfield, as well as the 483 km of pipeline between them, not to mention other infrastructure in southwestern Persia. The proposal was indeed first regarded by the Abwehr planners as a “fantastic” plan, and it looked as if it would not gain acceptance. However, “its authors [i.e. Bedaux] persisted and succeeded in getting the plan submitted to a panel of experts who, after meticulous examination, pronounced it technically feasible.”⁴²

According to the contradictory and undocumented secondary literature,⁴³ Bedaux apparently planned to use not sand from the Persian Gulf (coarse desert sand or beach sand), but extremely fine, liquefied, artificial sand made from Persian sandstone, which would act as a shock absorber. If bombed from the air, pipes would merely be punctured in places, and the risk of fire would be minimized. Bedaux apparently said that the sand had to be so light that it would rise in a wind to a height of 6000 metres. Sanding up and desanding were each variously estimated to take between two days and three weeks. One source seems not to understand that Bedaux’s plan was for a countersabotage operation rather than a sabotage operation,⁴⁴ and one even claims that Bedaux submitted plans for both purposes.⁴⁵

Technical feasibility is one thing; logistical feasibility is quite another. It needs to be remembered that Operation ABADAN would have to have been completed as a large-scale special operation (or, more accurately, as a series of coordinated special operations), while the installations were still in British hands. In other words, no use could have been made of the conventional Wehrmacht land forces poised to invade the region from southern Russia, for the operation had to secure the oilfields, the pipeline, and the refinery before any British retreat began, indeed ideally before any British demolition charges were even laid according to Plan WONDERFUL. In other words, only highly trained special forces could have been used, on a

1954), 8-9. The only significant discrepancy between the German and English versions is to be found in the description of the installations to be sabotaged, which Leverkuehn lists in the original German as “sowohl die Bohrlöcher als auch die Türme—Hydrier- und *Crack*-Türme—Rohrleitungen usw.”. Interestingly, at some time during the war, Leverkuehn became personally acquainted with Bedaux’s Abwehr friend Count Ledebur through one Coreth, a naval captain working as an agent under the cover of Speer’s armaments ministry. It is therefore possible that Leverkuehn discussed the Bedaux scheme with Ledebur, who may have provided some of the information given in Leverkuehn’s version of events. See p. 127n39 and Extract from Camp 020 report on the case of Graf Joseph Ledebur (Austrian Army officer formerly attached to Abwehr Headquarters in Madrid), 30 November 1944, KV 2/2664, TNA.

42. Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 9.

43. Christy, *Price of Power*, 235; Flanner, “Annals,” 2/42; Charles Glass, *Americans in Paris: Life and Death under Nazi Occupation 1940-44* (London: Harper, 2009), 197-198; C. M. Hardwick, *Time Study in Treason: Charles E. Bedaux—Patriot or Collaborator?* (Chelmsford: Horsnell, 1993), 52.

44. Allen, *Hidden Agenda*, 54-55.

45. Glass, *Americans*, 198.

scale that was probably well beyond the capacity of the Abwehr's own commandos, the Brandenburgers.

British intelligence records show that the men of Wüstensonderverband 287 (287th Special Desert Unit), a highly mobile motorized unit (with a ratio of one vehicle to every three men) under the command of Air Force General Hellmuth Felmy, also known as “Sonderverband Felmy” and “Sonderstab F,” were transferred from southern Greece to Stalino (Donetsk) on 22 September 1942, destined for Armavir, where, having been issued with tropical kit, they began serious training for deployment in Persia, including Farsi language training. Their special equipment included “a W/T set of at least 80-100 watts and 20,000-50,000 kilocycles ‘in view of the great distance to be covered’.” It is likely that this force had been placed at the Abwehr's disposal to capture the Mosul oilfields and the pipeline to Abadan, for the official war diary indicates that their operational goals for the autumn of 1942 had already been defined as “the opening of the Iran/Iraq border crossings and continued advances to Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra.”⁴⁶ In other words, they were to follow the route of the pipeline. British intelligence were fully aware of their movement from Greece to the Caucasus and their real purpose, noting:

“[they] may well be intended as a highly trained, technical and motorized unit, for engineering, demolition, and *anti-demolition* work, combined with rapid penetration and fifth-column activity, in Armenia, Iran, and Irak.”⁴⁷

Little more is to be inferred about Operation ABADAN from the surviving records. There is no Abwehr master plan. However, what we can deduce is that, in terms of manpower alone, it is highly unlikely that the Abwehr could have assembled a strong enough force to carry out the large-scale operation envisaged. The airborne Brandenburgers numbered at most perhaps 200 officers and men; Felmy's strength was between 4,000 and 6,000,⁴⁸ although his unit might have

46. Operationsziel, Grundgedanken der Kaukasusoperation, Besprechung bei OQu I, 24 October 1941, Oberkommando der Wehrmacht Kriegstagebuch (OKW-KTB), MSG 158/38, BA-MA; GCCS to “C”, CX/MSS/S21, German Intentions South of Caucasus, 17 September 1942, HW 14/52, TNA; Interrogation Report, Oberstleutnant Dr Murad Ferid, 11 July 1945, SCI Twelfth Army Group, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA. See also “Bericht des Gesandten Grobba vom Auswärtigen Amt an Botschafter Ritter über die Umwandlung des Sonderstabes F(elmy) in ‘Deutsches Orientkorps’,” 3 September 1942, in Müller, *Amt Ausland/Abwehr*: “Es ist für den Einsatz durch Westiran nach dem Irak mit Richtung Basra vorgesehen.”

47. GCCS to “C”, CX/MSS/S21, German Intentions South of Caucasus, 17 September 1942, HW 14/52, TNA. My italics. For the full story of Felmy's unit, including its role in the Gailani coup in Iraq, see Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 84 passim.

48. British intelligence estimated their strength at 4,000, while the German records state that, in addition to 5,200 regular German soldiers, there were four Arab companies of 200 “Muslim” men each. However, among the German soldiers, Felmy would have had to account for attrition: while awaiting Middle East deployment, the Germans — unlike the Arabs, who were held in reserve — were required to perform an active combat role in the Caucasus and suffered significant losses. After crossing the Caucasus, as the unit advanced south, they were expected to raise local levies in Armenia and Azerbaijan as reinforcements. See GCCS to “C”, CX/MSS/S21, German Intentions South of Caucasus, 17 September 1942, HW 14/52, TNA; Mallmann and Cüppers, *Halbmond und Hakenkreuz*, 193.

been augmented by any remaining Brandenburgers who could be spared from the main advance of the German army, where they would have been needed to perform the unique, spearhead role for which Canaris had originally intended them and for which they had been specifically trained.⁴⁹ Had the airborne Brandenburgers indeed succeeded in wresting Abadan from the British and Indian units defending it, which is questionable, it is clear that the refinery would then have been even less heavily defended than before. It is difficult to see how the lightly armed German parachute company, less inevitable casualties, could have successfully held such a large target until Felmy's arrival in the face of the inevitable waves of fierce Allied infantry counterattacks, shelling, and aerial bombardments that would have ensued. In short, to use the current buzzphrase, it is unlikely that Berlin could have put enough "boots on the ground" to take Abadan, leave alone to secure and hold it, with a grossly overextended supply line, against resolute British and Indian forces, possibly reinforced by Russian forces on land and in the air. British naval power in the Persian Gulf would also have been a factor to be weighed in the balance.

In addition to the fighting forces needed, there would have been the even greater challenge of recruiting and training enough technically competent combat engineers and technicians to supervise the actual sanding/desanding processes. They, in turn, on arrival in the region, would have faced the task of—perhaps clandestinely—raising and coordinating a local labour force of thousands of Persian and Iraqi manual workers. Given the extremely tight timeline for implementation, not to mention such potential complications as lack of surprise owing to advance British intelligence, only partial military success, British land and air counterattacks, and the Allied security response, the plan was indeed fantastic.

Even so, despite the daunting technical and logistical challenges facing them, Hans-Otto Wagner and the Abw II OR planning staff began to elaborate a detailed plan and, characteristically, did not choose the path of least resistance. For instance, they decided "that the enterprise should be carried out by a group of acknowledged experts, under the leadership of a man who was well acquainted, not only with the refinery and the oilfields, but also with the country and the people, and particularly with the Sheiks of the marsh Arab tribes, which provided most of the employees at the oilfields."⁵⁰ Presumably unable to locate anyone as charismatic as Wassmuss—whose name was still legend in southwestern Persia—they settled on none other than the originator of their project: Charles Eugène Bedaux, whose expertise was

49. Gliederung, Aufgaben und Einsatz des Lehr-Rgt. "Brandenburg" z.b.V.800, 26 June 1942, ff 40-41, *Verschiedene Abwehrangelegenheiten*, 2. Panzerarmee (PzAOK 2), RH 21-2/709, BA-MA.

50. Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 9.

confined strictly to his 1938 survey of the refinery, and who knew even less about Persia than the Persians knew about him.⁵¹ For many other reasons—age, poor health, lack of military training and experience, lack of petroleum-engineering qualifications, inability to speak either Farsi or German—Bedaux was a poor choice. As things turned out, Bedaux ultimately disgraced and disqualified himself as a potential leader by making what were considered by the Abwehr to be inappropriate, grandiose demands.

By the end of 1942, however, strategic events had negated the need for Operation ABADAN. Montgomery had prevailed over Rommel in the Western Desert, the Allies had landed successfully in French North Africa, von Paulus's Sixth Army was on the verge of annihilation in front of Stalingrad, and Army Group A was close to being completely isolated in the Caucasus. General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, who led PAIFORCE, could write in paradoxically positive terms that his command "had now lost its operational importance."⁵² Paradoxically too, after Stalingrad, the change in Germany's military strategy in southern Russia from offensive to defensive was accompanied by a converse change in intelligence strategy in Persia, from defensive to offensive. From early 1943 onwards, the operational priority for covert initiatives became the maximum delay and frustration of Allied progress—in a word: sabotage. Consequently, the oil and railway infrastructure of the Persian theatre, including the Abadan oil installations, was no longer to be preserved intact for the arrival of the Wehrmacht from the north. On the contrary, it now became a prime target for destruction.⁵³ The extraordinary Bedaux-Wagner countersabotage plan became instantly obsolete and was never, as far as we know, revisited by Abwehr planners at any later stage of the war.⁵⁴

4.3 Operation FRANZ

The original idea of Operation FRANZ came from Franz Mayr himself, who referred to it as Operation BERTA, as did the planners at Abwehr II until the SD bullied their way into assuming control of the operation. At the end of January 1943, a message from Mayr reached Ankara in which he suggested three possible landing grounds for a support mission (i.e. not a combat or sabotage mission), one of which (Landing Ground B, near the Siah Kuh range in the Salt Lake region approximately 113 km SE of Tehran) was to be used to drop only money and an

51. Annex II, Abwehr Activities in the Near East, United States Forces European Theater, Military Intelligence Service Center, 18 January 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ-18, Box 35, NARA.

52. Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 146-147.

53. Counter-Intelligence Summary No.11, DSO, CICI Persia, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

54. For a recent, most peculiar version of events, in no way substantiated by the records, see Christer Jörgensen, *Hitler's Espionage Machine: The True Story behind One of the World's Most Ruthless Spy Networks* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2004), 178-179.

unarmed radio operator.⁵⁵ When Karl Korel found Mayr in Tehran and told him that six heavily armed men with explosives had in fact been dropped, Mayr was “surprised and dismayed.”⁵⁶ He was also “annoyed” that the operation had been renamed FRANZ, which he regarded as a security lapse because it referred overtly to his real name. But what most angered Mayr was the intention of the mission to sabotage the Trans-Iranian Railway (TIR) under the leadership of an officer, Günther Blume, whom Mayr regarded as having only a superficial knowledge of sabotage. In fact, Mayr was incensed by the very notion of sabotage, which he considered inappropriate and untimely. Mayr believed that political activity in Persia was the best way of helping the German war effort and that acts of sabotage would have a disastrous effect on his political plans and subversive work. CICI summarized Mayr’s position as follows:

Throughout, Mayr’s intentions had remained the same: he wished to have a certain indirect control in Persian politics which would enable him to thwart British policy in the short run and assist a German advance through the Caucasus in the long. In order to keep on good terms with his Persian friends, he had to play up to their nationalism by deprecating any clash between the central government and the tribes, a conflict which in any case he wished to avoid because his long term plans demanded assistance to the German Army by both the Persian Army and the tribes. Mayr felt that, if the tribes were incited against the railway, a clash with the central government was inevitable, and if the Germans themselves committed acts of sabotage, there was little chance of success, and in any case his Persian friends would be alienated.⁵⁷

Mayr therefore decided to persuade Blume to change his plans for sabotage, possibly pulling rank on him in order to assert his will. Mayr relayed to Blume Persian reports that the British were guarding the railway infrastructure with anything from thirty to seventy men on every important railway bridge and that only 25% of US Lend-Lease supplies were being shipped to the Soviet Union by rail rather than by road. Under interrogation, Mayr admitted that he used these reports against Blume (and Berlin), knowing them to be wildly inaccurate. Before long Mayr had succeeded in persuading Blume and the rest of the party to abandon their mission and to conform to his ideas. So, faced with the problem of finding hiding places for so many idle

55. See Table C-4. It is these landing-ground designations that gave rise to the codenames of the two principal German covert operations in Persia: A for ANTON and B for BERTA (later renamed FRANZ). Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA.

56. The SD team (see Figure 4-2) were armed to the teeth with nine machine pistols, six revolvers, one sporting rifle, and 25 kg of gelnite. They were also equipped with four W/T sets, one receiver, four generators, and fourteen boxes of military tools. The funds they brought Mayr totalled at least \$20 000, £31, 1148 francs, 2196 gold sovereigns, 553 gold francs, or possibly up to twice these amounts. *Ibid.* For a detailed subjective account of the first part of the operation, including the parachute drop, see Appendix A2.

57. We know that Mayr was working off an inaccurate Persian map; consequently, he may have supplied Berlin with the wrong map reference. He certainly made a four-degree error when designating an alternative landing ground south of Varamin for Operation BERTA. Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA.

men in Tehran, Mayr decided to split the party up, despatching Blume and Ernst Köndgen south to the Bakhtiari tribal region (see Unternehmen DORA). From this point on and after the death of Karl Korel from typhus, what might be termed “rump FRANZ” became nothing more than a fugitive three-man W/T station of very limited use to Mayr and a growing cause of concern about security. Separated and constantly on the move from hiding place to hiding place around Tehran, confined to cramped quarters by day and by night, Köndgen, Werner Rockstroh, and Hans Holzapfel soon began to show signs of stress. The latter two were linguistically isolated too, for neither of them could understand Farsi; they were able to communicate only with Mayr or his mistress, Lili Sanjari, in German. Under such stress, it was merely a matter of time before one of the three might behave carelessly or outrageously, thereby endangering or compromising Mayr’s entire operation.⁵⁸



Figure 4-2. *Franz Mayr and the FRANZ group in captivity.* Front row (l-r): Köndgen, Grille, Holzapfel; back row (l-r): Rockstroh, Blume, Mayr. (Photo courtesy of The National Archives).

The planning for this operation was a dysfunctionally cooperative undertaking led by Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II, who originated the mission concept (based on Franz Mayr’s stated needs) of supplying Mayr with experienced Abwehr support personnel and funds for political subversion, and Kurt Schuback of VI C 12, who superimposed on the original plan an inexperienced SD leader, inexperienced Waffen-SS soldiers, and a new objective—sabotage. This hostile manoeuvre by Amt VI can be dated to around the time of the Battle of Stalingrad (late-1942/early-1943), and after the SD special training company had been formed at

58. Ibid. On the issue of mission objectives, see also pp. 76-78, 85-88.

Oranienburg. It is historically significant, for it constitutes a demonstrable instance of dominance by the SD over the Abwehr occurring earlier than such dominance is generally assumed by intelligence historians or was divined by contemporary Allied intelligence officers.⁵⁹ Superficially, it might seem remarkable that the SD should have sought cooperation with the Abwehr in the first place. However, when one realizes that the SD did so disingenuously in order to assert their control over an operation to support Mayr, whom they regarded as exclusively *their* agent-in-place, even though they had abandoned him two years earlier, then it becomes clear that cooperation with the Abwehr was never the SD's true intent: it was a hostile takeover, pure and simple. Schuback's uncompromising attitude towards Wagner during the planning stage exemplifies this. The importance attached to this mission by Amt VI is also evidenced by the fact that, some days before their departure, the members of the expedition were invited to a farewell party at which the SD brass—Kaltenbrunner, Schellenberg, and Gräfe—were all present. Of Abwehr representatives there is no mention. Ultimately, the mission became an SD operation, with the Abwehr fulfilling a subordinate role: supplying two experienced team members and retaining responsibility for air transport.

According to Gottfried Müller, who led the MAMMUT mission to Kurdistan,⁶⁰ the date of departure of FRANZ was to be 6-10 April 1943 (so he was out by about a fortnight). He says the personnel were recruited from Meseritz (which was of course true only of the Abwehr members, Köndgen and Korel). They were to go by Junkers Ju 290, piloted by Gartenfeld and Nebel. Air Force Lieutenant Figulla, the Luftwaffe liaison officer, told Müller that the destination had been located correctly (not true) and a good landing made.⁶¹ On return of the aircraft, however, three parachute ripcords were found to be missing. The air crew came to the conclusion that either three members of the expedition, three containers, or 1-2 containers and 1-2 men must have dropped with unopened parachutes. In fact, of course, it was one of the radios that was damaged; perhaps it was under a three-chute cargo assembly that failed to open.

Of the Abwehr personnel—Köndgen and Korel—Ernst Köndgen, 22, was a former architecture student and Luftwaffe W/T operator, an intelligent young man, while Karl Korel,

59. According to one SD source, the SD had completely taken over sabotage operations planned for Persia by August 1943; at the same time, Putz thought the SD would be unable to execute them because of adverse weather conditions and lack of aircraft. Camp 020 interim report on the case of Fred Hermann Brandt, January 1945, f 73a, KV 2/752, TNA.

60. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

61. Figulla was an experienced parachutist who had been transferred in February 1943 to liaison work after being seriously wounded while serving as an officer in the Hermann Göring Division. Kellar to Hall, 16 January 1945, f 54a, KV 2/402, TNA.

38, was an old Persia hand who had served as an interpreter with SK Bajadere⁶² and who was already personally acquainted with both Mayr, Schulze-Holthus, and Lili Sanjari from the days when Korel worked for Ferrostahl in Tehran.⁶³ Both men spoke Farsi fluently. When the SD took over the mission, they had the option of including yet another experienced Brandenburger W/T operator, cipher expert, and interpreter, recommended to them by Mayr—Otto Grüning, who had recently joined the ranks of the SD—but they chose not to, possibly because Grüning’s career had been made with the German Foreign Office and Abwehr II, not within the SS; therefore he had yet to gain their trust. Mayr, however, trusted Grüning, for he had met him at a social gathering in the Tehran Brown House shortly after his arrival in Persia with Gamotha in 1940.⁶⁴ The remaining members of the expedition were all from the Waffen-SS: while Günther Blume was nominally in command, he does not seem to have had a strong leadership personality and appears to have deferred willingly to the cultural and linguistic expertise of the Abwehr men, Köndgen and Korel. To the latter Blume delegated the crucial, virtually impossible task of finding Franz Mayr in Tehran, then a city of about half a million inhabitants. The meagre aptitudes and plentiful shortcomings of the chosen SS men—Holzapfel, Georg Grille, and Rockstroh—have already been discussed elsewhere in this study; there is nothing to mitigate their failure as a team and as individuals.⁶⁵

The aerial insertion was botched by Gartenfeld and Nebel, two of the Luftwaffe’s most experienced agent-droppers. Instead of landing on firm ground at the foot of the Siah Kuh hills, the group were deposited offzone in an extremely inhospitable desert region rife with such unpleasant natural hazards as the Kavir Masileh (or Darya-i-Namak), a large salt lake whose shoreline featured a mixture of silt and salt pans under which lay treacherous black mud, known for its ability to devour unsuspecting camels and men.⁶⁶ The stick jumped tightly and soon reassembled on the ground at about 0100 hrs on 30 March 1943. After getting their bearings, retrieving their cargo, and obtaining two camels, the group camped under canvas in the Siah Kuh hills for nearly a fortnight while Korel was in Tehran searching for Franz Mayr. It was by a

62. Camp 020 interim report on the case of Fred Hermann Brandt, January 1945, f 73a, KV 2/752, TNA.

63. Summary of information: The arrest of Franz Mayr, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA. See also p. 208.

64. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA; Extract from CICI Counter-Intelligence Report No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 20a, WO 208/1588B. For details of Grüning’s prewar and postwar diplomatic career, including his subsequent return to Persia seventeen years later (one year after his release from Soviet captivity) as West German cultural attaché, see Maria Keipert and Peter Grupp, eds., *Biographisches Handbuch des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes, 1871-1945*, vol. 3 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005), 122-123. Curiously, the *Handbuch* makes no mention of Grüning’s volunteering for the SS (SD). See also p. 150n113.

65. See pp. 102-104.

66. United Kingdom, *Persia*, 90.

stroke of luck that Korel succeeded in finding Mayr in a city teeming with about 500,000 inhabitants, for he had the good fortune to run into Lili Sanjari's mother, Frau Lange, whom he already knew, which led him through Sanjari to Mayr's whereabouts.⁶⁷ After Korel's return to Siah Kuh, it took the group several days to travel by camel and by truck into the city, where they finally, around 15 April 1943, met Mayr, who immediately split them up. Arguably the most capable, resourceful, and experienced German ever deployed in Persia, Karl Korel unfortunately contracted typhus and died after a brief illness. Had he and Otto Grüning alone been sent out to support Mayr, as Mayr would have wished, then the FRANZ mission might have enjoyed some degree of success, until inevitably hunted down by CICI. Apparently, Mayr did everything he could for Korel, but it proved impossible to find the drugs needed to fight his typhoid infection. For four months from mid-April to mid-August, after Blume and Köndgen had been despatched by Mayr to southwestern Persia, the remaining three—Holzapfel, Grille, and Rockstroh—were passed from house to house in the stifling heat of a Tehran summer with only an occasional radio transmission to relieve their tedium and their claustrophobia. Without any knowledge of Farsi, they felt particularly isolated, and their morale began to wither. All were arrested by British security in the latter half of August 1943.⁶⁸ By mid-September, both Werner Schüler of the Abwehr and Kurt Schuback of Amt VI realized that the game was up, and that the Tehran *Aktionszentrum* (operational centre) existed no longer.⁶⁹ With evident *Schadenfreude*, the German Foreign Office noted at the time: "the operations undertaken jointly by the SS and Abwehr II appear to have been carried out without sufficient technical expertise."⁷⁰ It is interesting that the diplomats should have perceived with hindsight what the secret services seemed unable to recognize before hurling their vulnerable young warriors into the desert night.

4.4 Operation DORA

This operation was conceived by Franz Mayr when confronted with the problem of finding refuge in Tehran for the unexpectedly large number of personnel deployed by Berlin to execute Operation FRANZ. Mayr succeeded in persuading Günther Blume, the mission leader, to abandon his original sabotage mission, which Blume was only too anxious to do, having received little or no training as a saboteur. Mayr despatched Blume, the former Brandenburger

67. Summary of information: The arrest of Franz Mayr, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

68. For details of the FRANZ/DORA arrests, see pp. 207-210.

69. Melcher to Hencke, 16 September 1943, R 901/61138, BA.

70. *Ibid.*

Ernst Köndgen, and Ahmed Akbari (REZA GHULI)⁷¹ south to Bakhtiari tribal country on 28 June 1943,⁷² at Kuh-i-Hebar Darreh, nr Buldazi, 145 km southwest of Isfahan, where they were to await further orders from Mayr, either by W/T or by courier, having been discouraged from contacting Berlin directly. Before leaving Tehran, Köndgen arranged a cipher, call signs, and frequencies with Georg Grille. Although the 50-watt W/T set Köndgen took with him was capable of reaching Belzig, and he knew the correct call signs and frequencies for transmissions to Belzig and Wannsee, Köndgen was under orders from Mayr to route all messages for Berlin through him in Tehran. This was clearly because Mayr wished to retain complete control of an operation he had conceived and implemented without any input from Amt VI or Abwehr II.⁷³ Messages were exchanged between 15 July and 13 August, at first every day, but as time went by less and less frequently, on average every two or three days, with a final flurry every day during the last few days. Their instructions were to spy on Allied supply lines, troop movements, and the oil wells. They were specifically tasked to provide intelligence about convoy loads and the types of aircraft being delivered to the Russians. Not having been provided with any funds, however, Blume was unable to procure any such information.

The tribal chief, Abdul Qasim Khan Bakhtiari (ABDUL RAHMAN), wanted to clear his uncle, Morteza Guli Khan, out of the district and therefore promised Blume that, if he could supply him with the arms he needed to do this, he would help the Germans. The Khan's promise was, however, probably empty, for he was already negotiating terms with the British and, according to Joe Spencer (DSO Persia), had abandoned the German cause by the time the DORA party arrived in his territory on 1 August. Finding himself too far from the TIR to reconnoitre any of the bridges alone, Blume decided to request arms and sabotage materials, and then wait until Germany's side of this bargain had been fulfilled before enlisting Bakhtiari help to carry out a railway reconnaissance in force with thirty-forty armed tribesmen, provided such action

71. Ahmed Akbari, a student who volunteered for the Persian Free Corps and trained with the Abwehr as an agent and W/T operator, was sent out from Berlin via Istanbul by Werner Schüler (Abw I M), arrested in Aleppo, released, and finally reached Persia on 5 May 1942. Akbari never transmitted to Germany, which led Schüler to believe that he had not reached his destination; however, since Akbari was expected to find unaided a W/T set for himself in Persia, the lack of transmissions should not have surprised Schüler. After the DORA arrests, Akbari was ultimately arrested in September 1943 on British orders by the Persian Police. Under interrogation, it was Akbari who blew KISS, which enabled the Allies to play KISS back as a notional agent. See Akbari's full story in Appendix C, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Also in f 64ab, KV 2/1478, TNA.

72. Several sources confirm this date. Georg Grille alone maintained that the DORA mission departed on 10 July 1943. First and second interrogations of Georg Grille, 27-28 August 1943, ff 5b-5c, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

73. Interrogation of Werner Rockstroh, 4 September 1943, f 8b, WO 208/1588B, TNA. According to Rockstroh, around the end of July, a message was received by Mayr ordering that DORA should send all but the most important messages direct to LEIT (i.e. the SD Havel-Institut at Wannsee), not BURG (the Abwehr station at Belzig). Mayr seems to have countermanded this order, having become completely disillusioned with the SD's executive competence. See also p. 192.

had been approved first by Mayr. Blume's hesitancy and reluctance to operate alone were also no doubt intensified by his acute awareness of the inadequacy of his own training as a saboteur.

On the night of 1-2 August 1943, DORA was resupplied by parachute drop in response to Blume's requests, forwarded to Berlin by Mayr, but the entire payload was dropped offzone by about 60-70 km too far southeast (near Isfahan).⁷⁴ It was not until nearly two weeks later that Blume managed to find what was left of the payload: most of the arms and equipment, intended to arm the Bakhtiari and enable Blume to sabotage the railway, had been looted by tribesmen, although some unspecified items were ultimately recovered. Most of the fuses were gone; the inaccuracy of the supply drop had rendered DORA pointless.⁷⁵ So, after two months of idleness, during which no intelligence was obtained and no sabotage carried out, and after Mayr and the other members of the FRANZ expedition had been arrested, Blume and Köndgen were lured to Tehran by CICI and were captured on a lonely road north of the city on 29 August 1943.⁷⁶

74. On 2 August 1943, a heavy aircraft was reported at 0017 hrs by ALO Hamadan flying E and SE at approximately 1500 metres; also, LOSC Recovery Company, Kermanshah reported a multi-engined aircraft flying W at 0400 hrs, probably the same aircraft. See MI2a, Unidentified aircraft over Persia and North Iraq, 17 June-11 September 1943, 22 October 1943, f 25a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

75. Report on sabotage interrogation of Günther Blume by Lt J. S. Crompton at Cairo on 24 November 1943, f 9a, KV 2/1483, TNA. As sabotage material, Blume requested 300 kg of British explosive (which he considered the best), 100 m of detonating fuse, 100 m of safety fuse, 2 magnetic coils, 60-105 fuses of various kinds, 30 British time fuses, 100 detonators, and 200 British hand grenades. I can find no trace of what arms and ammunition were requested. Interrogation of Günther Blume, 8 September 1943, f 11c, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

76. Ibid.

4.5 Operation BERTA



Figure 4-3. *Otto Schwerdt.* (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv).

This operation was referred to by the Germans as BERTA; however, care must be taken when reading primary sources dated before March/April 1943 to distinguish it from Operation FRANZ, which Mayr and the Abwehr originally called BERTA. The designated mission leader was Otto Schwerdt (see Figure 4-3), a Waffen-SS officer from Saarland described by Berlin as “a real soldier and well-trained saboteur,” known to us mainly because he was a role model for young Werner Rockstroh of the FRANZ mission and clearly the object of his hero-worship; Schwerdt had been Rockstroh’s platoon commander during special-forces training at Oranienburg. Under interrogation, Rockstroh spoke adoringly of Schwerdt as “a wonderful officer,” but felt that he ought to be in command of a company at the front rather than on a special mission to Persia. Before being promoted to second lieutenant, Schwerdt had certainly distinguished himself on the Russian front, winning the Iron Cross First Class and the Silver Wound Badge.⁷⁷ Accompanying Schwerdt was to be the able Otto Grüning, an old Persia hand who had recently—and unusually—transferred from Abwehr II to the SD, no doubt because he was a convinced Nazi. Grüning, originally recruited from the ranks of the Brandenburgers’ Interpreters Training Unit in March 1943 by Gottfried Müller,⁷⁸ was in fact so trusted by Mayr

77. Interrogation of Werner Rockstroh, 23-24 August 1943, f 2b, WO 208/1588B, TNA, and Preliminary note on case of Franz Mayr and captured parachutists (Rockstroh and Holzapfel), DSP/3137, f 4a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

78. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C14 Organizations occasionally collaborating with Abw missions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

that he asked Berlin to designate Grüning as his successor, should anything untoward befall him, leaving the FRANZ organization headless.⁷⁹

Franz Mayr certainly prepared for the BERTA group to land 40 kilometres south of Tehran on 6 August 1943 to reinforce and supply FRANZ, but eventually became resigned to the fact that they would never come. To avoid the problems encountered by the FRANZ group at Siah Kuh (Landing Ground B), including their lengthy camel trek, the BERTA group were supposed to drop at an alternative landing ground near Rud-i-Shur, very dangerous because of its close proximity to Varamin and to the capital and the fact that the site had to be illuminated by car headlights.⁸⁰ BERTA appears to have been delayed initially because the aircraft had an accident taking off from Simferopol, after which the operation was at some point and for no known reason aborted. Spencer's team originally stated speculatively in early September that BERTA might have landed at the end of August and therefore posed a significant potential threat to the railway.⁸¹ Three months later, however, CICI Tehran acknowledged that the operation had been deferred or cancelled.⁸²

4.6 Operation MADER

Planned for mid-May 1943 by Hans-Otto Wagner, Operation MADER was named for a Major Mader, who was allegedly a former military advisor to General Chiang Kai Chek. He was to be accompanied by an Azeri Turkoman. The method of insertion was to be by captured Soviet or French aircraft, piloted by a Russian. Mader and his Turkoman were both W/T-trained at Berlin-Matthäikirchplatz in March 1943. The mission was finally aborted owing to a false start (whatever that means) at Simferopol. Mader made an official complaint and wanted to set out again, but it is thought that he never left. There is no trace of any execution in the German, British, or American records. However, if a second attempt was made, since the mission was destined for the Soviet zone of Persia, its arrival and the fate of Mader and the Turkoman would not normally have been made known to CICI Tehran. The mission's purpose is unknown.⁸³

79. For more about Otto Grüning, see pp. 136n64, 150n113.

80. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 20a, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Also see Table C-4.

81. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 10, 6 September 1943, f 21a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

82. Middle East Summary No. 161, 22 December 1943, f 86x, KV 2/1480, TNA.

83. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

4.7 Operation MAMMUT

Operation MAMMUT⁸⁴ derived its codename from the Kurdish leader Sheikh Mahmoud (or Mahmud) Barzanji (1878-1956) (MAUS), who was an ardent nationalist and briefly self-proclaimed King of Kurdistan (1922-1924) (see Figure 4-4). Although this operation was executed and terminated entirely in Iraqi Kurdistan (i.e. within the CICI Baghdad area, as opposed to that of CICI Tehran), its inclusion in this study is justified in that it was intended as a regional mission to all Kurds, regardless of their location with respect to the international frontiers between Iraq, Persia, and Turkey—considered artificial by mission leader Gottfried Müller.⁸⁵ Indeed, Müller’s plan was to locate and join forces with Sheikh Agha Bassar, whose Pizhdar tribal territory extended into Persian Kurdistan (Western Azerbaijan province).⁸⁶ Contrary to German opinion, which tended to oversimplify and demonize Britain’s role in relation to the Kurdish nationalists, Sheikh Mahmoud was not implacably anti-British, reserving most of his distemper in fact for the Iraqi Arabs, whom he loathed, even though political circumstances repeatedly forced him into military confrontation with the mandatory power.⁸⁷

One British officer has described how military operations in Kurdistan were conducted by both the British and the Kurds with the utmost civility and high regard for each other:

My campaign against Sheikh Mahmud was a most gentlemanly affair. We stopped our battles at mealtimes and there were always mutual expressions of regret if anyone got hit by a bullet. ... The leaders of the other side sometimes called in for a chat with us.⁸⁸

When faced in 1932 with the prospect of being controlled by the Hashemites in Baghdad, Mahmoud would clearly have preferred to have had the British continue to occupy Kurdistan. Indeed, at least one contemporary source close to the Sheikh has said that Mahmoud was “politeness itself and ... a loyal servant of Britain,” adding:

It was always Sheikh Mahmud’s policy to emphasize that he was not antagonistic to Britain or, as he averred, to our continuing the Mandate. What he disliked, he said, was the idea of Arab rule, and he considered that his own was as good as any other Eastern administration. ...

84. The obscure proposed name was originally Operation SAID SCHA(H)SWAR. See Operation “Said Scha(h)swar,” 5 December 1942, ff 2-13, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

85. But not by Major Kuebart of FHO, who expressly forbade Müller to cross the border into neutral Turkey. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C14(c) Generalstab Fremde Heere/Ost, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

86. Operation “Said Scha(h)swar,” 5 December 1942, ff 2, 5, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

87. For a contemporary OSS synopsis of Mahmoud’s activities before the Second World War, see Kurds threatened with armed force, G 5438, 14 September 1944, CIA Research Tool (CREST) document, NARA.

88. Colonel MacDonald, quoted in Hamilton, *Road through Kurdistan*, 139.

Don't you believe that the influence of Sheikh Mahmud is destroyed. It is not. He can leap to life again just as he did before. And he will go down in history as the hero of the Kurdish people.⁸⁹

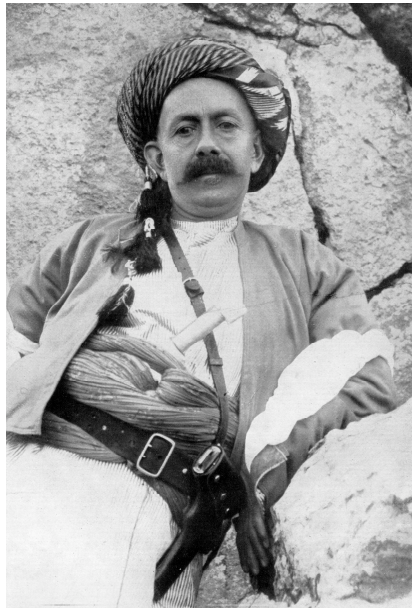


Figure 4-4. MAMMUT: *Sheikh Mahmoud (or Mahmud) Barzanji.*

This, then, was the charismatic leader—in temporary exile in Baghdad—whom Gottfried Müller met “by chance” during a euphemistically termed “student trip” via Turkey, Rhodes, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Transjordan to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1935-1936, which was in reality probably an Abwehr reconnaissance mission. Eager to garner evidence of pro-German sentiment among the Kurds, the young Müller (he was only twenty-one at the time) was quick to notice a portrait of the Führer prominently displayed alongside pictures of Arab and Persian national leaders in a Chamchamal teahouse. Müller seems to have convinced himself that Sheikh Mahmoud was anti-British largely on the basis of the Sheikh’s “meaningful look” when asked about his viewpoint and of his enigmatic statement: “It isn’t evening yet.” As for the Kurds at large, Müller had this to say:

The Kurdish people are kept aware of the global political situation by wandering storytellers who get their information from Baghdad and elsewhere. With enthusiasm they tell of freedom-loving Germany and her national hero, the Führer. However, all they really know about him is that he will make Germany great again, and that his enemies are their enemies: the British and the Jews. These facts are enough to make the Kurds feel very close to Germany.⁹⁰

89. Captain “Chakbo” Clarke (political officer and British adviser to Sheikh Mahmoud), “one of the leading authorities on the language, customs, and character of the Kurdish people,” quoted in Hamilton, *Road through Kurdistan*, 137-140. Mahmoud considered Clarke his “sincerest friend.” *Ibid.*, 137.

90. Operation “Said Scha(h)swar,” 5 December 1942, f 3, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

Müller's original operational plan, conceived during the summer of 1942 when German armies were rampaging across southern Russia, with every prospect of invading the Middle East through Persia and Iraq, was to contact Sheikh Mahmoud (no longer in exile and living close to the Persian border) and induce him to help Müller to seize and hold the Kirkuk oilfields until the arrival of German airborne troops, not unlike Charles Bedaux's Operation ABADAN in southwest Persia.⁹¹ In this way, Müller intended to prevent the Allies from setting fire to the oilfields before their withdrawal. However, after Stalingrad, realizing that there would never be any German airborne operations in Kurdistan, Müller appears to have abandoned the preservation plan and to have decided to convert the MAMMUT operation into a sabotage raid. At this point, concerned about Müller's decision, Abwehr I, who had hitherto taken an active interest in Müller's plans, convened an important planning meeting in Berlin at the end of March 1943 to clarify the Abwehr II mission's objectives.⁹²

The presence at this meeting of Major Wilhelm Kuebart (see Figure 4-5), head of the FHO Persian desk and subsequently head of Abw I H, is significant, for Kuebart was primarily an administrative liaison officer with FHO who did not normally deal directly with agents or operational details. The son of an old East Prussian Junker family, a career soldier and nationalist, considered to have been "the most efficient officer in the Abwehr," Kuebart greatly interested the Americans and the Soviets as a source of information after the war. As a consequence, there is a fat file on him at College Park (and one at Kew) from which much can be learned about many aspects of Abwehr organization and activities in the Middle East and elsewhere. Kuebart's hands-on approach to administrative affairs in the field brought him into direct contact with Paul Leverkuehn at KONO. On one such trip to Turkey, Kuebart got into trouble for stating anti-Nazi views and was narrowly saved from arrest by Georg Hansen, his immediate superior and close friend, who succeeded Admiral Canaris as head of the rump Abwehr in February 1944.⁹³ Kuebart subsequently became involved in the 20 July 1944 plot against Hitler, planned mainly by Hansen, and was arrested by the Gestapo three days later, kept in irons for a month, and tried before the People's Court in September-October 1944. One of the

91. Ibid. For details on Bedaux, see pp. 125-132. For a critical appraisal of Müller's lack of strategic realism and other aspects of the futility and failure of MAMMUT, see Bernd Lemke, "Aufstandsversuche an der Oberfläche: Das Unternehmen 'Mammut' (Irak) von 1943," *Krieg und Heimat* (14 February 2011), <http://www.lemkegeschichte.de>.

92. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA; Akten-Notiz über die Besprechungen des Einsatzführers Lt. Müller mit Mj. Kuebart bzw. Sf. Weiss vom Gen.St.Fr.H./Ost(III), 31 March 1943, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

93. For a synopsis of Georg Hansen's career and activities, see Helke Renner, "Widerstand bedeutete Tod," *Fränkischer Sonntag*, 18-19 July 2009.

few compromised officers to escape execution, Kuebart was dishonourably discharged from the German Army and spent the rest of the war as a civilian under Gestapo surveillance.⁹⁴

Kuebart, whose FHO unit had been transferred for some reason from General Staff HQ at Zossen, was stationed most inconveniently at the remote Camp Fritz, near Annaberg in the far south of Saxony, where Müller attended at least one planning meeting and found security to be extremely tight. The interest of FHO—normally responsible for operations in Russia—in MAMMUT is to be explained by the fact that the Iraqi-Turkish frontier formed the arbitrary demarcation line between the interests of FHW and FHO, with the result that, though under British command, PAIFORCE was considered an “Eastern” rather than a “Western” army, unlike the British Eighth Army in North Africa for instance.⁹⁵



Figure 4-5. *Wilhelm Kuebart.* (Photo courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration).

Kuebart’s attendance at the March 1943 planning meeting ensured a lively review and discussion of Müller’s intentions and priorities, during which it was agreed that Müller’s first priority must be the acquisition of badly needed military intelligence about western Persia, northern Iraq, and southeastern Turkey rather than sabotage.⁹⁶ Müller should concentrate on

94. RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA. Kuebart was exceptionally able: he became one of the youngest colonels in the German Army, which earned him the nickname *Milchbart* (bum fluff). Special Officer (with the equivalent rank of major) Willy Weiss, who also attended the March 1943 meeting, was Kuebart’s ADC and an old Persia hand. Of all contemporary sources it is Kuebart who has left us the clearest description of the sorry decline of the Abwehr prior to the SD takeover.

95. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C14 Organizations occasionally collaborating with Abw missions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

96. I have included Operation MAMMUT in this case study because, although its dropzone was located in Iraqi Kurdistan, Müller intended to use the tribal lands of Sheikh Agha Bassar in the high mountains on both sides

finding out as much information as he could about the Allied lines of communication and supply in the region rather than attempting to damage them. To help Müller in the “meticulous preparation of the operation,” Kuebart promised him access to the abundance of FHO intelligence material on the region to be found at General Staff HQ, including a large number of photographs. Particular attention was to be paid to roads, railways, bridges, towns and villages, and tribes.⁹⁷ Such planning, after Stalingrad, is of course a measure of the new attitude of much chastened optimism then to be found among OKW and Abwehr officers during the spring and early summer of 1943, still hopeful before Kursk that the summer campaign on the Russian front would achieve a reversal of German fortunes. Kuebart, ever a military intelligencer, was also clearly anxious to steer Müller away from considerations of political expediency, such as the planners at Abwehr II had no doubt instilled in him.

However, as the reality of the defeat at Stalingrad finally set in, the MAMMUT active-espionage priority had to be modified yet again in June 1943 and subordinated to a sabotage and subversion initiative, aimed at stirring up trouble among the Kurds and fomenting a state of general unrest in Kurdistan, in order to contain as many British forces as possible. Additionally, Müller’s new plan provided for the despatch of a stage-two supply mission (MAMMUT 2) with arms, ammunition, and explosives for the Kurds a month or two after the successful insertion of MAMMUT.⁹⁸ A third, essentially noncombatant and highly idealistic mission, MAMMUT 3, was to be despatched much later, when Kurdistan had been “liberated,” providing the tribes with experts in reconstruction and development. The personnel required for the third stage were specified by Müller as two German physicians (one male and one female), a German engineer, a German geologist, and a German economist.⁹⁹

In the end, according to a memorandum by Erwin Lahousen, head of Abwehr II, Müller’s greatly simplified objectives immediately prior to insertion looked like this: (1) make contact with Kurdish personalities; (2) *identify and reconnoitre* primary sabotage targets; and (3) *prepare for* sabotage operations.¹⁰⁰ The area of activity and chief interest was defined as the

of the Iraqi-Persian border as the base for MAMMUT 1 and 2, and the mission may have intended to join forces in Persia with Operation WERWOLF (see p. 160). As an ardent supporter of Kurdish nationalism, Müller saw the international frontiers that transect the region as an irrelevance. See Operation “Said Scha(h)swar,” 5 December 1942, f 5, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

97. Akten-Notiz über die Besprechungen des Einsatzführers Lt. Müller mit Mj. Kuebart bzw. Sf. Weiss vom Gen.St.Fr.H./Ost(III), 31 March 1943, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

98. For further details on Operation MAMMUT 2, see pp. 150-151.

99. Vortragsnotiz, 26 June 1943, RW 5/271, BA-MA. For further details, on Operation MAMMUT 3, see p. 152.

100. Chef Abw II to Chef Abw I, 9 July 1943, ff 22-23, RW 5/271, BA-MA. My italics. In the light of these redefined objectives, Müller’s MAMMUT group left without any sabotage material, counting on Oehler’s MAMMUT 2 group to bring it with them.

northern Iraq and western Persia regions of Kurdistan; however, Müller envisaged an extension of this zone to include ultimately the whole of Iraq, western Persia, southeastern Turkey (if Turkey entered the war on the side of the Allies), and possibly even Syria. Dividing his mission objectives into three distinct purposes, Müller elaborated his final plan as follows:

Espionage. (1) To obtain information with the help of an organization—either already existing ... or still to be founded. ... (2) To send certain people to places of interest for espionage. (3) To make enquiries from native residents or travelling persons. Type of information required: movement of troops; transport of war material; location of camps; details about production, oil pipelines, construction of roads, railways, aerodromes, etc.

Tying up of Allied forces. Through disturbances at various points situated as far as possible away from each other, and through inciting various tribes to active rebellion.

Sabotage, disruption of military traffic, and destruction of military objectives. Lines of communication: roads, railways, bridges. Transport: Rolling stock and [motor transport]. Means of communication: W/T, telegraph and telephone, cables, etc. Industrial and oil sabotage: Minor sabotage in depots, ammunition and supply dumps.¹⁰¹

While Müller, together with Kuebart's aide, Special Officer Willy Weiss (WEBER),¹⁰² was studying and preparing the FHO materials, supplemented by material from the Austrian National Library in Vienna, an extensive training programme for mission participants was to be held in Austria during April and May 1943. It would include training in W/T, languages, navigation by sextant, parachuting, and regional orientation (infrastructure, targets, geography, politics, and military aspects).¹⁰³

Besides Müller himself (promoted prior to insertion from lieutenant to acting major), the personnel selected for the mission were his deputy, Fritz Hoffmann (promoted to acting lieutenant) as W/T operator, Georg Konieczny (promoted to acting lieutenant), and Kurdish V-Mann Rashid Ramzi, who was to act as interpreter. Left behind were six men who would be ready to train others for MAMMUT 2 and 3. Accompanying the group as far as the Crimea were the group's liaison officer, Second Lieutenant Messow (MESSNER), and Müller's brother Hans (or Johannes), who was to handle all radio communications with the group in Simferopol exclusively and relay them to Berlin.

101. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

102. Sonderführer (K) Weiss was a merchant-importer in Persia for ten years and was in charge of matters pertaining to Persian economics and infrastructure at OKH. Describing him as clever and anti-Nazi, Kuebart considered Weiss very suitable for intelligence work; he spoke Farsi, English, and French and was well travelled. See Interim Report on the case of Wilhelm Kuebart, Camp 020, August 1945, f 79, KV 2/410, TNA (also in RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 472, NARA).

103. Akten-Notiz über die Besprechung des VO Leutnant Dr Messow mit dem Einsatzführer Leutnant Gottfr. Müller, gehalten in Brandenburg (Quenz) am 3.4.1943, 5 April 1943, RW 5/271, BA-MA. For a detailed overview of the MAMMUT training programme, see pp. 108-112.

Clearly, all Müller's plans hinged on the presumed compliance of as complex and canny a political leader as Sheikh Mahmoud, with—as we have seen—a past record of pro-British loyalty: something which the idealistic Müller seems to have been unaware of or to have chosen to ignore. Fortunately for him perhaps, Müller's simplistic faith in Mahmoud's pro-Axis sentiments was never put to the test, for—inexplicably—the MAMMUT stick was dropped a full 220 kilometres off-zone, at least forty minutes' flying time west of their intended target near the Persian border, and much of their equipment was lost.¹⁰⁴ Even those items that could be retrieved had to be abandoned in the team's eagerness to strike out for their intended dropzone in the largely uninhabited mountains northeast of Erbil (i.e. in the Rowanduz region, south of Rayat and the Gardaneh-ye-Shinak Pass). After ascertaining that they had been dropped near the River Tigris, not far from Mosul, and despite suffering acutely from the intense heat, the group covered a considerable distance (81 km) on foot and briefly by horse and donkey, reaching Erbil in four days.¹⁰⁵ There it was decided to press on towards the mountains, to the village of Benisilauya, not far from Erbil, which belonged to Ramzi's cousin, where the group sought refuge in a nearby cave, and Müller attempted to evolve a new plan of action. Now focussing on Turkish Kurdistan, where he thought he might, if Turkey were to declare war on Germany, rally Turkish Kurds to fight against the Turkish authorities, Müller decided to contact Paul Leverkuehn at KONO in Istanbul. Müller's plan was to send Konieczny across the Turkish frontier to get himself arrested, interned, and brought to the attention of the German diplomatic representatives, who would ultimately secure his release and direct him to Leverkuehn. Ramzi was instructed to find a guide in Erbil to lead Konieczny to the northern frontier; meanwhile a group of smugglers agreed to guide Müller, Hoffmann, and Ramzi to the Zagros mountains. After Ramzi had left for Erbil, the three Germans spent the night in a lonely house near their cave, which was approached on the morning of 28 June 1943 by an Iraqi police detachment, to whom the Germans surrendered without offering any resistance. Ramzi was arrested later.¹⁰⁶

When the members of the expedition landed, they were originally to be armed to the teeth. In March, Lieutenant Colonel Putz had requisitioned the following weapons for the mission: eight pistols, eight revolvers, one silent machine pistol, eight British rifles, four Russian machine pistols, one light machine gun, four British jackknives, four German parachutist's knives, one sporting rifle with telescopic sight, together with over 7000 rounds of live

104. The problems associated with the MAMMUT parachute drop are discussed thoroughly on pp. 184-187.

105. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA; Müller, *Im brennenden Orient*, 76-103. Müller was an experienced equestrian, as probably was the Kurd Ramzi; of the other two parachutists' horsemanship we know nothing.

106 Ibid.

ammunition for various calibres and an unspecified amount of dynamite. In addition, Müller was to bring with him twenty-five ceremonial daggers and thirty Brownings as gifts for the tribesmen.¹⁰⁷ However, probably because of the need to reduce the payload of the Condor aircraft and because they were no longer required to carry out sabotage operations, the expedition actually set out lightly armed with only four rifles, two machine pistols, one sporting rifle, one dual-purpose Verrey light pistol, and no explosives. Other gifts taken included five gold cigarette cases, some gold fountain pens and pencils, and ten wrist watches.¹⁰⁸

After returning to the Crimea, the jumpmaster discovered evidence that the second cargo canister would probably never have been found, for its parachute had snagged on the Condor's nonretractable tailwheel, actually causing a severe jolt to the aircraft that was felt by the parachutists before they jumped. As this large canister (weighing at least 125 kg) had contained the pedal dynamo for the two radio sets, Paulus feared that its loss would have seriously jeopardized the entire mission.¹⁰⁹ What he did not realize of course was that all four canisters containing Müller's weaponry and his W/T equipment had had to be abandoned on landing, when the men, unexpectedly finding themselves in open fields, were forced to make a dash for cover before sunrise.

Certain sums of money (bribes) were also requisitioned for the expedition, as follows: £1000 ("gift" for Sheikh Mahmoud); £500 ("gift" for Sheikh Haji Agha Bassar, whose tribal lands straddled the Iraqi-Persian border); £500 ("gifts" for other pro-German sheikhs, purchases, etc); RM 15,000 (funds for "preparations," i.e. presumably for extensive travel, accommodation, and daily expenses during training); and \$1000 (only), together with an unspecified amount of Persian and Iraqi currency, for sundry expenses in the field. Other noteworthy items packed included secret ink pills, disguised as laxatives, and poison: one ampoule of white powder was issued to each participant before takeoff from the Crimea.¹¹⁰

Two things about this operation remain problematic for the historian and are dealt with elsewhere in this study: (1) Müller's contention that his mission was sabotaged by the SD¹¹¹ and (2) Müller's allegation that the British (and Iraqis) mistreated and even tortured him and his team

107. Anforderungen für o. Unternehmen [MAMMUT], 20 March 1943, ff 35-37, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

108. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

109. Sprungeinsatzbericht über Unternehmen Mammut (I. Gruppe), 12 July 1943, ff 64-67, RW 5/271, BA-MA. The 14-watt radio sets were of Type 85/14, considered the best and most receptive German set available at the time. Only one was to be used for transmissions; the other, for spare parts. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, E18 W/T, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. See Appendix C2.

110. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

111. See pp. 186-187.

in captivity. The difficulty with these issues is of course the lack of anything but circumstantial evidence on both counts. Consequently, nothing can be deduced with certainty; any conclusions drawn remain speculative.

4.8 Operation MAMMUT 2

From the time of its inception during the summer of 1942, MAMMUT was always planned as a two-phase operation. MAMMUT 2 was to bring to Kurdistan reinforcements, arms, ammunition, explosives, sabotage material (250-300 kg of plastic explosives, 50 pieces of camouflaged coal [extremely difficult to procure], and 50-75 kg of other material, such as rail contact detonators and camouflage for detonating caps [tobacco pipes, toothbrushes, pens, pencils, and clogs]), W/T sets, and other supplies (probably including the propaganda material left behind by Müller because of payload restrictions and the redefinition of their phase-one mission objective by Kuebart and Lahousen), as well as further presents for the tribal chiefs. Thus the initial reconnaissance expedition would be converted into a fully-fledged sabotage and subversion mission.¹¹²

To this end, Gottfried Müller recruited his brother Hans (Johannes) as W/T operator to be based in Simferopol, relaying messages from the augmented group to Berlin, and Second Lieutenant Messow as liaison officer in Berlin. Other designated members of the second-phase group were Dr Karl-Heinz Oehler (astronomer) as leader, Karl Schmidt (dentist, medical adviser, and oil expert) and Herbert Schmidt (Farsi linguist)—“Little Schmidt” and “Tall Schmidt” respectively—Rudolf von Keleita (Arabic linguist), and a Kurd named Aloisi. The services of two other members, a Turkish linguist named Dr Kopf and a second oilfield expert named Adam Mayr were requisitioned but could not be obtained. Shortly after joining the MAMMUT group at the end of March 1943, some time in April or May, two Brandenburger interpreters—Otto Grüning and Staff Sergeant Vorndran—transferred from the Abwehr to the SD for reasons unknown, but probably personal. Grüning’s ciphering and deciphering work for the German Foreign Office was used as cover for his activity as an Abwehr courier between Berlin and Turkey. His departure constituted a significant loss for the mission, for Müller considered him the best cipherer/decipherer of the whole party.¹¹³

112. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

113. Ibid. Franz Mayr subsequently nominated Grüning as a prime candidate for the FRANZ mission. It remains incomprehensible that the SD should have passed him over in favour of the inexperienced Rockstroh and Grille, and the incompetent Holzapfel. The only possible reason is that Grüning had so recently transferred from the Abwehr that he had yet to gain the confidence of the SD planners. However, they appear to have

Oehler was apparently not keen on following Müller to Kurdistan as leader of the second phase, for he had dislocated both his ankles when landing hard during the practice parachute jump at Wiener Neustadt on 17 April 1943. However, Müller insisted that Oehler would be quite capable of leading the second phase provided his ankles were properly bandaged. So Oehler was to remain on standby in Berlin, probably for a couple of months, awaiting a message from Müller to the effect that MAMMUT had established itself in Kurdistan and was ready to be reinforced.¹¹⁴ Oehler was to wait in vain. By 23 July 1943, details of the fate that had befallen Müller's group were known to Putz and Eisenberg, for they wired Istanbul as follows:

British Military Attaché has informed Acting Chief of Turkish General Staff that three German officers have been captured. ... Apparent violation of Turkish air space. ... Further wire from Baghdad indicates that the German parachutists are to be treated as spies. [German] Foreign Office says it can do nothing.¹¹⁵

Inevitably, the second and third phases of MAMMUT had to be scrapped, for the capture of the first-phase group meant that the crucial element of surprise was lost, and the British-led security forces in Iraqi and Persian Kurdistan would be on heightened alert for months to come. Besides, Müller's role as leader of and driving force behind all phases of the operation was indispensable, and the essential faith of Mahmoud's Kurds in the German cause would have been irreversibly undermined by Müller's failure. The irony remains of course that it was not Müller himself who had failed; it was others who had failed him. And, in a sense, he had won a small Pyrrhic victory, for those who had allegedly ruined his chances by queering his pitch had also scuttled their own operational prospects. The alerting of British security forces meant that Kurdistan became nonviable for SD operations too. Consequently, the SD covert operation whose scheduling supposedly conflicted with that of MAMMUT was cancelled and never subsequently executed.¹¹⁶

wisely included Grüning in their plans to drop the highly competent Otto Schwerdt into the Tehran area with a sabotage/supply group. See pp. 140-141. For more about Grüning, see p. 136n64.

114. Ibid. It was Lahousen who documented the timeline of one or two months in Chef Abw II to Chef Abw I, 9 July 1943, ff 22-23, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

115. Funkspruch (ZWILLING [Putz]-EISEN [Eisenberg]), 23 July 1943, f 62, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

116. See p. 174.

4.9 Operation MAMMUT 3

A third phase was appended to Gottfried Müller's plans shortly before his departure from the Crimea. It was left up to Messow, after his return to Berlin on 18 June 1943, to implement Müller's instructions, presumably under the watchful eyes of Wagner and Eisenberg.

The immediate aim of this phase-three expedition was to have been the dissemination of German propaganda. The members were to have been guided by a long-range policy and were eventually to have carried out their respective duties in medical and other specialized work for the benefit of a new, independent Kurdistan. To this end, each expedition member was highly qualified: a physician who specialized in tropical medicine, a female gynaecologist (Maria Effinger),¹¹⁷ a civil engineer (Lieutenant Mühlmann), a geologist, an agriculturalist, and other specialists as required.¹¹⁸

How much training these phase-three participants received is unclear; however they appear to have joined Müller's physical training programme at some point during the summer, which was not discontinued by the group until the end of August 1943, by which time MAMMUT 3 had been cancelled.¹¹⁹

4.10 Operation ANTON

When Berthold Schulze-Holthus first encountered the three young men of the ANTON expedition, who could not even ride a horse, he tells us he was sceptical about their ability to survive in tribal Persia. To Martin Kurmis (see Figure 4-6), their leader, he purportedly said: "It seems extraordinary ... that the SD doesn't prepare its people better for a commando jump in Persia." And Kurmis responded: "Oh, excuse me. We've had special training with Skorzeny in Oranienburg, in Zistersdorf, and in Wiener Neustadt ... we've been very well trained in blowing up oil pipes and pumping stations."¹²⁰ This brief exchange alone encapsulates the incipient misunderstanding that was to dog the undertaking from the start. Schulze-Holthus needed well-trained, professional operatives who could become quickly acclimatized to Qashgai culture, and who could act supportively and deal shrewdly with the tribesmen. Instead, Berlin had sent the thuggish Kurmis, a mentally unstable Nazi fanatic, accompanied by the ill-prepared sabotage

117. Effinger was a 29-year-old unmarried Freiburg University medical student, "an unusually gifted, physically conditioned, tough woman, who had long wished to serve in the tropics." She was due to graduate in February/March 1944, provided the Abwehr were willing to fund the rest of her studies, including training in tropical medicine. This may indicate that MAMMUT 3 was not scheduled to depart until after that. Vortragsnotiz, 26 June 1943, ff 20-21, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

118. Ibid.

119. Funkspruch (ZWILLING [Putz]-EISEN [Eisenberg]), 23 July 1943, f 62, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

120. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 250-251.

team of Kurt Piwonka and Kurt Harbers (nicknamed “Kuchik”), who were actually Waffen-SS W/T operators, not saboteurs (see Figure 4-7).



Figure 4-6. *Martin Kurmis.* (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv).

But the problem with this dialogue in Schulze-Holthus’s postwar memoir is that, while there is no doubt that Schulze-Holthus and Kurmis locked horns from the moment they first met, the conversation as reported by Schulze-Holthus possibly never happened, for he always claimed under interrogation that he never knew until much later, after the group’s capture, that ANTON was an SD operation and that its members were SS—and his interrogators believed him.¹²¹ Yet how could this possibly have been, when Schulze-Holthus’s every instinct must have led him to suspect their true identity? After all, the slightest subcultural nuance would have betrayed the trio’s charade: neither their distinct SS vocabulary—nor their SS ideology, priorities, training, or general attitude in conversation—could possibly have resembled those that Schulze would have expected of Abwehr men. One must remember that, especially when held prisoner in a remote

121. See CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA. In Schulze-Holthus’s memoir (Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 248), Kurmis introduces himself at their first meeting as an SS captain. Apocryphal or not, this anecdote serves to reinforce my view that postwar memoirs of clandestine activities are often less reliable as historical sources than wartime interrogation reports. Once broken, virtually all the personalities I have studied came clean under interrogation, even recanting earlier evidence that was inaccurate. Since the Germans generally believed quite wrongly that the British always summarily executed spies, when captured their prime concern was to cooperate in order to save their necks, and this they all did successfully. After release from internment, however, the desire to sell books may eclipse earlier scruples and lead to flagrant distortions of the truth. A case in point is the postwar memoir of Hans Eppler (see John W. Eppler, *Geheimagent im Zweiten Weltkrieg: Zwischen Berlin, Kairo, und Kairo* [Oldendorf: Schutz, 1974]), who made various claims about Abwehr service in Germany and overseas which have been convincingly challenged and disproved by former Brandenburger and Abwehr man Fred Brandt, who wrote: “Not a single word about Persia and Afghanistan in this book is true.” *Die Nachhut* 31-32 [1 February 1975]: 23), MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

fortress by the Boir Ahmedi for five months, the four Germans lived at very close quarters; on a day-to-day basis, Kurmis's fanatical demeanour alone must have made it impossible for him to hoodwink the wily Schulze-Holthus for long. However, back in Berlin, even Gottfried Müller was led to believe that the ANTON W/T operators were probably from the Brandenburger Signals Company, which is just the impression that Piwonka and Harbers sought to convey to Schulze-Holthus.¹²² So, Müller and everyone else at Abwehr II were presumably spun this yarn, though Putz and Wagner must of course have known the truth. Precisely why the planners would have insisted on establishing such a legend—and why Schulze-Holthus denied detecting it—remains a conundrum; in either case, deniability was hardly an expedient. And yet there is one other possible explanation: that deniability was *perceived to be* an expedient. That Schulze-Holthus knew the truth all along, and that he and the SS men conspired before their capture, agreeing to tell the same story to their British interrogators, presumably because they feared ill-treatment if their SS provenance were revealed. The fact that Piwonka and Harbers initially claimed to be Brandenburgers, presumably confident that Schulze-Holthus would be telling the same story, would support this theory, as would the fact that Schulze-Holthus reverted in his memoir to the truth. Unfortunately, their interrogators did not record any further enquiry into the matter.

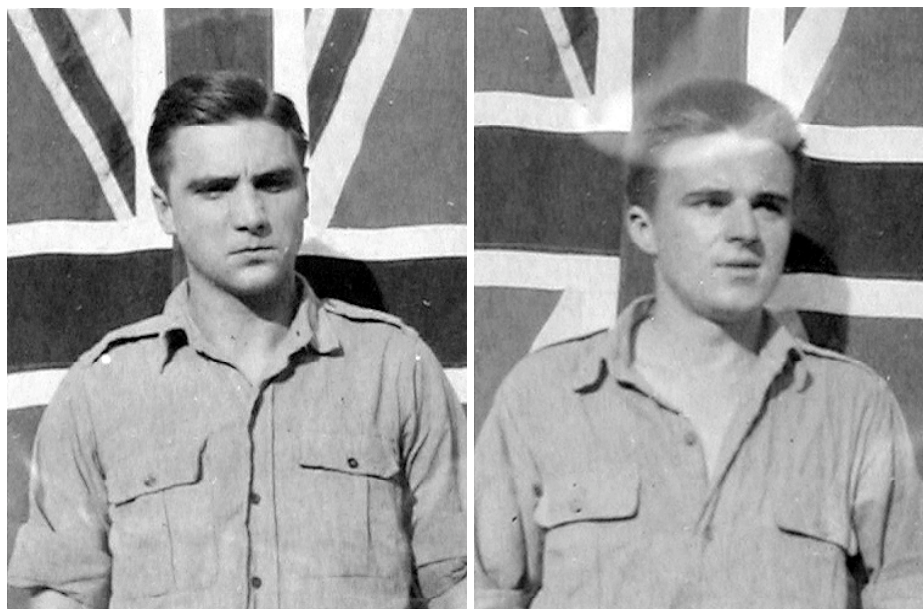


Figure 4-7. Kurt Piwonka (l) and Kurt Harbers (r), 1944. (Photos courtesy of The National Archives).

122. On 12 March 1943, Lieutenant Bender of the Brandenburger Signals Company (Berlin-Krumme Lanke) informed Müller that he was releasing his best W/T operators to take part in an expedition called Operation QASHGAI-FUNKGRUPPE (Qashgai Signals Group). However, Müller continued to believe that the men were actually from the SS. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

We know from the war diary of Erwin Lahousen that, by January 1943, ANTON had officially become a joint operation involving Abw I L, Abwehr II, and the SD.¹²³ The fact that both Gräfe and Schuback of VI C appeared at joint planning meetings with their Abwehr counterparts Putz and Wagner at the Tirpitzufer on at least two occasions wearing SS uniforms rather than civilian clothes suggests that there was certainly no attempt at a higher level to conceal the involvement of the SD in the operation. We may also gain insight into the final planning of Operation ANTON from statements made by the Qashgai Brothers, who were helping Putz, Wagner, and Air Force Lieutenant Figulla (the Luftwaffe staff liaison officer) with their regional and tribal expertise, who were introduced by them to the SD planners, and who witnessed at first hand the SD's evident reliance at such joint meetings on the expertise and resources of Abwehr II when preparing for the ANTON mission.¹²⁴ But the question remains, why were the SD involved at all? After all, Schulze-Holthus was not SD: he was a Luftwaffe air-intelligence officer working for Abw I L. It was therefore solely the Abwehr's responsibility to reinforce and resupply him. The SD appear to have used the fact that ANTON was also tasked to bring Mayr a W/T set—presumably at SD request and originally as a courtesy extended by the Abwehr—as a pretext to bully the Abwehr into transferring the entire mission to SD control, just as they did with Operation FRANZ. Presumably someone at the Abwehr, probably at a very high level, caved in to SD pressure; we'll never know who—perhaps Lahousen or perhaps even Canaris himself. Or maybe the increasingly overextended and underresourced Abwehr were only too glad to concede to the SD, given the latter's easy access to supplies and transport. Certainly we know that Wagner and Figulla were struggling to find ways and means of having aircraft cover the huge distance safely and to find a place on the tableland between the Qashgai and Bakhtiari country which could still be reached by Ju 290. It was precisely in the context of such logistical difficulties, according to Gottfried Müller, that, about March 1943, a joint meeting between Abwehr and SD members took place in order to organize the ANTON mission, almost as if the SD had come to the Abwehr's aid.¹²⁵ Clearly, what the SD lacked in regional expertise, they made up for with logistical leverage. And that is probably how ANTON, while planned jointly by the Abwehr and the SD, came to be executed solely by the SD. But why, if we are to believe him, the true genesis of the operation should have been kept from Schulze-Holthus will forever remain a mystery.

123. Diary entry for 13 January 1943, *Auszüge Lahousen aus dem Kriegstagebuch der Abwehr-Abt. II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr*, Bd. 2, f 110, RW 5/498, BA-MA.

124. SIME Report No. 3, SIME/P5919, March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA.

125. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

The only successful aspect of this initiative, which achieved absolutely nothing in operational terms, was the textbook aerial insertion, which has been described elsewhere.¹²⁶ From the moment of landing, on 17 July 1943, everything quickly unravelled, largely because of personality conflicts. Things began with a serious confrontation between Schulze-Holthus and Kurmis over the question of command, in which the “wily old SABA” prevailed. From then on, having accepted the Abwehr major’s right to lead them, by virtue of his rank, age, experience, education, and social class, the three young SS men bickered constantly among themselves. Piwonka resented not being commissioned before departure, as promised, and resented the last-minute appointment of Kurmis, an Amt VI desk jockey, as mission leader. Harbers was experiencing serious emotional problems after witnessing atrocities during active service in Russia (in today’s jargon, he was suffering from PTSD). Schulze-Holthus disliked Kurmis and Harbers but tolerated Piwonka; the SS men all loathed Schulze-Holthus.



Figure 4-8. *Homayoun Farzad.* (Photo courtesy of The National Archives).

Even before the mission left Germany, Kurmis had insulted and alienated Homayoun Farzad (see Figure 4-8), the Persian interpreter supplied by the Abwehr, rebuking him for questioning the opinion of a German meteorologist and threatening him with a pistol. Unknown to Kurmis and the SD, however, Farzad had a hidden agenda calculated to undermine the mission: one of the Qashgai Brothers (Mohammed Hussain) had actually used his considerable influence with Putz to have Farzad replace the designated German interpreter to the ANTON mission so that Farzad could alert Nasir Khan to the danger of harbouring the SS men and the

126. See p. 189.

need to switch his allegiance from the Nazis to the British, who were now clearly going to win the war. Soon after the group landed, Farzad abandoned them to join Nasir Khan, leaving them without an interpreter/guide/negotiator; fortunately for them, however, they were soon discovered by Schulze-Holthus, who assumed Farzad's role of cultural mentor, otherwise they would probably have met with a violent end.¹²⁷ And slowly, inexorably, Kurmis became mentally unstable, culminating in his suicide shortly after being taken into British custody—it was his second attempt—by plunging to his death through an upper-storey window, dragging his British guard with him.¹²⁸ Once transferred by Nasir Khan from Qashgai territory into Boir Ahmedi custody, there was really nothing for the ANTON group to do and no question of escape. Apart from the remoteness of the Tower of Alibaz in an unsurveyed area near the village of Negareh Khaneh, somewhere northeast of Behbahan, which was not even shown on Allied quarter-inch maps, they were closely guarded—though still armed themselves—by thirty trigger-happy tribal warriors. In addition to their close confinement as “guests” of the Boir Ahmedi tribe, the psychological problems experienced by all the ANTON group members were exacerbated and possibly even partially caused by the fact that they were gradually forced to acknowledge the futility of their mission, spent most of their time in enforced idleness, and drank a great deal of Arak. It was said by contemporary Persian sources that the Germans spent their mornings shooting game and their afternoons and evenings playing with their radios. They also busied themselves clearing a field of fire, removing stones and brushwood from below the ancient fortified tower in which they lived, and manning a machine gun at the top of the tower round the clock. From this vantage point they could see for at least 30 km; any attempt by British security forces to storm their position would have been met with stiff resistance.¹²⁹

Aware of this, Joe Spencer (DSO Persia) carefully weighed the possibilities of capturing the Germans at Negareh Khaneh by force, eventually ruling out the idea on the following grounds: (1) an operation in Boir Ahmedi territory would be dangerous and costly, requiring large numbers of experienced British or Indian mountain troops who should not be drawn on for

127. Spencer to Kellar, 29 May 1944, f 58a, KV 2/1469, TNA. When Kermit Roosevelt visited Khosrow Khan Qashgai in Shiraz in 1947, he heard Khosrow's version of Operation ANTON, including the story of Farzad's hidden agenda. See Roosevelt, *Countercoup*, 64-65.

128. Spencer to Kellar, 29 May 1944, f 58a, KV 2/1469, TNA. Both Farzad and Schulze-Holthus describe Kurmis's drunkenness and several instances of his irascible nature and erratic behaviour. The question of Kurmis's possible clinical insanity remains moot; Schulze-Holthus was certainly horrified by the blank expression in Kurmis's eyes, which he described on another occasion as “mad.” Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 261-263, 312-314, 315-317.

129. For more about the ANTON group and the Boir Ahmedi, see a recently translated eye-witness account by a tribesman who was a teenager at the time in Ata Taheri, *Deutsche Agenten bei iranischen Stämmen, 1942-1944: Ein Augenzeugenbericht*, trans. Burkhard Ganzer (Berlin: Schwarz, 2008).

what might prove to be a wild goose chase; (2) the Germans' well-prepared position would make it extremely difficult to conceal troop movements from them; and (3) the territory was "extremely difficult, impassable to M/T, and uncharted," and "guides could not be relied upon to keep their mouths shut."¹³⁰ The bombing of Negareh Khaneh and other Qashgai and Boir Ahmedi settlements was also considered but ruled out mainly because of possible political objections to bombing what was technically Allied territory. To Spencer the only solution seemed to be that of "slow and tortuous intrigue with the tribes, backed up by the use of any threats and force available."¹³¹ Fortunately, the capable negotiator Bill Magan of the Indian IB came to Spencer's aid and, together with the equally shrewd Area Liaison Officer (ALO) from Shiraz, Major R. Jackson, succeeded in persuading Nasir Khan, after the *Ilkhan's* powerful mother had sanctioned the release,¹³² that it was in his best interests to surrender the Germans immediately. As Magan described it:

We ... had to edge him into a position where we could force him to give up the Germans without offering or promising him anything in exchange. ... I pointed out that at the moment, against our wish, we were forced to look on Nasir Khan and the Qashgai tribe as our enemies, as they persisted in harbouring German soldiers. ... Lastly, I said that we were not without influence, and asked Nasir Khan whether, despite the fact that we could make no promises to him, he did not think it was worth conducting his affairs in such a manner as to gain our friendship, rather than to preserve the hostility which was not of our making, and which we did not want. Major Jackson hammered in the point, and Nasir Khan broke and gave us the written instructions for the handing over of the Germans.¹³³

The ever-resourceful Conny Jakob, who tried to raise the ANTON group's morale with his Persian stories and songs, and who remained with the group until a few weeks before their return to the Qashgai and handover to the British, seems to have seen beyond the hopelessness and the petty squabbling and, sensing that things would not end well, successfully eluded his captors and struck out alone for pastures new.¹³⁴ After the difficult negotiations with Nasir Khan for the handover of the group, the end of Operation ANTON finally came—eight months after their arrival—when the British took the Germans into custody in the small mountain village of Kush-i-Zard (2743 m) on 23 March 1944.¹³⁵

130. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 17, 16 January 1944, f 36a, KV 2/1484, TNA.

131. *Ibid.*

132. After the war, Magan modified his narrative to depict Bibi Khanum as the real power behind the Qashgai throne and the preliminary negotiations with her—rather than those with her son—to have been crucial. See Magan to Pilditch, 3 February 1981, GB165-0199, MECA, and pp. 280-281. In his 2001 memoir, Magan excludes Jackson entirely from his account. See Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 79-80.

133. Magan to Spencer, Events related to the capture of the ANTON group, 29 March 1944, f 43b, KV 2/1484, TNA.

134. See also p. 229.

135. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 17, 16 January 1944, f 36a, KV 2/1484, TNA.

There were about thirty armed men altogether and a crowd of hangers-on. They led the two British officers to the village, which was indescribably filthy, and eventually into a small courtyard surrounded by mud huts. The door of one of the huts was opened and inside were seen various small bundles and bedding and in some saddle bags the W/T equipment. Then another door opened and the Germans emerged, first Schultze [*sic*], then Kurmis, Harbers, and Piwonka. They were dressed in nondescript clothes and wore no badges of rank, although Harbers and Piwonka wore medal ribbons of the Iron Cross with bar. Each one as he came out gave the Nazi salute. They were loaded into cars and the convoy moved off ...¹³⁶

The next day, a jubilant Sir Reader Bullard cabled the Foreign Office:

Although the attitude of Kashgai [*sic*] had naturally been affected by signs that Germany will be defeated, the capture of four Germans reflects great credit on our security authorities who have persisted in their plans in face of repeated delays and evasions on the part of the Kashgai leaders.¹³⁷

4.11 Operation ANTON 2

In January or February of 1943, the German Consul General in Istanbul gave a banquet in one of the upper rooms of the consulate to which the Qashgai Brothers were invited and during which he gave a toast to the “Crown Prince of Qashgai Territory,” accompanied by a tribute to Wassmuss, the “German Lawrence” of the First World War. The purpose of the banquet was apparently to flatter and influence the brothers in favour of accepting the proposition made to Papen, the German ambassador, by Führer HQ that he provide them with a report on the possibility of sending 100 German officers to Qashgai territory. The force would land in aircraft on a landing ground previously prepared by the tribes under the command of Schulze-Holthus.¹³⁸ The mission objective would be to organize and train tribesmen to fight local Allied formations, cause disturbances on the Iraqi *and Indian* [*sic!*] frontiers, cut lines of communication, and steal Allied fuel stocks.¹³⁹

Erwin Lahousen wrote in January 1943 vaguely about this operation, calling it IRAN 2 and saying that he was awaiting the help of Mohammed Hussain Qashgai, who was due to return to Berlin from Turkey on 22 February, with preparations.¹⁴⁰ However, according to Gottfried Müller, the mission was supposed to be nothing more than a so-called *moralische*

136. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 22, 26 March 1944, f 48b, KV 2/1484, TNA.

137. Bullard to FO, 24 March 1944, f 42a, KV 2/1484, TNA.

138. See Table C-4. The Germans were apparently unaware that the Farrashband landing strip in Qashgai territory was already compromised: the RAF had identified it in November 1942. It was occupied by Persian troops from May 1943 onwards. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 44, 15 November 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

139. SIME Report No. 4, 12 March 1944, f 2a, KV 2/2640, TNA.

140. Diary entry for 22 January 1943, Auszüge Lahousen aus dem Kriegstagebuch der Abwehr-Abt. II des Amtes Ausland/Abwehr, Bd. 2, f 116, RW 5/498, BA-MA.

Waffenlieferung (morale-boosting arms shipment), delivering arms and ammunition to the Qashgai tribe, together with propaganda material for unknown purposes. The expedition had not yet left Germany at the time of MAMMUT's departure (16 June 1943). Müller claimed that the date of departure was postponed because Hitler's sanction was needed for the flight over Turkish territory, which was certainly the required procedure for all aerial insertions into Persia and Iraq.¹⁴¹ At some point later that year, ANTON 2, a joint Abwehr/SD venture, was cancelled, probably after the Qashgai Brothers, who were Abwehr officers and close friends of Colonel Putz, refused to cooperate because the SD were involved, just as they had vigorously resisted the original ANTON initiative when they discovered SD involvement. The SD, in the person of Heinz Gräfe, did not take kindly to the brothers' intransigence, and attempted to persuade Putz to allow only one brother at a time to leave Germany.¹⁴² They are also said to have balked at the long-term Nazi aim of establishing an independent Qashgai state, which would of course have split Persia asunder.¹⁴³

4.12 Operation WERWOLF

This expedition had not yet started when MAMMUT left. According to Wolfgang Kirchner, his destination was originally (in December 1942) supposed to be south of Lake Urmia, with subunits to be sent to an area east of Gottfried Müller's destination (presumably targeting the Persian extension of the Hamilton Road) and to Persian Azerbaijan, perhaps to sabotage the northern route from Tehran to the Soviet Union via Tabriz. Whether the intention was to link up with Müller (and/or Sheikh Agha Bassar) and mount combined operations is not clear. However, by May 1943 the destination had been changed to the Bakhtiari tribal area and regions further south of that. In other words, in the light of the German withdrawal from the Caucasus, Abwehr II's focus appears to have shifted from northern Persia to the TIR.¹⁴⁴

Kirchner's deputy was another Palestinian German, Second Lieutenant Wieland, and together they were to command about fifty Brandenburgers recruited up to May 1943 from the Dolmetscherabteilung (Interpreters' Section) and from Meseritz, known as the *Einheit Kirchner* (Kirchner Unit). Abwehr II appear to have planned this operation jointly with the Brandenburgers, which was unusual, but is probably to be explained by the fact that it was to

141. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

142. SIME Report No. 3, SIME/P5919, March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA.

143. SIME Report No. 4, 12 March 1944, f 2a, KV 2/2640, TNA.

144. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

involve such a large covert military force. In June 1943, it was suggested that Kirchner was thinking twice about taking with him so large a party.¹⁴⁵ For training purposes, no doubt building on Müller's experience, the group was based mostly in Austria, moving between Baden (2nd Battalion Brandenburg Regiment HQ)¹⁴⁶ probably for weapons and other military training in February, Kitzbühel and Innsbruck for mountain and ski training in March, and Wiener Neustadt for parachute training in April. The parachute trainer, Paulus, wanted Kirchner and Wieland to practise jumps with his newly invented *gekoppelter Lastenfallschirm* (coupled cargo parachute); whether they did so is not recorded.¹⁴⁷ As regular Brandenburgers, the men of the Kirchner Unit would have required less general training than the members of other Abwehr II missions; it is therefore likely that most of the training they received under Kirchner's command was mission-specific.

At some point during the planning process, Müller was asked by Kirchner to find a trustworthy Iraqi and to send him into southern Persia to locate a suitable landing ground for WERWOLF.¹⁴⁸ Given the difficulty the Abwehr experienced in locating such V-men at the best of times, it is hardly surprising that Kirchner's idea was not adopted. In fact, Müller was very sceptical about the entire undertaking and Kirchner's ability to execute it. Werner Eisenberg apparently also had little faith in Kirchner, even though he was a well-trained railway saboteur.¹⁴⁹

A significant stumbling block was encountered when Kirchner requested RM 500,000 to meet the costs of executing WERWOLF and was refused, possibly by Canaris himself.¹⁵⁰ When the Brandenburger regiments to which the men of the Kirchner Unit belonged passed from Abwehr to OKH command in April 1943, it is also possible that Kirchner ran into chain-of-

145. Extract from GSI GHQ Persia and Iraq Force Special Sitrep No. 5d, 3 September 1943, f 33a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

146. The Brandenburgers reached divisional strength on 1 April 1943, their battalions became regiments, and they were transferred from Abwehr II command to the Army General Staff. This did not apply to the 5th Brandenburgers, who were spun off to become the Kurfürsters (Lehrregiment Kurfürst zbV [Kurfürst Special Purposes Training Regiment), remaining under Abwehr II (later Mil D) command as an agent-training unit. See Witzel, "Kommandoverbände," 10, and also p. 89n127.

147. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

148. Presumably this was to occur after Müller's arrival in Kurdistan. Why an Iraqi rather than a Persian should have been sought for this role is unclear, unless it was simply because Abwehr II had no way of recruiting Persian V-men in Persia and were unwilling to delegate the task to Leverkuehn at KONO Istanbul, who, given time, could no doubt have found someone to do the job.

149. Kirchner's cousin Hans-Jürgen was also a trained Abwehr II saboteur. He is mentioned as the designated leader of two seaborne missions to the Levant planned for 1943 but never executed: Operation SCHIRM (targeting the Mosul-Haifa pipeline) and Operation JAFFA (targeting US aircraft stationed at Lydda). RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA; WO 201/1402B, TNA.

150. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

command problems, which may have contributed to the cancellation of his undertaking. However, the operation was more likely cancelled because news of Müller's capture had reached Berlin. Although not intended as a follow-up to MAMMUT, WERWOLF's departure does appear to have been contingent upon MAMMUT's success.

4.13 Operation KRÜGER

This operation to sabotage the TIR was originally planned by Hans-Otto Wagner for April 1942. Eventually, in November 1942, Lieutenant (or Captain) Krüger appeared at SK Bajadere in Meseritz in search of suitable Germans to take on a sabotage expedition to western Persia. He apparently recruited eight men, Germans and Tajiks, none of whom knew Farsi, and had them transferred to Baden for training. By June 1943, Lieutenant Wiegand had been appointed liaison officer for the mission. After FRANZ was more or less spun off from Abwehr II by the SD, Wagner continued to plan and repeatedly postpone KRÜGER until it was eventually absorbed into SD planning for August 1943 or April 1944 and was ultimately cancelled, probably because of lack of transport and/or weather conditions (according to Putz).¹⁵¹ Instead of going to Persia, the Brandenburgers originally recruited and specially trained for the sabotage operation by Krüger—like many former members of SK Bajadere and Sonderverband Felmy—ended their war ignominiously: fighting partisans in Yugoslavia, suffering heavy losses, and being disbanded, in a classic case of the squandering of extraordinary talent, valuable resources, and poor tasking that marked the decline of the Abwehr in 1944.¹⁵²

4.14 Operation TRANSIRANISCHE BAHN

Kurt Eigner was formerly an engineer on the TIR, against which his mission was to operate. Due to leave immediately after MAMMUT (end-June 1943), Eigner's target was the southern sector of the railway. The exact locality remains unknown. It is said that Eigner took on the job for Hans-Otto Wagner to avoid punishment for some offence he had committed in January 1943. He was to be accompanied by one other man—possibly Mustafa Riza Tadjadod (who, despite his name, was according to Gottfried Müller a German). He and Eigner were intimates and known within the Abwehr as “The Inseparables.” They were issued with a tiny, briefcase-sized W/T set with petrol aggregate (Model SE 100/5), together with medical equipment diverted from the aborted MAMMUT 2 and 3 missions. Eigner and Tadjadod were to

151. Camp 020 interim report on the case of Fred Hermann Brandt, January 1945, f 73a, KV 2/752, TNA.

152. Ibid.; First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

live with local tribesmen (probably Qashgai or Bakhtiari) in the mountains. They were to come down out of the hills to the railway and plant time fuses at irregular intervals along the line, thus wrecking it in several different places. Results were to be reported to Abwehr II by W/T. As with MAMMUT and WERWOLF, training took place in Austria (mountain training at Kitzbühel, W/T training at Innsbruck, and parachute training at Wiener Neustadt) in February-April 1943. There is no record of any SD interference with this operation nor of the circumstances surrounding its cancellation; however, it may have been preempted by ANTON.¹⁵³

4.15 Operation MERZ



Figure 4-9. *Hans Merz.* Note the wearing of Wehrmacht uniform, despite the fact that Merz was in the Sipo (Security Police). (Photo courtesy of www.michael-foedrowitz.de).

The precise purpose of the MERZ mission is unclear; however, one of its ultimate goals appears to have been the organization of a sabotage network in Persia. Hans Merz (see Figure 4-9), a member of the Kriminalpolizei (Criminal Police [Kripo]) since 1935, worked for VI D in Poland against the Polish resistance. During the course of these operations, it seems that Merz became acquainted with a resistance leader who suggested that the Germans should establish contact with General Anders' Free Polish forces in the Middle East, with a view to presenting a united front against the Russians. While the proposal was not officially sanctioned by the SD, Merz—now in the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police [Sipo])—was summoned to Amt VI in

153. Copy of paper prepared by CICI for CinC, Germans at large in Persia, 1 September 1943, f 18a, WO 208/1588B, TNA; GSI GHQ Persia and Iraq Force Special Sitrep No. 5d, 3 September 1943, f 33a, WO 208/1588B, TNA (which confuses TRANSIRANISCHE BAHN with ANTON); and First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. According to Gottfried Müller, Eigner was given the SE 100/5 miniature radio set as early as March 1943, much to Müller's annoyance.

1943 and told that the plan was to go ahead under Amt VI control. In October 1943, Merz was sent on a nonspecific mission to establish contacts in Polish circles in the Middle East which the SD could then exploit to their advantage. Apparently part of the far-fetched plan was the recruitment of Free Polish service personnel to operate as saboteurs against Allied lines of supply and communication in Persia—yet another illustration of how ill-informed RSHA planning staff were about the loyalties and motivation of Allied troops, especially the Polish volunteers serving in “Anders Army,” many of whom would go on to fight courageously against the Nazis in the Italian campaign as members of the Polish Second Corps, most notably at Monte Cassino. The Merz operation appears to have been controlled jointly by Unternehmen OTTO (VI F/O [Mandl/sabotage]) and VI C 13 (Beissner/espionage). Unfortunately for Merz, however, his mission coincided with a period of major internal disruption and reorganization at Amt VI involving the disbandment of VI F/O and the takeover of all sabotage operations by Otto Skorzeny.¹⁵⁴ SS Captain Mandl, Merz’s case officer and the person who originally recruited him for the Persia project, was transferred from VI F/O by Kaltenbrunner to act as liaison officer between Skorzeny and VI E, just at a time when careful handling of the Persian operation was called for. Possibly due to lack of effective control, Merz’s mission ended in disaster: a few days after reaching Syria via Turkey, Merz was captured and taken to Cairo. His failure proved costly for the SD, because his subsequent lengthy interrogation supplied Allied intelligence with copious information about Amt VI.¹⁵⁵

4.16 Operation BASRA

Hans Fritze, a former shipping agent in Basra, who spoke Farsi fluently and as a Brandenburger corporal had formerly trained Persians in sabotage at Meseritz, was designated to lead this operation. It is not clear how many men were to participate nor whether insertion was to be by air or by sea. The targets were undoubtedly Basra, Shatt-al-Arab, and Persian Gulf shipping, which was to be sabotaged and disrupted, and possibly the oil installations at Abadan. Planning is believed to have been undertaken in March 1943, at a time when Meseritz training

154. See p. 97.

155. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA; KV 2/203-206, TNA; SIME Security Summary No. 162, 30 December 1943, WO 208/1562, TNA; Richard Breitman and others, *U.S. Intelligence and the Nazis* (Washington, DC: National Archives Trust Fund Board for the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working Groups, 2004), 144. Not unlike Roman Gamotha, where Merz’s true loyalties lay is unclear: although he worked for the SD, he was raised by Communist parents in Hamburg, and after the war he became a close friend of the socialist politician and statesman Willi Brandt. Merz appears to have taken his own life under obscure circumstances during the 1960s in Tunisia, apparently pursued by the KGB. See <http://www.michael-foedrowitz.de/witnessDE.php>.

personnel like Fritze were facing probable transfer to front-line combat. There is no record of execution.¹⁵⁶

4.17 Operation NORMA

This operation was factually nothing more than a colossal hoax, a confidence trick, played by a brilliant young SD officer on his superiors at the RSHA, who had no inkling that he was in the employ of Stalin and had been released from imprisonment by the Soviets to penetrate the highest circles of the SS and SD and to hamper SD operations.¹⁵⁷

During the course of 1943, SS Captain Roman Gamotha returned to Germany from northern Persia via Turkey in a blaze of publicity and glory as a result of his adventures in making good his “escape” from the Soviet occupation forces. He was also very ill and was sent by the SD to the Tropical Institute in Tübingen, where he spent some time undergoing treatment for malaria. After his recovery, Gamotha was given the assignment of preparing an expedition to northern Persia, codenamed NORMA,¹⁵⁸ which never materialized, probably because Gamotha had no intention of returning there.¹⁵⁹ NORMA, which was ostensibly a covert military operation to be launched against Soviet installations and forces in northern Persia and which occupied Gamotha throughout the rest of 1943, seems to have been the brainchild of Walter Schellenberg, who stated after the war that it was particularly important for Amt VI to mount its next operation in northern Persia.¹⁶⁰ To Gamotha he delegated the task of mounting a parachute mission to Mazanderan, giving him free rein to recruit and train his team, with assistance from Otto Skorzeny and with relative autonomy; at any rate, although nominally part of it, Gamotha worked independently of the regular Persia desk (VI C 12) run since 1941 by Kurt Schuback, who naturally resented what he perceived to be Gamotha’s interference in Persian affairs.

156. Extract from GSI GHQ Persia and Iraq Force Special Sitrep No. 5d, 3 September 1943, f 33a, WO 208/1588B, TNA; First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other operations, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

157. According to Schellenberg, “... after careful investigation, we had no doubt at all about the possibility of him being a double agent.” Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

158. Perhaps an amalgam of “NORdiran” and “MAzanderan.”

159. Gamotha told one expedition member that Operation NORMA was “merely bluff” and that he had “no intention of going to Persia, because German prestige was so low owing to the failure of the Russian campaign.” See extracts from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA.

160. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.



Figure 4-10. *Kurt Eder.* (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv).

Gamotha's hand-picked NORMA team of at least seven men were a motley crew. As his deputy, Gamotha chose a medical officer, Waffen-SS Second Lieutenant Dr Kurt Eder (a childhood friend from Vienna) (see Figure 4-10).¹⁶¹ Others included Waffen-SS Lieutenant Pierre Sweerts (a former Belgian reserve officer, in charge of military operations),¹⁶² SS Corporal Theodor Staisch (who had "escaped" from Persia with Gamotha and was probably also a Soviet agent),¹⁶³ Waffen-SS Lance-Corporal Knud-Flemming Hellweg-Larsen (an SS official war reporter and published author, executed in 1946 as an accessory in the murder of a prominent Danish journalist, Carl Henrik Clemmensen, during the Nazi occupation of Denmark),¹⁶⁴ and SS Private Horst Knauff (about whom we know nothing except that he was

161. RS/B107, BA; SSO/173, BA; Schellenberg to Brandt, 29 October 1943, f 15, NS 19/2235, BA.

162. Extract from daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweerts, SD agent, Sipo and SD personalities, 26 September 1944, 33a, KV 1492, TNA; Extracts from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA.

163. Staisch is an even more enigmatic personality than Gamotha, for we have no idea what he did or where he did it before he teamed up with Gamotha, if indeed he was ever really a Soviet prisoner. When he reached Berlin with Gamotha, Staisch was apparently able to convince the SD that he was a genuine SS member, otherwise he would not have been awarded the EKII or have held the rank of SS corporal. CICI thought Staisch might have been captured by the Russians in northern Persia as a member of some unidentified SD covert operation, for he was unknown to them (see CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA); however, there is no record of any such operation being executed, so why would a lone SS man be captured in the Soviet zone of northern Persia in 1941-1942? It seems more likely to me that Staisch was captured elsewhere and transferred to Persia in order to train as a Soviet agent with Gamotha.

164. See SSO/6400020379, BA; Schellenberg to Brandt, 29 October 1943, f 15, NS 19/2235, BA. The archived story of the Clemmensen execution, carried out by Hellweg-Larsen and SS Second Lieutenant Søren Kam, is chilling. The German federal authorities have repeatedly refused to extradite Kam to face charges in Denmark, and at the time of writing Kam, now 90, continues to live with impunity in Bavaria, despite ongoing controversy about his role in the murder and his alleged complicity in the wartime persecution of Danish Jews.

barely twenty-one years old).¹⁶⁵ Other names mentioned with less certainty in connection with NORMA (or with Gamotha's desk) are Detective [with the approximate rank of Security Police Lieutenant] Gramowski (apparently third-in-command), and Waffen-SS Lance Corporal Raabe (W/T operator).¹⁶⁶ It is not possible to conjecture what precise roles these personalities were to play in the operation, what duties they performed at the Berlin desk, nor why specifically they were chosen. After all, two nonpractising journalists (if we may call Gamotha that), one physician, one army officer, one police detective, one radio operator, and one young infantryman might yield a curious potential *mélange* of skills, but not the kind of political or engineering expertise that one would have imagined necessary for an operation of this kind, whether primarily subversive or destructive. If we knew something of the mission-specific training the group members were supposed to undergo, we might be in a position to hypothesize NORMA's operational targets. However, apart from the mention of "strenuous" physical-training courses planned for the winter of 1943-1944 and parachute jumps in Greece in the spring of 1944, no record of any training events is to be found in the archives.¹⁶⁷

One has to remember that, if Gamotha was indeed a Soviet plant—and there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that he was—then no plans laid by him could have been too outrageous or impractical, provided he could convince Amt VI head Schellenberg and RSHA head Kaltenbrunner of their viability. Then it would simply be a matter of endlessly procrastinating while appearing to be busily engaged in preparing for the mission. In this connection, Gamotha's powers of persuasion should not be underestimated. Sweets once said of him that he had "great psychological insight" and handled people cleverly.¹⁶⁸ It certainly seems that Gamotha succeeded in persuading Schellenberg that the Persian clerics with whom he claimed to be in contact "were in possession of a well-functioning intelligence service which to all intents and purposes stretched to India."¹⁶⁹ Apparently, Gamotha also invented a notional force of 1200 men awaiting his orders in the mountains along the Turko-Persian frontier, ready

165. Schellenberg to Brandt, 29 October 1943, f 15, NS 19/2235, BA.

166. See *inter alia* extracts from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweets, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA.

167. Extract re. Pierre Letay, DSO Syria, 11 January 1946, f 44a, KV 1492, TNA. About the time of Gamotha's trip to Istanbul (November 1943-February 1944), he is also mentioned as visiting Greece, presumably to set up parachute training for NORMA. Ibid. Alex Kellar of MI5 possessed a list of sabotage equipment requisitioned by Gamotha for NORMA, which might have helped in the identification of mission objectives; unfortunately the list has not survived. See Kellar to Kirk, 13 October 1944, f 36a, KV 1492, TNA.

168. Extract from daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweets, SD agent, Sipo and SD personalities, Ramon Gamotta [*sic*], 26 September 1944, f 33a, KV 1492, TNA.

169. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

to attack Soviet troops.¹⁷⁰ Gamotha even seems to have succeeded in convincing Himmler himself of the strategic scale and significance of NORMA, for Himmler wrote in an—unfortunately undated—letter to the Führer:

[Gamotha] intends to work his way from the area around Meshed to Soviet Turkestan, Afghanistan, and India. Based on his experiences and his connections, he hopes to be successful in this.¹⁷¹

In December 1943, Gamotha travelled to Turkey, where it was thought by CICI Tehran that he met the Soviet double agent Mohammed Vaziri and would have heard from him of the true state of affairs in Persia, including the arrest of Franz Mayr, the rolling up of Mayr's network, and the neutralization of the ANTON group.¹⁷² Clearly, NORMA, at least as currently envisaged, was no longer viable; Gamotha returned to Berlin in January-February 1944, informed Schellenberg, and the operation was promptly cancelled. On his return from Turkey, Gamotha may also have argued that there were insurmountable problems with the designated landing zone if he, as is likely, had incorporated into his planning Landing Ground C, originally reconnoitred for him and Franz Mayr by Mohammed Vaziri. This drop zone, 48 km south of Aliabad¹⁷³ on the Caspian, was located in a forest clearing. The area was only one kilometre square and difficult to use because it was situated obliquely to the forest's general outline. It was also considered to be in the midst of "enemy [i.e. Soviet] territory."¹⁷⁴

4.18 Operation REISERNTE

This extraordinary naval commando expedition was the last known covert special operation to be mounted by the Germans against Persia before the end of the war. Some time around 13 February 1945, laden with a year's provisions, disguised as a Norwegian trawler, and crewed by twelve German servicemen, most of them trained frogmen who spoke either

170. Sweerts believed they were at best bandits and was not convinced that Gamotha had ever recruited such a force. Extract, 23 October 1944, f 38a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

171. Himmler to Hitler, Einsatz von SS-Führern im Iran, f 3, NS 19/2235, BA. Since it briefs Hitler on Gamotha's promotion to SS captain and his Iron Cross First Class, together with the fact that he had yet to recover from malaria, this letter must date from the spring or early summer of 1943—in other words, at least six months before NORMA was cancelled.

172. Roger to Kellar, 30 October 1944, f 42a, KV 2/1492, TNA. According to Sweerts, Gamotha went to meet a woman from Tehran with word from Mayr. MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA. According to Skorzeny, a German "co-worker" in Tehran [presumably Vaziri] arrived in Turkey with news that German covert operations had disintegrated and all of his co-workers had been arrested. As a result, a local organization no longer existed to support the group that was ready to depart, and the mission, probably BERTA, was cancelled. See Skorzeny, *For Germany*, 130. The main Vaziri file at Kew is KV 2/1317, TNA.

173. There are about forty-five places in Persia with this name; the precise location of Landing Ground C is therefore unclear. See also Table C-4.

174. Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, and f 20a, WO 208/1588B, TNA.

Norwegian or English, the purpose-built *Seekampfkutter* (Naval Combat Cutter [SKK]) 203¹⁷⁵ (see Figure 4-11) sailed from the port of Harstad in northern Norway, destined for the Persian Gulf by way of the Cape of Good Hope and the Indian Ocean, to disrupt and destroy Allied shipping by means of hydromechanically controlled, delayed-action explosives and (ambitiously) to sabotage the Abadan refinery and the oilfields of southwestern Persia. The unique operational concept was originated by Abwehr II (Hans-Otto Wagner) and was intended as a Brandenburger initiative. However, after years of postponements, wrangling over competences and the availability of vessels, and personnel changes, responsibility was finally passed to the Seekriegsleitung (Maritime Warfare Command [SKL]), but not without obstructive interference from the SD, who naturally saw themselves as responsible for any such covert, camouflaged *Ferneinsätze* (long-distance operations).

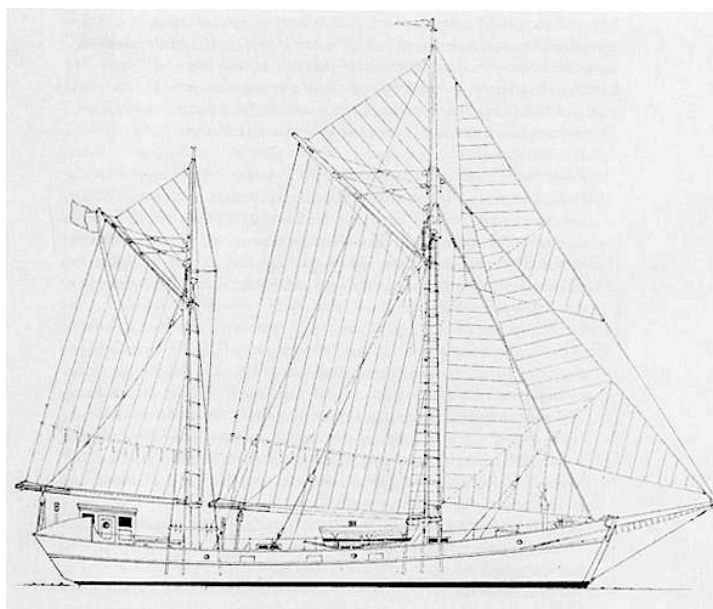


Figure 4-11. *SKK (KFK) 203 (aka Mary)*. Originally built in 1943 by Burmester-Werft of Swinemünde and subsequently rigged as a ketch for clandestine missions such as landing agents. Auxiliary cutters were less expensive, quicker to build, and could be manned by a much smaller crew than the U-boats normally used for covert maritime insertions. (Drawing courtesy of www.schoonerdolphin.com).

Unbeknown to the skipper, Otto Klaehn, the British had been intercepting his radio signals and tracking his progress ever since the *SKK 203* had left German waters for the Arctic at the end of December 1944, camouflaged as the Norwegian auxiliary yacht *Mary*. However, the British were unable to break the code Klaehn was transmitting; consequently, they were unable to identify the purpose or destination of his mission. A few weeks later, a prearranged signal was received in Germany indicating that Klaehn was off the coast of West Africa, sailing due south.

175. These auxiliary naval patrol vessels were also referred to as *Kriegsfischkutter* (armed fishing cutters [KFK]).

And that is the last that was heard of the *SKK 203*, her captain, and her crew. Had they been intercepted and sunk by an Allied warship, there would presumably be documentary evidence, but there appears to be none. One can only conclude that their rugged little vessel succumbed to the forces of nature, their mission having proved not just far-fetched but suicidal.¹⁷⁶

There remains, however, something peculiar about this initiative, quite apart from its extreme chronological lateness, its overly extended history (the original joint Abwehr/SKL naval-sabotage scheme was formulated in March 1943), and its operational infeasibility. Nothing quite adds up, and unanswered questions linger concerning the operational objective. First, why was Otto Klaehn, who had been in peacetime a ranking Hamburg-America Line captain,¹⁷⁷ entrusted with the command of a tiny fishing boat on such an extraordinary mission? Second, why—unless there was a last-minute change of command—is Klaehn officially listed as dead on 15 February 1945 in the naval personnel files?¹⁷⁸ Was this a simple clerical error or perhaps a preemptive deniability measure of some kind, or had Klaehn actually been replaced as skipper? Third, why did the naval commander-in-chief, Admiral of the Fleet Dönitz, issue a unique general order to all U-boat captains on 13 February 1945 to the effect that, until further notice, no sailing or fishing vessel in northern European waters or the North Atlantic was to be attacked? In the circumstances, at that stage in the war, Dönitz's order could only have concerned the *SKK 203*.¹⁷⁹ One cannot be blamed for wondering if the Persian sabotage scenario was merely a cover for some infinitely more important, highly secret mission objective—possibly the escape of a Nazi grandee or the conveyance of some kind of secret cargo.

4.19 Operation KINO

This expedition was to sabotage the Abadan oilfields in April 1945. It never actually came off; however, Fred Koch, a designated member of the planned expedition, defected to the Allies and gave them details of the operation.¹⁸⁰ We know that the Americans subsequently used Koch as an agent in Germany. Unfortunately, all that is to be found in the American records is the following comment by OSS X-2 about Koch: “This agent has proved to be unreliable and

176. For further details about Operation REISERNTE, see RM 7/1074, BA-MA; Gunther W. Gellermann, *Tief im Hinterland des Gegners: Ausgewählte Unternehmen deutscher Nachrichtendienste im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Bonn: Bernard und Graefe, 1999), 128-139; and Cajus Bekker, *Einzelkämpfer auf See: Die deutschen Torpedoreiter, Froschmänner und Sprengbootpiloten im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Oldenburg: Stalling, 1968), 105. Unfortunately, Bekker, who eschewed citations, died in 1973; consequently, his sources will forever remain undisclosed, although it has been suggested that he obtained most of his information from Rear Admiral Hellmuth Heye, who was the naval chief-of-staff responsible for commando operations. See N 316, BA-MA.

177. Gellermann, *Tief im Hinterland*, 133.

178. *Ibid.*, 139n546.

179. *Ibid.*, 138.

180. Secret to HQ 2677 Regt (Prov) OSS Caserta, 3 July 1945, f78a, KV 2/1486, TNA.

continues under arrest. His project has been dropped.”¹⁸¹ Elsewhere in the OSS files is a minimally informative memorandum which states:

This operation was to attempt to sabotage on a large scale the Allied gasoline dumps in the Middle East. It is rather difficult to ascertain in what way the Leitstelle [Südost] was connected with this operation which never took place. The only Leitstelle officer concerned with KINO was Leutnant Brüggebors.¹⁸²

The obvious question remains of course: if, as appears to be the case, Leit II SO, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Fechner, was only marginally involved in Operation KINO, then who was principally involved?¹⁸³ It would certainly be interesting to know when planning began, for this would tell us whether the project was rooted in a realistic appreciation of the war situation or was just some lunatic scheme conceived in the last months of the war when its execution was already far beyond the realm of possibility. Certainly, as a Mil D or Mil F sabotage operation, it would have been nominally Otto Skorzeny’s responsibility. However, in early 1945, Skorzeny was entirely preoccupied with commanding his Waffen-SS units on the Oder front and, from March onwards, with the planning and coordination of resistance in southern Germany and Austria. He would therefore have had no interest whatsoever in sabotaging Middle East oil installations, and it is unlikely that he would even have known of the KINO plan.¹⁸⁴

181. Progress report on X-2 penetration cases run in the American occupied zone in Germany, Aug 45, 1 September 1945, United States Forces European Theater OSS Mission for Germany, CIA 218273, accessed 22 April 2011, CIA Research Tool (CREST) document, NARA.

182. Operations and agents of Leitstelle II Süd-Ost für Frontaufklärung, 25 July 1945, CIA 201692, accessed 22 April 2011, CIA Research Tool (CREST) document, NARA. Lieutenant Heini Brüggebors, who had grown up in Istanbul, dealt primarily with Yugoslavian, Albanian, and Greek affairs, not the Middle East. Annex IV of Intermediate interrogation report (CI-IIR) (Dr Murad Ferid), 18 January 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA. Brüggebors probably became involved because Crete and Greece were selected as the training locations for KINO, not because the operation itself was to take place there. Interrogation Report (Dr Murad Ferid), 11 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

183. Auger to Stimson, 22 August 1945, RG 319, Entry 134A, Box 1, NARA. I have even suggested (p. 180) that KINO might have been confused with an unnamed Mazanderan mission possibly to be led by Roman Gamotha, but it is unlikely.

184. “Skorzeny was really only the technical head of MilAmt D; he took no part in the handling of FAKs and FATs and in fact seemed to know little about them.” Liquidation Report No. 13, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI S, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 November 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. Confusingly, Murad Ferid, former head of Mil D SO, stated under interrogation that KINO was the codename for an operation *in* Crete, planned by Lieutenant von Stoerck, assisted by Koch, “an oil expert.” Presumably Ferid really meant that the operation was being *prepared* in Crete, not that it was to be executed there. Intermediate interrogation report (CI-IIR) (Dr Murad Ferid), 18 January 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

4.20 Hypothetical and unnamed operations

“Should the German Army, God forbid, not be able to reach Persian soil before this winter, God help us!”¹⁸⁵

“ ‘When are the Germans coming?’... ‘They will come, but when they will come, only Allah knows.’
... *The Germans never came.*”¹⁸⁶

On 7 July 1942, the following typically nonspecific report appeared in *The Times*:

It has now been ascertained that the two German parachutists who landed on Turkish territory near the Caucasian border were heading for Persian Azerbaijan. Others may have reached their goal, and it would not be surprising that other such parachutists are being sent to Palestine, Syria, and Iraq for espionage, sabotage, and fifth-column activities.¹⁸⁷

It is not possible to identify this parachute mission specifically from the existing records. This is true of a number of unidentified aircraft and parachute sightings mentioned either in the archival records or in other literature,¹⁸⁸ or even in internet forums and blogs, where scholarly sourcing is seldom found. As the war progressed and Allied operational intelligence grew in volume, depth, and accuracy, the degree of speculation and the number of rumours diminished. There would therefore be little point in listing here all *suspected* German operations targeting Persia, especially those mentioned only in the press, since most were subsequently proven by hard intelligence never to have existed. Instead, this section of the study lists only *hypothetical*, often *unnamed* covert operations that were, according to German sources, planned by the Abwehr or the SD and that are specifically mentioned in the records or in other contemporary sources.

It is always necessary to distinguish between contemporary speculation and postwar speculation. The former process was an essential integral constituent of purposive intelligence analysis during the war, especially in the earlier phases of security-intelligence work in Persia, before a significant number of Axis or pro-Axis agents had been captured and interrogated, and the information obtained from them had been collated, cross-referenced, and corroborated. The latter phenomenon, on the other hand, is generally associated with the literature of neofascist historical revisionism, particularly when authored by less than scholarly writers who often

185. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 210.

186. *Ibid.*

187. “Axis agents’ attempt to reach Persia,” *The Times*, 7 July 1942.

188. During the most aggressive phase of German covert operations in the region, namely the summer of 1943, no fewer than thirty-four unidentified aircraft sightings were reported and officially documented by the Allies. See Unidentified aircraft over Persia and North Iraq, 17 June-11 September 1943, f 25a, WO 208/1588A, TNA. Most mysterious is the following report of sightings in southwest Persia, at the extreme limit of any German aircraft’s fuel range: “On two or three occasions in the quarter-moon, unidentified aircraft have flown over Abadan. ... I think we can take it that these were German aircraft on reconnaissance” See Extract from Enclosure 1A to M.O.5/BM/1700 Encl. “A”, Iran I.6.g, f 3a, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

employ the internet to propagate unsourced (or inadequately sourced) myths about the performance of Nazi agencies and agents in the region. An example would be the attribution to the Abwehr of a mythical parachute operation codenamed BAJADERE, together with a mythical narrative according to which 100 soldiers of the Indian Legion entered India through Persian Baluchistan in January 1942 and carried out successful covert action on Indian soil. There is no basis for this operation in the records.¹⁸⁹ Equally fictional is the operation codenamed AMINA,¹⁹⁰ which supposedly saw large numbers of marauding German special forces roaming around northern Persia and even as far south as Abadan before the Anglo-Soviet invasion.¹⁹¹ Such postwar speculation does not merit discussion in a scholarly case study; consequently, all such operations have been omitted from this section. They generally have in common an absurdly inflated operational scale, involving hundreds of participants. Contrast such fictions as BAJADERE and AMINA with the typically more modest, factual attempts by the Abwehr to insert officers singly, such as the Gräwer initiative in February 1941¹⁹² or the deployment a few months later of the former First World War agent Otto von Niedermayer to Persia (under the alias Otto Normann) in the summer of 1941, which was cut short by the Allied invasion. Niedermayer was at the time attached to Sonderstab Felmy in Athens; he was to be sent via Turkey on a reconnaissance “of great significance for any military operations in the region, with particular reference to road conditions.”¹⁹³

One of the most intriguing and imaginative but borderline Abwehr plans was revealed in a Swiss newspaper in 1942. It seems that Canaris was attempting to establish a W/T network

189. There was a factual unit named “Sonderkommando (SK) Bajadere” (see pp. 90-91); however, I have been unable to trace any mention of an operation by that name in the archival records. Had it existed, it would no doubt have been planned by Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II, who had dealings with Subhas Chandra Bose, and it would therefore normally have been mentioned in connection with Wagner. The two main sources of such unsubstantiated information about German covert operations in the Middle East and India are Littlejohn, *Foreign Legions* and Kurowski, *Brandenburgers* (see p. 17n72).

190. Aminah bint Wahb was the mother of the prophet Mohammed.

191. Operation AMINA (June-July 1941), which some sources describe as two or three separate operations, is not to be found in the archival records either. Even though the Abwehr records would probably have been destroyed, had it/they occurred on the scale described in the rogue literature, the operation(s) would surely have been described in surviving Allied documents. The main rogue sources on AMINA are the self-published Klaus Benzing, *Der Admiral: Leben und Wirken* (Nördlingen: Klaus Benzing, 1973), 135-136; Kurowski, *Brandenburgers*, 124-126; and recently Chapay A. Sultanov, *Would the Allies Have Won without Baku Oil?* (Baku: Nurlar, 2008), 147-151. Benzing hardly inspires confidence as a source of any information, for he was ostracized by his fellow former Abwehr officers for falsely claiming to have found a copy of Canaris’s missing diary in East Germany. See Gerold Guensberg, “Intelligence in Recent Public Literature,” *Studies in Intelligence* 21, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 47-49. In keeping with other published Russian accounts of Persian operations, Sultanov’s narrative is muddled, vague, and dubiously sourced.

192. See p. 88.

193. See Mansfeld to Krummacher, 7 August 1941, f 249754; Grobba to RAM, 19 August 1941, f 249755; Grobba to Krummacher, 26 August 1941, f 249756, GFM 33/463, TNA.

across the Middle East and Central Asia which would have facilitated communication between Germany and Japan:

Canaris plans a relay of numerous caravans, equipped with broadcasting and receiving stations, wandering about in the Syrian and Arabian deserts and in the remote mountain districts of eastern Persia and Afghanistan and even in Tibet, which would make their location very difficult.¹⁹⁴

The article goes on to describe the (factual) deployment of Abwehr agents Manfred Oberdörfer (KEIL) and Fred Brandt (ARMADA) in Afghanistan, but the details of the narrative are fictitious. It is therefore likely that the entire article was fed to the Swiss press by the Abwehr as a propaganda measure, and that the hypothetical eastern Persia operation never existed. While the two-man Afghanistan operation (codenamed FEUERFRESSER) certainly took place—and failed—there is no mention in the records of any related operations in Persia nor of any large-scale coordinated attempt to build the radio network, which would of course have involved multiple missions.

There remain in the records several additional Abwehr and SD operations known to have been in the planning stage in 1943 that may have targeted Persia (see Table C-3). All that is known about them for certain is that, if they were indeed destined for Persia, they were never executed. The first interrogation of Gottfried Müller after his capture in June 1943 generated a list of covert operations which Müller knew (or suspected) to have been planned by Hans-Otto Wagner at Abwehr II MO. While most of these operations have been corroborated, confirmed, and described in previous sections of this study, there remain a few that cannot, and that are seldom if ever mentioned elsewhere in the records (i.e. LANGE, ASLAN, and KLEEBLATT). Additionally, at the end of May 1943, Gartenfeld told Müller that several SD expeditions were due to leave in the near future (presumably including FRANZ, ANTON, and BERTA). One of these was bound for Kurdistan and would be given priority over MAMMUT, which would therefore be unable to leave before July 1943 at the earliest, if indeed it were not cancelled altogether. Schellenberg and Gräfe were said to be in on the planning of this unnamed mission.¹⁹⁵ Finally, there is mention as late as November 1943 of a highly secret mission being planned for southwestern Persia (Qashgai or Bakhtiari tribal regions). Germans with a knowledge of Persia were to be recruited from “a group of fifty agents” who were being given

194. *Die Weltwoche*, 27 March 1942. Quoted in English translation in Enemy communications in the Middle East, Special Report No. 177, Jerusalem Postal and Telegraph Censorship, f 1ab, KV 3/87, TNA. Factual details of the Oberdörfer/Brandt mission can be found in Camp 020 interim report on the case of Fred Hermann Brandt, f 73a, KV 2/752. See also Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan, and Indian Nationalists in the Second World War* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 316-317.

195. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt., 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

special instructions for operating in Persia. No other details are given, and no further mention of this operation is to be found in the records. It is possible that this mission was in fact a residual, scaled-down version of the ANTON 2 plan or an extension of Operation WERWOLF.¹⁹⁶

One of the most durable hypothetical operations, political rather than military, was the plan—using the tried and true Nazi paradigm of *Gleichschaltung* (forcible assimilation into pre-existing structures)—to designate and install a pro-Nazi quisling government in Persia. Generally subsumed under the heading “The Persian Quisling Channel” in Allied security summaries,¹⁹⁷ it was adopted originally by Abwehr II and separately by Abw I M, and finally late in the war by the SD, long after any possibility of implementing such a scheme had expired. It is tempting to assume therefore that the plan moved through three clearly defined phases; however, largely because of the complex intrigues within the Persian diaspora in Germany, things were in reality very confused and no clear linear development of any one plan can be detected, but rather a number of disparate plans that cannot even be said to have formed a series. Why such planning was continued by the Abwehr after Stalingrad remains a conundrum; however, why Amt VI should have adopted a quisling scheme at all is inexplicable, except for the fact that it was Roman Gamotha who appears to have invented or reinvented one and to have zealously promoted it.

Early in 1944, immediately after the cancellation of the military sabotage operation codenamed NORMA, Gamotha was appointed by Schellenberg as head of a new Persia desk at the RSHA (VI C 14) and was given the new task of forming within Germany a Persian shadow government-in-exile. In fact, there had been attempts to form a Persian shadow government from expatriates living in Germany since before the Anglo-Soviet invasion in 1941, the first being an initiative by the Hisb Mille Iran (Persian National Party [HMI]) led by Hassan Quraishi, Shahbahram Shahrukh, and the Qashgai Brothers. The aim of the party was:

... to unite all Persians in Germany and form a free Persian government, recognized and supported by the Germans. On the occupation of Persia by the German forces this party would take over power and receive full support from the various high-ranking Persian officers and both the Qashgai and Bakhtiari tribes.¹⁹⁸

196. SIME Report No. 4, 12 March 1944, f 2a, KV 2/2640, TNA.

197. As opposed to “The Tribal Channel” (i.e. Schulze-Holthus and the Qashgai Brothers) and “The Fifth-column Channel” (i.e. Mayr and the *Mellium* in Tehran). For clarification see Figure C-3.

198. Information given by suspect enemy agent Tarbiat about his activities in Berlin during 1941-42 and his contact with Shahrokh [*sic*], enemy agent, and the Qashgai Brothers, also suspect, P1440, 14 April 1944, f 19c, KV 2/1941, TNA.

The national leadership designated by the HMI was as follows: Malek Mansur Qashgai (Shah), Mohammed Hussain Qashgai (Prime Minister), Hassan Quraishi (Foreign Minister), Shahbaram Shahrukh (Minister of Propaganda), and Ardishir Tarbiat (Minister of Justice).¹⁹⁹ What was perhaps not apparent to the rank-and-file HMI members was the fact that all the key personalities in the party were in the pay of the Abwehr. For instance, the HMI's original founder was Abwehr agent Hassan Quraishi, close business associate of the Qashgai Brothers, who liaised between Colonel Putz and Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II on the one hand and the young Persians on the other. Quraishi appears to have helped the Abwehr persuade various Persians to enlist in the German army. Quraishi also selected suitable Persians to work in the Persian department of Goebbel's propaganda ministry, headed by Shahbaram Shahrukh, another party leader.²⁰⁰ "[Quraishi] was in the habit of meeting all newly arrived Persians, and of obtaining any information from them which would be of use to the Germans. He passed this information to Putz and Wagner."²⁰¹ It certainly seems that the Abwehr had cornered this particular information and recruitment market to the exclusion of the SD, and it was not until Roman Gamotha decided to breathe new life into the Free Persia movement early in 1944 that the Abwehr (and subsequently Mil D) lost the initiative. This explains why Gamotha quickly found himself in conflict with Werner Schüler of Abw I M, which had by then come to regard the Persian shadow government as its sole preserve.²⁰² Part of the problem for Abw I M, Abwehr II, and the SD was that they had great difficulty relating to the Persian psyche; the Persian expatriates thrived on political intrigue and drew the unsuspecting Germans into their tangled webs of nebulous and capricious ambition. Soon there were different factions all vying for plum positions in the future Persia. The conflicts among the expatriates were instantly transposed into corresponding conflicts within the German intelligence community, pitting one patron against

199. Ibid.

200. For more about Shahrukh, who was very influential in the Berlin diaspora but moved to Istanbul in 1943, see SIME Interrogation Report No. 3, 22, 23-29 March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA. He is described elsewhere as a discredited adventurer who was wanted in the Persian courts for embezzlement and who had begun working for the Germans as early as 1939, when he was connected with the Siemens agency in Persia. It was there and then that he first made the acquaintance of Werner Schüler of Abw I M. The Qashgai Brothers maintained that Shahrukh would do anything for money and would turn to whomever could offer the most, even the Japanese "if they were to come up with a dazzling enough offer." See CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA.

201. Ibid. For more about Quraishi (aka Gorechi, Goreschi, and Goreschi), see various reports in KV 2/1941, TNA.

202. See CSDIC (WEA) BAOR final report on Gideon Richard Werner Schüler, 28 January 1946, f 78z, KV 3/89, TNA. The naval intelligence section (Abw I M) originally became interested in establishing an intelligence network in Persia to cover the Persian Gulf and, if possible, to extend its activities beyond that area. They subsequently became involved in the expatriate political intrigues as early as October 1941 at the invitation of Shahrukh, who saw himself as the future Shah and was disappointed with the HMI's appointments; consequently, he founded his own Iran Parastan (IP) party in opposition to the HMI. Schüler apparently had "complete confidence in Shahrukh and relied upon him for most of his valuable information on various Persian nationals." See Information given by suspect enemy agent Tarbiat, 14 April 1944, f 19c, KV 2/1941, TNA.

another. In other words, far from controlling the Persians, the intelligence services were manipulated by them, or at the very least found them impossible to control.

There were in fact significant numbers of young, unmarried Persian men living in Germany during the Second World War, most of whom wished to return to Persia. Some arrived in 1936, all of them orphans who had been brought up and educated at the Tehran Military School; another wave immigrated in 1940, sent to work and train in Germany by the Persian Ministry of Industry. For various reasons, both groups of young people ultimately became disillusioned and impoverished, making them easy prey for Nazi propagandists and recruiters who persuaded them that the Red Army was raping their mother country and that joining the German armed forces would guarantee their return to Persia and a chance to repel the Bolshevik invaders. When the ill-fated Free Corps was established in 1942, many young Persians enlisted, only to be discharged within nine months. After Stalingrad, the German army had no further use for them, nor did they provide for them after the disbandment of the Free Corps; consequently, many became unemployed, hungry, and increasingly desperate. The few who could return to armed-forces positions held before they joined the Free Corps were lucky; those who could return to their university studies also enjoyed some advantages; however, those who had left industrial jobs became destitute. It requires little imagination to realize that such men were potential Abwehr or SD recruits. And those who were politically engaged could be organized in a Free Persia movement such as Roman Gamotha apparently envisaged.²⁰³

Those originally designated to assume positions in a future Persian government as envisaged by the Abwehr had included certain Persians then living in Europe, most of them young men who had received or were currently receiving basic agent training (or special-forces training) from the Abwehr. In February 1942, Putz read to Mohammed Hussain Qashgai a list of nine Persians who had volunteered to fight on the Russian front. In March 1943, those who still wanted to volunteer, after being told that they could not all expect to be officers, were sent to Meseritz for three-four months' training, along with thirty other Persians, seventy Germans, and 165 men of various Caucasian and central Asian nationalities, after which they were invited to continue with six months' further training, which would presumably be completed by January 1944.²⁰⁴

203. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 18a, KV 3/88, TNA. For more about the Free Corps and the recruitment of young Persians, see Extract from CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 1fg, KV 2/1941, TNA. Ahmed Akbari claimed that the Free Corps would never have existed had the Persian students not financed it themselves, which further explains their hardship after its dissolution. Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

204. SIME Interrogation Report No. 3, 22, 23-29 March 1944, f 21a, KV 2/1941, TNA.

From the viewpoint of the SD leadership, what useful purpose such a quisling plan could possibly have served in 1944 is not clear. Whether the two objectives (military [NORMA] and political [the quislings]) were connected and/or planned simultaneously at some point is not at all clear either. What is clear is that some members of the original NORMA team were retained at the RSHA, several remaining with Gamotha, while others were dispersed to other Amt VI desks and elsewhere.²⁰⁵ Equally clear is Kurt Schuback's fury at being left with responsibility for only Turkey and Afghanistan, neither of which at that stage in the war held any great promise in operational terms. Both Schuback and Gamotha were of equal rank (SS Captain), yet the brilliant Gamotha clearly felt superior to the pedestrian Northerner (Schuback was from Hamburg) in view of the latter's lack of Middle East field experience, lack of military distinction, lack of regional knowledge (political, cultural, and linguistic), and—no doubt—lack of intellect, flair, and Viennese sophistication. Moreover, Gamotha belonged to and enjoyed the protection afforded by the Vienna clique centred on Kaltenbrunner and Skorzeny at the RSHA,²⁰⁶ Schuback did not. All these factors must have led to considerable mutual resentment, suspicion, and friction between the two officers. Some say that this uneasy relationship led directly in October 1944 to Gamotha's arrest, as a consequence of the inevitable jealousies among all parties concerned in the affair and because Schuback objected to Gamotha's nominee for the position of prime minister in the proposed quisling government.²⁰⁷ Other sources point instead to Gamotha's international smuggling and blackmarketeering activities as the cause of his downfall.²⁰⁸

Planning for the quisling operation appears to have gone ahead, and it appears to have given Gamotha and Sweerts convenient excuses for travelling internationally, especially to Paris, where Gamotha had made contact with Count de Moncet (former Persian diplomat and finance minister) of the so-called "National Liberation Committee of Iran."²⁰⁹ Sweerts actually said that he was able to travel widely, providing him (and Gamotha) with ample blackmarketeering and smuggling opportunities, because after the cancellation of Operation NORMA he had nothing else to do.²¹⁰ Possibly warned by Gamotha of the impending crackdown, it was on one such trip

205. On Gamotha's arrest in August 1944, his friend and 2 i/c, Kurt Eder, was transferred from the RSHA to 12 SS Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" as a divisional medical officer. Verfügung, 12 August 1944, SSO/173, BA.

206. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

207. Creation of Referat VI C 14, Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

208. See pp. 222-223.

209. Extract from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, f 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA

210. Ibid.

to The Hague that Sweerts deserted to the Allies.²¹¹ Certainly, it seems likely that Gamotha had little need of assistance in running the quislings, which must have become virtually a one-man operation of ever diminishing significance and relevance. It should be remembered that by the second half of 1944 Amt VI operations and the chain of command were already beginning to deteriorate and disintegrate: officers were already preparing to run for cover, people were generally becoming more and more preoccupied with the question of their own personal safety and welfare, how to survive the incessant air raids, how to protect their families, how to find food and supplies, than with carrying out their futile duties. However, this also meant that Gamotha's scheme and Gamotha himself became ever more dispensable. And as soon as he had been spirited away in August 1944, his desk—and presumably his operation—disappeared, as the fourteen VI C desks were collapsed into four, with (significantly) Kurt Schuback taking sole charge of the new Near East desk (VI C 3), which included responsibility for Persia.²¹²

The question remains of why the SD leadership would have taken seriously Gamotha's assertion that it was necessary to establish a "Free Persia" movement in Europe when Germany was clearly no longer able to enter the region in force nor to influence Persian political affairs in any significant way. It is plain to see why Gamotha in his role as a Soviet agent might have wished to make mischief and hoodwink the SD or Nazi leadership into accepting whatever preposterous schemes he could devise (or, in this case, resurrect), but why did Schellenberg and Kaltenbrunner, possibly even Himmler and Hitler, go along with it? It is possible that Schellenberg—initially at least—saw the Persian quislings, especially the Qashgai Brothers, as potential factors in some future scenario involving British and/or Soviet interests in the region, and so he was disposed to delegate to Gamotha the task of surveilling and coordinating the unruly emigrés.

At the time, Gamotha must have been desperate to find a project that would justify his continued presence at the RSHA; SD desk officers were all too aware that they could be transferred to the *Einsatzkommandos* or the Russian front at any time, and Gamotha as a Waffen-SS officer with an impeccable military record may have felt more vulnerable than most. In his role as a Soviet agent, it was vital that Gamotha remain close to the SD leadership, so the quisling scheme must have been all that he could find available to match his expertise and keep him in Berlin. As a measure of how defensive Gamotha had grown and how intense the debate about Persian quislings had become, it is worth noting that Gamotha went so far as to threaten

211. Extract from interim report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, f 34a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

212. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

Werner Schüler of Abw I M with arrest, simply because he was opposed to Gamotha's nominee as quisling leader.²¹³ However, Schüler resigned from his desk in June 1944 after what he himself described as “a difference of opinion with the RSHA” and accepted a consular post in Turkey, not as far as we know as a direct result of Gamotha's threats, but because he had long considered the quisling plan to be ill-advised.²¹⁴

Perhaps there was a realization at last that it was no longer possible to recruit Persian agents within Persia and that the only hope therefore of retaining some vestige of Nazi influence on political opinion in the region was to recruit agents outside the country, from within the Persian diaspora in Europe, to form a liberation movement, and to establish a shadow government. Perhaps the intention was to then use the Persian expatriates as a subversive propaganda tool in some way—to bring pressure to bear on the occupying powers, especially the Russians, as they manoeuvred towards postoccupational realignment. Yet, puzzlingly, Gamotha seems to have convinced Schellenberg that such subversive objectives, probably best achieved through such media as the newspapers and radio, would necessitate a military mission. Why else would Gamotha have written in his marriage application of 22 March 1944:

In mid-May, under orders of the Reichsführer-SS [Himmler], I am leaving as commander of *a special operation from which I shall be unable to return until the war is over*. I would, however, like to have a child with my future wife. I therefore request immediate approval, especially since General Dr Kaltenbrunner has also already agreed to officiate.²¹⁵

In the absence of any further documentation concerning this operation, only one hypothesis presents itself, namely that Gamotha was planning a third, military mission that had nothing to do with the quisling plan—probably targeting the supply infrastructure in northern Persia, either the railway or the Caspian port installations. It is unlikely to have been Operation KINO,²¹⁶ for Gamotha's interest seems to have been focussed always on the north. Had he not been removed from the RSHA, had he been able to continue with his scheme, one thing is certain: Gamotha would have used it as an opportunity to expend RSHA resources, and he would have done everything possible to prevent its actual implementation.

213. See CSDIC (WEA) BAOR final report on Gideon Richard Werner Schüler, 28 January 1946, f 78x, KV 3/89, TNA. Gamotha's nominee was Muhammad-Husayn Ayrom, Reza Shah's son-in-law and former Persian Cossack commander and head of the Persian Police.

214. Ibid. Even before the mass arrests of Persian subversives in 1943 and 1944, Schüler considered that Gamotha's plans for a Free Persia movement in Europe would cause the German staybehinds and parachutists to lose all faith in a unified German policy on Persia.

215. My italics. Verlobungs- und Heiratsgesuch, Roman Gamotha, Berlin-Grünwald, 22 March 1944, RS/B5043, BA.

216. See pp. 170-171.

4.21 Problems of aerial insertion

“Gartenfeld’s men nearly always flew at night and preferred no moon and thick cloud cover. ... The squadron estimated the accuracy of its drops as within 5 miles of the target point, ... but the planes could stray considerably.”²¹⁷



Figure 4-12. Karl-Edmund Gartenfeld.

Air Force Captain Karl-Edmund Gartenfeld (see Figure 4-12) originally trained as a navy pilot during the First World War and then flew for Lufthansa until 1936, when he joined the newly formed Luftwaffe. By 1940, Gartenfeld was already involved in special operations, attached to the Abwehr (Brandenburger) parachute training unit at Oranienburg, after which his “Gartenfeld Squadron” specialized in medium and long-range covert aerial insertions on behalf of Abwehr I, Abwehr II, and ultimately the SD behind enemy lines in virtually every war theatre. In this capacity, Gartenfeld was responsible for the dropping of the MAMMUT, FRANZ, and ANTON expeditions, although he did not personally fly the MAMMUT group to Kurdistan, delegating that task—perhaps unwisely—to Air Force Captain Liemann. This was possibly because Liemann was a Condor pilot, whereas Gartenfeld normally flew the Ju 290. In the same year of intense covert activity, 1943, Gartenfeld was awarded the Knight’s Cross; he was considered one of the Luftwaffe’s leading experts on long-range reconnaissance and navigation.²¹⁸

217. Kahn, *Hitler’s Spies*, 286. Contrast Gartenfeld’s preference for dark skies with SOE’s practice of inserting agents on clear moonlit nights.

218. For more about Gartenfeld’s special operations squadron, see J. Richard Smith and others, *On Special Missions: The Luftwaffe’s Research and Experimental Squadrons, 1923-1945* (Hersham: Classic, 2003) and

Gartenfeld's squadron employed two types of four-engined, oxygen-equipped aircraft for long-range, high-altitude parachute and reconnaissance operations to such destinations as Persia: the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor and, from 1942 onwards, the Junkers Ju 290 (see Figures 4-13 and 4-14). Flying at high altitude facilitated undetected flights over neutral Turkey and, in the face of Soviet air superiority, reduced the likelihood of attack by enemy fighter patrols. However, it also greatly elevated parachutists' physical discomfort and stress levels; together with the disorientation inherent in any night landing in inhospitable, alien territory, it may well have caused an indefinable but significant degree of operational dysfunction and interpersonal tension upon landing. Most German agents received only minimal parachute training, if any, and were genuinely afraid of flying, suffered from airsickness, and were absolutely terrified of jumping. The uncomfortable quarters in the aircraft, the bitter cold,²¹⁹ the thin atmosphere, the very high noise level—all these factors, coupled with a high degree of apprehension at being dropped into a moonless void over an alien country behind enemy lines to carry out a difficult and dangerous task, combined to bring the parachutists close to hysteria.

Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 285-286. After the war, Gartenfeld became a senior administrator in the Gehlen Organization.

219. The parachutists were of course wearing only tropical kit, unlike the warmly clad aircraft crew.



Figure 4-13. *Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor.* This is the long-range aircraft type used for Operation MAMMUT—designed as an airliner, it was one of the most aesthetically pleasing German aircraft ever built, but fraught with problems when used for cargo drops. Unlike the Junkers Ju 290 (Figure 4-14), which featured a rear slipway, the Condor had only a narrow side exit, which often caused problems when parachutists and cargo were to be ejected in rapid succession. (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv [Bild 146-1978-043-02]).



Figure 4-14. *Junkers Ju 290.* This is the long-range aircraft type used for Operations ANTON and FRANZ. Considerably larger and faster than the Condor (Figure 4-13), it had twice its range, but was not supplied to the Gartenfeld squadron until February 1943. (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv [Bild 141-2472]).

The job of dealing with these men face-to-face, training them, and getting them to perform optimally under such adverse conditions fell to Air Force Staff Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Paulus, the Abwehr’s chief parachuting specialist, who often accompanied covert missions to their dropzones and acted as jumpmaster or “chucker-outer,” a key role requiring an understanding of how to communicate effectively with parachutists very different from the Luftwaffe airborne soldiers he was originally trained to lead.

Paulus was also a technical innovator of some renown who had invented a unique method of landing stores and equipment in such a way that they arrived in the same area as the parachutists themselves. His so-called *gekoppelter Lastenfallschirm* (coupled cargo parachute), which was suitable for landing boxes and other heavy objects, worked as follows:

The load is coupled closely to the parachutist's body. Immediately on leaving the aircraft he releases the load, which, however, remains attached to him by a rope some 20-30 m long. A special parachute attached to the load then opens automatically. The size of this special parachute is so devised as to ensure that the load reaches the ground before the parachutist, without, however, accelerating what would be the normal speed of his descent.²²⁰

On orders of Air Force Lieutenant Figulla, a Luftwaffe staff officer, Paulus tested the *Koppelverfahren* (coupling system) many times in April 1943 to a point where it was officially approved for operational use. The chief problem with this ingenious invention seems to have been the fact that it severely limited the amount of cargo that could be dropped. While the leader of Operation MAMMUT, for instance, initially accepted the method for parachutists' backpacks, he subsequently insisted on the dropping of four additional weapons canisters by conventional means, which would of course be scattered on landing, defeating the purpose of the coupling system. Also, there were psychological problems associated with the new procedure: getting parachutists to accept the alarming notion of being tied to a heavy object was difficult. We know from Paulus himself, for instance, that at least one of the members of the MAMMUT mission (V-Mann Ramzi) refused to be dropped in this way.²²¹

There were cargo-dropping problems associated specifically with one aircraft type: the Fw 200 Condor (see Figure 4-13). Whereas the other preferred type for long-range insertions, the Ju 290 (see Figure 4-14), featured an exit ramp or slipway for both parachutists and cargo, the Condor had only a side door. This necessitated considerable manhandling of heavy containers to position them for dropping, adding minutes to the interval between each drop, which in turn meant that the cargo was bound to be scattered over a wide area of many square kilometres. The space within the cramped fuselage of the Condor adjacent to the exit became densely packed with men, cargo, ropes, and parachutes, with obvious implications for safety and efficiency.

220. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, C7(h) Liaison with Luftwaffe, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

221. Sprungeinsatzbericht über Unternehmen Mammut (1. Gruppe), 12 July 1943, ff 64-67, RW 5/271, BA-MA. In 1944, Paulus, by then a lieutenant with Mil D/F, also invented the equally intimidating *Personenabwurfgerät* (personnel dropping device or "live bomb" [PAG]), a three-man parachute capsule with additional space for 160 kg of cargo, designed to prevent widespread dispersal, to permit the use of untrained parachutists and a smaller aircraft type (Ju 188), and to afford greater protection to both parachutists and cargo. These devices were mass-produced for use on the Russian Front, but arrived on the scene too late to be used by Gartenfeld's squadron in the Middle East. Bericht, 5 December 1944, RW 49/399, BA-MA.

Only two cargo canisters at a time could be manoeuvred into the doorway; at a critical moment during the MAMMUT drop, Paulus himself was briefly knocked unconscious when a weapons canister weighing 125 kg dropped on his head.²²²

Matters were not helped much by the fact that the mission members handling the loads were often oxygen-deprived, befuddled, and slow. The absolute altitude at which aircraft had to fly over Turkish airspace and the mountainous regions of Iraq and Persia was at least 4,500-5,000 metres. Although the air at such an altitude was breathable for people sitting quietly without expending any energy, inexperienced parachutists tended to gorge themselves on oxygen even when flying at much lower altitudes, so that when the time came for the intense physical activity involved in preparing the cargo for ejection, their oxygen tanks were almost empty.²²³ Worse yet, there might even be no oxygen for them at all. According to the MAMMUT mission leader, Gottfried Müller, this is what happened when their Condor climbed to high altitude over Turkey:

We continue to climb. We're at 4,000 metres. Instinctively, I reach for the oxygen apparatus, because we still have to climb another three or four thousand metres. Mount Ararat is ahead of us, and it's at least 5,000 metres high, not to mention the fact that it is imperative we climb high enough to avoid engaging enemy aircraft.

I beckon to one of the crew members.

"Where are the oxygen masks?"

Clearly embarrassed, he replies: "There aren't any."

"What? No oxygen masks?"

He tries to get away from me.

"You have to be joking! We *are* going to be flying above 7,000 metres, aren't we!?"

He nods.

"Then we'll need oxygen, won't we!?"

He nods again.

"So where are the masks? And where are the connections?"

"We didn't bring any equipment for you."

"But the crew have oxygen, don't they!?"

"Yes."²²⁴

At this point in the narrative, jumpmaster Paulus himself intervenes, volunteering to share his oxygen with the parachutists. It is understandable that Müller should have perceived this blunder as one of several indications that he had been thwarted by a conspiracy to sabotage his mission rather than by simple Luftwaffe inefficiency. When one pieces together the comedy of errors that this Condor flight became, on the basis of the archival records and the mission commander's memoirs, one is oneself hard pressed to think otherwise.

222. Sprungeinsatzbericht über Unternehmen Mammut (1. Gruppe), 12 July 1943, ff 64-67, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

223. Ibid.

224. Müller, *Im brennenden Orient*, 69.

Before taking off from the airfield at Sarabus, 25 km from Simferopol, Müller had specifically requested that Captain Liemann's flight plan should allow for a final approach to the dropzone from the northeast (i.e. Persian Kurdistan) over the southern tip of Lake Urmia, dropping the parachutists into the first Iraqi Kurdish valley beyond the Persian frontier from an altitude of 250 metres (see Figure D-2). Instead, Liemann flew directly south from Lake Van (Turkish Kurdistan), and Paulus dropped the stick, to Müller's alarm, from a relative altitude of 600-900 metres (Müller claimed they dropped from 2,500 metres), seemingly undeterred by the fact that none of the requisite landmarks had been spotted other than a fork in the river below. Unfortunately, it was the wrong river and the wrong fork, and so the success of the entire operation was forfeited in an instant. Müller was so angry that he wanted to have Liemann court-martialled; however, Müller also harboured a suspicion that Paulus might have dropped the stick (conspiratorially) without orders from Liemann.²²⁵

In his memoirs, Müller describes his feelings as he jumped and found himself floating earthward for far longer than he had anticipated, drifting towards a huge river. Shortly after landing, Müller realized that Operation MAMMUT could never succeed:

Away from here as fast as possible and into the safety of the mountains! But where are they? O my God, they're a long way off!

Why on earth did they drop us here? One thing's for sure: at all costs, we needed to be dropped far from any river! Where there's water, there are people. And where there are people, there's betrayal! Away!

... "Where are we, sir?"

"Dropped off-zone."

What a sudden, bitter realization: the operation is ruined.

... A brief council-of-war with my comrades confirms that the brilliantly conceived Operation MAMMUT on which the generals were counting so heavily has been ... destroyed.²²⁶

Initially, Müller reasoned that simple human error had been responsible for the bad drop: the pilot had mistaken the Tigris for the Lesser Zab river. However, Müller subsequently became convinced that the drop was inaccurate because his mission had been malevolently sabotaged, probably by the rival SD, and that the jumpmaster had deliberately dropped the stick close to the Tigris and the city of Mosul, which was of course seething with British troops:

[Müller] expressed the opinion that Paulus might have intentionally dropped them at the wrong place. Paulus and Grüning, who had left the [MAMMUT] group for the SD, had been great friends, and the SD might have been annoyed by the fact that the MAMMUT party had left before the SD expedition bound for the same area. [Müller] therefore thought that Paulus might have dropped them

225. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

226. Müller, *Im brennenden Orient*, 75-77.

without orders from Liemann [the pilot], for [Müller] was told on the day after landing that a German aircraft had been spotted (This might have been the Condor looking for them).²²⁷

On returning to Berlin, the jumpmaster, Staff Sergeant Paulus, filed a four-page debriefing report which told a very different story, suggesting that, while the dropzone itself was under clear skies, unexpected cloud cover, ground fog, and the proximity of very high mountains had made the operation challenging, that the pilot had been careful to ensure that the River Zab was correctly identified, and that the drop had been accurate, inserting the agents east of the river and just north of the village of Dera (which was, however, not illuminated).²²⁸ Furthermore, the brightly illuminated city over which the aircraft flew just prior to the drop, and which Müller correctly identified as Mosul, was claimed by Paulus to have been Ranya, 158 km east of Mosul:

Apart from the flight path data, that this was in fact the correct dropzone may be concluded from the following circumstances:

- (1) the N-S course of the river, corresponding to that of the Zab;
- (2) the illuminated city, which must have been Ranya;
- (3) just N of the dropzone there was a fork in the river as shown on the map, and soon after that we were flying over high mountains—presumably Batirkhan and Berimka;²²⁹
- (4) the fact that on the return (direct) flight we reached the Turkish coast right on time.²³⁰

Not one of these conclusions drawn by Paulus reflects what actually occurred. Either this highly experienced jumpmaster—the Abwehr’s foremost parachuting expert—was honestly disoriented during the flight (after being struck on the head by the equipment canister), or he disingenuously fabricated his report—at whose behest we shall never know. In fact, the misidentification of the brightly lit city as Ranya was already suspected in a marginal annotation (“obviously Mosul”) dated 13 September (presumably 1943) on a postoperational minute by the unit liaison officer, Second Lieutenant Messow, dated 24 June 1943.²³¹

The difficulties experienced by the members of the FRANZ expedition, who were also victims of an inaccurate drop, were significantly different from those that afflicted the

227. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, G24 Other expeditions, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA. Lemke, “Aufstandsversuche,” 22, points out that in his memoir (*Im brennenden Orient*, 165-167) Müller suspected Abwehr II of treachery (not the SD).

228. Barbiyan Dera (lat 36.3644 and long 44.1142) is located 21.57 km NNE of Erbil, a significant distance E of the intended dropzone; another place named Dera Fort is nearby (lat 36.4194, long 44.0972). Which place Paulus is referring to is unclear.

229. Batirkhan (lat 36.433333, long 44.681389, elev 2489 m) is located 25 km NW of Ranya, approximately midway between that city and Rowanduz; Berimka (lat 36.383333, long 44.85, elev 1898 m) is located 15 km due N of Ranya, approximately midway between that city and the Rowanduz Gorge, and very close to the intended dropzone.

230. Sprungeinsatzbericht über Unternehmen Mammut (I. Gruppe), 12 July 1943, ff 64-67, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

231. Akten-Notiz über Einsatzflug I. Gruppe, 24 June 1943, RW 5/271, BA-MA.

MAMMUT group. First, with Operation FRANZ there was no suggestion of sabotage or conspiracy; this was an SD-led joint operation involving the full participation of SD and Abwehr planners and participants. While there was disagreement, there was no malevolent rivalry; the Abwehr were simply bullied by the SD into doing things their way. Second, none of the technical problems specifically associated with the Fw 200 Condor had to be contended with, for the FRANZ mission was inserted by Junkers Ju 290 equipped with a cargo ramp. Furthermore, the aircraft was flown by Karl-Edmund Gartenfeld himself, arguably the most competent and experienced pilot available. Third, there were no last-minute uncertainties about the dropzone. The FRANZ group had a designated, reconnoitred landing ground as its dropzone (Landing Ground B), suggested by Franz Mayr,²³² whereas the MAMMUT group was to jump blind and unawaited into the Zagros foothills. Finally, the FRANZ group jumped under clear skies into open desert with the Siah Kuh range as an unmistakable topographical feature: ideal conditions for navigational accuracy. Yet, none of these positive factors prevented things from going awry. Why? And why was the ANTON drop successful, while the FRANZ drop failed partially, and the MAMMUT drop failed completely?

The answer seems to be that the use of prepared landing grounds and reception teams was essential for the successful insertion of covert groups. Based on these criteria, it is possible to theorize that at least four of the aerial insertions planned by the Abwehr and the SD but never executed would probably have failed because they would have been blind drops.²³³ The failure of both services to acknowledge the extreme danger posed to their personnel by such methods is yet another indictment against them. Particularly in 1943, the German services' adoption of blind drops as the standard mode of aerial insertion was born of urgency rather than lassitude; it was an inevitable consequence of their not having worked patiently since 1941 with those on the ground in Persia to develop landing grounds and reception committees. Instead, in their haste to cause mayhem with Persia's infrastructure, they really had no alternative but to order their operatives to jump blind, often after giving them only the most rudimentary parachute training, or none at all.²³⁴

232. Mayr maintained a list of landing grounds (see Table C-4). Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA. For a map of the FRANZ dropzone, see Figure D-3.

233. Operations RUVANDIZ-SCHLUCHT, WERWOLF, KRÜGER, and TRANSIRANISCHE BAHN (see Table C-1).

234. Blind drops or blind jumps, where no reception can be prepared on the ground, and where agents, if not hit while still in the air, had to do everything on their own, were considered by SOE to be extremely dangerous and undesirable. See Amos Ettinger, *Blind Jump: The Story of Shaike Dan* (New York: Cornwall, 1992), 64-65.

Despite a spectacular false start caused by engine trouble, which entailed the return to Berlin of the entire group,²³⁵ Gartenfeld's squadron managed to execute only one accurate and wholly successful drop into Persia: Operation ANTON near Khan-i-Zinian (Khaneh Zenyan), in Qashgai tribal territory approximately 45 km west of Shiraz, on 17 July 1943, thanks largely to expert reconnaissance work by Schulze-Holthus and Jakob, who prepared the clearly marked landing ground carefully (see Figure D-4). The only major casualty was the pedal dynamo required to power the mission's W/T equipment, which was damaged on landing; however, it was soon repaired by Conny Jakob. The landing strip near Farrashband, equally carefully prepared by Schulze-Holthus and Jakob for the arrival of the ANTON 2 mission and for other "offensive sorties" and supply drops, and stocked with approximately 5,000 litres of petrol, was of course never used.²³⁶

235. Details of the delay, other aircraft problems, Hitler's personal interest in the mission, a meeting with Schellenberg and Skorzeny, the actual drop, injuries, Kurmis's erratic behaviour, and initial dealings with the Qashgai are all in Spencer to Kellar, 29 May 1944, f 58a, KV 2/1469, TNA.

236. Schulze-Holthus to Mayr, 28 June 1943, Document 208, KV 2/1482, TNA.

4.22 Communications problems

“Technical equipment of the Abwehr is superior to that of the SD, [who] ... issued what they thought was necessary for the mission. ... They had no spare parts available.”²³⁷



Figure 4-15. *Havel-Institut, Berlin-Wannsee.* This was the main SD W/T station, Amt VI F (H) (codenamed LEIT), which also served as a W/T training centre.²³⁸ (The principal Abwehr station [codenamed BURG] was at Belzig; the local Berlin Abwehr station [codenamed SCHLOSS] was at Stahnsdorf). The main building (l), former guard house, and former administration block (r) are located in secluded grounds at the edge of the Düppel Forest. The property remains today virtually unchanged from its wartime appearance and matches in all respects the description given in a contemporary document.²³⁹ The ample attic space beneath the massive roof doubtless concealed extensive radio antennae, although two Operation FRANZ trainees claimed that the antennae were simply attached to the trees!²⁴⁰ This was one of many villas, often homes of wealthy Jews, acquired by the SS in this prosperous Berlin suburb. It is but a few doors from the former SS VIP guesthouse, the Villa Marlier, where the Wannsee Conference on the Final Solution was chaired by Reinhard Heydrich on 20 January 1942, some six months before the SD began transmitting from Wannsee. (Photographs by the author).

When Franz Mayr, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, and Konstantin Jakob were operating as lone staybehinds in Persia, the main weakness in their situation was the fact that they found it impossible to contact Berlin. The continued success of their operations depended on help being provided from Germany in order to keep the tribes and various other subversives in good humour. Because of their lack of the functioning long-range W/T equipment and qualified W/T operators which would have permitted direct communication with their headquarters or with the

237. Franz Mayr and Ernst Köndgen in SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f79b, KV 2/1479, TNA. For examples of typical Abwehr and SD signals equipment, see Appendix C-2.

238. Under LEIT control was Network B (*B-Netz*) with eight stations throughout Germany. As the likelihood of evacuation from Berlin loomed, three additional stations were built at Tegernsee (Bavaria), Hall near Braunschweig, and Grossgeschwenda (Thuringia). Additional training centres existed at Potsdam, Braunschweig, and Lübeck. The Amt VI regional desks also ran their own training schools abroad (e.g. in France and the Netherlands). Situation Report No. 11, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI F, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 9 November 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

239. See Haylor to Kellar, 25 November 1943, f79, KV 2/1479, TNA.

240. Georg Grille and Ernst Köndgen in SIME Report No. 1, 17 November 1943, f79b, KV 2/1479, TNA.

outstations in Turkey,²⁴¹ they were forced to rely upon cumbersome and risky improvised procedures involving the use of international couriers. The German records actually include one anecdotal mention by a former Abwehr signaller of the stationing in Tehran during the autumn of 1942 of a fully equipped W/T operator named Paul Dorn, pending a German invasion from the Caucasus. No other details are given, nor is it possible to cross-reference this information with any other file, German or Allied. It is therefore unclear if Dorn was supposedly alone, had been inserted with a group, or was a staybehind. Unless he was captured by the Russians within their zone of occupation outside Tehran, the lack of any mention by CICI Tehran suggests that the former Abwehr man must have been mistaken, and that Dorn's existence is either notional or mythical.²⁴² Certainly neither Schulze-Holthus nor Mayr appear to have been aware of the existence of any such operator, for they never wrote about one and, had they known of Dorn, would hardly have resorted to the unreliable and hazardous method of employing couriers to carry messages across the Turkish frontier.

In August 1942, Mayr sent a courier to contact the German Embassy in Ankara carrying with him a letter signed on behalf of Schulze-Holthus which requested the despatch of a W/T operator from Berlin and, of course, money. The letter also suggested a code which should be used when sending any reply. It is interesting to note that the method suggested by Mayr for receiving messages from Berlin was identical to that already proposed by him in his "bolt-from-the-blue" message sent via Tokyo in April. The suggestion was that the Germans should transmit any messages openly as part of the *Kameradschaftsdienst* (German Navy and Mercantile Marine Broadcasting Service) broadcasts to the German forces, using the simple code prepared by Mayr. It was in fact by this method that Mayr learned in August that his "bolt-from-the-blue" message had indeed reached Berlin. In October 1942, a similar message was received via the same channel confirming the arrival of Mayr's courier in Ankara and promising that a courier was on the way to Mayr with a message. This buoyed Mayr with false hope, for, when the courier arrived, he brought the message in the shape of a small pill wrapped in paper. It was beyond even Mayr's resourcefulness and ingenuity to discover what message the pill or the paper

241. Mayr sought contact with Ludwig Moyzisch, SD representative at the Ankara embassy, while Schulze-Holthus would of course have preferred immediate contact with Paul Leverkuehn at KONO in Istanbul. Since Mayr handled all the courier messages on Schulze's behalf, it is likely that they were channeled to Berlin by Moyzisch, thus reaching the VI C Persia desk at the RSHA rather than the Persia desk at Abwehr headquarters. See also p. 86.

242. Rudolf Staritz, Notizen, 62, MSG 2/5206, BA-MA.

contained.²⁴³ Undaunted, in January 1943, Mayr sent another courier to Ankara, this time with clearer, more specific proposals, detailing three alternative drop zones for projected parachute operations and a code which was to be used to indicate the type of mission and choice of drop zone. A month later he heard that operations were indeed being planned.²⁴⁴

When covert operations were finally executed, they too were plagued by communications problems. After the FRANZ mission landed, they struggled to establish and maintain contact with Berlin:

About 1 May Köndgen and Holzapfel were taken out to the village of Aivan-i-Kaif about 70 km SE of Tehran to try to establish W/T contact with Berlin. ... Mayr had a friend in the village ... and he took them to a run about 5 km from the village where they put up their set. ... After three days without contacting Berlin they went to a garden in the village and tried again for three days. Being again unsuccessful, they returned to Tehran where Grille actually accomplished the first contact on 8 May.

At the beginning of June, Blume, Köndgen, and Akbari went to Davazdehimam near the Salt Lake where they were to erect a permanent W/T station for communication with LEIT. ... It was much too hot for them to be able to set up their station and some of the apparatus fell off the camel.²⁴⁵

Matters were not helped by the fact that the Abwehr operator Ernst Köndgen constantly quarreled with the SD operators over the different Abwehr and SD methods of transmission and enciphering. No attempt appears to have been made to reconcile these differences. No doubt out of frustration, Köndgen, described by Franz Mayr as “standoffish,” was suspected by him of having surreptitiously transmitted messages to BURG (the Abwehr station at Belzig) instead of to LEIT (the SD station [Havel-Institut] at Berlin-Wannsee [see Figure 4-15]).²⁴⁶

Power supplies were always a concern; expeditions’ reliance on pedal dynamos, which appear to have been very fragile and highly susceptible to damage, to generate power for W/T transmitters, was one of the parachutists’ main vulnerabilities. When the ANTON group landed, for instance, their pedal dynamo was damaged; had it not been for the mechanical ingenuity of Conny Jakob, who repaired the ANTON power supply, the mission would have been completely incommunicado.²⁴⁷ Once they began W/T operations, two months after their arrival, however, they also experienced problems with the W/T sets themselves, less with reception than with

243. Mayr and Vaziri tried dissolving the pill in both hot and cold water, soaking it in spirit, and even holding it over the fire, all to no avail. Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

244. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

245. Communication with Berlin, Second interrogation report on Ernst Köndgen, 7 September 1943, f 10b, WO 208/1588B, TNA. Cf. Appendix A2.

246. Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, Defence Security Office, CICI Persia, f 48b, KV 2/1478, TNA. See also p. 138.

247. Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

transmission. Owing to a lack of petrol for their generator, they were only able to operate their sets for a short time each day. Their last transmission to Germany was a few days before Christmas 1943; this means that they were transmitting sporadically for only three months; for the final three months of their mission they were off the air. The FRANZ group, particularly Hans Holzapfel, also experienced various technical problems. It is ironic that both these expeditions, overstaffed as they were with trained W/T operators and disposing of tried and tested standard Abwehr and SD equipment, should have experienced such difficulties maintaining communication with their headquarters in Germany.

Ironically, in terms of potential communications efficiency, the best organized group to be dropped into the region was the Abwehr's MAMMUT expedition, because their plan was to channel all W/T traffic through one intermediate operator stationed permanently in Simferopol: Hans (Johannes) Müller, the brother of the mission commander. It was even arranged that members of the party who were separated from each other in the field were also to communicate with one another through Simferopol. Yet, because they were captured days after landing, this group never transmitted a signal.²⁴⁸

In addition to an examination of communications problems, aerial insertion problems, and various hypothetical and unnamed operations, this chapter has constructed the historical account of each Abwehr and/or SD covert initiative executed or planned against Persia between 1941 and 1945, on the basis of evidence found in the British, German, and American archives that has hitherto remained largely undiscovered and that, if examined at all, has been treated only superficially by a handful of authors, sometimes inaccurately. Where there is an absence of detail, this generally reflects the state of the archival holdings. These nineteen failed, aborted, or cancelled initiatives which, with the exception of Operation DORA, were planned in Berlin are to be distinguished from the individual clandestine activities undertaken in the field by the three principal staybehinds in Persia: Franz Mayr (SD), Roman Gamotha (SD), and Berthold Schulze-Holthus (Abw I L), whose stories now follow.

248. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, E18 W/T, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

5 GERMAN CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES

“Mayr’s work and that of Schulze were entirely admirable insofar as they had been able to build up a fifth column from scratch and until the winter of 1942-43 without any help from Germany.”¹

At the outbreak of war, Franz Mayr, 25, was studying law at the University of Berlin, while working as a secretary at the Wirtschaftsgruppe Maschinenbau (Engineering Business Group) of the Reichsgruppe Industrie (Reich Industry Group [RgI]), in which capacity he served with a German economic mission to Moscow from December 1939 to February or March 1940.² On his return from Russia, Mayr reported for military service, was commissioned as an army subaltern, and was placed in command of a signals platoon in Potsdam. Shortly after that, having been identified as a Russian specialist³ on the basis of his mere three or four months in the Soviet Union, Mayr was summoned to Abwehr headquarters and inducted into the SS (SD). It was on this occasion that he came across a newly commissioned and highly decorated Waffen-SS subaltern, Roman Gamotha, 23, whom he already knew from the university, and the two became friends. Mayr later claimed that “a certain romantic impulse” led both young men to volunteer for service in Persia, for neither of them knew anything about the Near or Middle East.⁴

The first efforts of Amt VI at exploiting Persia as a sphere of operations were half-hearted, but illustrate well the improvisational methods of the department at that early stage in the war. It was in the spring of 1940 that Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha volunteered for service in the Middle East and were accepted as prospective representatives for Persia by Heinz Jost, then head of Amt VI. Neither of the young SS officers had any knowledge of Farsi, although Gamotha was quick to learn languages; indeed, they had no outstanding qualifications for intelligence work at all. Nor was Amt VI, still in its infancy as a foreign intelligence service, in a position to help them with the basic guidance and specialist training they needed. Not even a Persia desk existed, so all Jost could do for Mayr and Gamotha was attach them to Group VI H, under the command of Helmut Knochen, which was responsible for “ideological enemies abroad” (e.g. Jews, freemasons, Roman Catholics, and—curiously—the press), and which had nothing to do with Persia. Nevertheless, Mayr and Gamotha suggested to Knochen that they be

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1. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA.
 2. The RgI was a huge, top-heavy administrative structure superimposed on Third Reich industry, yet linked to the concept of industrial decentralization. As organized at the time Mayr was there, it numbered no fewer than 31 business groups, 162 technical groups, and 143 technical subgroups. See Petra Bräutigam, *Mittelständische Unternehmer im Nationalsozialismus: Wirtschaftliche Entwicklungen und soziale Verhaltensweisen in der Schuh- und Lederindustrie Badens und Württembergs* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), 80.
 3. Of whom the service could never have too many. Roman Gamotha, of course, was also classified by the SD as a Russia expert, although one senses that Gamotha, with his Ukrainian ethnicity and linguistic proficiency, was far more expert in that field than Mayr could ever have been.
 4. Thistlethwaite to Wharry, 3 June 1944, f 97b, KV 2/1480, TNA, which contains an essay by Mayr on his recruitment into Amt VI. See also p. 70n68.

prepared for a mission to the Middle or Near East, so Knochen sent the pair to the Palestine desk, where they were employed for about a month on a casual, part-time basis. While awaiting their Russian transit and Persian entry visas, with which the German Foreign Office seemed reluctant to issue them, the two novices spent their days hunting down Persian information wherever they could find it in Berlin, voraciously devouring books on Persia, and doing little else. There was no planning whatsoever at Amt VI for the Mayr/Gamotha mission; the two young officers were left entirely to their own devices in that respect, evolving a simplistic plan of their own which had but two objectives: (1) to send back military information to Berlin; and (2) to contact Persian resistance groups (assuming there were any). Jost simply told them vaguely to go to Persia, find out what they could, and await further instructions. Finally, Mayr and Gamotha tired of the seemingly endless wait for visas and asked Jost to transfer them back to the army and the Waffen-SS respectively, which he did. Once again a signals officer, Mayr was promptly despatched to Paris with two warrant officers, to play a part in the great victory parade being staged in the French capital. Where Gamotha was posted has not been recorded. However, in mid-July 1940 permission to travel to Persia was finally granted (although the visas themselves took another month to materialize); consequently, both Mayr and Gamotha were recalled from military duty by the SD, and Mayr was recommissioned as an SS officer. Towards the end of August, they left Berlin for Moscow, having undergone a one-month shipping-industry training course for their commercial cover jobs at Schenker & Co.⁵ This proved to be a false start, for, after only two days in Russia, the two were recalled to Berlin because Erwin Ettel, the German minister in Tehran and a ranking SS brigadier general, had raised objections to their mission. Severely disillusioned, Mayr told Gamotha to find another companion and for himself succeeded in “wangling” an “unfit for tropical duty” certificate. Jost, however, refused to release Mayr and managed somehow to placate Ettel with the promise that Mayr and Gamotha would answer to Ettel in Tehran. Thus the expedition was sanctioned, and the two officers set off again in early October for Moscow and the (for them) mysterious orient.⁶

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5. Although ostensibly a private company, Schenker & Co was in fact a wholly owned subsidiary of the Deutsche Reichsbahn (German State Railways [DR]) and remains (as DB Schenker Logistik) a subsidiary of the Deutsche Bahn (German Railways [DB]) even today (see “Weltweite Logistik-Kompetenz, starkes Rückgrat Schiene,” DB Schenker, http://www.dbschenker.com/ho-de/ueber_dbschenker/profil.html). In that sense, then, Mayr and Gamotha’s cover at Nouvelle Iran Express, a Schenker subsidiary in Tehran, could be considered semi-official rather than commercial, but it did not provide them with diplomatic or consular immunity. For more about the widespread use of Schenker as commercial cover, see H. O. Dovey, “The Intelligence War in Turkey,” *Intelligence and National Security* 9, no. 1 (January 1994): 65-66.
 6. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA; Thistlethwaite to Wharry, 3 June 1944, f 97b, KV 2/1480, TNA; SIME Report No. 2, 10 January 1945, KV 2/1480, TNA.

Upon arrival from Baku at the Caspian port of Pahlevi (now Bandar-e-Anzali) in the northern Persian province of Gilan on 8 November 1940 after such an inauspicious and troubled beginning to their mission, one might have expected the situation of Mayr and Gamotha to improve; instead, their difficulties had barely begun:

Their position on arrival therefore was that they were both untrained in intelligence and in W/T, had received no instruction in sabotage methods, had been unable to obtain any accurate information on the country itself prior to their departure, were given no connections already existing in the country which they could profitably exploit, had been given no channel of communications apart from the [German] Foreign Office, which facilities were promptly refused them, and, last but not least, had been given no specific instructions on the nature of their mission. It is hardly surprising therefore that the success or otherwise of their stay ... would depend entirely on the intelligence and enthusiasm which they themselves displayed and not on any guidance from Amt VI.⁷

Mayr (MAX)⁸ and Gamotha (MORITZ) spent their first nine months in Persia (November 1940 to August 1941) maintaining their commercial cover while making contacts among influential Persians and local tribes with a view to creating a fifth column.⁹ However, their professional relationship soon became troubled: both men were equally ambitious and temperamental, frequently disagreeing about how best to pursue their intelligence activities.¹⁰ Having no W/T equipment of their own, Mayr and Gamotha communicated with the SD in Berlin entirely by diplomatic pouch via the German Legation in Tehran. But to their despatches came only one response: a message from the rival Abwehr, devoid of instructions and merely denying them the foreign-exchange funds they had urgently requested. Inexplicably, Amt VI maintained total silence.¹¹ And then, on August 1941, their work was suddenly and surprisingly interrupted: the British and the Russians invaded and occupied Persia. Ignoring instructions to report to the German Legation for internment, MAX and MORITZ¹² decided to separate and run for cover.

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7. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.
 8. Some time in 1942, Mayr abandoned the cryptonym MAX and began using the cover identity RABBI (alternatively HUSSEIN KHAN RABBI, RABB'I, or RABBI'I). Extract from DSO Syria's Interrogation Report No. 1 on Firouz Khalilnia, 8 December 1945, f 24, KV 2/1317, TNA.
 9. Ibid. Gamotha was nominally responsible for exports to Germany, and Mayr for imports from Germany; their Schenker boss was Ernst Fasting, a former associate of Oskar von Niedermayer and Wilhelm Wassmuss in the First World War. Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA.
 10. The Case of Franz Mayr, 11 November 1943, WO 208/1588A, TNA.
 11. Special report on Kameradschaftsdienst Marine, 3 December 1943, f 82c, KV 2/1480, TNA; Thistlethwaite to Wharry, 3 June 1944, f 97b, KV 2/1480, TNA.
 12. *Max und Moritz: Eine Bubengeschichte in sieben Streichen*, written and illustrated by Wilhelm Busch and first published in 1865, is the legendary comic tale of two young pranksters, the *enfants terribles* of nineteenth-century German literature.

5.1 Franz Mayr (MAX, RABBI)

“Mayr had already become too affected by Persia, too used to its political intrigues, and too proud of what he had done to execute blindly any orders he received from Berlin.”¹³

“Mayr was the one with the real guts and imagination, but he was Schulze’s social inferior.”¹⁴

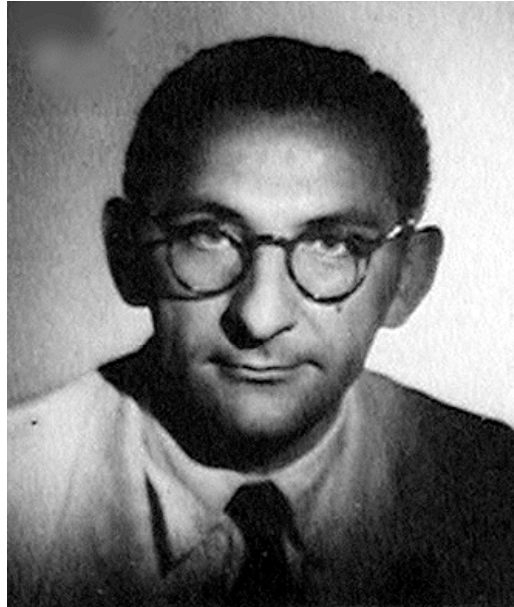


Figure 5-1. *Franz Mayr.* (Photo courtesy of The National Archives).

Franz Mayr¹⁵ was born on 15 November 1914 in the rural hamlet of Grossinzemoos, Bavaria, a few kilometres north of the town of Dachau, not far from Munich, into a large Roman Catholic family: Mayr had three brothers and three sisters. Many physical descriptions of Franz Mayr and several photographs are to be found in the records. Clearly, unlike Roman Gamotha, who was renowned for his stellar good looks, Mayr was of unprepossessing appearance: average height (180 cm) with “slight build ... very thin lips, prominent nose, large ears.” However, absent from the descriptions but striking in the photographs is the engaging, intelligent gaze (see Figure

13. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

14. Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 30 December 1954, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA.

15. Most of the information on Mayr in this chapter and elsewhere in this study is to be found in KV 2/1482, TNA, the voluminous MI5 file on Franz Mayr, released in 2004, which I have conveniently subdivided into the following seven sections: (A) Spencer’s introduction to the Mayr diary; (B) Key to codes in the Mayr diary and documents; (C) Comments on the Mayr diary based on his interrogations; (D) The first Mayr diary (5 December 1941 to 9 October 1942); (E) Comments on the Mayr documents based on his interrogations; (F) Comments on the Mayr documents by Schulze-Holthus; and (G) The Mayr documents. The second Mayr diary (4-12 August 1943) is to be found in KV 2/1479, TNA. A wealth of additional detailed information on Mayr is to be found in KV 2/1477-1481, TNA. In addition, there are files on Mayr in the War Office records (e.g. WO 208/1590), where much of the information in the KV series is duplicated, occasionally with useful annotations, and in the CIC records at College Park (RG 319). In the German records very little is to be found on either Mayr or the other staybehinds, parachutists, and agents in Persia. Several summaries of Mayr’s career up to 1945 exist, most notably Alex Kellar’s lucid three-page narrative dated 11 November 1943 in f 26a, KV 2/1484, TNA.

5-1). Mayr seems to have been further distinguished by his peculiar “loose walk,” his tendency to whistle, his ready sense of humour and wit, and his nervous habit of continuously tapping his cigarette on the table top. Unlike Gamotha and most of the parachutists sent to Persia by Berlin, with their pale complexions and regular, unmistakably European features, Mayr could effortlessly disguise himself as a Persian or an Arab.¹⁶

Alone after Gamotha’s departure for the north in September 1941, during the winter months after the Anglo-Soviet invasion, Mayr remained in hiding (in an Armenian cemetery on the outskirts of Tehran) and politically inactive in the Tehran region. It was not until early in 1942 that he felt safe enough to resume his subversive activities. By this time he had got the “feel” of the country and had already reinvented himself—at least in his own mind—as some kind of “Lawrence of Persia.” Building on the contacts established with Gamotha prior to the invasion, Mayr’s first steps were to create and foster a fifth column among the tribes, which at that stage in the war offered good scope for such work, as long as Germany’s momentum in North Africa and Russia remained positive, which seemed likely.¹⁷ In February 1942, Mayr succeeded in re-establishing contact with Schulze-Holthus by means of his agent Mohammed Vaziri, and the two SD officers, Mayr and Gamotha, made a deal with the Abwehr representative to divide Persia among them.¹⁸ In April 1942, shortly before the Japanese diplomats were expelled from the country, Mayr contacted the Japanese Legation and was given five old W/T sets and some much needed cash. At the same time, Mayr gave the Japanese a message to transmit on his behalf from Tokyo to Berlin giving an account of his situation and suggesting a code which might be used if Mayr were to succeed in getting his W/T sets to work. The narrative of Mayr’s so-called “bolt-from-the-blue” and its consequences has been provided elsewhere.¹⁹

Mayr subsequently moved temporarily from Tehran to Isfahan, where he enjoyed the assistance and protection afforded him by the pro-Nazi local governor, General Fazlollah Zahedi.²⁰ However, most unexpectedly, on 1 November 1942, one of Mayr’s accomplices, an Armenian named Moses Gasparian (MUSA) who shared a house with Mayr, suddenly appeared

16. Schulze-Holthus describes Gamotha as “princely”: “a blond, film-star type of masculine beauty,” as opposed to Mayr, “his face like a devil mask—black hair, black moustache, and black fanatical eyes.” Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 66. Describing Mayr’s brilliant disguise, Schulze-Holthus writes: “While my own costume seemed somewhat theatrical, ... anyone would have taken [Mayr] for a Persian artisan.” *Ibid.*, 116.

17. German agents in Persia, 9 April 1944, WOWIR No. 41, Galley 4, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

18. Initially, Schulze-Holthus was to retain responsibility for military intelligence, while Mayr would take care of political intelligence. In May 1942, when Schulze-Holthus’s courier was arrested and things became too dangerous for him to remain in Tehran, the division became geographical: Schulze-Holthus moved south to Qashgai territory, while Mayr remained in Tehran. Gamotha volunteered to take care of the Russian zone. See p. 85.

19. Mayr’s communication measures and problems at this time are described on pp. 190-192.

20. For more about Zahedi, see Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 495-505, and pp. 265-268.

at the British Consulate in Isfahan claiming to have just survived a running gun battle with Mayr, who had apparently lost his temper during a political disagreement, and offering to lead the British to their house.²¹ When the premises were searched, although Mayr had disappeared, the British authorities discovered over 225 items of correspondence and other documents left behind. Mayr had the highly unprofessional habit of committing everything he thought or did to paper and hoarding it, apparently with a view to pursuing a postoccupational literary career, which proved to be most unfortunate for him, though not for British security. The captured documents revealed that the cases hitherto built up by CICI Tehran were substantially correct and that Mayr was indeed organizing an extensive fifth column in Persia. Mayr's personal diary for the period May-September 1942 was also found, as well as some annotated maps.²² Together, the diary and the documents provided the missing link for which CICI had been searching, along with a significant amount of useful supplementary information with respect to enemy intentions and the whereabouts and activities of the Abwehr staybehind, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, who was revealed to be hiding in Qashgai tribal territory with the staybehind Konstantin "Conny" Jakob and corresponding with Mayr. Both Nasir Khan, leader of the Qashgai, and General Zahedi were also shown to be thoroughly implicated in Mayr's plot.²³

The fifth column was cohesively organized under the cover of a political movement called the *Melliun*, cunningly structured by Mayr and Vaziri to unite all the anti-Allied

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21. Apparently, the two men were quarrelling about Gasparian's demand that Mayr should get Hitler to make a binding declaration guaranteeing Armenian independence. See Schulze-Holthus, "Fälschung," 25, MSG 3/667, BA-MA. That Mayr should have pulled a gun on Gasparian is either indicative of how quick-tempered Mayr was or of how stressful he was finding his fugitive role ... or both. We know from his diary that he was under a great deal of pressure at the time. See Diary of Franz Mayer, KV 2/1482, TNA.
 22. Mayr's diary is a fugitive's log of movements, messages, and Byzantine intrigues, interspersed with occasional brief reflections. Important identities are encoded; however, it is apparent from it that Lili Sanjari ("the most faithful of all friends") was of immense help to him in his work. Unable to leave his room unless in heavy disguise, Mayr could not possibly have coordinated subversive affairs without Sanjari, who carried his messages, met his agents ("stooges" in CICI parlance), and made his arrangements. (Of the other Persians with whom Mayr had to deal, Mohammed Vaziri and Habibullah Naubakht appear according to the diary to have been the most capable and steadfast). Mayr was clearly shaken by the news he received on 24 April 1942 that Sanjari had contracted typhus, from which she fortunately soon recovered. Confined to his room, Mayr's health was also a constant concern: in the diary he often wrote of indigestion, constipation, and nervous exhaustion. He complained bitterly about his isolation, saying: "It is very uncomfortable to have to explain everything in writing. ... Always to have to balance these groups so that they do not eat one another, on top of the mistakes made by the middlemen, ... being locked up in this miserable little room in the heatwave, all this has weakened my nerves." Diary of Franz Mayer, KV 2/1482, TNA.
 23. Plan for breaking the German fifth column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 24x, KV 2/1477, TNA. After the raid, Mayr returned to Tehran, where he sought refuge with one of his closest Persian associates, Mohammad Vaziri (Mayr speaks of his "wild nature"), who was in constant touch with Schulze-Holthus (who described Vaziri as a "bombastic hothead") and whose father was a sympathetic senior police officer, which no doubt greatly improved Mayr's chances of remaining undetected. Vaziri was later turned and doubled by the Soviets. There is evidence that he was used by them to liaise with Roman Gamotha in Turkey and Vienna after Gamotha's return to Germany. See KV 2/1317, TNA.

subversive cells under one central executive committee and to facilitate coordination and communication among all the disparate elements in his network. In his own words:

... the *Melliun* movement is the unification of all forces and associations of Iran which aim at freeing their homeland and who, in their fight against Bolshevik Russia and the Anglo-Saxon world, see in National Socialist Germany their natural allies.²⁴

By the time his Isfahan house was raided, Mayr had diligently developed the *Melliun* to a point where he was able to count on the support of “a large part of the Persian Army, cabinet ministers, *Majlis* deputies, police, gendarmerie, and members of the Persian civil service”—some 160 of whom were actually named in the captured correspondence.²⁵ This seems a remarkable achievement for a young SS subaltern who a mere two years earlier had been totally ignorant of Persia and who, abandoned after the Allied invasion by the SD in Berlin, had been constantly on the run and—most significantly in wartime Persia, where loyalty came only at a high price—penniless.²⁶ It is important to remember that from September 1941 onwards Mayr never ceased to be a fugitive and could only move around Persia in heavy disguise;²⁷ consequently, correspondence and cutouts rather than actual meetings served as his primary means of communicating with his agents. In this Mayr appears to have had little choice, though it seems likely that he, like Bill Magan of the Indian Intelligence Bureau,²⁸ appreciated the greater security of such an approach to agent handling. Unfortunately, it is difficult to learn from the captured documents, all of which have now been released by MI5,²⁹ precisely how Mayr succeeded in organizing such an extensive network with so few resources at his disposal, not least because, when CICI Tehran let Schulze-Holthus loose on the records after his capture in 1944, he neatly deconstructed them, revealing that much written by Franz Mayr in his diary and other documents was either poorly translated, wildly inaccurate, or pure imagination. It seems clear from the same records, however, that Mayr had little personal contact with the influential Persians he organized, preferring to operate at arm’s length from them and their diverse political

24. Plan for breaking the German fifth column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 24x, KV 2/1477, TNA. The full name of the organization was *Melliun Iran*. It united the following groups already identified by CICI: the *Golmohammedi* group, *Hezb-i-Kabud*, *Siahpushan*, *Jamiat-i-Melli Hemayat-i-Dan* (Workmen’s Aid Society), *Iran Azad*, *Anjuman-i-Tablighat Iran*, and *Iran Bidar*. Mayr himself wrote that the *Melliun* was “no party, but rather a centre of resistance.” Preface to commentary on the documents left by Franz Mayr in Isfahan, 27 October 1943, KV 2/1482, TNA.

25. Plan for breaking the German fifth column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 24x, KV 2/1477, TNA.

26. According to Schellenberg, both Mayr and Gamotha financed their activities before the occupation by borrowing “large sums of money from all and sundry.” Doerries, *Hitler’s Last Chief*, 247.

27. On one occasion in January 1942 in Kazvin (Soviet zone), Mayr chose too heavy a disguise. Dressed in tattered rags as an extremely poor Persian, he actually attracted attention rather than deflecting it and was twice mistaken for a thief, narrowly escaping arrest. Diary of Franz Mayer, KV 2/1482, TNA.

28. See pp. 279-280.

29. They are in KV 2/1482, TNA.

movements. It was probably a wise choice of *modus operandi*, for it not only made his immense task more manageable, but it enabled Mayr to steer clear of Persian distemper and British security simultaneously; consequently, most of the Persians with whom Mayr had direct contact found themselves working for him as intermediaries and couriers.³⁰ An example of how Mayr delegated all executive functions to Persians instead of handling them himself would be the way in which he made Mohammed Vaziri responsible for liaison with the special section of Mayr's organization (codenamed A/216) set up to carry out TIR espionage and sabotage. From this important section Mayr acquired a significant amount of intelligence for onward transmission to Berlin, including monthly statistics on railway goods traffic to Russia, together with general information on all transportation modes, including port facilities and Allied depots. Instead of dealing with Mayr directly, the A/216 leader (A1/216 or "Engineer A") reported directly to Vaziri, who then transmitted the intelligence to Mayr, who in turn incorporated it in the reports he passed, or attempted to pass, by courier to Ludwig Moyzisch in Ankara.³¹

Despite the formation of a special railway intelligence unit in May 1943, CICI found Mayr's TIR section particularly difficult to penetrate, for it was more highly disciplined than the other sections. It adopted the strictest safeguards to preserve the secrecy of its operations and to conceal the identity of its agents. To this end, it was organized on a cell basis, so that each member knew only his immediate collaborators and nothing about the working of the organization in general. By August 1943, shortly before Mayr's arrest, CICI had accumulated a record of some 230 railway-espionage and railway-sabotage suspects, of whom sixty-eight had been selected for arrest.³²

The two most important Persians with whom Mayr did have face-to-face contact were the aforementioned Mohammed Vaziri, and Habibullah Naubakht (FATHULLAH), the *Majlis* deputy for Shiraz.³³ Most of what we know about Vaziri pertains to the fact that he was captured by the Russians in northern Persia and became a Soviet agent (with cover as Ghulam Reza Abbassian), at some point tasked by Moscow to contact Roman Gamotha during the latter's trip

30. See pp. 211, 214n78. Mayr's principal international couriers were smugglers: Firouz Khalilnia (KARIM KHAN), Bahloul Zanoluzi (Sanoussi) (YUSSUF), and Anvar Hussein Tarizi regularly smuggled goods, including drugs, between Persia and Turkey. To communicate with the south, Mayr used mainly Javad Ramazani (HABIB) and Ghulam Reza Kashefi (REZA), both of whom were arrested and interned in 1943.

31. The tradecraft employed could be elaborate and imaginative: I came across an instance where one of Mayr's messages was written on a tiny piece of cigarette paper and glued into the courier's armpit, where it was concealed beneath a flesh-coloured condom fragment. Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

32. Plan for breaking the German fifth column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 24x, KV 2/1477, TNA.

33. As a member of parliament, Naubakht enjoyed the great advantage of being immune from arrest. Biographical sketch of persons mentioned in the document summarizing the information gained from Franz Mayr, f 351/1, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

to Turkey on behalf of Operation NORMA in late-1943 and possibly on a subsequent trip to Vienna in March 1944.³⁴ However, it seems clear that before his arrest by the Russians Vaziri was more than just Mayr's right-hand man: he handled most of Mayr's paperwork, he did most of Mayr's organizing, he conducted much of the liaison work between Mayr and the various elements of the *Melliun*, and he even carried out such practical tasks as landing-ground reconnaissance.³⁵ Mayr stated later rather peevishly that "most of the plans did not correspond to realities and were the result of Vaziri's fantasy and love of cell-building."³⁶ Vaziri was certainly extremely energetic on Mayr's behalf, a characteristic later evidenced when he became a fully fledged Soviet agent, which he continued to be into the Cold War era.³⁷ Habibullah Naubakht was an influential parliamentary politician to whom Mayr was originally introduced by the Japanese.³⁸ Known to the British as Nasir Khan's Tehran agent with ardent pro-Nazi sympathies and links to all the various subversive groups in the *Melliun*,³⁹ it was Naubakht who, at Mayr's suggestion, escorted Schulze-Holthus south in June 1942 to join the Qashgai after hiding him for three weeks in a Tehran suburb.⁴⁰ CICI later came to the conclusion that it was Naubakht who then "persuaded Franz Mayr to advise [Berlin] to send the ANTON group to ... stir up the Qashgai tribe," and to give Nasir Khan such advice as would bring the tribe into conflict with the British and the Persian government, "thereby using the Qashgai to divert Allied forces."⁴¹ It was certainly Naubakht who brought Mayr news that the ANTON group had landed in July 1943,⁴² so we can see that he essentially functioned as Mayr's link with southern Persia, the Qashgai, and Schulze-Holthus himself. However, Naubakht ultimately proved unreliable: he greatly abused his position of trust by opening one of Mayr's letters to Schulze-Holthus and revealing the contents to Nasir Khan "in twisted form," which angered Mayr and damaged their

34. Extract from DSO Syria's Interrogation Report No. 1 on Firouz Khalilnia, 8 December 1945, f 24, KV 2/1317, TNA. Khalilnia, formerly Mayr's courier to Turkey, and Bahloul Zanouzi, both related to Vaziri, worked with Vaziri as German agents. Both are thought to have become Soviet agents too, probably recruited by Vaziri. Extract from attachment to Defence Security Office CICI Tehran report re. cooperation with Russian Security, 31 August 1945, f 24abb, KV 2/1317, TNA.

35. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1473, TNA; and Table C-4.

36. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1317, TNA.

37. After the war, Dick Thistlethwaite wrote: "Whether Vaziri was double-crossing the Russians or double-crossing the Germans or double-crossing both is not ... evident, though being a Persian he was probably quadruple-crossing everybody." Thistlethwaite to Brodie, 4 January 1946, f 25a, KV 2/1317, TNA.

38. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

39. The general security situation in Persia, 3 March 1943, f 10b, WO 208/3094, TNA.

40. KOI 34, 20 July 1942, f 70a, KV 2/1486, TNA.

41. Magan to Spencer, 29 March 1944, f 43b, KV 2/1484, TNA.

42. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1317, TNA.

relationship.⁴³ After Mayr's arrest, Naubakht fled south to Qashgai tribal territory; by September 1943, his subversive political influence had been eliminated.⁴⁴

Mayr's organizing influence in these matters was clearly more symbolic than personal: because his plans and his promises depended on a successful German invasion and occupation of Persia, Mayr was to the Persians who rallied around him not of great importance in himself, but merely yet another intermediary. He was seen by them quite accurately as Hitler's herald or Germany's proxy, not as a revolutionary leader and more as an envoy than an ambassador. In other words, Mayr's reach was not quite as extraordinary as it might at first appear. As a proxy facilitator Mayr actually needed to *do* far less individually than we might imagine; it was really up to his fighting comrades in southern Russia to inspire the Persians with their victories, which of course never came to pass.

So, by 15 October 1942, Mayr was able to write to Berlin:

The military, gendarmerie, and tribal organizations are welded together in the Melliun Iran movement. Everything is thoroughly organized in the provinces. Throughout the whole country they are ready to strike.

Your energetic assistance with the air force and with arms is awaited. Landing grounds for aircraft and parachute troops and sites for the dropping of arms are ready in every province.⁴⁵

After the capture of the Mayr documents, CICI synopsisized Mayr's plan, which was contingent upon the arrival of German airborne troops or a Wehrmacht attack across the Caucasus and/or the Caspian, as follows:

... The original design was to employ the Persian Army in conjunction with some of the tribes to rise against the Allied forces in Persia. Action to be taken included:

(a) The seizure of key positions such as oilfields, refineries, public buildings, military installations, Allied legations in the capital, the rounding-up of Allied sympathizers and nationals, and, of course, the formation of a puppet government.

(b) The creation of the greatest possible confusion amongst the Allied Forces and amongst Persian elements who might be prepared to help the Allies, by timing accurately the various subversive activities so that they should coincide with the advance of the German forces. In fact, the plans laid down follow closely the common design so frequently, and successfully, employed by the Germans in other countries.⁴⁶

43. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1473, TNA. See also Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

44. "Naubakht's influence in Tehran has ceased. He has fled" FO discussion, 19 September 1943, f 133a, WO 208/3094, TNA; see also Viceroy to Secretary of State India, 13 September 1943, f 127a, WO 208/3094.

45. Doerries, *Hitler's Last Chief*, 247.

46. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 44, 15 November 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

Perhaps Mayr's most impressive achievement was his ability to maintain an essential state of equilibrium among the various elements of the *Melliun* movement. It has to be remembered that Mayr's task was not simply to "cry 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war."⁴⁷ He was neither a reckless Marc Antony nor a mere adventurer; on the contrary, Mayr's intention was to prepare Persia for an orderly German military occupation, which had to be done methodically, with discipline, and at a measured pace. To this end, it was necessary to restrain the hotheads and deal with the rogues, and it appears that Mayr had sufficient strength of character and personality to do both. Mayr was also confident that he had time on his side: "he was not among those who thought that Russia would collapse quickly under the German onslaught."⁴⁸ It was also vitally important not to let one branch of his organization know about the activities of the other, first for reasons of security and second because only by playing one element off against the other could Mayr retain total control of all elements and direct Persian activities to German ends. However, had the British not neutralized him, General Zahedi might have proved to be Mayr's nemesis, for the general's ultimate ambition was clearly to depose the Shah and replace him, which was not at all on Mayr's agenda; it would have exceeded the limits and destroyed the balance within the *Melliun* that Mayr had carefully created and maintained.⁴⁹

Mayr's activities were by no means confined to Persian politics and the Allied supply routes; in addition, he had been active on the tribal front. In fact, he had managed to garner the support of at least twenty-three Persian tribes—including the Qashgai, the Bakhtiari, and the Boir Ahmedi—an astonishing and timely achievement, during a particularly disjunctive period when the chasm between the tribes and the central government threatened to widen to a point where the entire country could slide into anarchy even without German assistance.⁵⁰

In 1941, the political collapse of the regime signalled by the shah's abdication was accompanied by the actual collapse of its coercive apparatus, particularly in the rural areas. ... The veneer of government control in the tribal areas vanished ... [The tribes] also rearmed, often as much to defend themselves from their regional and tribal enemies as from the army. ... By 1942 the rural

47. *Julius Caesar*, 3.1.270–275.

48. Introduction to the diary of Franz Mayr, May 1943, KV 2/1482, TNA. See also Kellar to Vickery, 1 June 1943, enclosing Special Appendix dated 29 May 1943, ff 16c, 17a, KV 2/1477, TNA.

49. Extract from Security Summary No. 137, 19 June 1943, f 19a, KV 2/1477, TNA.

50. Enlightening information on contemporary indigenous perspectives and policies is to be found in Stephanie Cronin, *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921-1941* (London: Routledge, 2006), 191-205. For specific information about the Qashgai, in addition to Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, see Lois Beck, *The Qashqa'i of Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Oliver Garrod, "The Nomadic Tribes of Persia Today," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 33, no. 1 (January 1946): 32-46, and "The Qashgai Tribe of Fars," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 33, no. 3 (July 1946): 293-306; Pierre Oberling, *The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), and "Qashgai Tribal Confederacy," *ELXAN* (7 January 2004). For more about the Bakhtiari, see Gene R. Garthwaite, "The Bakhtiyari Ilkhani: An Illusion of Unity," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8, no. 2 (April 1977): 145-160.

populations were fully rearmed with modern weapons. ... Nasir Khan Qashqai ... was one of the first [tribal leaders] to re-establish his position Others were more cautious but, by the spring of 1942, all traces of government administration had disappeared from the tribal areas and been replaced by the authority of the old tribal families.⁵¹

Surprisingly, the Jangali of Mazanderan, inaccessible to Mayr, also appear to have been pro-*Melliun*, possibly due to the activity of Roman Gamotha in their area. At any rate, what had to be avoided by the security authorities at all cost was a situation where the fifth column became stronger than the Persian government itself. By August 1943, CICI had come to recognize that the time had arrived when, unless resolute action were taken immediately, the Allies might “find themselves with the disagreeable task of restoring the situation themselves.”⁵²

Mayr’s subversive political activities may be conveniently divided into two phases: before and after El Alamein and Stalingrad. During the spring and early summer of 1942, while enjoying the support and protection of General Zahedi, Mayr nurtured ambitious schemes, which he later acknowledged to have been impracticable. However, after his flight from Isfahan in November 1942 and after Germany’s two catastrophic military failures in North Africa and Russia, Mayr decided to cease all political activity, recognizing that his work depended entirely on the prospect of German victory in southern Russia. It was only after the arrival in Tehran of the FRANZ group in early April 1943 that he decided that “he ought to try and do something again, although at the bottom of his heart he realized he was playing a losing game.”⁵³ To this end, he re-enlisted the services of Habibullah Naubakht, while taking the shrewd precaution of also involving two other even more influential and powerful figures, Ayatollah Kashani and Ali Hayat,⁵⁴ to play off against Naubakht and to offset Naubakht’s aggressive personality and ambitious aims. In fact, Mayr was extremely reluctant to deal once more with Naubakht, as he suspected that Naubakht would likely attempt to exploit him to further his own political ends. However, since Mayr’s southern couriers had all been interned, he desperately needed someone who could liaise between Tehran and Qashgai territory, thereby facilitating communication and coordination between FRANZ and ANTON. The subsequent shortlived reincarnation of the *Melliun* movement was but a pale imitation of its former self and far less effective, for Persia was now entering a new, divisive phase of political realignment, largely reflecting the changing

51. Cronin, *Tribal Politics*, 192-193.

52. Extract from Security Summary No. 137, 19 June 1943, f 19a, KV 2/1477, TNA.

53. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 9, 30 August 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1317, TNA.

54. A curious choice, Hayat was the pro-Allied leader of a group urging the declaration of war against Germany. Mayr evidently recruited Hayat in order to monitor and control his potentially damaging activities and to camouflage the real purpose of the *Melliun*. Biographical sketch of persons mentioned in the document summarizing the information gained from Franz Mayr, f 351/1, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

course of the war, and also because Mayr now experienced considerable difficulty penetrating the Persian electioneering process with the shrinking resources, funds, and credibility at his disposal. For his part, Mayr also readily admitted that his “general political plans had never borne much fruit because of the impossibility of getting two Persians to work together.”⁵⁵ Whatever his concerns and frustrations, Mayr’s second attempt at subverting the Persian polity was to last no more than a few months, for by mid-summer 1943 CICI were closing in on him.

On the night of 12 August 1943, a Persian Army officer named Hussein Keyhani, one of the *Mellium* suspects, was taken into custody by CICI, admitted his guilt in conspiring with the Germans, and agreed to contact a Persian Police officer, Third Lieutenant Saharkhiz, who would reveal the whereabouts of Franz Mayr. Two nights later, with the help of these sources, a CICI reconnaissance party led by the Defence Security Officer (DSO Persia) Joe Spencer himself were able to locate the FRANZ parachutist Werner Rockstroh in the home of one Ali Mutti and to capture both him and his W/T set. Spencer, believing that Rockstroh was expecting a visitor, decided to remain in Rockstroh’s room for a while. Soon a Persian soldier, Sergeant Major Mansouri, arrived and was arrested; he was then followed by much larger fry—a dentist named Dr Qudsi, who was the uncle of Franz Mayr’s mistress, Lili Sanjari. Qudsi resisted arrest but was finally subdued. After interrogation at CICI HQ, both men agreed to cooperate and to lead the British to where Franz Mayr was—in Dr Qudsi’s house, where Sanjari lived and received visits from Mayr. The official narrative is anticlimactic:

The DSO and one FS sergeant entered a room at the top of the stairs and saw a man in the darkness; he was challenged and made no attempt to resist. The light was switched on and, as he answered to the description, he was asked if he were Franz Mayr, and at once admitted it. He was placed with his face to the wall and covered with a firearm The room was searched and all documents removed.⁵⁶

Throughout Franz Mayr’s years of activity in Persia, he had been in love. Roman Gamotha’s secretary, Lili Sanjari, became Mayr’s mistress soon after his arrival in the country in 1940 and worked for him from time to time as a courier and intermediary. Sanjari was born on 8 December 1921; in other words, she was only nineteen years old when Tehran was occupied and eight years younger than Mayr. Her parents were both Persians, but her widowed mother

55. Ibid.

56. Yet again, Mayr had been hoarding papers: two briefcases full of documents were found. Narrative of arrest of Franz Mayr and a group (Gruppe FRANZ) of German parachutists who landed in the Siah Kuh area, 75 miles southwest of Tehran on 22 March 1943, WO 208/1588A, TNA. See also Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA. Bill Magan provides a slightly more animated narrative of the arrest, though even he found it “rather an anticlimax.” Cf. Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 67-68. At some point during the war—how long after Mayr’s arrest is unclear—the Germans made a clandestine approach to the Allies for a “spy swap” involving Mayr, which the Allies vetoed because of Mayr’s “extraordinary knowledge of the Middle East.” Summary of Mayr’s security career, f 195a, KV 2/1481, TNA.

married a German named Lange when Sanjari was very young. Thus she was raised in Germany, returning to Persia with her parents in 1933. While in Germany, Sanjari attended a German school for five years; in Tehran, however, she attended the American School, studying Farsi, History, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, English, Psychology, Public Speaking, and Ethics. In other words, Sanjari was highly educated and spoke Farsi, German, and English fluently. She also loved music, and studied the piano and the accordion.⁵⁷ After leaving school, Sanjari worked in Tehran for the German firm of Ferrostahl, where she knew Karl Korel, who would later return to Persia as an Abwehr interpreter/guide with the FRANZ expedition, for which he was probably selected partly because he had previously known Mayr through Sanjari.

Evidently, Mayr fell deeply in love with Sanjari and, as was required of any SS officer, sought the permission of his superiors to marry her. Even after his capture three years later, Mayr asked the British to allow him to marry Sanjari. Neither the SS nor the British complied. Sanjari appears to have misinterpreted Mayr's failure to secure permission from the SS (who suspected she might be working for the British) as a betrayal, and out of pique entered into a sexual liaison with an American GI, not realizing that he was a US Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) informant. Private (later Sergeant) Robert J. Merrick (divorced and remarried, with two children), aged 23, from Indiana was described by his superiors as an "outstanding enlisted man ... very discreet and trustworthy." Working as an army transport clerk by day, Merrick was a dance-band musician by night, which may explain how he met Sanjari. They trysted with indeterminate frequency for a period of about three months in Tehran rooms rented and paid for by Sanjari, who claimed to have plenty of money, and were even caught one night *in flagrante* by British security, who raided the premises looking for Franz Mayr. At one time Sanjari told Merrick that five or six Germans had been landed by parachute south of Tehran and had then contacted her. She mentioned the death of Karl Korel, saying that she and some other individuals had buried him secretly somewhere outside the city.⁵⁸ Sanjari also said that the parachutists had brought with them a great deal of British and American currency, which she had hidden, and which may of course have been the source of her affluence. Several times she asked Merrick if he could dispose of some of the dollars for her. Once Merrick asked Sanjari what role she played

57. Sanjari to Lambert, 26 June 1938, RG 319, Entry 134B Box 147, NARA. This transcribed letter to Sanjari's American penpal Johnnie Lambert in Mississippi (their relationship was subsequently shown to be entirely innocent) is wrongly dated 1933. In it Sanjari writes that she had to switch from piano to accordion because her family were planning to return to Germany and could not be burdened with such a large instrument. Why they never returned is not known. See also Hodge to OIC, Letters found in the documents of Franz Mayr, 17 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B Box 147, NARA.

58. According to Habibullah Naubakht, Korel's nocturnal burial, attended by Mayr and the other FRANZ fugitives in open fields south of Tehran near the Varamin road, was a gruesome business: "We had to cut his body into pieces and take them out of the city in cases and rucksacks." Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 214.

in the “spy ring of which she spoke constantly.” Sanjari replied that “she and another girl named Lucille were ostensibly in charge of the propaganda angle,” softening up the Persians in anticipation of a victorious German entry into Persia.⁵⁹ From such a remark one may infer that, despite her infidelity, Sanjari clearly remained under Mayr’s influence.

The pillow talk of Merrick and Sanjari eventually reached the ears of Major E. P. Barry of the US Provost Marshal’s office, who recorded his intention to relay any intelligence derived from it to British security and to ask the British to prepare further questionnaires for Merrick, whom Barry encouraged to continue his relationship with Sanjari.⁶⁰ But by this time, having had Sanjari under constant surveillance for some time, Spencer’s team were well aware of her activities and connections, and were already working with her. While it would be quite wrong to see Sanjari as some latter-day Mata Hari, she was not without a feisty spirit and considerable resourcefulness, as British security soon learned when they finally reeled her in and sought to use her to entrap the remaining FRANZ parachutists. Once persuaded to work for Joe Spencer, Sanjari certainly seems to have been of use to him, although the activities she revealed to Merrick show that she still preserved a robust instinct for the preservation of her own interests. While she no doubt led the British to a buried W/T set, whether Sanjari ultimately got to keep her hoard of banknotes is not known; nor is her fate after her usefulness had expired. Possibly she was interned by the British (she was certainly on the CICI arrest list); possibly not, for the arrests of Mayr, the remaining parachutists, and the fifth columnists must have rendered her relatively harmless.⁶¹

On the day following Franz Mayr’s arrest, Spencer raided another house where he found Hans Holzapfel, who was arrested with his W/T set. Both Rockstroh and Holzapfel stated under interrogation that one more W/T operator, Georg Grille, was still at large somewhere in Tehran. At this point, one of the Persians arrested earlier revealed that Grille was being sheltered by Lili Sanjari, who had been deliberately left at liberty by Spencer as a decoy with whom to lure and trap Mayr. Ten days after Mayr’s arrest, Spencer brought Sanjari in for questioning, but she refused to reveal Grille’s whereabouts. Shrewdly, Spencer then decided to place Mayr and Sanjari together in the same room, which resulted in a dramatic confrontation during the course

59. About the Merrick affair, see Lili Sanjari (Franz Mayr case), 25-27 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

60. Ibid.

61. When he returned to Berlin, Gamotha told Schellenberg that Mayr’s relationship with Sanjari’s family had heavily compromised the entire opposition movement: “in spite of all warnings, Mayer [*sic*] became so involved with this family that in the end they knew full details of his activities.” Doerries, *Hitler’s Last Chief*, 247. See also Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

of which Mayr ordered the astonished Sanjari, who, unfaithful to him though she had been, was clearly still under his control, to reveal Grille's hiding place. Mayr subsequently provided the following rationale for such cooperation on his part:

He feared [the arrest of the remaining parachutists] by the Russians and was also disgusted with the Persians for the way they had double-crossed him.⁶²

Sanjari was extremely angry, cursing Mayr for giving up after two years' hard work and continuing to resist his instructions, but finally she acquiesced and agreed to lead Spencer to the house where she had hidden Grille. However, it turned out that the occupants of the house had become alarmed and had passed Grille to another house, the location of which they refused to reveal. Having volunteered to interrogate Grille's passers, it took Sanjari two hours to extract from them the necessary information, which resulted in Grille's capture with his W/T set in the early hours of 26 August 1943.

All that now remained was to locate and capture the two remaining DORA parachutists, who were to be found somewhere in the Bakhtiari tribal region. The narrative continues:

In the meantime, [Spencer] had been successful in contacting Franz Mayr's "most trusted" courier. This man, after intense interrogation, offered to throw in his lot with the British and put forward a plan for the capture of Lt. Blume and Cpl Köndgen His plan was that [Spencer] should lend him a civilian car and he ... would go to the Bakhtiari country with a faked message from Franz Mayr telling them to come at once to Tehran. ... On 29 August the [courier] informed [Spencer] that the two Germans ... were in his house in Tehran.⁶³

However, it was not possible for Spencer to arrest Blume and Köndgen in Tehran for fear of attracting attention and blowing his plans to use the captured W/T sets for subsequent deception, so a successful ambush was staged 9.5 km north of the city and, after slight resistance, both parachutists were captured. On searching their car, the security forces discovered about 100 kg of gelignite, a W/T set, and a machine gun.

In late August and early September, the arrests of Franz Mayr and the parachutists were followed by a spectacular wave of arrests throughout the British zone, conducted with the full cooperation of the American military intelligence services.⁶⁴ The way in which this operation was planned and executed by the British was meticulous: a textbook case, in fact, which merits

62. Narrative of arrest of Franz Mayr and a group (Gruppe FRANZ) of German parachutists who landed in the Siah Kuh area, 75 miles southwest of Tehran on 22 March 1943, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

63. Ibid.

64. CICI and the American CIC liaised intensively and cooperated closely during September 1943. The following month, when the British decided to fly Mayr to Cairo for further interrogation, the PGC commander, General Connolly, placed his own plane at their disposal. Cooperation requested by British in breaking up subversive and sabotage organizations, 12 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA; Memorandum regarding Franz Mayer [*sic*], 14 October 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

closer inspection. Cooperation between CICI and the American CIC had been ensured beforehand by the despatch from Baghdad in August of “Chokra” Wood, Head of CICI Baghdad, on direct orders from the PAIFORCE commander, Sir Henry Pownall—as the Americans saw it:

... to initiate such steps as might be required to improve the general security situation in Persia from the point of view of the Allies and in particular the apprehension of many persons stated by the British to have been engaged in espionage and preparations for sabotage against the interests of the United Nations.⁶⁵

Once Mayr had been captured, CICI decided to smash—rather than penetrate—his network; having eliminated the main head of the hydra, it seemed best to decapitate the monster completely. To this end, rather than attempting to capture every *Melliun* suspect, CICI decided to arrest only the leading members of each identified group or cell, even if there was less evidence against them than against some inferior members. Thus the effect of the arrests was spread throughout the entire organization, and the leaderless rank-and-file in every part of it were effectively paralyzed. The final CICI arrest list combined the names of powerful *Melliun* personalities like Ayatollah Abol-Ghasem Kashani⁶⁶ with those of active and dangerous associates of Franz Mayr and Berthold Schulze-Holthus like *Majlis* deputy Habibullah Naubakht, the Gulmohammedi brothers, and Firuz Khalilnia, who was Mayr’s principal international courier.⁶⁷

A series of Anglo-American liaison meetings was then held at which Wood and Spencer agreed to provide the Americans with additional information about the crisis, identifying three key areas of concern: the German fifth column, parachutists and unidentified aircraft, and the enemy organization in Persia. The Russians were also cooperative, indicating their agreement in principle with the British demand for greater attention to security measures and the arrest of certain individuals. Faced with such unanimity, the US commander, Donald H. Connolly, had little choice but to accede to the British and Soviet views; however, one senses from the relevant correspondence that Connolly was personally in accord with them. At any rate, he gave Wood and Spencer carte-blanc, agreeing to allow them:

... to enter the railway establishments in order to apprehend individuals working on the railway who were included on their lists of persons to be arrested, while at the same time [to] a policy on our part of refusing to intervene in any fashion on behalf of any individual to be arrested; and secondly, to say appropriate things through our commanding general and our diplomatic corps

65. Walsh to Connolly, 8 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

66. For more about Kashani, see Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 343-349.

67. Summary of Mayr’s security career, f 195a, KV 2/1481, TNA.

which would indicate acceptance of the situation and our refusal in any way to interfere with the orderly progress of the arrests and subsequent punishments if any.⁶⁸

The diplomats were also active. Sir Reader Bullard, the British minister, liaised personally with General Connolly throughout the operation to ensure that he was kept fully aware of the Russian position. Louis G. Dreyfus Jr, the generally hostile⁶⁹ US minister, had to be briefed (lectured severely) by Connolly's staff and told not to interfere in any way in what was going on "because the responsibility for our [i.e. American] security rested on the British."⁷⁰

Throughout the latter half of August 1943, US cooperation was widened to include the establishment of collecting points at which the persons to be arrested might be grouped in order that the minimum of confusion might occur and railway operations would in no way be interfered with. The Americans also felt that this would aid in the identification of the sixty-two persons to be arrested (forty in Tehran; the others in Kermanshah, Qum, Sultanabad, Andimeshk, and Ahwaz). By the end of the month, the list had been extended to include sixty-six more people, none of them railway employees: four Persian Police, one Persian Gendarme, twenty-five Persian Army, and thirty-six other individuals.⁷¹

To the Persians the Allies displayed a united front. On the evening of 29 August, in a shrewdly conceived *démarche*, the British minister and the Soviet chargé called together on the requisite Persian officials, including even the Shah himself, and described the situation, presenting an official joint Anglo-Soviet statement to the Persian government. Possibly as a direct consequence of this diplomatic initiative, the Persian police cooperated fully with CICI, helping them to carry out the arrests of 103 persons and facilitating their transportation to the Sultanabad internment camp.⁷²

The next step was the formation of a joint Anglo-Soviet-Persian interrogation committee to carry out a complete interrogation of all the Persians detained at Sultanabad.⁷³ The inclusion

68. Walsh to Connolly, 8 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

69. Dreyfus appears to have been as severely anti-Soviet as he was anti-British. See Gregory J. Rosmaita, "Strange Menagerie: The Atlantic Charter as the Root of American Entanglement in Iran, and Its Influence upon the Development of the Policy of Containment, 1941-1946," (1994). www.hicom.net/oedipus/us_iran.html.

70. Walsh to Connolly, 8 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

71. Ibid. The names of sixty-two persons to be arrested are to be found in Spencer to Connolly, 30 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA; the names of eighteen railway employees arrested in Tehran are listed in Barry to Provost Marshal, PGSC, 30 August 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

72. Walsh to Connolly, 8 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

73. Ibid. Captured subversives and saboteurs at Sultanabad were treated well: "... we never received any complaint from them directly, in fact a number of them stated how kindly they had been treated and used to send flowers and other small tokens to our own officers after their release from internment." See Spencer to Bullard, 5 October 1959, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA.

of the Persians in this process of course pre-empted any potential accusations of oppressive action ... but this was not enough to silence Louis Dreyfus.

On 1 September, the Deputy Provost Marshal of PGSC, Major John Walsh, received a telephone call from Dreyfus, “who was very disturbed about reports ... that the Americans were taking an active part in the arrests.” Walsh appears to have effectively neutralized the fundamentally anti-British diplomat by iterating the official PGSC policy and stressing that US forces had not strayed from it:

After a clear outline of what our commanding general’s position had been and what was actually done by us, Mr Dreyfus clearly saw that a careful policy of noninterference with the British in discharging their security responsibility had occurred, as well as the refraining on our part from the making of actual arrests or the detaining of any Iranian citizen against his will.⁷⁴

The interrogations which followed the mopping up of the Persian fifth column were of two distinct sorts. The Germans and their most important Persian collaborators were interrogated by Spencer’s Tehran staff independently, although the interrogation of Franz Mayr and the FRANZ/DORA parachutists was greatly facilitated by expert SIME interrogators who arrived from Cairo (CSDIC Maadi). However, most of the Persians arrested were sent to Sultanabad for interrogation by the joint Anglo-Persian Commission, the presence of which required an entirely different technique.⁷⁵

The initial interrogations of the captured Germans were of course the most important, especially as some of them had extremely valuable information to give about the then little-known SD. The breaking of Mayr, who “at first resisted interrogation with considerable energy,” was the work of an expert SIME interrogator. However, the detailed follow-up interrogations of Mayr and of his compatriots inevitably fell to Spencer’s officers, who had been responsible for investigating and arresting Mayr’s Persian fifth column. Both Mayr and Schulze-Holthus were interrogated about all the German documents and records seized, which enabled Spencer’s staff to increase the amount of intelligence they had about the fifth column and to correct any errors. The Germans were also persuaded to write personality notes and outlines of their activities in their own handwriting, thereby facilitating subsequent interrogations at Sultanabad before the joint Anglo-Persian Commission.⁷⁶

74. Walsh to Connolly, 8 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 167, NARA.

75. History of Combined Intelligence Centre, Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, 15 December 1944, f 57c, KV 4/223, TNA.

76. *Ibid.* Interrogations before the Commission were important not for the additional information obtained, which was negligible, but as a political weapon for making the Persian government realize its responsibility towards its allies. The Persians were often reluctant to proceed against powerful pro-Nazis, like Sayid Abul Qassem

Walsh summed up the American view of how the round-up had been handled in the following positive terms:

The British have certainly to be commended for the manner in which they have handled this counterintelligence job in Persia. Immediately after the first arrests began, a great deal of criticism was handed out by the Persians themselves concerning the illegal power assumed by the Allies and the disrespectful manner and procedure which was used. Secrecy and the general condition of the country demanded that an absolute merciless procedure be assumed. After the interrogations began, the Persians began to realize that no evidence was lacking, and, with their declaration of war in October, have since developed quite a serious attitude of cooperation in security matters.⁷⁷

After two years of tirelessly standing on guard against German subversion and sabotage in Tehran and the provinces, the head of British security intelligence in Persia, Joe Spencer, had by the autumn of 1943 developed a penetrating profile of his prime suspect and target, Franz Mayr. After Mayr's capture in mid-August, Spencer was finally able to release the following profile for distribution throughout the Middle East and beyond. One is struck by Spencer's insightfulness and the lucidity with which he described his subject:

[Mayr] is not a well-educated man in the sense of having a disciplined mind. He is however shrewd by nature, and he picked up a considerable amount of information during and after his student days. He is a very careful and cautious worker, and when he plans on paper, he does so neatly. These qualities, however, which were responsible for the success he achieved, were counterbalanced by his emotional and introspective nature, which drove him to put everything down on paper, made him sometimes lose his temper when it was dangerous to do so, and tied him too closely to Lili Sanjari, whom he went to visit, against his better judgement, on the night of his arrest. He is ambitious, proud of what he has achieved, and, with a good deal of reason, looks on the fifth column in Persia as his own personal creation.

His long separation from Germany loosened his ties of loyalty to the Reich, and Berlin's inefficiency angered him. He shows, however, a good deal of loyalty to his countrymen individually and those Persian accomplices whom he trusted.⁷⁸ It was only by playing on this loyalty, as well as by emphasizing Berlin's stupidity, that Mayr's interrogators were able to break him down, for he looks on his confession as a means of shielding Persians who were innocent of political

Kashani for example; however, proving the guilt of such fifth columnists before the Commission forced the government to stop protecting them and to take action against them.

77. Barry to OIC, 11 November 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA.

78. Acute space constraints preclude from this study a galaxy of minor personalities involved in the covert war in Persia, some of whom were undoubtedly turned and doubled by the Soviets, for use against the Germans. Apart from the fifth columnists, some agents and contacts whose names occur with varying frequency in the records and who merit further investigation are Akbari (JIMAND, REZA GHULI), Afshar (TALAN), Gailani (TAN), Gasparian (MUSA), Georgiades (DRILLIG), Karagoezlu, Karakash, Kashani (PRIESTER), Kashefi (REZA), Khalilnia (KARIM KHAN), Saidi, Salmassi (KISS), Salyanlou, Wahabzadeh (SEIDL), Zanoouzi (aka Sanoussi [YUSSUF]), and—last but by no means least—Mayr's close associate Mohammad Vaziri (aka Ghulam Reza Abbassian). There is a scattered abundance of CICI documents in the Kew records, including correspondence between Spencer and Roger concerning Soviet counterintelligence activities, which describe the activities and movements of these Persian and Azeri agents and clarify their complex interrelationships. Some are mentioned in Seydi, "Intelligence": 737-743 passim.

activity against the Allies, and Germans who would be better in British hands than in the custody of Persian crooks.

Mayr is physically brave, annoyed with himself for having been overwhelmed so easily ... , and not in the least appalled by anything the future may have in store for him. He is however still engrossed in his Persian schemes, adores talking “shop,” and is very interested in seeing the British side of the picture. His sense of humour is more developed than in most Germans. Politically he is still dominated by his hate and fear of Bolshevism.⁷⁹

The last word on Franz Mayr therefore rightly belongs to his nemesis, Joe Spencer, whose not unkindly portrayal of Mayr shortly after his arrest hints at the respect he was accorded by CICI and the gravity of the potential threat he had posed to them and the entire Persian theatre:

It is difficult not to have a little sympathy for Mayr. He knew nothing of Persia before he arrived, and he came here only after entangled red tape had been cut. He was given no training and no support; he was prevented from communicating with his base by the German Legation, and when, almost two years later, thanks to his own codes and his own courier, he finally got in touch with Germany, rivalry between two departments produced a series of expeditions which not only ran counter to his intentions but endangered his own personal safety. He managed to cope with the five remaining Germans of the FRANZ expedition, only to find that Berlin had not changed its mind and was sending explosives and more Germans without any weapons. Mayr saw that Persia was anti-Allied. He realized that with money he could influence the elections, against the Allies if not for Germany, and that with weapons he could get control of the tribes. He saw the opportunities, but Berlin failed to grasp them. Even if the German authorities at home belatedly saw the importance of Persia, once they were forced to change to a defensive strategy, they sent out expeditions which were inadequately prepared, and obstinately continued to follow their own policy despite Mayr's protestations. The result was that young German soldiers of junior rank and little education became slaves of the Persians to be bartered from one scoundrel to another. There could hardly be a better example of the ignorance or cruelty of the present German regime than the way in which it was prepared to sacrifice its most ardent supporters to petty departmental jealousy.⁸⁰

79. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 38a, WO 208/1588A, TNA.

80. *Ibid.* Much of Spencer's interpretation of Mayr's invidious position is reflected in my analysis of the dysfunctional relationship between him and Amt VI (pp. 73-78, 85-88).

5.2 Roman Gamotha (MORITZ)

“He was all out for money, and was continually offended at not being given enough respect and decorations.”⁸¹

“Speaks first-class Russian and studied in Moscow before the war. ... Will do anything for money, and must always be playing a dramatic role.”⁸²



Figure 5-2. Roman Gamotha. (Photo courtesy of the Bundesarchiv).

Roman Gamotha (see Figure 5-2), born on 10 April 1917 in Vienna, the son of a Ruthenian schoolteacher who would later disown Gamotha because of his political activities, was educated at the renowned Theresianum (Vienna Theresian Academy), joined the Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth [HJ]) in the spring of 1932, the SS in May 1935, and the Nazi Party on 1 November 1937.⁸³ The truth is that, after matriculating with distinction and entering the medical faculty of the University of Vienna, Gamotha was in constant trouble with the Austrian authorities for extreme right-wing political agitation. First arrested in August 1934, he served a total of ten months in jail for illegal activities on behalf of the Austrian Nazi Party. As a result, he was expelled by Vienna University in the autumn of 1936 and barred from attending any other Austrian university. Accused of membership in an illegal secret society and of sabotage, Gamotha fled the country and arrived in Germany, stateless and without a passport, on 1 November 1936.⁸⁴ Once more able to study, he enrolled as a medical student at the University

81. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

82. Extract from daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweerts, SD agent, Sipo and SD personalities, Ramon Gamotta [sic], 26 September 1944, 33a, KV 1492, TNA.

83. PK/CO385, RS/B5043, and SSO/3A, BA.

84. SSO/3A, BA.

of Berlin, where he appears to have first met Franz Mayr. At some point, probably shortly before the Nazi invasion of Poland, Gamotha transferred from the regular SS to the Waffen-SS. His distinguished record of military service during the Polish campaign has been described elsewhere,⁸⁵ as has his recruitment by the SD and his early service association with Mayr.⁸⁶

Gamotha is said to have participated in the Rashid Ali Gailani coup in Iraq, although what specific intelligence role he might have played there—and on whose behalf—is unknown.⁸⁷ In fact, it is generally assumed that Gamotha was active in northern Persia at the time, not in Iraq, and that he was primarily concerned with Azeri, not Iraqi, affairs. He himself never made any subsequent mention of Iraq, Gailani, the Mufti, or Arab affairs in general; the records show that Mazanderan and Azerbaijan were always his focal points. However, because he was ultimately captured and spirited away by the Soviets, who would never share any information with CICI Tehran about Gamotha's subversive activities, uncertainty will always remain about what he actually did and where he did it. It is precisely this extraordinary secrecy that gives rise to the suspicion that Gamotha was turned by the Russians and subsequently protected by them. According to one albeit dubious source, Gamotha had even studied Farsi in Tehran before the war, and had built up an entire network of agents on the ground in Persia.⁸⁸ While the latter contention seems far-fetched, Gamotha is certainly said to have spoken Farsi well, something he could scarcely have learned to do during the brief period since his arrival at the end of 1940.

Like Mayr, Gamotha fell in love while in Tehran, with the married daughter of Max Schünemann, who, like Gamotha's boss (the general manager of Nouvelle Iran Express, Ernst Fasting), had been an associate of Wilhelm Wassmuss and Oskar von Niedermayer during the First World War and was a sincere admirer of T. E. Lawrence.⁸⁹ Under interrogation before being shipped to Australia,⁹⁰ Schünemann, who was thought to have coordinated intelligence activities in southern Persia, stated that Gamotha, who often visited his house at the invitation of his daughter, had sounded him out about the possibility of fomenting trouble among the southern

85. See p. 220n100.

86. See pp. 195-197.

87. Harald Irnberger, *Nelkenstrauß ruft Praterstern: Am Beispiel Österreich—Funktion und Arbeitsweise geheimer Nachrichtendienste in einem neutralen Staat* (Vienna: Promedia, 1983), 54; Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA.

88. Irnberger, *Nelkenstrauß*, 54.

89. See Sykes, *Wassmuss* (see p. 31n8) and Oskar von Niedermayer, *Unter der Glutsonne Irans: Kriegserlebnisse der deutschen Expedition nach Persien und Afghanistan* (Hamburg: Uhlenhorst-Verlag Karl Brenner, 1925).

90. Liste der in Loveday/Südastralien internierten Deutschen aus Iran, Auswärtiges Amt, Kult E/Nf(Zv)4964, 17 February 1942, R 27330, AA.

tribes. Schünemann told Gamotha to forget the idea, for he would be “playing with fire.”⁹¹ This may have been the original reason for Gamotha’s subsequent interest in the northern provinces.

Nothing is known of Roman Gamotha’s activities in the Russian occupation zone of Persia after he left Franz Mayr in Tehran around 13 September 1941 and ventured north alone, having apparently lost interest in the south, probably because of Schünemann’s caution, nor even of what he did north of Tehran before the Russians arrived. According to Schünemann, Gamotha had contacts with White Russians in Persia and was clearly more interested in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus as espionage targets than in Persia itself.⁹² He certainly appears to have worked completely independently of Mayr, which explains why Mayr, who wrote prolifically, recorded nothing about Gamotha’s activities. After the invasion, it is generally conjectured that Gamotha was at some point apprehended by the Russians or that he willingly surrendered to them. However, between the time of his disappearance from Tehran in September 1941 and his release from Turkish custody on 17 March 1943,⁹³ we lose track of Gamotha almost entirely. All we know with certainty is that he and his companion Theodor Staisch crossed into Turkey on 27 October 1942, reached Dyarbakir on 23 December 1942, and were interned in Yozgat camp on Christmas Day 1942.⁹⁴ When the Soviets took him, Gamotha was likely interrogated and turned by Soviet intelligence or counterintelligence, to be played back to the SD in Berlin; alternatively, he may have already been recruited by them earlier in his career, perhaps when visiting Moscow as a student, although this seems unlikely in view of Gamotha’s record of arrests and convictions for Nazi activities in Vienna as a very young man and his expulsion from the university, which led him to flee to Germany. The problem is that, in the absence of any Soviet records, we will never know how much opportunity or time Gamotha might have had to become active as a German agent in the Russian zone before being arrested or possibly abducted. Much also depends on whether his arrest was genuine or staged. For anything up to a year, Gamotha may have been (1) working hard for either Berlin and/or Moscow, (2) pursuing his own interests, or (3) doing nothing at all.

Thus it is mostly on the basis of postwar evidence that we may conclude retrospectively that Roman Gamotha was a Soviet mole during the war—probably unknown to the SD, although they may have had their suspicions. No single irrefutable fact confirms his duplicity; instead, it is

91. Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA. It is not clear for which German agency Schünemann was working.

92. Ibid.

93. Telegramm Nr. 378, 17 March 1943, R 27330, AA.

94. It took Ambassador von Papen almost three months to secure their release. Vertreter Gamotta [*sic*] aus dem Iran in die Türkei geflüchtet, 12 January 1943, R 27330, AA; Telegramm No. 61, 13 January 1943, R 27330, AA.

the sheer mass of cumulative circumstantial evidence which strongly suggests it, revealing Gamotha to have had the instinct of a chameleon, which is ultimately what enabled him to survive as an operative in the service of various causes, sometimes simultaneously, for up to twenty years, until falling victim to Stalin's final purge. Although the evidence is not voluminous, we can certainly trace the basic sequence of Gamotha's clandestine career without much difficulty in the archival records.⁹⁵ The devil, however, is in the details, for the Soviet propaganda machine chose to conflate the Gamotha narrative during the Cold War, perpetrating an elaborate literary hoax (Operation WEITSPRUNG [Long Jump]) in an apparent attempt to endow Russian counterintelligence at the Tehran Conference with heroic stature.⁹⁶

Gamotha was certainly not a typical RSHA staffer. Both his linguistic expertise⁹⁷ and his overseas experience must have distinguished him from his more pedestrian, less versatile colleagues at Amt VI. He was not overly popular with them, soon earning himself the nickname *Windhund* (gasbag),⁹⁸ and repelling many with his malodorous breath.⁹⁹ However, within the SS, Gamotha enjoyed the protection of the powerful Ernst Kaltenbrunner, with whom he had attended school as a boy in Vienna, and who would later succeed Reinhard Heydrich as head of

95. Unlike the other two German protagonists in Persia—Schulze-Holthus and Mayr—Roman Gamotha was never apprehended and interrogated by the Western Allies either during or after the war. Of his debriefing and/or interrogation by the Soviets there is of course no available record. What we do know with certainty is that, after defecting to the Red Army at Vienna-Schwechat in April 1945, Gamotha worked as a Soviet or East German intelligence officer, mostly in Egypt, until he was sentenced to “death by shooting” by the Soviet Military Tribunal of the Moscow Military District on 28 January 1952 and was executed on 9 May 1952. He was barely thirty-five years old. Karner and Stelzl-Marx, *Stalins letzte Opfer*, 375.

96. Since my own thorough research has convinced me that the operation was pure Soviet fabrication—a view strongly held by Schulze-Holthus and by British intelligence—a detailed discussion of Operation WEITSPRUNG belongs elsewhere. It is remarkable, however, how the Russians persist in disseminating their baseless epic even into the Putin era. See *inter alia* Gary Kern, “How ‘Uncle Joe’ Bugged FDR: The Lessons of History,” *Studies in Intelligence* 47, no. 1 (2003), <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol47no1/article02.html>. In addition to Kern, Donal O’Sullivan has recently published a common-sense appreciation of the WEITSPRUNG scenario, concluding that it likely never happened. See “Casablanca East: Joint Anglo-Soviet Counter-Intelligence in Iran,” in *Dealing with the Devil*, 195-204. Also, Robert Stephan, while citing John Erickson and even Otto Skorzeny as debunkers of the Soviet “documentary fiction,” is at least sceptical about the existence of WEITSPRUNG. See Stephan, *Stalin’s Secret War*, 117; John Erickson, *Stalin’s War with Germany*, vol. 2, *The Road to Berlin* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975-1983), 149-154; Otto Skorzeny, *My Commando Operations: The Memoirs of Hitler’s Most Daring Commando*, trans. David Johnston (Atglen, PA: Schiffer, 1995), 206-207.

97. Gamotha is said by one source to have spoken no fewer than fifteen (mostly oriental) languages. Irnberger, *Nelkenstraus*, 54. This seems an exaggeration; however, he was undoubtedly fluent, if not bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian, and also spoke Farsi, Arabic, English, French, and possibly several Balkan languages. He may or may not have also spoken some Caucasian/Transcaucasian languages or dialects. See *inter alia* Extract from daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweerts, SD agent, Sipo and SD personalities, Ramon Gamotta [*sic*], 26 September 1944, 33a, KV 1492, TNA.

98. “Gamotha is known as *Windhund*: both his words and his parachuting are empty boasts.” Extract re. Pierre Letay, 11 January 1946, f 44a, KV 2/1492, TNA. Letay was a former Romanian officer whom Gamotha attempted unsuccessfully to recruit for Operation NORMA in October 1943.

99. Extract from daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweerts, SD agent, Sipo and SD personalities, Ramon Gamotta [*sic*], 26 September 1944, 33a, KV 1492, TNA.

the RSHA. Professional envy may also have been at the root of Gamotha's unpopularity among his brother-officers—most of them “desk jockeys” who had never experienced frontline combat—for Gamotha was an exceptionally able and courageous soldier, something of a military hero, having fought ferociously as a Waffen-SS private in Poland, where he received a battlefield commission, something rare in the early years of the war, yet a distinction that often carried with it the stigma of the social upstart, even in the relatively egalitarian officer corps of the SS.¹⁰⁰ When Gamotha returned to Berlin from Persia in 1943 after what he portrayed as a harrowing ordeal, he was hailed as a hero yet again, awarded the Iron Cross First Class, overwhelmed with media attention, promoted to SS Captain, and given control of a brand-new, functionally autonomous desk for Persian affairs at the RSHA (VI C 14)—none of which won him any new friends among the officers of Amt VI. As Gamotha then proceeded to recruit an eclectic assemblage of specialists from outside the RSHA for his projected Operation NORMA, including old friends from Vienna and the Waffen-SS, he appears to have become increasingly restive and headstrong, with the result that his popularity declined further, even among the known “Vienna clique” at the RSHA.¹⁰¹ Gamotha's commanding officer, Walter Schellenberg, has described the situation as follows:

He was ... not satisfied with anything; he came with marriage requests, because he wanted an allowance. ... He had no shame in casting aspersions on [Karl] Wolf, [Kurt] Schuback, and others. They were supposed to have taken articles of value from the courier luggage of a Persian V-Mann. Later his closest Viennese friends ([Werner] Goettsch and [Wilhelm] Waneck), who through Kaltenbrunner had enabled him to belong to the closest Viennese social circle, placing him in the position to alienate himself more and more from his Group VI C, so blackened his character that he was arrested. He was accused of dirty dealings with various Persians; furthermore, by using all possible means, he is supposed to have obtained his new apartment from seized Jewish property. He was released again but the proceedings were not terminated. ... Gamotha had no discipline and ... was often unwise and insubordinate, but very gifted.¹⁰²

100. “Vom SS-Mann zum Ustuf ,” Brandt to Ellersiek, 28 February 1940, Tgb. Nr. A/46/3/40, Bra/Scho. K370/40/1, Beförderungen zum Untersturmführer, NS34/ZB6583/69-76, BA. Gamotha was highly decorated. After the war he himself listed his Second World War decorations as follows: War Merit Cross Second Class without Swords, Iron Cross First Class, Winter Battle Medal, Bravery Medal in Gold First Class, and the SS Death's Head Ring. Karner and Stelzl-Marx, *Stalins letzte Opfer*, 376. Gamotha neglected to mention that he had also been awarded, in addition to his commission, the Iron Cross Second Class during the invasion of Poland (on 3 September 1939). Himmler to Hitler, *Auszeichnung des SS-Hauptsturmführers Gamotha mit dem EK I. Klasse*, f 11, NS 19/2235, BA.

101. For details of the work of VI C 14, see pp. 175-179, 220, 285. Regarding what the Americans later termed the “Austrian Group,” see Beer, “Von Alfred Redl”: 7.

102. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

It is from the testimony of one of the SS officers recruited by Gamotha for the NORMA mission that the strongest evidence of Gamotha's duplicity emerges.¹⁰³ The information was revealed under interrogation at Camp 020 by a Belgian SD agent, Pierre Sweerts, who gave himself up on crossing the Allied lines near Antwerp on 11 September 1944. Sweerts was a Belgian reserve officer (codenamed RENE) with the rank of Waffen-SS lieutenant, who had been selected by Gamotha for Operation NORMA to handle the military aspects of the mission, and who subsequently worked under Gamotha at Amt VI in Berlin, spending "quite a lot of his time with Gamotha, with whom he became increasingly friendly." He described Gamotha as belonging to the "smaller fry" at the RSHA, who were "conceited, stupid, corruptible, vain, and of such poor morale that they would readily betray one another." To this he added: "Some of them, e.g. Gamotha, began thinking of working for the Allies a considerable time ago."¹⁰⁴ Sweerts thought that Gamotha must have sold himself to the Russians in order to escape from northern Persia and return to Germany. Gamotha told Sweerts: "I am not a traitor, but if you should go over to the Allies, tell them I would like to work for them in Austria." Gamotha always told Sweerts that, if he came into contact with the Allies, he was to mention Gamotha's name. And, most importantly, he confided to Sweerts that his highly adventurous escape across the Persian desert "was largely fictitious." Sweerts ultimately believed that Gamotha must have become a Russian double agent, as he could not possibly have escaped from the Soviets so easily otherwise. Sweerts also implied that Gamotha's ongoing friendship with his fellow "escapee" Theodor Staisch and his inclusion of Staisch in the Operation NORMA staff could have been attributable to the fact that they were both Soviet agents.

Contrasted with this, it should be noted that the RSHA, officially at least, considered Gamotha loyal. Schellenberg clearly thought that the SD had ensured Gamotha's loyalty by buying him off when he returned from Persia:

After careful investigation, we had no doubt at all about the possibility of his being a double agent. He was lavishly rewarded with money, I think 10,000 RM; besides which I believe that he was able to have his illness treated at the Tropical Institute in Tübingen.¹⁰⁵

According to Schellenberg, when Gamotha was debriefed, he informed the RSHA that, during his internment in Turkey, the Turkish Secret Service had made several attempts to turn

103. See extracts from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA.

104. At some point, Gamotha's mother became convinced that her son was working for the British; presumably Gamotha had left her with that impression. See Daily reports from Camp 020 in the case of Pierre Sweerts, f 33a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

105. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA.

him and send him back to Persia with military espionage assignments.¹⁰⁶ Presumably, Gamotha's story was that he had refused to cooperate with the Turks, thus reinforcing the impression that he was a loyal Nazi. In reality, of course, he may have succeeded in convincing the Turks that he was now working for the Allies, which may in turn have been the true reason for his release from Turkish custody and repatriation, rather than any diplomatic pressure exerted by von Papen and the German Embassy staff.

It is from Pierre Sweerts that we also learn details of Gamotha's black-marketeering and other clandestine activities.¹⁰⁷ Early in 1944, Gamotha asked Sweerts if he could lay his hands on cognac, liqueurs, and coffee, especially the latter. During the course of the spring and summer of that year, Gamotha and Sweerts developed an extensive international smuggling business in those commodities and watches, involving trips to Belgium, France, and Spain. Under the guise of raising funds for Operation NORMA, Gamotha obtained vast quantities of money from the SD for equipment, which he later sold in Vienna. After the cancellation of NORMA, Sweerts had no other work to do, so Gamotha readily agreed that he should continue making purchases, especially of coffee in any quantity. They evolved a system whereby Gamotha withheld Sweerts' SD pay, giving him in exchange travellers' cheques which could be cashed in any country at profitable exchange rates. One day, he told Sweerts that he would pay him as much as RM 100,000 to smuggle Jews into Switzerland. According to Sweerts, Gamotha had "plenty of money and many sources in Austria, including a printing works."¹⁰⁸ He told Sweerts in confidence that he believed Germany would lose the war and that he was putting money aside for such a contingency.¹⁰⁹

Early in 1945, Gamotha was arrested by the Gestapo and charged with black marketeering and theft. It is of course possible that his indictment was rigged and was triggered by increasing suspicions that he was a traitor, exacerbated no doubt by his endless procrastinating and his apparent reluctance to launch operations against Persia. He was dishonourably discharged from the SS and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment. At one point, he was apparently even threatened with execution. However, Gamotha's membership in

106. Ibid.

107. See extracts from the MI5 Interim Interrogation Report on Pierre Marie Ernst Sweerts, 4 October 1944, ff 34a, 35b, KV 2/1492, TNA.

108. The implication is, of course, that Gamotha was printing travellers' cheques and possibly even counterfeit currency to finance his activities.

109. Schellenberg said that Gamotha was "all out for money." See 216n81. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA. Alan Roger of CICI maintained that Gamotha's "defeatist" statement, together with his urging Sweerts to mention his name to the Allies, make it "fairly certain" that he was a Soviet agent. See Roger to Kellar, 30 October 1944, f 42a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

the “Vienna clique” of the SD saved his neck: his old friend and protector Ernst Kaltenbrunner intervened and arranged for Gamotha to join his staff, which had by then decamped to the small lakeside town of Altaussee in Austria. From there, Gamotha was posted to a special SS combat unit near Vienna.¹¹⁰ It is here that the newly repatriated Schulze-Holthus found him, in his home together with his wife Hermine, on Palm Sunday (25 March) 1945. Gamotha was apparently “wearing an SS uniform without insignia or medals,” which suggests either that he had been stripped of his rank of captain or that he was deliberately anonymizing his appearance in order to defect. The story of his rise and fall that Gamotha told Schulze-Holthus at their meeting is corroborated by the versions of events that Schulze-Holthus had already heard from Kurt Schuback at VI C 3 and from Theodor Staisch, who accompanied Gamotha on his “flight” from Persia, and that Schulze-Holthus would later hear from Hassan Quraishi, former Abwehr II V-Mann and close associate of the Qashgai Brothers in Berlin, at the American prisoner-of-war camp at Glaserbach near Salzburg, where Schulze-Holthus was interned.¹¹¹

One week later, on Easter Sunday, two weeks before the Red Army entered Vienna, Gamotha made his way through enemy lines near Schwechat and “surrendered” to the Russians. It is said that a car had been sent earlier—probably by Kaltenbrunner—to fetch him and bring him to safety in the West, but that Gamotha refused to go.¹¹² His ability to cross the Russian lines as an SS combatant without being summarily shot suggests that he was probably able to identify himself as a Soviet agent. Wilhelm Höttl, former SD Balkans specialist (and intimate friend of the notorious Adolf Eichmann), who knew Gamotha, maintained that he suddenly disappeared from Vienna in the summer of 1945. Hermine Gamotha received a smuggled note in her husband’s handwriting saying that he had been sentenced to twenty-five years in Siberia. Höttl’s version of events continues:

110. Possibly a punishment unit or one of the adhoc SS formations assembled by Otto Skorzeny towards the end of the war. See Supplement to “Operational units of Amt VI S” of 9.9.45, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room London, 24 April 1945, RG 319, Entry 134A, Box 1, NARA. This conflicts with Schulze-Holthus’s description of the discharged Gamotha as a *Privatmann* (private citizen). See Schulze-Holthus, “Fälschung,” 25, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

111. Schulze-Holthus, “Fälschung,” 24-25, MSG 3/667, BA-MA. According to Schulze-Holthus, Gamotha also accepted bribes from Quraishi, the purpose of which is unclear. As a result, Quraishi was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. For more about Hassan Quraishi (aka Gorechi, Goreschi, and Goreschi), see KV 2/1941, TNA.

112. Irnberger, *Nelkenstrauß*, 54. Höttl, *Secret Front*, 306, tells a different story, claiming that Gamotha was simply dismissed from the SS “after some minor episode” and sent to Vienna to resume his university studies. Irnberger is not an impeccable source and needs to be approached with caution, for he clearly relies to some degree on the mythical narrative concocted by Laslo Havas in *The Long Jump*, trans. Kathleen Szasz (London: Neville Spearman, 1967). Regrettably, in an otherwise well-sourced paper, Siegfried Beer in turn relies on Irnberger for information about Gamotha. See Beer, “Von Alfred Redl”: 10. Höttl’s reliability as a source is thoroughly treated in Wildt, *Nachrichtendienst*, 241-242n2.

Those acquainted with the methods of the Russian police consider that a man as interesting and important as Gamotha would hardly be convicted within a few days of his arrest. A case of this kind would go on for months—and would probably be handled by headquarters in Russia itself. The conviction and the journey to Siberia seem to me to be suspect, though the handwriting was Gamotha's without any doubt. It did not seem improbable that he had been working for the Russians since his days in Persia.¹¹³

Even the cagey Schulze-Holthus wrote after the war that the rumours he had heard “from various sources” to the effect that Gamotha had been turned by the Soviets (he does not say when) and that he was working for the Soviet secret service in Prague were quite feasible, “because Gamotha's father was Ukrainian.”¹¹⁴

5.3 Dr Berthold Schulze-Holthus (SABA)

“He is led astray by his vanity—he is very vain. ... His belief that he was a second Wassmuss is fatuous. ... He saw himself romantically acting the part, without actually doing so. His wife was of much better stuff!”¹¹⁵

“He's no Wassmuss. ... Wassmuss was a German hero, but SABA is an old fox that sits in his lair and hatches plots.”¹¹⁶



Figure 5-3. Berthold Schulze-Holthus. (Photo courtesy of The National Archives).

Julius Berthold Schulze-Holthus¹¹⁷ (see Figure 5-3) was born in Wetzlar on 31 October 1894 into an upper middle-class Prussian family. After matriculation at the renowned

113. Höttl, *Secret Front*, 306.

114. Schulze-Holthus, “Fälschung,” 25, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

115. Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 30 December 1954, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA.

116. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 198.

117. After the war, Schulze-Holthus seems to have preferred the first name Bernhard(t), which has led to some confusion in the records and literature. Also, Schulze-Holthus's American captors identified him variously as

Thomasschule in Leipzig, he began reading jurisprudence at Freiburg University. When the First World War broke out, however, Schulze-Holthus, seized with patriotism like many of his fellow students, interrupted his studies and volunteered for the infantry. After recovering from serious wounds sustained on the Western Front in December 1914, Schulze-Holthus returned to active duty and served in an ordnance unit until August 1917, when he was finally commissioned. Four years later, Schulze-Holthus had completed his doctorate at Leipzig University and married his sweetheart, Gertrud Liebe. While raising their three children during the turbulent years of the Weimar Republic and into those of the Third Reich, Schulze-Holthus successfully built his professional career in Leipzig as a defence lawyer specializing in espionage cases, but without joining the Nazi Party.¹¹⁸ At the same time, in his capacity as a reserve officer, he studied Russian, becoming an official military interpreter in 1937. On 16 March 1939, Schulze-Holthus was conscripted into the air force as a reserve lieutenant and by October had been promoted to major. His unusual instant transfer from the army reserve to the air force and his rapid promotion to major suggest that he was already working for Abw I L when “conscripted.” It is also possible that studying Russian was not his idea, but was initiated by the Abwehr.¹¹⁹

Originally, the Abwehr appear to have intended to install Schulze-Holthus under consular cover in Omsk; when, however, after two months of diplomatic training, this scheme fell through, it was decided to post him somewhere as close to the Soviet Union as possible.¹²⁰ The Abwehr first sent Schulze-Holthus out to Tehran early in 1941 to assess the possibility of establishing an Abwehr *Kriegsorganisation* in Tabriz (KOI) targeting airfields in southern

Bernhard and, for some inexplicable reason, as Bertram. See Todd to A2 USAFE, 20 September 1946; Preliminary interrogation report, 10 May 1946; Interrogation summary, 18 November 1946, KV 2/1486, TNA. This greatly irritated George Wickens, who had handled some of Schulze’s interrogations in Tehran and who wrote: “It seems incredible that, having Schulze on their hands for as long as they admit, they could not achieve accuracy at least in the matter of his name!” Wickens to Kellar, 6 November 1945, f 85a, KV 2/1486, TNA. Wickens also pointed to an “incomprehensible” attempt by the Americans to give Schulze-Holthus a Baltic background, recording his birthplace as Danzig. Ibid.

118. Interestingly, Schulze-Holthus also acquired between 1923 and 1938 a nationwide reputation for successfully defending German nudists before the courts. So effective was he as a barrister that he and the landmark judgements he influenced can be credited with bringing about the remarkably liberal Nazi Bathing Law of 1942, signed by Himmler himself, which remained in force in some West German provinces until the 1970s. See Matthew Jefferies, “‘For a Genuine and Noble Nakedness’? German Naturism in the Third Reich,” *German History* 24, no. 1 (January 2006): 82. Whether Schulze-Holthus practised naturism himself I have been unable to determine; however, his impassioned advocacy for the naturist cause comes as a not unpleasant surprise and surely leads one to view his personality as perhaps a little less “Prussian” (i.e. stoic and taciturn) than his interrogators have implied.

119. Interrogation Report No. 1, 27-28 March 1944, f 4sb, KV 2/1484, TNA.

120. Ibid. Schulze-Holthus attempted to convince his CICI interrogator (Dick Thistlethwaite) that he had actually left the Abwehr at this time and had joined the German Foreign Office, but another CICI officer (George Wickens) dismissed this as a disingenuous last-ditch attempt by Schulze-Holthus to establish a legend. It is worth noting that Schulze-Holthus was himself a trained military interrogator and consequently not an easy subject for British IOs. See CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 25, 28 May 1944, f 59a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

Russia and Caucasia.¹²¹ On this trip, he travelled under official cover as a senior education official from the German Ministry of the Interior on a field trip to survey German schools in Persia. During this reconnaissance mission, Schulze-Holthus succeeded, not without difficulty, in obtaining the necessary consent from Erwin Ettl at the German Legation—who it must be remembered was a senior SS officer with a vested interest in promoting SS, not Abwehr, interests—to operate under diplomatic cover as vice-consul in Tabriz.¹²² However, Ettl only consented on the condition that Schulze-Holthus maintain close contact with the SD, which meant submitting to them copies of all his Abwehr reports. Later, whenever Schulze-Holthus attempted to circumvent Ettl's demand, the SD simply obtained copies through other legation personnel.¹²³ Another condition imposed by Ettl was that Schulze-Holthus be accompanied by his wife.¹²⁴

On his second, permanent mission to Persia, now accompanied by his wife Gertrud, Berthold Schulze-Holthus arrived in Tabriz on 1 May 1941 and set to work eagerly. During the four months before the Allied invasion, in order to investigate Russian intentions and troop movements in Transcaucasia, Schulze-Holthus established contact with the Armenian Dashnak Party and the Azerbaijan National Defence Party, headquartered in Baku.¹²⁵ Schulze-Holthus despatched Armenian and Azeri agents to various sectors of the frontier, but none could detect any Soviet troop movements until immediately before the Allied invasion. When the Russians appeared in northern Persia four months after their arrival, the Schulze-Holthus's, at Ettl's suggestion, attempted to escape to Afghanistan but were arrested by the Persians on British orders at Birjand on the Meshed-Zahidan road and sent back to the German Legation in Tehran. While negotiations were proceeding for his transfer by the Swedish and Swiss diplomatic mediators to the British authorities, Schulze-Holthus and his wife bolted, going into hiding in a former Tehran brothel with their chauffeur and factotum Hamdullah for about eight months.¹²⁶

121. Schulze-Holthus specialized in Russian airfields, reserve and emergency landing-grounds, and their ammunition and supply dumps, especially in the Kharkov and Kiev regions. Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 25, 28 May 1944, f 59a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

122. Franz Seubert, "Frührot in Iran: Aussergewöhnlicher Einsatz eines Abwehroffiziers im II. Weltkrieg," *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 5 (15 June 1968): 2, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

123. Interrogation Summary, 18 November 1946, KV 2/1486, TNA.

124. See note 122.

125. It is likely that Roman Gamotha used similar, if not the same connections in his work, and definitely provided Schulze-Holthus with at least one important contact, the double agent Sultan Beg Salyanlou. Interrogation Report No. 1, 27-28 March 1944, f 4sb, KV 2/1484, TNA.

126. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. During this period, Schulze-Holthus disguised himself as a mullah. "Am 'Hofe' des Grosskhan Nasir Khan: Dr Schulze-Holthus berichtete bei der Deutsch-Iranischen

By February 1942, Schulze-Holthus had reached an agreement with Franz Mayr on the division of responsibilities throughout Persia, which reflected the competencies of their respective services, with Schulze-Holthus responsible for military intelligence and Mayr for political intelligence. Between February and June 1942, the working relationship between the two men was impaired by Schulze-Holthus's attempt to poach Mayr's contacts, most notably Mohammed Vaziri. This of course infuriated Mayr, who confronted Schulze-Holthus (SABA) when they met on 1 May 1942 and compelled him to submit to the following terms:

- (1) All Germans here were to be under my control.
- (2) I alone control all contacts with Persians, even such ones which possibly might come SABA's way.
- (3) I am to give SABA all my military information for his use, but I am to send reports to Ankara.
- (4) SABA is to consult with me on all military matters, until Berlin decides differently.
- (5) We are to share couriers together.¹²⁷

With that the Abwehr and SD representatives in Persia buried the hatchet. One month later, however, when the fugitive Abwehr staybehind had no choice but to leave Tehran to evade capture, the division became of necessity geographical, with Schulze-Holthus joining the Qashgai tribes in southwestern Persia and Mayr remaining in Tehran and Isfahan.¹²⁸ In the meantime, in late March 1942, after an incredibly courageous and arduous journey with smugglers across the high mountains of the Persian-Turkish border, Gertrud Schulze-Holthus reached Ankara (and ultimately Berlin), where she successfully delivered a report from her husband and informed "the Germans verbally of Mayr's presence in Tehran, of his agreement with Schulze[-Holthus] over the Abwehr and SD spheres of interest in Persia, and for the need of some form of communications between Ankara and Tehran."¹²⁹

Two minor personalities of the diaspora who stayed behind in Persia became associated with Schulze-Holthus during his fugitive period: a Viennese geologist named Friedrich Kümel (LEO) and a Russian-German engineer named Konstantin "Conny" Jakob. Kümel, who joined the Nazi Party in May 1938, immediately after the *Anschluss*, arrived in Persia on

Gesellschaft (aus einer rheinischen Zeitung von 23.2.1970)," *Die Nachhut: Informationsorgan für Angehörige der ehemaligen militärischen Abwehr* 10 (1 July 1970): 31-32, MSG 3/667, BA-MA.

127. The Diary of Franz Mayer, KV 2/1482, TNA.

128. At the end of May 1942, Mayr met Schulze-Holthus for the first time since the Allied invasion, and they decided jointly that Schulze-Holthus should be escorted south to the Qashgai by Naubakht while Mayr remained in Tehran. Extract from CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1473, TNA.

129. Interrogation Report No. 1, 27-28 March 1944, f 4sb, KV 2/1484, TNA. Franz Mayr once said that Gertrud Schulze-Holthus was the most efficient and intelligent woman he had ever met. Commentary on the diary of Franz Mayr, 18 October 1943, KV 2/1478, TNA.

24 October 1939 after undergoing a sabotage training course. He became chief geologist for the Yazd and Kerman area, and in that capacity travelled the length and breadth of Persia, first coming to the attention of British intelligence early in 1940 as a close associate of the German military attaché, which was considered strange for a geologist.¹³⁰ Suspicions were further aroused when it was discovered that in April 1941 Kümel had visited Bushire, inspecting the airfield, oil tanks, and wharves, which was clearly beyond his remit.¹³¹ Under interrogation, Kümel gave little information about his intelligence role other than to say that he had a friend in Vienna who was a naval officer in the German secret service, suggesting that he, like Conny Jakob, was probably recruited and controlled by Abw I M.¹³² After the war, Kümel was described by Alan Roger, formerly head of CICI, as follows:

He always struck me as a little unbalanced and had a slightly fanatical look ... the thing I remember most was his very intense, bright blue eyes. He went out of his way to be troublesome when he was in custody. ... He was a difficult subject to interrogate and I do not believe that anybody was particularly successful with him. ... Mayr I think regarded him as unreliable, and his short period in hiding without any action told on him¹³³

Kümel fled from Tehran on 9 May 1942,¹³⁴ was arrested by the Persians acting on British information on 13 May between Hamadan and Senna on his way to the Turkish frontier,¹³⁵ and was handed over to the British on 20 July 1942.¹³⁶ After interrogation, he was interned in the Monastery Camp near Jerusalem, together with all the other German agents captured in Persia.¹³⁷

When the Russians landed on the northern coast of Persia, Conny Jakob was trapped in the Caspian port of Babolsar. It is not clear from the records whether Jakob too was operating there for the naval intelligence section of the Abwehr; if he was under Abwehr control, then it appears to have been without Schulze-Holthus's knowledge. Later, Jakob managed to escape to Tehran, where he was advised by a British friend named Ellis, who apparently worked for British intelligence, to flee further south to Bakhtiari tribal territory. Having learned that Nasir Khan had returned from exile and was actively challenging the central authorities, Jakob joined Schulze-Holthus in Qashgai territory, where he worked as an engineer-mechanic, building his own workshop, in which he repaired equipment and weapons for the tribesmen and the ANTON

130. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 27, 15 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

131. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 28, 31 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

132. Appendix A, CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 36, 4 August 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

133. Minute by Alan Roger, DSO Hong Kong, 23 June 1952, KV 2/1473, TNA.

134. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 27, 15 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

135. Appendix A, CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 28, 31 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

136. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 28, 31 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA; Axis intelligence activities in Iran, 1 November 1942, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 35, NARA.

137. Appendix A, CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 28, 31 May 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA.

mission. He also helped Schulze-Holthus reconnoitre and prepare an aircraft runway and parachute landing grounds (see Table C-4).¹³⁸ The secret landing strip at Farrashband was discovered in November 1942 during an RAF reconnaissance flight:

About 15 people on the ground lit a smoke indicator, displayed a wind indicator and the code words [*sic*] SABA, and clearly expected our plane to land. It is known that SABA is the code sign used by the German agent Major Schulze. It is therefore assumed that he, or his agents, were on the aerodrome and that our plane was mistaken for a German machine disguised by RAF markings.¹³⁹

Shortly before Schulze-Holthus and the SS men of the ANTON group were to be handed over to the British, Conny Jakob announced that “the whole atmosphere smelt badly” and promptly disappeared. He remained in hiding in the Gulpaigan area for the rest of the war and was the last German agent to be captured on Persian soil in April 1945.¹⁴⁰ There is no question that Jakob survived as a staybehind where others failed because of a unique combination of practical and linguistic skills, which under different circumstances the Abwehr could have put to good use.¹⁴¹ Had he been actively controlled by W/T link with Werner Schüler at Abw I M, he might have proven to be an extremely effective agent, but he needed guidance from above to be productive. As it turned out, innately lacking initiative and with no communications network to support him, Jakob became little more than a tribal handyman, and expended all his energy on self-preservation rather than espionage.

The success of Schulze-Holthus’s assumed role as military advisor to Nasir Khan, *Ilkhan* (Supreme Chief) of the Qashgai (see Figure 5-4), depended directly on the military success of German forces in southern Russia and North Africa, and on the provision of German largesse. Yet, at the same time, it also depended on the quality of the personal relationship between the two men. To be found acceptable to the Qashgai leader, his family, and his tribal chiefs, Schulze-Holthus had to learn much about tribal customs, as well as improve his knowledge of Farsi and,

138. According to Schulze-Holthus’s version of events, he had no say in the location of the airfield and little to do with its preparation; all the work was undertaken by Jakob on Nasir Khan’s direct orders and without Schulze-Holthus’s knowledge. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 175-183.

139. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 44, 15 November 1942, WO 208/3088, TNA. In fact, Schulze-Holthus was not present, but Jakob was one of those spotted on the ground at Farrashband and described the overflight as follows: “A machine of unknown nationality flew over the airfield and I believe it to have been a plane belonging to the British Secret Service. The pilot circled at a low altitude and was obviously taking photographs.” Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 187.

140. Interrogation Report No. 1, 27-28 March 1944, f 4sb, KV 2/1484, TNA; Interrogation Report No. 2, 5 April 1944, f 52a, KV 2/1484, TNA; CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 22, 26 March 1944, f 48b, KV 2/1484, TNA. See also p. 158.

141. Jakob was a highly skilled mechanic. As well as Farsi, he spoke both Qashgai Turki and Azerbaijan Turki.

more importantly, Qashgai Turki, a dialect similar to the Turki spoken in northern Azerbaijan.¹⁴²

One contemporary source described the extraordinary Qashgai as follows:

The average Qashgai nomad is a healthy fellow, of strong, wiry physique, rarely addicted to opium and free from venereal disease. His courage is variable, but is undisputed in many sections; whilst his loyalties, though mainly confined to clan or tribe, are undoubtedly strong. Cooperation of a marked degree is often found between the various tribal sections. They have a strong family sense, which is, I believe, common to Turks as a race. They are strictly monogamous, and I have seen among them many instances of what I consider to be real family love, a quality which is often marked by its absence among Lurs. This family cooperation is apt to extend itself between members of sections of a hundred families or more. Thus at times they are able to achieve a solidarity which may amount to nearly thirty thousand families owing allegiance to one paramount chief.¹⁴³

While nurturing his friendship with Nasir Khan, Schulze-Holthus also needed to pursue his own goals of regularizing communications with Franz Mayr, establishing an airbase for communications with Berlin, and maintaining German influence with the tribes. Luckily for him, he was of value to Nasir Khan because of his legal knowledge, which proved useful to the Khan in the settlement of land claims.¹⁴⁴ However, the cordiality of Schulze-Holthus's relations with Nasir Khan was evidently conditional upon the former's ability to make good his promises of Berlin's support for the Qashgai warriors in their struggle for autonomy from the central Persian authorities. As German fortunes suddenly changed and the likelihood of Axis victory diminished at the turn of 1942-1943, so too did Nasir Khan's faith in—and ultimately his benevolent attitude towards—the Abwehr representative. Where were the German guns and gold that he had promised? What Nasir Khan needed were “anti-tank weapons, mortars, heavy machine guns, and then rifles and ammunition—a great deal of ammunition.”¹⁴⁵ Schulze-Holthus, soon after first meeting Nasir Khan, promised to send his requests to Berlin via Mayr in Tehran. In return, Khan provided Schulze-Holthus, who by now had a price of 5,000,000 tomans on his head, with sanctuary, protection, and—of supreme significance to a Persian—hospitality.

142. Schulze-Holthus remarked to his interrogators that he “consciously maintained the pose of physical tirelessness, as he believed, rightly as it proved, that this highly prized tribal quality would impress the tribesmen most favourably.” Commentary on those “Franz Mayr Documents” ... written by Berthold Schulze or directly connected with him (based on Schulze's interrogations), Document 206, note 1, f 96b, KV 2/1480, TNA

143. Oliver Garrod, “The Nomadic Tribes of Persia Today,” *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 33, no. 1 (January 1946): 39.

144. Interrogation Report No. 2, 5 April 1944, f 52a, KV 2/1484, TNA.

145. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 162.



Figure 5-4. *Nasir Khan Qashgai.*

When news arrived from Mayr of the successful landing of the FRANZ expedition, Nasir Khan was elated, yet disappointed that the mission should have landed near Tehran instead of in Qashgai territory. Immediately Schulze-Holthus promised to contact Mayr and arrange for a German parachute squad to land nearby. “And weapons,” Nasir Khan reminded him.¹⁴⁶ Unaware of the extent to which the SD had taken the upper hand in Berlin, no doubt Schulze-Holthus anticipated airborne Brandenburgers and talented Abwehr agents. But Nasir Khan and Schulze-Holthus were both to be disappointed, for when the ANTON group landed successfully near Khan-i-Zinian (Khaneh Zenyan), approximately 45 km west of Shiraz, on 17 July 1943 after an accurate drop by Karl-Edmund Gartenfeld, they had been tasked by Amt VI as an advance reconnaissance party, not as a supply mission. Their job was merely to pave the way for ANTON 2, not to provide the tribal chiefs with guns and gold.¹⁴⁷

Some time later, Nasir Khan convened a tribal council of war and confronted Schulze-Holthus with Germany’s manifest failures in North Africa and Russia. The latter’s response was what we today would term “pure spin.” Had not Rommel forced the withdrawal of large numbers of British troops from Persia? Were not Kharkov and Rostov once more in German hands? It was the eve of a great new German offensive! However, the *Ilkhan* was not convinced, even after seeking reassurance from Schulze-Holthus that he truly believed all he had said.

When Persia finally surrendered its neutrality and declared war on Germany, Nasir Khan was provided with the justification he by then sought for distancing himself from his German

146. *Ibid.*, 212.

147. The ambitious ANTON 2 initiative is described on pp. 159-160.

guests, in preparation for the postoccupational political realignment that would be required of the Qashgai. To avoid embarrassment and to dispel any notion that he might still be supporting the German cause, Nasir Khan therefore transferred Schulze-Holthus and the members of the ANTON expedition to the adjacent territory of the fierce Boir Ahmedi, where they remained in tribal custody,¹⁴⁸ narrowly escaping execution,¹⁴⁹ until they were returned to the Qashgai in early March 1944 and were then handed over to CICI representatives in the village of Kush-i-Zard, 21 km northwest of Abadeh, on 23 March 1944.¹⁵⁰ Five months later, after a discreet period of disassociation from his former pro-German stance, Nasir Khan was able to conclude an unprecedented agreement with the neighbouring Bakhtiari on joint cooperation, opposition to the Tudeh Party, and the cessation of any action against the British. This intertribal rapprochement of August 1944 marked the end of pro-German support by the southwest Persian tribes.¹⁵¹

This case study has now examined in considerable detail the three levels of covert failure on the part of the German intelligence services active in Persia during the Second World War: organizational failure was emphasized in Chapter 3, operational failure in Chapter 4, and individual failure in this chapter. However, it should be remembered that these levels of failure are essentially theoretical not descriptive, serving merely as a useful prismatic tool, and should definitely not be considered in any way mutually exclusive.¹⁵² In fact, they more often than not overlapped at the time, both within and among the services and operations concerned, and were frequently combined and compounded—with disastrous effect on individual covert operatives and activities. What has emerged is a pathetic, rather than tragic, narrative of general and

148. Although held captive, the Germans were technically “guests” of the Boir Ahmedi and remained armed, posting a sentry at night with a heavy machine gun on the roof of the tower in which they were imprisoned. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 17, 16 January 1944, f 48b, KV 2/1484, TNA. Schulze-Holthus even claimed to have saved them all from execution by insisting that the tribesmen honour their code of hospitality towards them, unless the Boir Ahmedi were willing to lose face. “Our only safeguard ... is the Qashgai’s religious fear of violating the sanctity of hospitality.” When Schulze-Holthus upbraided one of his captors, Mehemed Khan, for violating the sacred code, the man’s humiliation knew no bounds: “Oh, the shame of it. I don’t know how I shall survive it. My children and my children’s children will curse me, because they bear the name of a traitor. By Allah, were I not afraid of hell I would today take my life.” Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 302, 305. See also Taheri, *Deutsche Agenten*.

149. Before they were dropped, Franz Mayr greatly feared that the ANTON parachutists would be murdered if they were to land in Boir Ahmedi territory due to pilot error. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 11, 20 September 1943, f 5a, KV 2/1473, TNA.

150. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 22, 26 March 1944, f 48b, KV 2/1484, TNA; Magan to Spencer, Events related to the capture of the ANTON group, 29 March 1944, f 43b, KV 2/1484, TNA.

151. Cronin, *Tribal Politics*, 195.

152. Although my layered analysis of covert failure echoes the three constituent dimensions of military failure discussed by Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 21-23, it is actually rather different, for my approach, unlike that of the military historian, barely concerns strategy and, as is appropriate within the discipline of intelligence history, greatly concerns character, personality, and individual behaviour. Also, apart from the thematic level upon which each of the three chapters (3-5) focusses, I have made no attempt to extrapolate levels of failure within each chapter, leaving them jumbled and complex, as they were in reality.

unmitigated failure which stands in stark contrast to the narrative of remarkable operational success enjoyed—quite deservedly—by the British security forces.

6 BRITISH INTELLIGENCE

6.1 Response to German strategy

“The difficulties of the security organization in Persia are greater than those in any other Middle East country.”¹

It is difficult to examine German military strategy as an influence on the direction taken by German covert operations in the Persian theatre and on the Allied response to them, because there was essentially no grand strategic concept in Berlin, from the very beginning to the bitter end of the Second World War. Indeed, there was in Nazi Germany no single, central military authority that could have worked out and coordinated an overall strategy. What passed for strategy was in fact a haphazard series of empirical judgements and situational responses, either steeped in political ideology or based on nothing more than operational pragmatism on the part of Adolf Hitler, a self-appointed, dilettantist military commander, not a trained strategist. Therefore, in this context, the term *strategy* describes nothing grander than the planning of operations at the army, corps, and divisional levels, and might be seen by some as synonymous with the term *operational strategy* or even *operational tactics*.²

For the purposes of this study, the highest-level strategic document to have survived the war is Hitler’s War Directive No. 32, issued on 11 June 1941, on the eve of his invasion of the Soviet Union, in which he outlined his post-BARBAROSSA plan for the Middle East, including the use of Persia as a stepping stone to the rest of the region:

The possibility of exerting strong pressure on Turkey and Iran improves the prospect of making direct or indirect use of these countries in the struggle against England. ... The struggle against the British positions in the Mediterranean and in Western Asia will be continued by converging attacks launched from Libya through Egypt, from Bulgaria through Turkey, and in certain circumstances also from Transcaucasia through Iran. ... If the collapse of the Soviet Union has created the necessary conditions, preparations will be made for the despatch of a motorized expeditionary force from Transcaucasia against Iraq.³

In terms of global operational strategy, however, before the reversal of German fortunes in North Africa and at Stalingrad, it is important to recognize the paramount and realistic priority Adolf Hitler accorded to operations on his southern flank—in the Ukraine and in southern Russia. Oil was the determining factor, so significant that its consideration directly led Hitler in July 1942 to commit one of his worst errors of judgement in splitting his Russian offensive into two synchronous but geographically divided partial drives, one towards the Volga and the other

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1. K. W. Jones in Appendix IX, Security: Persia, 16 February 1943, KV 4/240, TNA. This conclusion was reached after a lengthy meeting in Cairo in early 1943 between Dick White of MI5, Ray Maunsell of SIME, and E. L. Spencer of CICI Tehran.
 2. *MGFA*, vol. 9/1, 51. See p. 40n42.
 3. Trevor-Roper, *Hitler’s War Directives*, 131-133.

towards the Caucasus.⁴ This “operationally wrong decision”⁵ by the German commander-in-chief came about because he was convinced that the most important strategic objective of the eastern campaign was to conquer the Caucasian oil wells before any Allied initiative could be launched in the west. Two months later, with his great summer offensive (Operation BLAU) bogged down and the few captured oilfields damaged and unproductive, Hitler realized the impossibility of fulfilling his strategic goals. Yet, only a month before, on 5 August, with the rapid advance of German forces in the southern Soviet Union continuing, he had appeared full of optimism:

The closer this advance got to its objective, the more intensively did he once more consider a southward extension of the Caucasus thrust in order to strike directly at the British Empire. “We must at all costs,” he once more affirmed ... , “get down into the Mesopotamian plain and get the oil at Mosul away from the British. Then this whole war will be over.”⁶

If Albert Speer is to be believed—and there are some who would dispute this⁷—Hitler sat beside Speer one “peaceful” evening in August 1942 on a bench outside Hitler’s Vinnitsa lodge and confided in him “in a cool, mathematical tone” his oil-driven strategic vision, so soon to be abandoned:

For a long time I have had everything prepared. As the next step we are going to advance south of the Caucasus and then help the rebels in Iran and Iraq against the English. Another thrust will be directed along the Caspian Sea toward Afghanistan and India. Then the English will run out of oil. In two years we’ll be on the borders of India. Twenty to thirty elite German divisions will do. Then the British Empire will collapse. They’ve already lost Singapore to the Japanese. The English will have to look on impotently as their colonial empire falls to pieces. ...

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4. For a detailed overview of the German fuel situation, including its effect on military strategy in the southern Soviet Union, see Hinsley, “Intelligence on the Axis Oil Situation up to the Summer of 1944,” *British Intelligence*, vol. 3.2, 913-924. “Capturing the Caucasus oil fields [Operation BLAU] ... dominated German strategy in much of 1942. ... However, by mid-September 1942 Operation BLAU had run out of steam, not the least a result of severe fuel and transport shortages.” Robert W. Stephan, *Stalin’s Secret War: Soviet Counterintelligence against the Nazis, 1941-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 29. For a better understanding of German intentions towards the Caucasus region, I would recommend an MGFA publication: Joachim Hoffmann, *Kaukasien 1942/43: Das deutsche Heer und die Orientvölker der Sowjetunion* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1991).
 5. “The Time of Hope: Hitler’s Evaluation of the Situation in the First Half of 1942,” in Horst Boog and others, *The Global War: Widening of the Conflict into a World War and the Shift of the Initiative 1941-1943*, trans. Ewald Osers and others, Germany and the Second World War 6, edited by the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Research Institute for Military History), Potsdam, Germany (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001) (MGFA, vol. 6), 133.
 6. *Ibid.*, 132.
 7. For instance most recently John Holden, “The Case against Albert Speer: The Mendacity, Evasion and Deception in His Explanation of His Nazi Past to His Family and History” (PhD diss., Birmingham, 2010). Speer’s definitive critic remains of course Gitta Sereny: see Gitta Sereny, *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth* (New York: Knopf, 1995).

... by the end of 1943 we will pitch our tents in Teheran, in Baghdad, and on the Persian Gulf. Then the oil wells will at last be dry as far as the English are concerned.⁸

To understand why Hitler had decided to make the Caucasus the primary target of his next major offensive, it is in part necessary to appreciate how deeply his global strategy was affected by his perception of his “unloved ally,” Japan. While Hitler had a high regard for Japan’s strategic military capability, to which he was to some extent beholden as an Axis leader, he clearly felt ill at ease about the unpredictable implications of the probable Japanese conquest of eastern, southern, and southeastern Asia, and of Australia, for the global balance of power, and of the destruction of British hegemony in those regions. Whatever Hitler said to Speer and despite the former’s self-evident feeling of *Schadenfreude* over Britain’s demise, we know from strategic statements made on other occasions⁹ that Hitler may not actually have sought the outright dismantling of the British Empire; he would probably have preferred to dispense generosity towards a suitably humbled and supplicant Britain at the peace table, magnanimously allowing its colonies and dominions to survive and the Royal Navy to continue policing what was—to an untravelled provincial like him¹⁰—an alien, menacing orient populated by inferior races (*Untermenschen*).¹¹ Indeed, Hitler’s unease about Japanese success was undoubtedly rooted in his racism; he “repeatedly voiced regrets that the entire East Asian and Pacific world would be lost to the ‘white race’.”¹² This view led Hitler to see Germany as standing heroically alone in its global struggle against the forces of Bolshevism and international Jewry, especially at the periphery of Nazi hegemony before the gates of Transcaucasia. It was therefore up to Germany to secure its sources of energy independently; there could be no expectation of oil

8. Albert Speer, *Spandau: The Secret Diaries*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 47-48.

9. Most notably in “Germany and England,” *Hitler’s Second Book: The Unpublished Sequel to Mein Kampf*, ed. Gerhard L. Weinberg, trans. Krista Smith (New York: Enigma, 2003), 160-174. According to Andreas Hillgruber, Hitler idealized the notion of an alliance with Britain in which “... Britain’s imperial position throughout the world would remain unchallenged. The logic of this argument required German recognition of the ‘living spaces’ of ... Great Britain, and German restraint ... in all areas belonging directly or indirectly to the British sphere of influence.” Hillgruber, “Third Reich,” 274-275, 281n5.

10. Speer thought Hitler’s global perspective, in the absence of any personal international experience, to have been strongly influenced by the mediocre Ribbentrop—“a supposed cosmopolite” who purported to be an experienced traveller and who corroborated “Hitler’s provincial ideas.” In effect, Ribbentrop himself had little influence on Nazi policy towards Persia and none whatsoever on Abwehr and SD covert operations. See Speer, *Spandau*, 143; for a good general biography, see Michael Bloch, *Ribbentrop* (London: Bantam, 1992).

11. Certainly before the outbreak of war, Hitler had “accepted the British Empire” and “readily left political ‘responsibility’ for the Middle East to Great Britain and Italy. ... Hitler’s racial views ... must have influenced his lack of interest in creating German colonies or territories in the lands of ‘coloured people’.” Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, “The German Middle Eastern Policy, 1871-1945,” in *Germany and the Middle East 1871-1945*, (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2004), 11. Cf. Jaschinski, “Das deutsch-iranische Verhältnis”: 158-159; Weinberg, *Hitler’s Foreign Policy*, 33-34.

12. *MGFA*, vol. 6, 124-125. Cf. Weinberg, *Hitler’s Foreign Policy*, 39.

shipments from Japanese-held Indonesia, for instance. The planned operation into the Caucasus therefore was no mere alternative for Hitler; it was the “downright precondition of global strategy.”¹³

Aside from their leader’s racial imperatives, the professional planners of the OKW of course assessed the strategic significance of the southern flank according to different operational criteria and a different timeline. The key document was an OKW planning paper of 14 December 1941 on the significance of the entry into the war of the United States and Japan.¹⁴ It was an appreciation of the strategic situation “analyzed with remarkable realism,” which largely affirmed the importance of the Caucasian campaign, for it saw the Middle East as an ideal area of deployment for Allied forces from which they “would be in a position to realize a whole string of defensive and offensive intentions,” including a “stiffening of Soviet resistance in the Caucasus” and air offensives against the Caucasian and Romanian oilfields. To prevent such outcomes, the paper proposed the simple strategy of nothing less than outright conquest of the north and south Caucasian regions, not only to secure the oil deposits for Axis use, but also to secure a launching pad for a push into the Middle East. Such an operation would make sense “only if it thrust all the way to the enemy’s unloading ports, the Suez Canal, and the Persian Gulf.” A stalled offensive, on the other hand, would create “the worst imaginable conditions for defence, with the most difficult rear communications.”¹⁵

So much for OKW strategy for the Caucasus and beyond. The OKH, however, faced with a complicated nexus of daily challenges associated with maintaining stability on a broad eastern front, postponed the idea of a Transcaucasian offensive which they had earlier favoured, and never had the opportunity of resurrecting it. General Halder and his staff clearly saw the proposed shift of emphasis to expansion beyond Caucasia as completely unrealistic; “any such shift, given the alarming shortage of human and material reserves, would have been at the expense of the virtually burnt-out army in the east.”¹⁶

Two months earlier and in the absence of any hard intelligence on German military strategy in the region, General Headquarters India produced a mock appreciation “as by all three arms of the Wehrmacht,” which delineated a conjectured German strategy in the Middle East

13. *MGFA*, vol. 6, 125-126.

14. Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (German Armed Forces High Command [OKW]), “Überblick über die Bedeutung des Kriegseintritts der USA und Japans,” 14 December 1941, RH 2/1521, BA-MA. See also *MGFA*, vol. 6, 132-133.

15. RH 2/1521, BA-MA. See also *MGFA*, vol. 6, 116-121.

16. *MGFA*, vol. 6, 121. Hardly any OKW or OKH strategic planning documents on the Middle East have survived; a few general studies are to be found in the Imperial War Museum EDS Foreign Documents Collection (11929 DX): MI14/398/1-2, MI14/606, and MI14/934, IWM.

regarding Persia, and which is interesting to compare with the OKW paper discussed above.¹⁷ While one may regard this simulation exercise today as little more than an anachronistic curiosity, it does represent a serious and imaginative attempt to base Allied strategic thinking on knowledge that the Germans “might reasonably be expected to have” instead of strictly on GHQ’s knowledge of their own forces, plans, or the political, administrative, and economic situation. For instance, the Germans might well have had different views on the extent to which the Allies were dependent in the Middle East on Iraqi and Persian oil. In this respect, the simulation hypothesized German strategy as follows:

Our ultimate objective in an advance into Iraq and Persia must be either to attack India or to facilitate an attack on Egypt. We have already proved that an attack on India is not a feasible proposition except as a very long-term project. The ultimate object of the present operations must therefore be to facilitate an attack on the enemy sea, land, and air bases in the eastern Mediterranean littoral.

The greatest assistance we can give to this attack is to deny to the enemy the oil supplies which he obtains from Persia and Iraq. Total denial of these might be decisive. At the same time we have to obtain oil for ourselves—it was one of the two main reasons for the Russian campaign.

We can thus take it that the immediate object of an attack on Iraq and Persia must be the acquisition of oil and the denying of oil supplies to the enemy. *All other longer-term objects must be subsidiary to this.*¹⁸

GHQ India felt that, in determining whether and how they should attack Iraq and Persia, the German planners would have had to take into account the following five strategic factors: (1) Rommel’s progress in the Western Desert; (2) the response of Turkey to a German demand for military and air bases; (3) the possible movement of at least one British armoured division to Persia; (4) the possible collapse of Russian forces in the Caucasus; and (5) the strength and resistance of Russian forces deployed in northern Persia.

The simulated appreciation goes on to elaborate in some detail the operational implications of the overall German strategy, none of which is relevant here, especially since the hypothetical operations were never mounted. Equally irrelevant are the operational details enumerated in connection with the short-lived German strategy for an attack on northern Iraq and Persia in the event of a Russian collapse before January 1942. However, it is worth noting that the unpredictable strength and behaviour of Russian forces already deployed in Persia was considered a highly significant strategic factor: “If ... the Russians now in Persia fight and do

17. “Joint appreciation as by the German naval, army, and air staffs on the problems of an attack against Iraq and Persia, dated 12 October 1941.” Wavell considered this to be “a very valuable paper” at the time, even though some of its estimates and conclusions might have been “open to question.” See WO 106/3078, TNA; also WO 208/1565, TNA.

18. WO 106/3078, TNA. My italics.

not allow us to defeat them north of Tabriz, an attack through Transcaucasia alone [without also attacking through Turkey] will not achieve our object.”¹⁹

Of course, once the Wehrmacht had failed suddenly and spectacularly in southern Russia in early 1943—after Stalingrad and after the withdrawal of German troops from the Caucasus—German strategic planning for oriental expansion abruptly ceased and was never resurrected. No longer were covert operations to be justified and driven by a relatively uniform, ideological, and race-based concept of Nazi hegemony at the strategic level; instead, a far more pragmatic operational approach became the norm, both in the Abwehr and the SD, with local, tactical objectives and far fewer real prospects of success. Only inexperienced, naïve, and ideologically motivated SS parachutists (like Martin Kurmis [Operation ANTON] and Werner Rockstroh [Operation FRANZ]) continued to nurture visions of German supremacy and oriental victory. More pragmatic and realistic desk officers (like Roman Gamotha [VI C 14] and Werner Eisenberg [Abw II OR/MILD]), who were better informed than field operatives because they had instant access to secret military intelligence about real conditions in Russia and elsewhere, quickly realized that there would be no more German strategy in the Middle East and that their operational endeavours were probably futile. Gradually, however, the catastrophic news reached even the field men. One cannot fail to notice from the official reports how quick German agents, captured in 1943 and 1944, were to cooperate with their interrogators; most of them, including Franz Mayr, indeed “sang like canaries.” Before El Alamein and Stalingrad, when the possibility of strategic victory still existed, this would not have been so. In reality, however, uncompromising idealism was swiftly converted, albeit grudgingly perhaps, into a kind of cooperative pragmatism, adopted no doubt with a view to postwar survival under Allied rule.

It is quite clear from Sir Henry Pownall’s report on the period of his command in Persia between March and October 1943, which included the major German covert initiatives mounted against Persia and Iraq—Operations FRANZ, DORA, ANTON, and MAMMUT—that German operational priorities in the theatre had become tactical, not strategic, and that their general intent had become disruptive and destructive rather than preparatory (i.e. for military invasion) and constructive:

Evidence already gained by our intelligence service indicated that there was in being a strong fifth column in Persia, instigated by a group of German agents and supported by a considerable number of ill-disposed Persians. This organization was doubtless created with a view to assisting the German invasion of Persia which, until the spring of 1943 at least, had been confidently expected. The turn of the tide of operations in South Russia must have disappointed these

19. Ibid.

expectations, and a reorientation of the German outlook in Persia was therefore to be expected.

Several valuable objectives offered themselves to aggressive action by the Germans, by which they could impede our war efforts and further their own. Any material reduction in the output of oil in South Persia would inflict far-reaching damage on us; a steady and increasing flow of military supplies was reaching Russia by the Persian Gulf, and any interruption of this supply would directly assist the German armies in Russia; finally it would detract from our growing offensive power if British troops could be embroiled in tribal operations in Persia, or locked up in increasing numbers in protecting our installations and lines of communication in that country.²⁰

General Pownall felt that two forms of Nazi aggression might be expected: first, sabotage of oil installations or vulnerable points on the Persian lines of communication; second, attempts to stir up the tribes against the Persian government. His analytical judgement was to prove unerringly correct: all subsequent German covert operations had as their primary tactical objectives either sabotage against Persian infrastructure; subversion of the Qashgai, the Bakhtiari, or the Kurds; or both. Pownall was particularly concerned about possible German operations against Abadan and the oilfields and installations of western Persia, against the TIR, against various port installations operated by the Russians and the Americans, and in support of rebellious tribes, especially the Qashgai of southwestern Persia:

Tribal attack presented the simplest solution of all, and the most imminent danger was removed by the decision, taken in consultation with the American commanding general, to close Bushire as a port of entry and so avoid the long mountain road by Shiraz and Isfahan through the Qashgai country. ... In general it is fair to say that no widespread or well-conceived campaign of sabotage has yet been undertaken by the enemy in Persia or Iraq.²¹

6.2 Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) and the Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq and Persia (CICI)

“Tehran was always a source of trouble from the internal security angle.”²²

It was General Archibald Wavell who as early as October 1939 conceived of the need for security intelligence to be organized on a Middle East basis.²³ At Wavell’s insistence, Raymond Maunsell was seconded to the army from MI5 and submitted a series of proposals for an “MI5 of the Middle East,” all of which were rejected for budgetary and administrative reasons by two successive Deputy Directors of Military Intelligence (DDMI).²⁴ However, the extraordinarily

20. Despatches, Persia and Iraq Command, 12 October 1943, CGS/1740/2, f 1b, WO 32/10540, TNA.

21. Ibid.

22. Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 145.

23. An excellent recent biography of Wavell is Victoria Schofield, *Wavell: Soldier and Statesman* (London: John Murray, 2006).

24. Maunsell to Head of MEIC, 6 June 1942, f 77c, KV 4/306, TNA.

efficient and successful organization called Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) eventually developed from Maunsell's original concept owing to the persistent feeling both in London and in Cairo from the beginning of the Second World War that, notwithstanding administrative objections, the central coordination of counterintelligence was necessary and that the problem was "an indivisible whole" in the Middle East.²⁵

SIME was therefore "to coordinate information of all anti-British agents whether or not of German nationality working in [the] area covered by MEIC."²⁶ The object was to locate them, keep track of their movements, and deal with them, "should opportunity offer."²⁷ In fact, this defensive nexus of coordinated security-intelligence measures, in coordination with the deception operations run by Dudley Clarke's "A" Force, proved so effective that the uncoordinated German, Italian, and Japanese espionage services were unable to obtain any useful information from the Middle East, despite the existence of disaffected, pro-Axis elements among the indigenous populations.²⁸ Meanwhile, the skilful doubling, tripling, and playback of their agents also ensured that a great deal of disinformation reached the Axis spymasters.²⁹

It should be borne in mind that the Allied view of the German intelligence services operating in the Middle East was never complimentary, yet neither was it complacent. Shortly after the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Persia, the head of SIME noted that the enemy espionage organization in the Middle East had never been efficient; that, being newcomers in the area, the Germans were in the process of making all the mistakes that the British had long forgotten; and that recent events in Persia had disorganized whatever organization existed. He went on:

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25. Memorandum on counter-intelligence in the Middle East area with special reference to Iraq and Persia, f 3a, KV 4/223, TNA.
 26. Ibid., quoting MEIC telegram no. 5069, 4 October 1939. The brief history (1939-1943) of the Middle East Intelligence Centre (MEIC), effectively superseded in mid-1943 by the Political Intelligence Centre Middle East (PICME), is described in Dovey, "MEIC": 800-812. The security summaries provided by both organizations tended to concentrate on the Arab Middle East, to the exclusion of Persia, which was adequately covered by a separate series of summaries released by CICI Tehran, now to be found in WO 208/1567-1569 and WO 208/3088-3089, TNA. Unfortunately, the first fifteen summaries in the series, located in WO 208/3087, are listed as "wanting" (i.e. although catalogued by TNA, they were never actually transferred to Kew from the War Office).
 27. Memorandum on counter-intelligence in the Middle East area with special reference to Iraq and Persia, f 3a, KV 4/223, TNA. It was originally intended that SIME should be called Preventive Intelligence Arab World (PIAW); however, since the area to be covered included Persia, Turkey, and parts of Abyssinia, a more suitable title was created.
 28. "In the whole of the Middle East there literally was no genuine Axis espionage network." Mure, *Practise to Deceive*, 49. "It is probably true to say that the Abwehr have failed to obtain any reliable information of strategic importance." Liddell Diaries, vol. 8, 22 October 1943, KV 4/192, TNA.
 29. By far the most interesting source on these Middle East deception operations is David Mure, who was directly involved in them at an executive level and who wrote: "... we were able to control the German military espionage service in all areas occupied by the Western Allies and supply all their information." Mure, *Practise to Deceive*, 12. See also Mure, *Master of Deception*, 15-16 passim.

I am not suggesting that we have any cause for complacency and we have no intentions of ‘sitting back,’ as we know that the enemy is directing every effort to reconstituting his espionage organization.³⁰

Maunsell’s boldly innovative leadership of SIME was characterized both by his “paternalistic” leadership style and by the operational principles he instilled in his officers, other ranks, and civilians. While SIME was technically part of Middle East Forces (MEF), Maunsell simply could not see the point of applying a rigid military hierarchy and a unified code of behaviour to a heterogeneous interservice/civilian staff:

There was nothing to be gained by having a military-type discipline in a body consisting of regular army officers ... , RAF, and RNVR people, and civilians with honorary or temporary commissions, to say nothing of the extremely efficient and hard-working lady civilians—all were part of the show. ... I encouraged the use of first names. ... I particularly strove to encourage the SIME [organization] to be a friendly and quick-working one, and I didn’t give a damn how they wore their uniforms or, indeed, what they wore³¹

Maunsell thoroughly believed that his was the best paradigm for “ ‘working’ a mixed bag of people engaged in operations of complexity, nicely seasoned with embarrassments, successes, and occasional absurdities.”³² Yet, when it came to operations, there was nothing lax or inefficient about SIME. Indeed, Maunsell insisted on the strict observance of certain “general working principles” throughout the organization: careful and exact administration; unending patience, accessibility, and an “inexpugnable” sense of humour; the importance of “dedramatization”;³³ the necessity for constant, if not daily, contact with local commanders, other British intelligence organizations, and the local special police; the importance of consultation with each other; the importance of vetting; and, finally, the importance of cutting across channels.³⁴ So, the absence of formality in Maunsell’s organization was clearly not associated with any absence of rigour or professionalism in operational procedures. Indeed, as one former “A” Force officer has pointed out:

In the Middle East, all the security and clandestine organizations, SIME, ISLD,³⁵ “A” Force, were service-staffed and functioned admirably in far more

30. Maunsell to Petrie, 18 September 1941, f 53g, KV 4/306, TNA.

31. Memoir of work in the intelligence service in the Middle East, 1934-1943, Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM.

32. Ibid.

33. Maunsell defined *dedramatization* as the stressing of the “ordinariness” of human activities: “the necessity of trying to interpret dramatic police or other reports, e.g. the apparently suspicious behaviour of individuals may often be due to the secret pursuit of homo- or heterosexual relationships.” Ibid.

34. In this connection, Maunsell wrote: “It was a principle of operation that different SIME areas (Defence Security Offices) and, indeed, individual officers in different areas, should communicate directly with each other and only refer to SIME Head Office if help was required or if it was vital for the Head of SIME to know about the matter in question at once. ...” Ibid.

35. See p. 249n53.

difficult circumstances than those obtaining [in the UK]. Being service organizations, they were free of the plague of the civilian MI5 in 1944 ... indiscipline. A man under service conditions is forced to maintain a high standard of conduct as he is liable, rightly, to be sternly disciplined for the slightest misdemeanour. One immediately thinks of homosexuality—then a criminal offence, perpetual drunkenness, drug taking, black market operations. People like Burgess [and] Blunt ... would not have survived six weeks in the Middle East intelligence services.³⁶

Early in the war, of course, Persia was an independent neutral state in which no British intelligence organizations were operating, with the exception of individual travelling agents working for Air Staff Intelligence, Iraq, which held responsibility for Persia. Initially therefore, SIME permitted this arrangement to continue, providing the Royal Air Force (RAF) with direction on counterintelligence matters concerning Persia and providing them with funds for this and other purposes. However, by November 1942—over a year after the Anglo-Soviet invasion and two years after the arrival in Persia of the German agents MAX and MORITZ (Franz Mayr and Roman Gamotha)—it was felt that counterintelligence was not being adequately covered under the existing arrangement. Properly organized Defence Security Officers (DSOs) were therefore posted to Persia in December 1942. This decision, shortly after the establishment of Persia and Iraq Command (PAIC) under Lieutenant General Sir Henry Maitland “Jumbo” Wilson, was largely a response to strong pressure from Sir Reader Bullard, the British minister (later ambassador) in Tehran (see Figure 6-1), for a beefing up of the Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq and Persia (CICI) organization in Persia, in the light of heightened Axis covert activities. In October 1942 Bullard wired the British Minister of State in Cairo as follows:

At present [the] staff of CICI Tehran is quite inadequate for the duties it has to carry out, and they are overworked to a point at which efficiency is bound to suffer. Of the total Tehran strength of five officers and seven other ranks, one officer has had to be detached for interrogation duties at Sultanabad. The military authorities also want an ALO at Qum. Meanwhile the control of suspects suffers. On [October 20], there were no less than forty investigations pending against Germans supposed to be hiding here. The careful control of entry and exit visas arranged last summer has had to be abandoned, as it is physically impossible to check all the applications with the staff available, without intolerable delays.³⁷

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36. The role and control of secret intelligence in support of both operations and security, Private papers of D. W. A. Mure, 2194:67/321/3, IWM. One cannot but wonder what Mure must have made of the flamboyant yet durable Alex Kellar, who served MI5 in exemplary fashion well into the Cold War era.
37. HM Minister to Minstate, 23 October 1942, 138/25/42, WO 201/1400A, TNA.

Bullard also made it abundantly clear to London that there was no alternative but to reinforce CICI, as they alone had to bear the full burden of responsibility for internal security within the British zone of occupation:

It has been suggested that [the] Persian police should help more. As you will realize, this shows total incomprehension of the situation here. Members of [the] Persian police are themselves suspected of complicity in fifth-column activities, and at the best they tend to use any evidence we bring forward as a means of extracting bribes from the accused. No more help can possibly be expected from [them] than is now being given.

After full consideration of this undesirable state of affairs, I ... recommend most strongly that six more officers and six ORs be sent here, and provided with additional transport. This would enable [the] vast and important problem of security to be tackled more effectively.³⁸

Bullard was also unstinting in his praise of Joe Spencer and the staff of DSO Persia:

... Nothing in this telegram should be read as a criticism of Major Spencer and his staff. They are most capable, but they cannot be expected to shoulder their greatly increased responsibility until they are strongly reinforced at [the] earliest possible moment.³⁹



Figure 6-1. *Sir Reader Bullard.* Jumbo Wilson described Bullard as “a great scholar with knowledge and experience of both the Moslem world and Russia.”⁴⁰ (Photo courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery).

Pressure also came from the military leadership. Like Wavell, who was renowned for his insatiable appetite for intelligence product—Wilson, who assumed command of Persia and Iraq on 21 August 1942—almost one year after the Anglo-Soviet occupation began—was an

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 142.

extremely security-conscious commander, who strongly supported and relied heavily upon CICI. Of course, Wilson's main concern was that the internal security of Persia should remain sound at a time when he was assembling his military forces to defend Persia against an anticipated German attack through the Caucasus, in the event of a Russian collapse, possibly as early as mid-November 1942.⁴¹

Meanwhile, at CICI headquarters in Baghdad, E. K. "Chokra" Wood compiled his own general prescription for success in Persia, which he saw as dependent upon making the right policy decisions. After defining the main causes of disaffection and unrest in the country as being (1) an oppressive, corrupt, and inefficient administration, (2) economics, (3) government inability to enforce its authority outside the urban areas, and (4) enemy agents, Wood concluded:

Enemy agents are widespread throughout the country, and in this category are included many Persian officials of high and low degree, as well as foreign nationals. For reasons of policy, the Persians, in most cases, are being temporarily left at large but under observation. The foreign nationals are receiving Persian and tribal protection and, although every effort is being made to round them up, the difficulty of this task is considerable.

... When considering a remedy for the situation in Persia our policy towards that country has to be considered. Our policy at present consists of support for the central government and noninterference in Persia's internal affairs. The support is given to a very shaky structure and the noninterference, which is belied in practice, has been construed as an evasion of responsibility. Whatever the result of the policy it rules out any suggestion of Allied administration of the country and any possibility that the root causes of Persia's ills might be speedily and effectively removed. There remains the problem of ensuring security in our military areas and on our lines of communication. Since time is a consideration it appears that finer political feelings should be disregarded and the issue decided by Allied force or by British or Allied negotiation with those elements which are the causes of insecurity.⁴²

In fact, the concerns of Bullard, Wilson, and Wood were effectively dealt with in 1943 by various measures taken at the policy level and by the deployment of greater numbers of security personnel and advisers, including American field security units, in the region.

While CICI was essentially a combined services organization, the original supremacy of the RAF in matters concerning the administration of Allied security intelligence in the region inevitably led to all manner of difficulties, especially as the War Office saw fit to perpetuate the RAF's responsibility for administrative arrangements connected with CICI. The main problem seems to have been that, while the operational work of CICI prospered and multiplied from 1942

41. Later revised to end-December 1942. See various despatches in PREM 3/237/9 and PREM 3/401/13, TNA. Even later PAIC commanders, like General Pownall, whose appointment lasted from 23 March 1943 until 12 October 1943, after the invasion crisis (in other words, after El Alamein and Stalingrad), were concerned that the internal security situation should not deteriorate to the detriment of the general prosecution of the war. See Despatches, Persia and Iraq Command, 12 October 1943, CGS/1740/2, f 1b, WO 32/10540, TNA.

42. Wood to Quilliam, 12 December 1942, f 49a, WO 201/1401, TNA.

onwards, the administrative resources of the RAF did not. The administration of officers' pay, for instance, seems to have been fraught with difficulties:

The officers' WE [war establishment] strength from December 1942 to June 1944 ... included a Naval officer, British Army officers on British rates of pay, British officers on Indian Army rates of pay, Regular Indian Army officers, ... Emergency Commissioned Indian Army officers, and Royal Air Force officers. All officers drew their own service pay and allowances, and travelling claims, etc had to be submitted to their own service. This meant that the RAF adjutant and orderly room staff could not possibly deal with the many and varied queries which were continually arising regarding Army pay questions, etc, and a separate Army officer had to be appointed to deal with those and other Army questions.⁴³

Another area in which an underresourced RAF ran into difficulties was transport:

On the formation of the Centre, the RAF were responsible for issue and maintenance, but as they could not deal with the problem they asked the Army to accept responsibility, which they did. This was the first break in the administration, and CICI found itself responsible to the Army for transport and having to comply with Army rules, forms, etc, which the RAF orderly room staff were not able to deal with.⁴⁴

There were also apparently “endless difficulties” with hirings, equipment, and staff replacements, for which neither the Army nor the RAF would accept responsibility. In other words, what had originally seemed to be a feasible arrangement when CICI was being formed ultimately became a cumbersome burden for all service branches to bear, especially since the RAF administrative staff was “constantly changing.”⁴⁵

A unique symbiotic relationship developed between SIME, headquartered in Cairo, and its offspring CICI, headquartered in Baghdad. In turn, an equally special, mutually beneficial working arrangement evolved during the years of the Allied occupation of Persia between the latter organization and its virtually autonomous “branch office” in Tehran (termed variously CICI Tehran or DSO Persia),⁴⁶ which, under the extraordinarily able command of E. L. “Joe” Spencer⁴⁷ and his deputy Alan Roger, is a leading protagonist in the operational history portrayed in this study.⁴⁸

43. History of Combined Intelligence Centre, Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, 15 December 1944, f 57c, KV 4/223, TNA. By August 1943, two years after the Anglo-Soviet invasion, the total war establishment of CICI numbered 75 officers and 20 other ranks. See War Office Organization Table: Persia and Iraq Command, 27 August 1943, WO 33/2122, TNA.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. See Figure B-6 for a comprehensive chart of the DSO Persia/CICI Tehran organization.

47. Lieutenant Colonel Edward Leslie “Joe” Spencer DSO, OBE, OStJ (1902-1976), was originally commissioned during the 1930s as a Territorial Army infantry officer but was transferred to the Royal Artillery in 1938 when 21st London Regiment was disbanded. Spencer was a Londoner (born in Kensington, where his father practised medicine) and an engineer with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC), with no experience at all in security-intelligence work. Spencer was personally recruited by Ray Maunsell as DSO Persia; how he

Strong personalities ruled these roosts, yet it is testimony to the professionalism of these leaders that their relations remained generally amicable and, as the narrative shows, particularly in the case of Persia, highly productive.⁴⁹ In fact, partly but not entirely thanks to his capture of Franz Mayr and the FRANZ/DORA parachutists, Spencer's record in Tehran was so spectacularly successful, bringing him promotion to G1 (with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel) and a "gong,"⁵⁰ that he was earmarked in 1944 as the most worthy successor to Maunsell as head of SIME, a promotion which ultimately, however, never came his way.⁵¹

It is true that there was some irritation between Ray Maunsell, Head of SIME, and Chokra Wood, Head of CICI Baghdad, over the former's strong views that he must control all Defence Security Officers (DSOs) throughout the Middle East and PAIFORCE, even though PAIFORCE was an independent command under the War Office. However, Maunsell subsequently agreed that he was quite content with his charter and that of CICI,⁵² so he and

originally came to Maunsell's attention remains unclear. See "London Gazette of Tuesday, January 14" published in *The Times*, 15 January 1936; Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM. One artillery officer visiting Tehran in 1943 depicted Spencer as "an ex-Gunner colonel who looks as though he did all the rough stuff with blackjacks and automatics." See diary entry for 16 October 1943, Private papers of Captain A. M. Bell Macdonald, 10786:PP/MCR/C49, IWM. After the war, Sir Reader Bullard described Spencer as "an able man of good and calm judgement." Bullard to Farago, 3 November 1966, GB-165-0042-3/11, MECA. Spencer was competently assisted and ultimately succeeded as DSO Persia by his ADSO, Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Alan Stuart Roger MBE (1909-1997) of the 6th Rajputana Rifles, IA.

48. The ability of these men was extraordinary inasmuch as neither they nor the officers and NCOs on their staff were security-intelligence professionals. Bill Magan, who served with CICI as Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) Liaison Officer and who was himself a career intelligence officer, praised them highly: "They appeared to have been hand-picked, as they were a very gifted lot of people and included some Persian speakers. ... The officers consisted of a petroleum engineer [Spencer], a stockbroker [Roger], a schoolmaster [Carstairs], an Englishman who had formerly been a Russian Army officer [Caird], and a university don [Wickens]. The two NCOs consisted of a university don who was fluent in Persian and an Englishman who had been brought up in Persia and was also fluent in the language." See Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 23. My identifications in brackets, deduced from references and cross-references scattered among the British archival records. For a detailed account of Bill Magan's work in Persia, see pp. 277-281. Security officers were also posted to eight regional centres: Hamadan, Kermanshah, Sennandaj, Qum, Isfahan (with vice-consular cover), Shiraz (with vice-consular cover), Ahwaz, and Abadan. See Appendix IX, Security: Persia, 16 February 1943, KV 4/240, TNA.
49. Ray Maunsell's deputy at SIME was Kenyon W. Jones of the Welch Regiment (former Welsh rugby international and managing director of Ronson's Ltd), while E. K. "Chokra" Wood presided over CICI Baghdad, ably assisted by H. K. Dawson-Shepherd of the RAF, a highly competent Arabic speaker. Also on Maunsell's staff, at least for a while, was General Wilson's son, Patrick Maitland Wilson of the Rifle Brigade. See Wilson, *Where the Nazis Came*, 86-87 passim.
50. In October 1943, Spencer was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) "for arresting Franz Mayr at gunpoint in dangerous circumstances"; according to the *London Gazette*, Roger received the MBE (1944), but WO 373/95 lists his award as the OBE. In 1947, the Americans made Spencer an Officer of the Legion of Merit; in 1953, he also received the OBE. See Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM; WO 373/62, TNA; WO 373/148, TNA; Spencer to Bullard, 5 October 1959, GB 165-0042-3/7, MECA.
51. "... Maunsell has no real deputy at his elbow who could take his place and ... he has got his eye on Spencer as a possible successor should need arise" Note on certain points of interest concerning security matters in the Middle East, 22 January 1944, f 22a, KV 4/223, TNA. In fact Maunsell was immediately succeeded by Major (later Brigadier) Douglas Roberts and ultimately by Alex Kellar of MI5, as first civilian head of SIME.
52. See Appendix A1. According to paragraph 4 of the CICI Charter, CICI Persia was in fact directly responsible to CICI Baghdad, with SIME retaining responsibility solely for methods and policy. Maunsell subsequently

Wood buried the hatchet. Far from resenting advice and requests for assistance from SIME, Wood actually welcomed them, along with visits by SIME officers, though few took place. What Maunsell ended up with was simply the general coordination of security throughout the Middle East and PAIFORCE, which was his chief, entirely justifiable priority.⁵³

One visitor to Baghdad came away with the following positive impression of the effectiveness of the CICI organization that Wood had established:

Wood was not a Middle East expert, but he was an excellent and experienced administrator and had plenty of expertise on his staff. His organization had an air of purpose and discipline about it which was noticeably lacking in most of the other mushrooming intelligence and propaganda organizations which I encountered in the Middle East and India.⁵⁴

By the beginning of January 1942, when CICI's remit was extended to cover Persia as well as Iraq, and the Tehran office began to investigate subversive activities, only a few security controls had been introduced.⁵⁵ While most German nationals in Persia had been rounded up and interned by the British and Soviet occupying forces, and joint Anglo-Soviet-Persian censorship measures had been introduced, only rudimentary records of enemy aliens had been established. Those that existed were fragmentary, inaccurate, and often even highly speculative. Most remaining Germans had gone to ground, the Japanese Legation was still operating with impunity, Persian laws for dealing with fifth columnists were inadequate, and there was no travel or visa control at all. The CICI office in Tehran—which later became DSO Persia—and the Area Liaison Officers (ALOs) were not wholly responsible for the evolution of the various security controls, normally subject to diplomatic negotiation with the Persian authorities. However, the investigation and pursuit of the fifth column so often brought to notice the many flaws in the existing arrangements that CICI Tehran seized the initiative. As a precursor of what was to become their routinely pragmatic, inventive, yet thoroughly consistent *modus operandi*, they proposed a series of bold remedies and unilaterally created the expedient security arrangements that remained in effect until the end of the war.⁵⁶

noted that it was important that SIME's overall coordination of security-intelligence matters should extend to CICI and that this was "amiably achieved." See Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM.

53. Far less amicable was the external relationship between CICI and the Persian branch of the Inter-Services Liaison Department (ISLD), which was the name adopted by the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) for its Middle and Far East operations. See pp. 268-276.

54. Geoffrey Wheeler Collection, GB165-0298, MECA.

55. Extract from report from CICI Tehran on the plan for breaking the German 5th column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 12a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

56. History of Combined Intelligence Centre, Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, 15 December 1944, f 57c, KV 4/223, TNA.

The routine controls established by DSO Persia included postal and press censorship. The former occupied a unique place among them, not least because Spencer's team could not rely upon the Persian police, whom they quickly came to regard as enemies rather than allies. Furthermore, the ALOs who supplied regional intelligence to the Tehran office were only stationed in southern Persia; consequently, they were unable to report on events in the north. DSO Persia therefore had to rely upon censorship to acquire intelligence on the intended and actual movements of suspects throughout the entire country. Visa control too came to depend as much upon censorship intercepts as upon actual visa applications to the police. In view of the venality of the Persian police and the laxity of the Soviet authorities in the north, it was found advisable to use censorship to reduce to a minimum all travel between Persia and Turkey, the route used by most enemy agents and couriers.⁵⁷

Ultimately, the joint Anglo-Soviet-Persian censorship administration, established formally by the Tripartite Treaty of January 1942,⁵⁸ in which DSO Persia was evidently compelled by circumstances to invest far greater effort than its Russian partners—with the Persians contributing virtually nothing—assumed far more importance in Persia than censorship measures in other theatres. For instance, censorship was not only used by DSO Persia as a substitute for general security controls, but also as a counterespionage weapon. By examining a large number of censorship extracts, it proved possible to establish the identity of the principal couriers between the pro-Axis fifth column in Persia and the German intelligence services in Turkey. Censorship also revealed plain-language communications between agents using other people's names.

The routine work was painstaking. For example, on a daily basis, the censorship liaison officer at DSO Persia would examine the list of all correspondence between Turkey and Persia.

57. The main problem was that the Persian police and gendarmerie were grossly underpaid, not least because the officers would routinely steal their men's wages. See Bullard to Eden, 26 May 1942, E 3655/3655/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL. Even when their American adviser, Colonel Norman Schwarzkopf (whose son would become celebrated as "Stormin' Norman," the commanding general of US and Coalition forces in the First Gulf War [1990-1991]), attempted to introduce gendarmerie reform measures in 1944, he had his budget arbitrarily slashed from 600 million to 290 million rials by Dr Millspaugh, the US economic adviser, who stated at the time that the security forces in Persia were "not worth the money expended on them." See Bullard to Eden, 9 March 1945, E 2050/31/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

58. The Anglo-Soviet-Persian Treaty of Alliance was signed on 29 January 1942, after what the British minister described as "endless attempts at procrastination and amendment by the [*Majlis*] deputies and the Persian government." Under the terms of the treaty, the Persian government formally agreed to cooperate with the Allies in maintaining internal security on Persian territory and to cooperate in the censorship measures required. Despite the delays, a complete censorship scheme was sanctioned as early as November 1941, and—with the help of volunteers—telegrams and outgoing press messages were quickly placed under control. Significantly, the Persians were also persuaded by the British censors to abandon all wireless communication with Axis countries. See Bullard to Eden, 17 June 1942, E 3655/3655/4, and 26 March 1943, E 2450/239/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

Then he would decide which letters to report in full and which to paraphrase. The translations were always attached to the originals, so that handwriting could be examined and a decision on disposal quickly made. This arduous process meant that fewer letters could be reported; however, it guaranteed more accurate investigations into particular cases.

As the correspondence subject to examination was multilingual, many nationalities were represented on the staff of the Anglo-Soviet-Persian censorship administration. Despite positive vetting by DSO Persia, some could have been recruited by various intelligence organizations, either before or after joining the censorship staff. It was therefore necessary to keep a general watch on the censorship officials themselves, which complicated matters considerably. Even cases of possible connections between Jewish censors and the Zionist movement proved to be a cause of anxiety and extra work.⁵⁹

The second set of routine security controls developed by DSO Persia concerned travel and visas. The arrangements established formed part of a general Middle East movement-control scheme; however, there were certain peculiarities about conditions in Persia which made any attempt at control very difficult, even when the Persian government had agreed to the arrangement. For instance, after the abdication of Reza Shah in September 1941:

... Persians felt that for the first time they were free to travel abroad, visas having been extremely difficult to get under the old regime. The result was that, instead of the war leading to a restriction of travel, it merely stimulated the demand for visas, and the DSO's office has been continually faced with the problem of hundreds of Persians blandly trying to go abroad in wartime for trade or simply for the novelty of the thing. Ever since the last war, Germany has exercised an extraordinary fascination on the wealthier Persian, and one could therefore never be sure that a Persian who applied for a visa to go to Turkey would not go on to Germany afterwards, or at least get in touch with the Germans in Istanbul. Neither the breaking off of diplomatic relations nor the declaration of war had any effect on this, and the only remedy was to try to cut down all traffic with Turkey to a minimum.⁶⁰

However, this policy raised a second difficulty: the northern frontier was not controlled by the British, but by the notoriously lax Russians. Only from censorship intercepts could DSO Persia determine whether its decisions about exit visas were being respected or not:

Thus, although it was possible to have one of the fifth column's couriers arrested in Aleppo because his journey was through British-controlled territory, much more important couriers were able to travel to and fro across the northern

59. Ibid. The possibility of sabotage by Zionist agents was of very real concern. For instance, the British Embassy reported to DSO Persia early in 1944 "that 130 Palestinian Jewish technicians employed in the Abadan refineries were members of a Jewish sabotage organization." See Minutes of the SIME Annual Conference, held in Beirut 2-4 April 44, f33a, KV 4/234, TNA.

60. History of Combined Intelligence Centre, Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, 15 December 1944, f 57c, KV 4/223, TNA.

frontier without hindrance. As the northern route was much cheaper than that via Syria and Iraq, our inability to control it adequately was a serious weakness in the general control of movement throughout the Middle East. The only restriction on the use of the northern route was imposed by winter conditions, and even these did not prevent the determined from making the journey, among them enemy agents.⁶¹

Ultimately, it took formal diplomatic negotiations to resolve the question; somewhat unexpectedly, the impetus came from the Russians, not the British, and not until late in 1943. At that time, the Soviet ambassador in London requested that all precautions be taken to prevent Axis agents from entering Persia from Turkey. As a consequence, it was decided that, “as there were full facilities for interrogation at Aleppo,” the Persian government would be asked to close the northern frontier with effect from 21 November 1943.⁶² This was done, although the border proved to be as leaky as a sieve until the end of the war, since the Soviets were highly selective in their choice of whom to detain and whom to allow passage. Ultimately, however, DSO Persia turned this situation to their own advantage by shrewdly using the Russians’ choices (as revealed in censorship intercepts) to identify possible Soviet agents (or double agents).

Besides these general difficulties with the effective implementation of routine visa controls, there were also specific technical issues associated mostly with passport control, including the question of the validity of pre-existing visas (i.e. those issued before the visa-control arrangements were introduced), the automatic issuing of exit visas in renewed passports, the automatic right of every Persian to re-enter the country, the inaccurate transcription of Persian names, and the systemic corruption among Persian officials. DSO Persia accepted these challenges with vigour and largely resolved them. They persuaded the Persian police to limit the validity of exit visas and to withdraw passports from Persians re-entering the country. They also redesigned the application form to be submitted by Persians seeking exit visas for trips to Turkey, requiring full details of the applicant and ensuring that the information was distributed to DSOs throughout the Middle East.

The third area of routine security control was that of positive vetting, which was originally carried out by DSO Persia for various Allied services and organizations more or less as a courtesy on an unofficial basis. Later, however, this evolved into a formal cooperative role, although CICI records were never directly accessible to other agencies. Among other responsibilities, it was necessary to maintain close liaison with a large international community in Persia, which included many nationalities other than those of the three major Allies. For

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

instance, many Poles evacuated from the Soviet Union after the launching of Operation BARBAROSSA in 1942 remained in Persia for a lengthy period before moving elsewhere in the Middle East; some even settled in Persia permanently. Additionally, there were over 500 Czechs, as well as Greeks, Yugoslavs, French, and Danes, all of whom were liable to be conscripted by the Free Forces of their respective countries, especially as the establishment of a second front in Europe became imminent:

To deal separately with Poles and Russians when neither were on speaking terms with the other and to fathom the intrigues inherent in all exiles' communities taxed the diplomacy of British Security to the full. The only workable criterion which could be adopted was to make the authorities of each community responsible for their own nationals. If there was a special security authority, as with the Poles, then the word of that authority was taken rather than that of their legation, but in most other cases the diplomatic representative was looked upon as responsible for the security of his own compatriots.⁶³

It is some measure of the high esteem in which British security held the Polish forces in general that they chose Polish soldiers to guard CICI premises in Teheran and even CICI prisoners and suspects, whenever British soldiers were unavailable. Although there was sometimes internal dissension between the Polish security authorities and the diplomats at the Polish Legation, and although Polish security occasionally adopted an unacceptably anti-Soviet—or even anti-Semitic—line of enquiry, Anglo-Polish cooperation was always cordial. Polish security also rendered technical assistance to DSO Persia in the form of much needed photographic and reprographic services for less sensitive documents. But it was clearly disappointing to Spencer's staff that the Poles could not be more useful as providers of pure intelligence; however, constant Polish intrigues rendered any collaboration "almost fruitless."⁶⁴

Unlike the Poles, most other Allied nationalities in Persia lacked any specific security organizations of their own. CICI therefore had to maintain contact with Allied diplomatic missions on questions of security. DSO Persia not only helped in the disposal of suspect Allied nationals and in the general control of visas and employment of all Allied nationals, but even went so far in the case of the Greeks as to help them conscript all Greek men of military age. With most of the exiled nationalities, however, the most significant problem for CICI was the fact that the policies pursued by their legation diplomats did not always sit well with the majority of the exiles themselves. Consequently, Spencer's officers were frequently obliged to monitor both sides in any resulting disputes in order to respond objectively to any requests that were

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

submitted to them, either by diplomats or private individuals. Naturally this compounded CICI's workload.

Of paramount importance, of course, was CICI's ability to cooperate with Soviet security, responsible for the northern half of the country. As Bullard noted in 1945, notwithstanding American "inexperience" and Russian "ill will," Persia was the one country where British, American, and Soviet civil and military authorities met on a broad land front, and the necessary contacts at the various technical levels proceeded reasonably smoothly and efficiently, in spite of difficulties in the political sphere.⁶⁵ While the Nazi enemy of course remained the prime concern of British security forces in Persia between 1941 and 1945, one can observe a growing awareness of the Russian presence in the region as a potential threat to British interests and a gradual return to the mentality of the Great Game.⁶⁶ After the immediate improvement in Anglo-Soviet relations in the region between June and September 1941, following operations BARBAROSSA and COUNTENANCE, play was essentially suspended, until the old rivalry began to re-emerge during the summer of 1943. By then, it was becoming apparent that the increasingly assertive attitude of Soviet officials conflicted with British interest in safeguarding the status of Persia as a buffer state and in protecting its regional oilfields, pipelines, and refineries, which the Russians had originally targeted in early 1941, before BARBAROSSA and the subsequent thaw in Anglo-Soviet relations. In other words, as early as mid-1943, with Germany's ultimate defeat still a long way off but more or less a certainty, Britain and the Soviet Union began to align themselves in preparation for the resumption of postwar play. Thus the continuity of the Great Game in central and western Asia—begun in the early nineteenth century—was really only interrupted for a relatively brief spell of two years, between June 1941 and July 1943.⁶⁷

It was not the task of DSO Persia to obtain information about Soviet intelligence by undercover methods; that was the job of ISLD under Robin Zaehner.⁶⁸ Nor would the use of such methods have been consistent with CICI's need to remain on cordial terms with the

65. Bullard to Eden, 9 March 1945, E 2050/31/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

66. An excellent introduction to the Great Game as it was played in Persia, including German subversive activities in the region during the First World War, is Antony Wynn, *Persia in the Great Game: Sir Percy Sykes, Explorer, Consul, Soldier, Spy* (London: John Murray, 2003). See also Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, *Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1999). On the Great Game and Persia during the 1930s and 1940s, see Miron Rezun, "The Great Game Revisited," *International Journal* 41, no. 2 (Spring 1986): 332-336.

67. For a detailed study of Anglo-Soviet relations and the Great Game in the region during the Second World War, see Harold J. Kosiba, "Stalin's Great Game: Anglo-Soviet Relations in the Near East, 1939-1943" (PhD diss., Indiana, 1991).

68. See pp. 271-276.

Russians in order to carry out effective security liaison. Joe Spencer and Alan Roger therefore preferred to concentrate on fostering cooperation; the acquisition of intelligence about Soviet operational methods ensued from such cooperation incidentally rather than intentionally. It was learned, for instance, that the Russians probably used censorship as their principal means of selecting and recruiting Persian agents, that Persians permitted to cross the sealed Soviet-zone borders without hindrance were probably combining trade with espionage, and that Persians interned and subsequently released (or otherwise given preferential treatment) were probably Soviet spies. Such lack of subtlety in Russian methods of recruiting and running agents enabled CICI to identify various Persians as agents of Moscow with relative ease and probably without the Russians' knowledge. The British also derived from their cooperation over time (with the Russian security officers Guterman, Asaturov, Zemskov, and Sosnin) a general picture of the Soviet intelligence organization in Persia, which appears to have been embedded within the Soviet censorship administration.⁶⁹

All these officers have at some time or other had an office in the Anglo-Soviet-Persian Censorship. DSO Tehran thinks that their Censorship duties have not merely been a cover, but that they have in fact regarded their Censorship work as an integral part of their general security task.⁷⁰

CICI's perception of the links between Soviet security and the intelligence role played by the Soviet Embassy in Tehran remained rather more speculative. It was certainly clear that a link existed between the two; however, Alan Roger could only point with confidence to the role obviously played by the ambassador himself, Mikhail Maximov, a hard-line Stalinist, as a spymaster:

The DSO visualizes under Maximov a homogeneous organization responsible for such varied aspects of intelligence work as espionage, counterespionage, censorship, arrests and kidnapping of anti-Soviet personalities, and subversive activities in general—the whole being carried out in line with central policy formulated by Moscow.⁷¹

In the closing months of the war, Alan Roger compiled a definitive summary of CICI's cooperation with the Russian security authorities, tracing its history from early 1942, "when it was difficult to distinguish between a Russian officer and a British private," to a time when the Soviet intelligence machinery in Persia had become so extensive that it needed an official with

69. Information about Russian intelligence methods in Persia derived from cooperation between DSO Tehran and the Russian security authorities, 7 March 1945, f 4a, KV 4/224, TNA.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid.

ambassadorial rank to be its director.⁷² However cordial, such cooperation was not at all synonymous with joint operations: apart from the KISS double cross,⁷³ which necessitated some degree of cooperation and coordination between CICI and Soviet security, and the Vaziri case,⁷⁴ which included an informal intelligence-sharing agreement, operations within the Soviet and British zones were conducted for three years separately and without significant mutual disclosure. Nevertheless, in order to ensure tight occupational security, Joe Spencer realized from early 1942 onwards that the maintenance of effective liaison between the occupying powers was crucial and that internal security could only be effective if the competent authorities in both zones regularly discussed problems of mutual interest and concern.

The general policy adopted by Spencer was to force cooperation by breaking down suspicion and by making the Russians acknowledge their own responsibilities. Initially, Russian suspicion of British motives was considerable, not because of any questionable moves by CICI but rather because life under Stalin naturally engendered deeply ingrained distrust. For instance, it took years before Russian security officers would sign receipts for documents or suspects handed over to them by CICI, because they simply did not wish to put their names on paper. Actual discussions took place quite frequently. On routine matters, Captain R. Caird, fluent in Russian, would simply visit his Russian counterpart and submit his requests orally, which were never answered immediately. On more important questions, the Soviet security officer would visit Spencer at his home, where things would usually be set down in writing. It would sometimes take months before queries were answered and issues resolved, suggesting that all matters had to be referred by the Russians to Moscow Centre for decision, whereas the DSO of course made most decisions on the spot, without any reference to MI5 in London or to SIME in Cairo. In fact, for the benefit of the Russians, Spencer studiously maintained a pose of being completely autonomous and ignorant of what was happening elsewhere in order to avoid taking the Russian point of view against any British organization. This proved necessary because the Russians clearly found it difficult to understand why CICI did not have the same power over British institutions as the NKVD had over organs of the Soviet state. "They have ... expressed dismay and shown irritation that we do not come to a decision ... when it conflicts with high

72. Cooperation with Russian Security, 28 December 1944, KV 4/224, TNA. "Soviet intelligence used the occupation to establish its largest presence so far beyond its borders with nearly forty residencies and sub-residencies. The main residency in Tehran had 115 operations officers. Their principal task ... was the identification, abduction, and liquidation of those whom Stalin considered 'anti-Soviet' elements." Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The World Was Going Our Way: The KGB and the Battle for the Third World* (New York: Basic, 2005), 169.

73. See KV 2/1281-1285, TNA.

74. See KV 2/1317, TNA..

British policy, instead of acting first and ‘telling the diplomats what to do’ afterwards.”⁷⁵ Despite such occasional misunderstandings, mutual respect and trust evolved over the years, and Anglo-Soviet security collaboration in Persia grew progressively more intimate and more effective.⁷⁶

All three occupiers evolved different strategies for coping with the incompetence of the Persian security authorities. Buoyed by a seemingly ingenuous faith in their own particular brand of democracy, the Americans tried to reform the Persians with something akin to missionary zeal—and failed. The American police adviser died after accomplishing nothing, and was not replaced. The American gendarmerie advisers of GENMISH, led by the capable and resourceful Colonel H. Norman Schwarzkopf, though able and invested with wide powers, battled against incredible corruption without any appreciable sign of headway.⁷⁷ The force was in a deplorable state. As Bullard noted:

Its administration has been neglected, and in its operations it has not often had that support from the army which was the essence of its effectiveness in the time of Reza Shah. It is grossly underpaid, its detachments are badly housed and almost unfed, except for what they can beg or steal. Consequently, its numbers and its morale are low. The miserable conditions offered attract few volunteer recruits, and its numbers are maintained only by drafting to it unwilling conscripts from the army. Owing to its almost complete lack of transport and means of communication, its effectiveness in protecting communications is very limited. The arrival of three American officers as advisers has done little to improve the state of affairs. They have blinded themselves to the needs of the immediate present by fixing their eyes on a beautiful but quite impractical, ideal organization, which would only be justified if the army were to be abolished.⁷⁸

In the face of such dysfunction, the British were generally content to regard the Persians as sleeping partners, consulting them as little as possible and usually ignoring and circumventing them at the operational level. It was clearly felt by MI5 in London that the Persian police would remain of negligible value to DSO Persia unless or until reformed by the Americans, which never happened:

The inefficiency, corruption, and anti-British attitude of the Persian police has made effective liaison with them impossible. Information from them is small in quantity and valueless. From the executive point of view they are untrustworthy, and it has been found necessary to make arrests direct.⁷⁹

75. Ibid.

76. It has been asserted that MI5’s greatest single wartime handicap was a lack of Soviet SIGINT; GC&CS (Government Code and Cipher School) did not decrypt the communications of Soviet intelligence agencies. See John Curry, *The Security Service, 1908-1945: The Official History* (Kew: PRO, 1999), 21. It is not known how much SIGINT material was passed locally to DSO Persia by the Soviets; however, it is clear that MI5 was as a matter of course in no position to pass any decrypts of Soviet intelligence to Tehran.

77. Bullard to Eden, 9 March 1945, E 2050/31/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

78. Bullard to Eden, 26 March 1943, E 2450/239/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

79. Appendix IX, Security: Persia, 16 February 1943, KV 4/240, TNA.

By 1943, at the zenith of German covert activity in the region, MI5 and SIME seem to have become increasingly aware that US interest in Persia was transient and Soviet interest intransigent. Therefore, a policy of self-reliance—combined with sound tradecraft and consistent methodology—appeared the best approach to solving the knotty counterintelligence problems presented by covert Axis subversion and sabotage initiatives. Even so, DSO Persia maintained close liaison with the Russians throughout the occupation, meeting two or three times a week with the Russian security officers in a generally cordial atmosphere and, as far as possible, deciding upon a uniform policy towards the Persians.⁸⁰

While the Americans attempted reforms, the Russians in the northern zone preferred simply to control the Persian authorities (or at least to influence them ideologically). First, they disarmed the Persian gendarmerie and police, and then they refused to help them maintain law and order on the ground that this would constitute interference in the civil administration. Eventually an agreement was concluded for the rearming of a limited number of gendarmes and police in the Russian zone.⁸¹ The process left Persians with the accurate impression that an attempt was being made by the Soviet occupiers to weaken the authority of the Persian government in preparation for a campaign of ideological propaganda.

The propaganda campaign indeed followed, and was sustained throughout the years of joint occupation. No doubt partly to alleviate pressure on the Persian polity and to ensure internal security and political stability, the British security authorities tried to intervene by using the Tripartite Censorship Commission to intercept printed propaganda from Moscow, which usually came by post. A game of tit-for-tat ensued in which the Soviet censorship section tried to suppress all British propaganda, while the British section—without disputing the Soviets' right to act as they had—attempted to obtain reasoned explanations of their actions. In a despatch to London, the British minister described the outcome:

No explanations in the least satisfactory or detailed were ever forthcoming. The truth is probably that the Russian section, true to Soviet political principles, considered wholesale suppression as laudable and natural action, from the performance of which it had only refrained in the past owing to the necessity for accommodating valuable allies. Some of the suppressed British material was indeed critical of Soviet affairs in varying degrees; but for the most part the criticism was not only fair, but also extremely mild—far more so than the habitual tone of the Soviet press in regard to the Western Allies.⁸²

80. Ibid.

81. According to Bullard, “the Russians arrested most of the police and gendarmes in their area, and ... they haggled long and tenaciously about the number ... to be kept at each post, and whether they should be armed or not.” Bullard, “Persia”: 14.

82. Bullard to Eden, 9 March 1945, E 2050/31/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL.

Cooperation was also necessary with the Americans, whose main interest in Persia appears to have been in political rather than security intelligence, as well as in targeting their Russian ally rather than their Axis enemy. However, the initial focus of the US mission to Persia was the coordination and supervision of the Lend-Lease supply route to Russia—an engineering project of enormous scale.⁸³ Consequently, matters of intelligence—whether to do with espionage, counterespionage, security intelligence, sabotage, propaganda, or subversion—were given scant consideration. Later, after the establishment of Persian Gulf Service Command (PGSC) in August 1942,⁸⁴ when the Americans decided to deploy the field-security forces of the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) in Persia, their decision was logically prompted by the need to secure their strategic project by safeguarding the vital lines of communication and supply between the Persian Gulf and the Soviet Union.⁸⁵ Less logical, however, would seem their decision to send to Persia active espionage and counterintelligence agents of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), particularly in a theatre where a moratorium on positive intelligence operations existed—mutually agreed between the British and the Soviets.⁸⁶ The British were not informed of this move, and CICI were left to discover independently the presence of American secret agents operating in Tehran.⁸⁷ By the end of the war, OSS Near East Section controlled nine positive intelligence officers in Persia,⁸⁸ for whom three priority remits had clearly emerged: (1) the interpretation of internal politics with repeated attempts to forecast future developments; (2) the study of Soviet activities within Persia and an attempt to define their ultimate aims; and (3) the study of what the Americans perceived to be British interference in

83. For a map of the Lend-Lease supply network, see Figure D-5. To better contextualize the US missions to Persia during the Second World War, I recommend a recent study that (unusually) emphasizes the continuity of US-Persian relations from the nineteenth century onwards: Mansour Bonakdarian, “U.S.-Iranian Relations, 1911-1951,” in *U.S.-Middle East Historical Encounters: A Critical Survey*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Thorkell Bernhardsson (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2007), 9-25.

84. Persian Gulf Service Command (PGSC) was recast as Persian Gulf Command (PGC) in December 1943.

85. Beware of a grandiosely entitled but thoroughly unreliable and poorly sourced history of CIC, according to which—among other glaring errors—Franz Mayr was tried and executed (!): Ian Sayer and Douglas Botting, *America’s Secret Army: The Untold Story of the Counter Intelligence Corps* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1989).

86. On the finely nuanced sociocultural differences between CIC and OSS, see Michael John, “Anglo-amerikanische Österreichpolitik, 1938-1955,” *Historicum* (Winter 1999/2000, <http://www.wsg-hist.jku.at/Historicum/HABIL/Beer.html>).

87. See Table C-6 for a list of OSS active espionage agents I have identified as operating in Persia. The existence of an inter-Allied agreement on operational intelligence in Persia seems clear; however, despite exhaustive searches, I can find no such document in the British or American records. The clearest statement on record is by OSS Head of Near East Secret Intelligence (SI), Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr, who said that the PGSC commanding general had been “prevailed upon by the Russians to withdraw all military intelligence” and that the British too had been instructed “to do no intelligence work in Russian-occupied areas.” See Penrose to Warne, 8 July 1943, RG 226, Entry 217, Box 1, NARA.

88. Richard Lowe (TIGER), Eliot Grant (TAPIR), Harold Lamb (TIMUR), and Walter Donor, together with Gordon Scott, fnu Herdic, fnu Fennel, fnu Leland, and fnu Loy. See Notes on representatives in Iran and Iraq based on field trip made by Gordon Loud, November 11-24, 1944, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 261, NARA.

Persian politics and British efforts to dominate the postwar markets in Persia. Even at the operational level, Germany was no longer a factor for OSS, and German intentions merited no consideration whatsoever.⁸⁹

The CIC in Persia kept only meagre security records, preferring to rely upon the resources of CICI when it came to security matters common to the three main Allies. The sheer volume of the records created and maintained by DSO Persia are a testimony to the diligence and organizational ability of Spencer and his staff.⁹⁰ By September 1944, Alan Roger was complaining that it was impossible—during the period of the arrests of Mayr and the FRANZ/DORA group and of Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group—to keep the records up-to-date, and that a serious bottleneck had developed in the carding process. However, when one realizes that 7,000 names were carded during the month of August 1944 alone, it seems astonishing that such a small staff could have generated so many records in such a brief period. In connection with the arrests, it should be remembered that the voluminous documents captured from the Germans, as well as most of the interrogation dialogues, were of course in German and had to be translated. Since many of the original translations were produced under extreme time pressure and proved to be of inferior quality, they frequently had to be re-translated, placing an additional burden on those responsible for creating and maintaining the relevant case files.⁹¹

In addition to the case files on captured German agents in Persia, one group of records was accorded significant priority: the files that CICI had compiled on the principal Persian suspects in enemy territory. They included not only full details of the careers and contacts of Persians who had been or could have been recruited as agents, but also a fairly comprehensive survey of German connections which would be of use in counteracting any long-term German plans for the resurrection of German influence in Persia at some future date.

In view of the inefficiency of the Persian police, whose records were “in a chaotic state,” DSO Persia’s records were in fact probably the only comprehensive ones in the entire country; without them the Persian police would frequently have been unable to arrest their own citizens. In other words, by default, CICI “had to constitute itself its own police force in the matter of records as in everything else”:

The way in which DSO Persia’s activities have extended shows that the organization filled a definite need in Persia, where it has become, along with its Area LOs, a sort of independent police force. It operates general security controls and has probably the only up-to-date records in the country. It has carried out

89. Field report of Eliot Grant, 11 July 1945, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 58, NARA.

90. By late 1944, 50,000 index cards and 1,700 case files; a year later, 61,000 cards. Roger to Kellar, 29 August 1945, f 71a, KV 4/223, TNA.

91. Secret summary by Alan Roger, 4 September 1944, f 2412, KV 4/223, TNA.

investigations into the fifth column, effected its own arrests, made its own interrogations, and done its own interning. Although first and foremost a security and counterintelligence organization, it has inevitably been drawn into other branches of intelligence, working a double-agent case, interrogating about conditions in enemy territory, investigating oil intrigues, and providing the embassy with “hot” news of political events. At the same time, DSO has had to warn the local military commander of impending trouble in Persia and keep him “au courant” with the political situation. As the German threat receded, these subsidiary activities grew in importance, though constant vigilance was still necessary *in view of the surprisingly continued German interest in Persia*.⁹²

What remains to be mentioned in this chapter is the positive and productive relationship which grew and matured during the war years between the staff at DSO Persia in Tehran and the B Branch staff at MI5 Headquarters in London.⁹³ In no small measure it is the effectiveness of this liaison that enabled a mere handful of albeit very enthusiastic young British security officers in Tehran to succeed in protecting an enormous territory like Persia from enemy threat and incursion. They were attached umbilically to the immense resources of the Security Service, and access was guaranteed them by one particularly gifted and able officer: Alex Kellar, who had in turn established liaison with various other government departments, thereby significantly widening his own subsection’s resource base.⁹⁴

John Le Carré’s early but exquisitely crafted novella of counterespionage, *Call for the Dead*, juxtaposes two character foils of note: the professional field officer George Smiley, who was to become in subsequent novels Le Carré’s most celebrated protagonist, and a highly politicized desk jockey named Maston, “the man with cream cuffs.”⁹⁵ It is said that David Cornwell (Le Carré) based the latter character on an officer he had known during his years at MI5: Alexander (more frequently Alex or Alec) J. Kellar.⁹⁶ However, the real Kellar who emerges from the archival records bears little resemblance to his flamboyant fictitious counterpart. While Maston expends his energy on currying favour with his political masters, much to George Smiley’s distaste, the real Kellar in fact ran the Middle East desk in London thoroughly professionally throughout the occupation, and in that capacity liaised directly and very effectively with Joe Spencer and Alan Roger at DSO Persia. Kellar was a former barrister from the Middle Temple, who as a law student during the 1930s had been president of the

92. History of Combined Intelligence Centre, Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, 15 December 1944, f 57c, KV 4/223, TNA. My italics, emphasizing one of the principal contentions of my thesis, namely that the Germans remained covertly interested in Persia until the last days of the Second World War, primarily because they sought, for ideological reasons, to impede postwar Soviet expansion.

93. See Curry, *Security Service*, 271-274.

94. Kellar was known to have useful contacts at the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, and MI6. *Ibid.*, 273.

95. John Le Carré, *Call for the Dead* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 12 *passim*.

96. Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 350.

National Union of Students (NUS), and who subsequently was to play a prominent role as a security expert on Zionism and the Palestine Mandate, as well as in the negotiations leading to decolonization in the Far East and in Africa. Kellar rose to become the first civilian head of SIME in 1946 and subsequently head of Security Intelligence Far East (SIFE), ultimately becoming Director of F Branch (Communist subversion) under Director General Sir Dick White, who also took a great interest in Persian security during the war, and who visited SIME in 1943.⁹⁷

It was in fact during this visit, at the SIME Annual Conference held in Beirut early that year, that White outlined the genesis of Kellar's Middle East desk, created about a year previously, which was to prove so supportive during the critical period in which DSO Persia succeeded in arresting all but one of the known Nazi agents in the region. According to White, consideration would be given on his return to London to the question of adapting this section as far as possible to meet the interests of SIME and ensuring that SIME received from London all available and relevant intelligence. White went on to enumerate the sources from which such intelligence could be acquired by MI5:

- (1) Radio Security Service decrypts of secret Abwehr communications (TRIANGLE);
- (2) double agents run jointly by MI5 and MI6;
- (3) agents placed on ships;
- (4) MI5 interrogation centre;
- (5) MI5 transit camp, through which travellers entering the UK from enemy-occupied territory had to pass;
- (6) port and travel control;
- (7) Allied intelligence services;
- (8) FBI;
- (9) OSS;
- (10) Imperial censorship;
- (11) DSOs throughout the world;
- (12) SOE and MEW;
- (13) Indian police intelligence;
- (14) British military attachés;
- (15) POW interrogations;
- (16) MI14 (German armed forces, police, and Gestapo);
- (17) Shipping Security Executive;
- (18) joint intelligence organizations in strategic areas (e.g. SIME);
- (19) own agents;
- (20) intelligence sections of the Code and Cipher School run by MI6;
- (21) BBC monitoring service;

97. Apparently in delicate health, six months after taking over in Cairo, Alex Kellar had to be relieved of his post and invalided back to Whitehall, having suffered a nervous breakdown caused by overwork and suspected amoebic dysentery. See Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 352; also Phillip Knightley, "So What's New about Gay Spies?" *The Independent*, 1 June 1997. Kellar was succeeded as head of SIME by the "far more robust" Bill Magan, IB Liaison Officer at DSO Persia, who had established a network of staybehind agents in Persia in 1942. See pp. 277-281; Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 98; Curry, *Security Service*, 270-271.

- (22) analysis of financial transactions, banknotes held by enemy agents, and postage stamps or jewels as methods of payment.⁹⁸

The immense scale of this global intelligence acquisition, analysis, and distribution operation is impressive: one realizes how much Spencer's comparatively tiny counterintelligence organization in Persia must have benefited from its liaison with Kellar's desk at MI5 in London. The cordial correspondence between Kellar and Tehran testifies to this; many of the letters have been preserved in the records of the Home Office. To a considerable degree, this liaison with Kellar undoubtedly compensated for the dysfunction of DSO Persia's local liaison with the MI6 representative in Tehran. During wartime at least, however uneasy their relationships at various regional and local levels, MI5 and MI6 appear to have shared intelligence on the Middle East with relative ease at the headquarters level in London.⁹⁹

Ultimately, however, German covert operations in Persia would likely have failed, whatever the circumstances and regardless of the solidarity of the security forces deployed against them. As Ray Maunsell, the architect and founder of SIME, has pointed out, it is in the very nature of covert warfare that it always favours the defender:

Counter-intelligence in war, properly organized, will always have the upper hand, since its defences and resources are based on the whole nation, with its different security and secret services, police, frontier controls, etc and a watchful wartime public. The enemy, i.e. the spy or saboteur, has to break through a "defensive ring" and starts off with the disadvantage of being frightened, i.e. doesn't know whether, if caught, he will be tortured before being executed.¹⁰⁰

Maunsell's analysis of course echoes Clausewitz's insistence on the primacy of defence over offence; in fact, Clausewitz's axiomatic theory is analogous to what occurred in the case of Germany's clandestine intentions towards Transcaucasia and Persia as its military campaign in southern Russia evolved, its resources became progressively overextended, and its field agents ever more isolated, especially when he writes:

By initiating the campaign, the attacking army cuts itself off from its own theatre of operations, and suffers by having to leave its fortresses and depots behind. The larger the area of operations that it must traverse, the more it is weakened—by the effect of marches and by the detachment of garrisons. The

98. Minutes and notes on the meeting of SIME representatives held at Beirut 12-13 Feb 43, f1a, KV 4/240, TNA.

99. The role and control of secret intelligence in support of both operations and security, Private papers of D. W. A. Mure, 2194:67/321/3, IWM. According to Mure, a former "A" Force officer, the two services cooperated well even in Cairo: "SIME was a marvellously successful amalgam of all security intelligence affecting the Middle East, and officers of MI5 and MI6 worked together in it irrespective of their original allegiance." Mure, *Master of Deception*, 66. See also Curry, *Security Service*, 273.

100. Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM.

defending army, on the other hand, remains intact. It benefits from its fortresses, nothing depletes its strength, and it is closer to its sources of supply.¹⁰¹

Thus, in Persia there was little of the “cat-and-mouse” play popularly associated with counterintelligence operations, for that is not at all how things happened. It was rather a case in which a robust defensive security-intelligence system, soundly conceived and efficiently run, succeeded in sustaining preventive measures which covered all aspects of potential offensive enemy movements and activities. Into this solid wall of British determination, the Germans of the FRANZ and ANTON initiatives blundered—ill-prepared, isolated, and fugitive from the start—with little realistic hope of survival. In operational terms, apart from sending a few radio messages to Berlin, they achieved nothing. The stories told after the war by Paul Leverkuehn and Berthold Schulze-Holthus of German agents tying up thousands of British troops are a nonsense; the truth is that by the latter half of 1943 the British only had a few battalions of fighting forces in Persia, having transferred most PAIFORCE units to the Italian campaign or returned them to India. Clearly, the strategic deception perpetrated by Dudley Clarke’s “A” Force, which greatly inflated the number of British and Indian troops deployed as part of Tenth Army in Persia, had its effect and continued to be believed by the Germans even after the war.¹⁰² Thus Paul Leverkuehn hyperbolized Schulze-Holthus’s achievements in his 1954 memoir as follows:

Far away and cut off from his superiors he showed both courage and imagination of a high order, and he made the utmost of the possibilities inherent in his position. Nor did his efforts go unrewarded; he tied down a number of British troops, the forces and material which the enemy had to bring into action were considerable, and around this solitary man a complete little theatre of war was developed.¹⁰³

Dick Thistlethwaite, who served under Joe Spencer and Alan Roger in Tehran as an operations officer responsible for many of the counterintelligence reports and summaries on which this study relies, took a slightly different, much more accurate view after the war of British successes against German covert operations in Persia, sensing not only that Spencer was an extraordinarily able leader, but also that—given the same degree of integrated and consistent

101. Carl Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 365. Cf. Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy, and Intelligence* (London: Frank Cass, 1989), 71-74.

102. The PAIFORCE Tenth Army deception operation was part of Clarke’s highly successful Middle East order-of-battle deception codenamed CASCADE, which was initiated in March 1942, fully implemented by July 1942, and terminated in February 1944. See Howard, *Strategic Deception*, 41; H. O. Dovey, “The Eighth Assignment, 1941-1942,” *Intelligence and National Security* 11, no. 4 (1996): 686-687.

103. Leverkuehn, *German Military Intelligence*, 10. Cf. Schulze-Holthus, *Daybreak*, 149, 193, 203, 213 passim. Reader Bullard was highly critical of Schulze-Holthus in this regard and accused him of megalomania no less for “supposing, quite wrongly, that he was keeping large numbers of British troops occupied.” *International Affairs* 31, no. 3 (July 1955): 392-393. See also the interesting exchange of opinions between Wolfgang G. Schwanitz and Burkhard Ganzer about Leverkuehn and Schulze-Holthus in *Sehepunkte* 9, no. 6 (June 2009) and *Sehepunkte* 9, no. 10 (October 2009), <http://www.sehepunkte.de/archiv/ausgaben/>.

support by the SD in Berlin that Spencer could rely on from MI5 in London—Franz Mayr might have been a far more formidable opponent than he ultimately proved to be:

If Berlin had done as Mayr asked and only sent a trained Persian W/T operator with lots of gold and sporting rifles, things could have been quite sticky with us. He was however let down by his own side, who thought they knew better and hampered him with a lot of useless Germans. ...

By the time the [Big-Three] Conference met, there wasn't a single German agent at liberty in Tehran. It was really due to a splendidly-led, but extremely small team, which it now seems to me had a remarkable esprit.¹⁰⁴

6.3 The Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the Inter-Services Liaison Department (ISLD)

*"Persia was a hostile country, our control was precarious, and the position was deteriorating. Such conditions made SOE work extremely difficult."*¹⁰⁵

*"On the whole SOE activities in Persia were disappointing, because of the general nervousness among the British Foreign Office officials there, the lack of real first-class personnel, and complete lack of local material."*¹⁰⁶

In the absence of any offensive Special Operations Executive (SOE) actions on Persian soil between 1941 and 1945, a brief mention needs to be made here of a unique PAIFORCE covert operation (codenamed PONGO) which marked the special-operations debut of Fitzroy Maclean, who would subsequently distinguish himself as a prominent SOE officer with Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. According to Maclean, who planned the Persian operation himself without any formal sanction by SOE, to whom the task would normally have fallen, he was given a free hand by Sir Reader Bullard and Jumbo Wilson's chief-of-staff, General Joseph Baillon, in the matter of the arrest of the powerful southern Persian malcontent General Fazlollah Zahedi, governor-general of Isfahan (see Figure 6-2): "Only two conditions were made: I was to take him alive and I was to do so without creating a disturbance."¹⁰⁷ Although Zahedi was in clandestine contact with the Germans, and his arrest removed a significant security threat, there was no security-intelligence (CICI Tehran) involvement in Operation PONGO. It was essentially an independent *military* special operation carried out on 7 December 1942 by regular infantry soldiers (Seaforth Highlanders) with negligible commando training under GHQ Baghdad (PAIFORCE) command. However, PONGO did not encroach upon the competence of DSO

104. Thistlethwaite to Bullard, 30 December 1954, GB165-0042-3/7, MECA.

105. SOE War Diary, November/December 1942, HS 7/267, TNA. Quoted in Saul Kelly, "A Succession of Crises: SOE in the Middle East, 1940-45," *Intelligence and National Security* 20, no. 1 (March 2005): 135.

106. History of SOE in the Arab World, September 1945, HS 7/86, TNA.

107. Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), 214. An unillustrated version of Maclean's autobiography was also published in the United States as *Escape to Adventure* (Boston: Little Brown, 1950). According to Jumbo Wilson, the decision to arrest Zahedi was his and achieved its goal: "... the possibility of others being treated in a like manner put a complete damper on any further activities of the plotters." Wilson, *Eight Years Overseas*, 146.

Persia, which had yet to be fully established, nor upon that of SOE, since it did not involve sabotage or subversion. This does not mean that CICI Tehran were not responsible for obtaining and analyzing the intelligence that alerted Bullard and Baillon to the dangers inherent in allowing the deceptively charming Zahedi to pursue unchecked his malevolent intentions, which included “liquidating” the British Consul in Isfahan and hoarding so much grain that Persians throughout the country would starve.¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, the operation was entirely dependent on accurate intelligence supplied by CICI Tehran to CICI Baghdad, which was then relayed to PAIFORCE.

Zahedi was a prime target for CICI, because he was deeply implicated in the subversive activities of Franz Mayr and his *Melliun Iran* movement, on the basis of hard evidence acquired on 2 November 1942.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the catalyst for action against Zahedi was his callous attitude and that of the military governor of Feridun, Colonel Sadiq Khan Feruhar (NIAZMAND) (another known pro-German fifth columnist), towards the shocking Harris-Griffiths triple murder on 3 August 1942. A vacationing Australian schoolboy (Ian Griffiths), his medical-missionary father (Dr Leslie Griffiths), who had lived and worked in Isfahan since 1938, and a British—probably SOE—agent (R. C. Harris) operating under diplomatic cover were travelling in tribal territory, where all three were shot to death in cold blood by Bakhtiari tribesmen (under Zahedi’s control and probably bribed by Feruhar on Zahedi’s orders to ambush the British agent).¹¹⁰

108. Given acute food shortages, crop failures, inflation, and civil unrest throughout 1942, it is understandable that Zahedi’s criminal intentions with respect to the food supply were taken very seriously by the security forces, as they could have had far-reaching political and social consequences. See Stephen L. McFarland, “Anatomy of an Iranian Political Crowd: The Tehran Bread Riot of December 1942,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 1 (February 1985): 51-65.

109. Plan for breaking the German fifth column in Persia, 11 August 1943, f 24x, KV 2/1477, TNA.

110. Most of the details about the Harris/Griffiths murder case are to be found in FO 799/8, TNA. Also see isolated documents in FO 248/1411, FO 921/3, FO 371/31386, FO 371/31387, FO 371/31418, FO 371/31419, FO 371/35068, TNA; as well as “Persian Brigands’ Crime,” *The Times*, 12 August 1942; “Aust. Missionary Killed in Persia,” *The Courier-Mail*, 13 August 1942; “Australian Missionary Killed by Brigands in Persia,” *The West Australian*, 13 August 1942; “General Cables,” *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13 August 1942. Much was made at the time of how unwise and provocative it was for the two men to have travelled armed in a tribal area. However, Harris was an experienced agent who undoubtedly knew exactly what he was doing; it seems clear that he was deliberately targeted as part of Zahedi’s personal vendetta against the staff of the Isfahan consulate.



Figure 6-2. *Fazlollah Zahedi.*

In his official report on the tragic incident, the British vice-consul in Isfahan, J. C. A. Johnson, wrote to CICI Baghdad that the whole of Isfahan was already waiting to see what would happen as a result of the affair, and that, unless very strong action were taken at once, it would be highly detrimental to British prestige, and would probably result in other attempts to kill British people.¹¹¹ No doubt Johnson was ultimately gratified, for Maclean and his Highlanders carried out a daring and successful covert raid on Zahedi's home on 7 December 1942, kidnapping the general more or less without incident.¹¹² After Zahedi's arrest, CICI Baghdad assessed the significance of Operation PONGO in words that directly addressed Johnson's concerns:

This removal of one of the main obstructions to British efforts to improve the economic conditions and the security position in Isfahan is one of the most important security measures taken in Persia since the Allied occupation, and should serve as a deterrent to similar undesirable persons who have hitherto relied on their position to protect them in their subversive activities. There have been no visible reactions to this effective counterstroke except for the congratulations offered to the British authorities by certain leading Persians on the arrest of Zahedi. It is likely however that other Persian obstructionists will not fail to take warning from the fact of Zahedi's arrest, the effect of which should assist in maintaining our prestige, and improving our security throughout Persia.¹¹³

111. Johnson to CICI Baghdad, 8 August 1942, FO 799/8, TNA.

112. See Appendix D to Report on the Methods of Ensuring Security of the Road Bushire-Shiraz-Isfahan, 10 January 1943, WO 201/1400A, TNA; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 212-221; McLynn, *Fitzroy Maclean*, 113-116.

113. CICI Security Intelligence Summary No. 48, 15 December 1942, WO 208/3089, TNA.

The only negative reaction to PONGO came from Washington—not surprisingly, for the State Department was briefed on the operation by the ever hostile US minister, Louis G. Dreyfus Jr. Ultimately, it was this American opposition that prevented the British security authorities from carrying out any further arrests of Persian officers implicated in the subversive plotting that emanated from the circle around Zahedi. In fairness, it has to be added that it was not only the odious Dreyfus who raised objections to further British action: the US adviser to the Persian Army also felt that the arrest of an officer like Colonel Feruhar might have the undesirable effect of lowering morale among the Persian officer corps in general, and British security seem to have accepted his view.¹¹⁴ Ultimately though, SOE never really succeeded in overcoming American resistance to their presence and subversive activities in Persia. One SOE officer who served in the region felt that the Americans were simply not “in favour of having any fifth columnists for fear of disturbing friendly relations between the Allies and the Persians.”¹¹⁵ In postwar retrospect and while acknowledging the difficulties inherent in waging coalition warfare, at least one American historian who studied the security situation in Persia felt uneasy with what he saw as the “criminal” naivety of the American position.¹¹⁶

Much of the discourse in earlier chapters of this study has addressed issues of dysfunction in the German secret services, including problems arising from interservice rivalry. While it has to be acknowledged that the British response to the German threat in Persia was overwhelmingly concerted and effective, it is only fair to recognize that the British services in the region were themselves not immune to a certain degree of interservice rivalry and friction.¹¹⁷ However, such instances were rare and were generally resolved in a timely fashion, so that no conflict was permitted to escalate to a point where it might actually impede operations. For instance, the relationship that existed between British counterintelligence in Persia, as represented by Joe Spencer’s DSO Persia organization, and the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), thinly disguised overseas as the Inter-Services Liaison Department (ISLD), was

114. Minute, 30 December 1942, E7561; FO to Tehran, 4 January 1943, FO 371/31387, TNA.

115. SOE War Diary, January/March 1943, HS 7/268, TNA. Quoted in Kelly, “Succession of Crises”: 136.

116. See the correspondence between Ladislav Farago and Sir Reader Bullard in GB 165-0042-3/11, MECA. As far as I can tell, Farago never published any of his extensive research on Persia, which is unfortunate, for he was a pioneering investigative intelligence historian—albeit not an academic—with a nose for buried archival treasure, who wrote extremely readable books. His contribution would no doubt have been valuable and stimulating. He is the only historian I know of who has shown any sustained interest in the subject-area of this thesis. His best-known work is Ladislav Farago, *The Game of the Foxes: The Untold Story of German Espionage in the United States and Great Britain during World War II* (Toronto: Bantam, 1973), which disappointingly makes no mention of secret warfare in Persia. For a critical view of Farago’s reliability as a researcher, see Gerold Guensberg, “Abwehr Myth: How Efficient Was German Intelligence in World War II?” *Studies in Intelligence* 21, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 39-40.

117. For an interesting and well-informed account of the evolution of effective working relationships among various British intelligence organizations in the region, see Shelley, “Empire of Shadows,” 144, 147-157.

not a happy one. The ultimate dysfunction of CICI/ISLD liaison in Persia is all the more noteworthy in the light of the optimism expressed about relations between the two organizations in the spring of 1942 by a senior MI5 officer, T. A. “Tar” Robertson, who visited SIME headquarters in Cairo:

Finally there is the liaison between SIME and ISLD. This is undoubtedly the most striking feature of all. The closeness of contact between the two departments, *both at the head offices and at the outstations* is remarkable especially over matters of counterespionage importance. This is partly due to the close friendship which exists between the heads of the two departments together with the fact that the two offices are so closely situated. However be that as it may this liaison allows for the smooth working of and the close cooperation between the two departments throughout the whole area [including Persia], and partly accounts for the fact that one finds ISLD in Turkey and everywhere else throughout the area. The result is that the interchange of information is free and the assistance which the departments give to each other is great. ... *This is the only way satisfactorily to run intelligence work.*¹¹⁸

In theory at least, strong potential for animosity lay in the fact that the two services overlapped geographically and, partially at least, in their common pursuit of counterintelligence objectives. By 1943, the Head of SIME felt himself constrained to emphasize the “necessity of whole-hearted collaboration with ISLD and the avoidance of friction,” while warning that “MI6 were taking more active measures to establish themselves in counterintelligence in the Middle East.” At the same time, however, Ray Maunsell asserted that “it was ... the duty of DSOs to direct counterintelligence in their areas, ” adding:

While the necessity for collaboration with ... ISLD was recognized, it must be understood that the final responsibility for counterintelligence in the [Middle East] is SIME’s, and it is the duty of DSOs, while doing their utmost to avoid friction, to make that clear.¹¹⁹

Two years after Tar Robertson’s positive report,¹²⁰ CICI/ISLD relations in Persia had deteriorated to such an extent that the counterintelligence specialists at DSO Persia had come to view ISLD as—quite simply—an indolent parasite.¹²¹ According to Chokra Wood, Head of CICI

118. Report on visit to Egypt (20.3.42-17.4.42) by Major T. A. Robertson, 7 May 1942, f 1a, KV 4/234, TNA. My italics. Robertson also foresaw the establishment of a network of jointly controlled SIME and ISLD counterintelligence agents who were to become staybehinds in the event of a German invasion of the region. In Persia, however, this notion never came to fruition. Instead, it was the Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) that ultimately created such a network of agents, under the sole control of their liaison officer in Tehran, Bill Magan. See pp. 278-280; Curry, *Secret Service*, 272-273.

119. Minutes and notes on the meeting of SIME representatives held at Beirut 12-13 Feb 43, f1a, KV 4/420, TNA.

120. See note 118.

121. Their views found official expression, on the record, at the 1944 SIME conference held in Beirut. On that occasion, Joe Spencer “stated that his relations with the local [Tehran] ISLD representative had deteriorated in the last year owing to the deterioration in the standard of their personnel.” His statement appears slightly at odds with the Head of SIME’s somewhat conciliatory perception, from his Cairo perspective, of “the importance of good relations with ISLD owing to the powerful influence their organization enjoys and the

Baghdad, and Joe Spencer, Head of CICI Tehran, the ISLD representative in Tehran was often asked by MI6 in London for reports on Axis activities in Persia and, as he had no information on the subject from his own sources, he habitually plagiarized the material in routinely received copies of DSO Persia's reports, rewriting them as his own reports. In doing so, he was of course pointlessly duplicating information which would already have been passed from CICI via MI5 in London to MI6 in the normal course of events.¹²² Additionally, he may have been giving "C" (Sir Stewart Menzies, Head of MI6) the false impression that ISLD Persia rather than DSO Persia were doing all the responsible work there. This definitely appears to have been the case, for a signal was at one point received from MI6 by their Tehran representative, instructing him to send them the codes and equipment captured with the ANTON group, in the belief that he, not Spencer, had been responsible for their capture.¹²³

Upon learning of these unfortunate misrepresentations, Ray Maunsell, Head of SIME in Cairo, wrote:

I sincerely hope that CICI may not fade out of Persia leaving MI6 alone to cover counter-intelligence. ... I fully support Wood ... and sympathize with the annoyance to both Wood and Spencer at this ridiculous duplication of work that has been carried out by the MI6 office in Tehran. In addition I may say that the little I have seen of that office did not impress me. I have, I must confess, never been able to understand the mentality which finds it necessary to justify its existence by poaching other people's game. It is particularly peculiar when one bears in mind the excellent work which Spencer and his organization have carried out in Persia in completely destroying the German intelligence organization there. It is my belief that in this work they received very little assistance from their MI6 colleagues.¹²⁴

It can have been of little reassurance to Chokra Wood to be told by his London superior, Sir David Petrie,¹²⁵ that "C" was well aware of "the limitations in the scope of the work of MI6 in Tehran."¹²⁶ According to Petrie, "CICI serves PAIFORCE; the MI6 representative serves the local British authorities Your interests are mutual and to a certain extent must overlap and be closely integrated."¹²⁷ And, as if foreshadowing the postoccupational realignment that was soon

value of the information they provide." Minutes of the SIME Annual Conference, held in Beirut 2-4 April 44, f33a, KV 4/234, TNA. Maunsell's view may have been influenced by the fact that at the headquarters level in London MI5-MI6 relations were generally good, at least insofar as the sharing of Middle East intelligence was concerned. Not so, however, with respect to counterintelligence operations, as is explained by Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence*, vol. 4, 187-189.

122. Wood to Petrie, 8 May 1944, f 31a, KV 4/223, TNA.

123. Ibid. Wood was understandably indignant about this, while Spencer's comments on the actions of ISLD were apparently "unprintable."

124. Maunsell to Petrie, 7 June 1944, f 39a, KV 4/223, TNA.

125. Petrie, formerly a senior police and intelligence officer in India, was successful and popular as Director General of MI5 from 1941 to 1946.

126. Petrie to Wood, 26 May 1944, f 35a, KV 4/223, TNA.

127. Ibid.

to come, already requiring less emphasis on Germany as the enemy and greater emphasis on the Soviet Union as the main intelligence target, Petrie added, in carefully chosen words:

Spencer has a full-time job. The MI6 representative has probably less to do, but *he must create and build up his position to meet long-term requirements*. CICI knows the special interests of MI6 and should deal with MI6 as a separate department, but in the very closest collaboration.¹²⁸

The limited capability of the MI6 representative in Tehran is therefore at least partially attributable to the fact that he had no files to work with: ISLD had destroyed most of its records during the Rashid Ali coup, and he doubtless had little interest in the independent acquisition—from scratch—of intelligence on Nazi agents and sympathizers.¹²⁹ By mid-1944, while CICI's gaze remained constantly fixed upon German covert initiatives in the region, that of ISLD had undoubtedly become trained on Stalin's occupation forces and their newly perceived potential threat to British influence in the region after Germany's inevitable defeat. Thus, in a sense, ISLD was already fighting the Cold War in Persia well before the end of the Second World War. It is therefore hardly surprising that the two British services became increasingly at odds, simply because their strategic roles had diverged beyond reconciliation. Rather than standing shoulder-to-shoulder, they found themselves facing different enemies, back-to-back.

Who then was the MI6 representative in Tehran? The records are of course far from conclusive, so we have no way of ever knowing just who came and went on SIS missions in the region, nor who specifically incurred Joe Spencer's wrath. However, the circumstantial evidence we have to work with strongly suggests that the key MI6/ISLD man in Tehran was the brilliant scholar Robert Charles "Robin" Zaehner, who later became—as Professor R. C. Zaehner—a renowned orientalist and prolific writer who taught Persian and religion at Oxford University until his sudden death in 1974. Peter Wright, a senior MI5 officer who interviewed Robin Zaehner after the war concerning allegations that he had at some point worked for the Soviet Union,¹³⁰ has described Zaehner's work in wartime Persia on the basis of his personnel record as follows:

He was responsible for MI6 counterintelligence in Persia during the war. It was difficult and dangerous work. The railway lines into Russia, carrying vital military supplies, were key targets for German sabotage. Zaehner was perfectly equipped for the job, speaking the local dialects fluently, and much of his time

128. Ibid. My italics.

129. History of Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, ff 1a and 57c, KV 4/223, TNA. The official record in fact shows that DSO Persia indeed "assisted ISLD in building up fresh records." Ibid.

130. It is worth noting that, after meeting him, Wright quickly became convinced that Zaehner had remained loyal. In fact, Wright felt bitter and angry about the accusation against Zaehner. Peter Wright, *Spycatcher: The Candid Autobiography of a Senior Intelligence Officer* (New York: Viking, 1987), 244-246.

was spent undercover, operating in the murky and cutthroat world of countersabotage. By the end of the war his task was even more fraught. The Russians themselves were trying to gain control of the railway, and Zaehner had to work behind Russian lines, continuously at risk of betrayal and murder by pro-German or pro-Russian Arabs [*sic*].¹³¹

How does this description fit with DSO Persia's view of Zaehner's "parasitic" behaviour? First, it certainly seems consistent with the shift—already mentioned above—in ISLD's operational role from anti-German countersabotage to anti-Soviet counterintelligence and counterespionage from 1943 onwards. Second, it suggests that Zaehner was primarily interested in the Soviet zone of occupation in northern Persia, not in the British zone to the south, which might explain Zaehner's lack of any network of intelligence sources outside the Russian zone and his consequent need to "poach" intelligence on southern Persia (where the Germans were) from DSO Persia.

There is good reason for coupling SOE and ISLD under the same rubric in this study, for the work of the two services in Persia was inextricably intertwined and their identity possibly even coalescent, in the sense that ISLD appears to have used SOE in the region as a convenient proxy. What better cover can there be for a secret service than another secret service? It has certainly been documented that Zaehner was under double cover as an MI6 officer in Tehran, occupying a diplomatic position as assistant press attaché to Ann Lambton at the British Legation,¹³² where, as an undercover SOE officer with the rank of captain (subsequently major), he was responsible for covert propaganda, together with two other SOE officers (Christopher Sykes and—in Isfahan—Egerton Sykes, whose wife was Zaehner's secretary) who may also have been ISLD operatives under double cover.¹³³ At the same time, Zaehner also worked closely with the British minister, Sir Reader Bullard, and enjoyed his full support as much as did Joe Spencer and the DSO Persia staff. However, while no doubt fully aware of his SOE role, it is uncertain if Bullard was entirely aware of the extent of Zaehner's work for MI6, nor of the

131. *Ibid.*, 244-245.

132. Zaehner's closest colleague at the British Legation was another learned orientalist who enjoyed a distinguished postwar academic career: the redoubtable Ann K. S. Lambton, who was press attaché in Tehran throughout the war, and who would in 1951 collaborate with Zaehner in evolving a notorious scheme for MI6 and the CIA to topple Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. See Martin Kramer, "Miss Lambton's Advice," *Middle East Strategy at Harvard (MESH)*, 20 August 2008, <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/mesh/>. It remains unclear whether Lambton also worked with Zaehner for ISLD during the war. If she did, it is of course possible that one originally recruited the other. For evidence of Lambton's scholarship, see Ann K. S. Lambton, "Persia," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 31, no. 1 (January 1944): 8-22.

133. Mrs Sykes appears to have been much more than a secretary, assuming complete responsibility for Zaehner's work whenever he was in the field. She and her husband were apparently expert in working with (against?) the Russians, Poles, and Czechs, which strongly suggests their ISLD involvement. Memorandum on SOE activities in Arab Countries, Persia, Egypt and Cyprus, HS 7/85, TNA.

possible involvement in active espionage of other members of the legation staff (e.g. Lambton and the Sykes).¹³⁴

Although SOE were originally inserted in the region to form sabotage teams that would attempt the demolition of certain strategic objects, should the need arise before a German invasion, the principal role played by SOE (i.e. Zaehner) in Persia became the covert production and dissemination of written and oral propaganda in an attempt to smear pro-German politicians, generate rumours, and inspire an anti-German spirit among the Persians:

On instructions from the Minister [Bullard], most of our propaganda has been directed towards discrediting certain corrupt and undesirable deputies. ... We attacked them violently by means of clandestine leaflets—sometimes statements in their name denying that they wished to be elected, that they had a revelation from God which had made them devote the rest of their lives to religion, and other simple stratagems of this kind. We have attacked them in pamphlets signed by political parties, real or imaginary, accusing them of bribery, immorality, etc. In most cases the pamphlets stated the exact bribe offered, when, where, and to whom, or circumstantial evidence was offered pinning a deputy down to some horrible offence.¹³⁵

At the same time, SOE also sought permission to make contacts with the dissident tribes, particularly the Bakhtiari, Qashgai, and Boir Ahmedi, initially to form sabotage parties, but later to create a nucleus for their postoccupational work. Unfortunately, Bullard and/or the British government were opposed to such contacts, not wishing to contravene the tribal policy of the Persian government. SOE therefore took it upon themselves to raise sabotage teams clandestinely, together with a denial scheme elaborated in conjunction with the Transportation Directorate, which operated the TIR. Eventually, Bullard (or Whitehall) relented, enabling SOE to make what they described at the time as “several excellent tribal contacts.” With the ANTON mission still operating in Qashgai territory, SOE’s aim had become ensuring the future security of the oilfields and the TIR in the tribal area, using methods “for which this organization is peculiarly adapted.”¹³⁶ Colonel H. J. Underwood, who, as military attaché at the legation in 1941, had furnished CICI Baghdad with the intelligence they needed on the Nazi diaspora to enable Whitehall to justify the invasion and occupation of Persia,¹³⁷ subsequently became SOE field commander for Persia, with cover as political adviser in Khuzistan. Underwood’s work for

134. *Ibid.*; History of SOE in the Arab World, September 1945, HS 7/86, TNA.

135. Memorandum on SOE activities in Arab Countries, Persia, Egypt and Cyprus, HS 7/85. See also Kelly, “Succession of Crises”: 136.

136. Memorandum on SOE activities in Arab Countries, Persia, Egypt and Cyprus, HS 7/85. There is no proof, but it is likely that Harris, the British agent murdered by the Bakhtiari (see p. 266n110), was at the time engaged in a reconnaissance mission for the SOE. Of course, he too may have been an ISLD officer or agent.

137. See p. 39 *passim*.

SOE in this vital area of tribal southwestern Persia primarily concerned oilfields security and was undertaken at the request of Bullard and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC).¹³⁸

To the intelligence historian, Robin Zaehner's work for ISLD in northern Persia is of course less transparent. All that is said in the SOE records is the veiled comment: "It is difficult to explain in detail the full value of his work, but undoubtedly he has been of great assistance to the Minister, who is very keen for his work to continue."¹³⁹ While SOE were never able to penetrate the Russian-occupied zone,¹⁴⁰ Zaehner apparently had little difficulty in doing so, which leads one to wonder how he succeeded. Presumably what made him exceptional in the first place was his mastery of Farsi and his knowledge of many regional dialects and minority languages. Also, the excellent relations established with the Russians by Egerton Sykes and his wife may have facilitated Zaehner's movements and contacts within the Soviet zone. However, as the war drew to a close, Zaehner faced a problem with his double cover. By 1945, SOE realized that they would need to arrange civilian cover for those British staff who chose—as Zaehner apparently did—to remain with the organization. Zaehner's solution (or was it MI6's?) was that he should persuade Oxford University "to allow him to return to Persia to compile a modern grammar and dictionary of the Persian language." Zaehner appears to have informed SOE that he was confident he could make such an arrangement. Whether MI6 interceded on Zaehner's behalf in the common rooms of Oxford is not evident.¹⁴¹

In general, though, it can be safely assumed that Zaehner's task as an ISLD officer in wartime Persia undoubtedly had more to do with furnishing MI6 with intelligence and counterintelligence product about Soviet intentions and the perceived Soviet threat to postwar Persia and the Middle East than with the war against Hitler. And it was to Alex Kellar that the

138. Memorandum on SOE activities in Arab Countries, Persia, Egypt and Cyprus, HS 7/85. After his transfer to full-time SOE duties, Underwood was succeeded as military attaché by the extremely knowledgeable and experienced Major General William A. K. "Wak" Fraser, IA, who had held the position once before (1924-1928), having commanded the South Persia Rifles during the immediate postwar period (1919-1921). Fraser was also Bill Slim's predecessor as commander of 10th Indian Division and Edward Quinan's predecessor as commander of IRAQFORCE. Working closely with Bullard, who was fortunate to have at his disposal a Persia expert of Fraser's rank and calibre, he served ably at the Tehran legation/embassy between 1941 and 1945, when he returned to Britain to resume the well-deserved retirement he had originally begun in 1941.

139. Ibid.

140. History of SOE in the Arab World, September 1945, HS 7/86, TNA. See also Kelly, "Succession of Crises": 136, who writes: "All efforts to appoint SOE representatives to Tabriz and Resht ... were to be stymied by the NKVD, which regarded it as a 'sinister' British move aimed at stealing a march on the Soviets for the postwar period."

141. Future cover for British staff, Summary of activities, March 1945, HS 7/86, TNA. For an interesting though far from conclusive discussion of MI6-SOE relations in London and the Middle East, see Nigel West, *Secret War: The Story of SOE, Britain's Wartime Sabotage Organisation* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), 250-252. A similar discussion of MI6-SOE relations in (mainly southeast) Asia is to be found in Richard J. Aldrich, "Britain's Secret Intelligence Service in Asia during the Second World War," *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 1 (1998): 179-217.

task fell of finding on behalf of MI5 an optimal solution to the vexed question of postwar counterintelligence competences in the region. At issue was the question of whether to allow the formidable regional expertise developed by SIME to continue to function after the war under MI5 control, or whether control had to pass perforce to MI6, because of the SIS's traditional primacy in all overseas operations, whether of an active intelligence or counterintelligence nature.¹⁴² It was a thorny issue, and to resolve it Kellar twice visited the region, once during the war (between 26 November 1944 and 2 February 1945), primarily in order to address security issues in Palestine, and once after the war (May-June 1945). Yet the farsighted Kellar had already anticipated many of the security problems that subsequently arose in the Middle East in a report he filed as early as November 1943, in which he wrote:

I consider our position in that part of the world will probably be most seriously threatened by Russia, whose penetration of the area, already evident in Persia, will perhaps present us with our most important and at the same time most difficult counterespionage problem. ... Whatever the political conception of Russia's future status, our interests must, I think, be menaced, and no more so than in the Middle East where, in addition to the mineral wealth of Persia and Iraq, Suez and the Persian Gulf would give Russia sea-way to the Indian Ocean and beyond.¹⁴³

After discussing the need to take into account realistically the US intelligence services as a potential postwar target and a possible postwar resurgence of German interest in the region (realistic in 1943, no doubt), Kellar appealed for continued cooperation on counterintelligence between MI5 and MI6, while remaining vague as to who might ultimately control things:

The problems are at any rate sufficiently complex and important to indicate that there can be little, if any, let-up in our counterintelligence activities in the area, and their *integration under centralized direction* would seem to be a necessary piece of rationalization.¹⁴⁴

Kellar remained convinced that it would be necessary after the war for British counterespionage and counterintelligence in the Middle East to be directed centrally, because of the political, strategic, and economic importance of the region and the heavy burden of responsibility for security that the British secret services would continue to bear. Consequently, it would be necessary for a permanent solution to be found for the unsatisfactory overlapping of

142. It needs to be emphasized that the problem was centred on the specific question of responsibility for overseas counterespionage outside the British Empire (e.g. in Persia) and whether that particular remit would be surrendered by SIME to MI6 after the war, which it was. This potentially divisive interservice issue was entirely separate from the local tussle between Spencer and Zaehner concerning attribution of intelligence. Regarding the MI6 counterespionage remit, see Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 442-443; Howard, *Strategic Deception*, 32.

143. Note on future security problems in Mid-East, November 1943, KV 4/384, TNA.

144. *Ibid.* My italics.

function between MI5 and MI6.¹⁴⁵ Clearly, any counterproductive rivalry between the services such as existed between Spencer and Zaehner in wartime Persia, however briefly and insignificantly, had to be prevented.¹⁴⁶

6.4 The Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB)

*“Mopping up the well-concealed Germans was not a task for conventional military forces. It was a rat-catching operation, and our little group were the rat catchers ...”*¹⁴⁷

Until the Second World War, the Government of India (GOI) had always tended to regard most of eastern, southeastern, and central Persia as its sphere of influence and had assumed responsibility for diplomatic representation and intelligence gathering in that region. Personnel manning posts in Ahwaz, Kerman, Meshed, and Seistan, for example, were traditionally drawn from the Indian Civil Service, the Indian Political Service, and the Indian Army, whereas the Tehran legation and consulates in other Persian regions (for example, in Kermanshah, Khorramshahr, Resht, and Shiraz) were staffed by the London-based diplomatic and consular services. A traditional rivalry and a rather cumbersome reporting system evolved, according to which intelligence was transmitted by the predominantly Foreign Office (FO) posts to the FO in London, whence copies were sent to the India Office, and relevant information was then forwarded by them to Delhi. Conversely, GOI posts reported directly to Delhi, whence copies were sent to the India Office in London, for onward transmission to the FO.¹⁴⁸

In practice, early in the war, the FO routinely consulted Delhi before implementing policy in Persia, including any proposed measures to counter Axis intelligence and other secret activities. Shortly before the Anglo-Soviet invasion, the FO, alarmed at the proliferation of German agents and the growth of German influence in Persia, suggested fighting fire with fire: recognizing the GOI’s interest and strong representation in the region, they proposed to Delhi a mass infiltration of British agents into Persia under commercial or even religious cover “more or less on the German model” and sought Delhi’s input. Not unnaturally, the GOI appear to have been almost as alarmed at Whitehall’s proposal as at any Nazi intrigues and showed little enthusiasm for the bold plan. Consequently, they sought to delay it, after various substantive

145. Report of visit by Mr A. J. Kellar to SIME and CICI organizations, May 1944, KV 4/384, TNA.

146. The issue was not ultimately resolved until the Attlee Directive of 1948 and the Maxwell Fyfe Directive of 1952. However, in the case of India, MI5 did not cede competence to MI6 until the late 1960s. See Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 443.

147. William Magan in *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 24.

148. See “British Intelligence on Persia (Iran), c. 1900-1949: Secret and Confidential British Intelligence and Policy Files,” in A. J. Farrington, ed. *British Intelligence and Policy on Persia (Iran), 1900-1949: India Office Political and Secret Files and Confidential Print* (Leiden: IDC, 2004), 3-5.

objections had been raised by, among others, the political resident in Bushire. Fortunately perhaps for both Whitehall and Delhi, the dispute was effectively neutralized by the decision to stage a full-scale military invasion and occupation of Persia.¹⁴⁹

A flurry of correspondence in the records shortly after the Anglo-Soviet invasion reveals something of the background to the secondment of Major William M. T. Magan early in 1942 from his Indian Army cavalry regiment (Hodson's Horse) to CICI Tehran, overtly to liaise between CICI and Delhi, but covertly to establish a network of underground staybehind agents in Persia to resist the enemy behind German lines, should the Wehrmacht break through Transcaucasia.¹⁵⁰ This correspondence is interesting inasmuch as it shows how, after the invasion, in late 1941, it was ensured that all security-intelligence organization and operations in Persia would come under the CICI umbrella, without interference from Delhi, yet without upsetting the GOI. The supportive, no-nonsense attitude of the British minister in Tehran, Sir Reader Bullard, clearly helped the Commanders-in-Chief India and Middle East to get the policy approved.¹⁵¹

Referring in late October to various proposals relating to intelligence organization in Persia, the FO declared that Bullard's staff had the situation well in hand and that Bullard had suggested that the GOI appoint their own special officer to Tehran (presumably to handle liaison with Delhi). The letter continues: "There has been a large increase in the staff at Tehran, with a consequent tendency to unwieldiness and duplication, and Bullard's view ... is that further additions to staff should be made only for objects with which the present staff cannot adequately deal."¹⁵²

A little over a week later, the FO cabled with heightened urgency:

Commander-in-Chief India and Commander-in-Chief Middle East consider that establishment of security and intelligence organization in Persia under CICI is essential in order to watch future attempts by enemy to develop subversive

149. The relevant correspondence is to be found in IOR/L/PS/12/3517, BL.

150. Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 16-17. The publication of these memoirs, upon which much of this section is based, has been sanctioned by MI5, which is fortunate because I was unable to find any trace of Magan's covert work in the records. See also "Brigadier Bill Magan (Obituary)," *The Telegraph*, 22 January 2010.

151. It seems that the GOI was facing an extreme shortage of manpower at the time. However much it might have wished to "maintain influence" and retain control of political intelligence operations in eastern Persia, including those concerning tribal affairs, the GOI was not in a position to provide sufficient numbers of consular political officers to do so. Ultimately, it was compelled in some areas to rely upon the assistance of CICI Area Liaison Officers for the acquisition of political intelligence. Seconding a single intelligence officer (Magan) to Tehran to liaise with DSO Persia was therefore a simple solution to what had become a daunting problem. And it was of course an appointment that suited Magan nicely and enabled him to carry out his covert role without being detected. See GOI External Affairs Department to Secretary of State for India, 18 December 1941, E 8443/42/34, FO 371/27161, TNA.

152. Caccia to Peel, 28 October 1941, E6813/3326/24, IOR/L/PS/12/656, BL.

activities which must be expected after the present setback to their plans, especially if German forces draw nearer to Persia. The present opportunity of penetration by security service may not recur.¹⁵³

The suggestion that CICI should include an “intelligence organization” appears to have unnerved the Indian Political Intelligence (IPI) somewhat, ostensibly at least, for they minuted in late November:

We were somewhat worried by the use of the term “Security and Intelligence” or “Intelligence” alone It is now clear that the new organization is intended for “Security Intelligence” only, and I am grateful to the India Office for confining themselves to this term¹⁵⁴

Nevertheless, when Bill Magan was summoned to Delhi in January 1942 to confer with Sir Denys Pilditch, Director of the Indian Intelligence Bureau (DIB), it was clear that, with the Germans at the gates of Transcaucasia, the absence of any British intelligence organization in Persia was the truly unnerving circumstance:

If the commander-in-chief of the German forces in south Russia ... was to succeed in breaking through the Caucasus into Persia as a prelude to attacking India we did not want to be caught in a ... situation there [like in Malaya].

... [Pilditch] asked me if I, as a Persian speaker and having knowledge of the country from having lived there for a year, would go into south and east Persia and try to form a “stay behind” organization to provide intelligence from behind the German lines in Persia if they succeeded in getting there. He went on to say that the Germans had left their own “stay behind” organization in Persia which had gone underground. PAIFORCE ... was trying to mop that up.

... I clearly could not refuse this request to carry out the Persian operation. ... I was the only person with both Persian knowledge and experience and the required relationship with the Intelligence organization in India, to whom I would be reporting.

... The Government of India Intelligence Bureau, to which I would be reporting, had a local office at Quetta, ... which was to be my local base in India. It was also on my route to Persia.¹⁵⁵

After establishing an Indian support base in Quetta and recruiting a Farsi-speaking Hazara police driver from the Quetta Police, Sergeant Ibrahim Khan, a First World War veteran who became his trusted companion, Magan set about establishing various forms of cover ideal for his projected activities: first as “temporary military vice-consul” at the British Consulate in Kerman, engaged upon “road and other reconnaissance,” and second playing multiple roles with the Royal Engineers repairing the access roads leading from the Indian border into Persia: as adviser, as liaison officer between the sappers and the Persians, and “as general reconnaissance officer making advance preparation for the arrival of our forces.” Quickly and methodically

153. FO to Tehran, 7 November 1941, E7150/3326/34, IOR/L/PS/12/656, BL.

154. IPI minute, 26 November 1941, 6341, IOR/L/PS/12/656, BL.

155. Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 16-17, 19.

Magan assembled his network, travelling immense distances across southeastern Persia while doing so. It is interesting to note that in this remote region, by contrast with other parts of the country, there was little support for the Germans. As Magan noted:

South and east Persia had a very close association with British India and, in particular, strong and important trade links, and they were horrified at the thought of coming under the heel of Hitler's Germany. In consequence the area as a whole was well disposed towards the British and welcomed our interest in frustrating the German advance there.¹⁵⁶

Magan then moved on to Tehran to establish his final cover as Indian Intelligence Bureau (IB) liaison officer with what he refers to as the "small PAIFORCE security intelligence organization": in other words, DSO Persia.¹⁵⁷ While fully realizing that his expertise as a regular-service intelligence officer could be put to good use in mopping up fugitive Germans, it was equally clear to Magan that his first priority was to prepare for a possible German breakthrough from the Caucasus, and that he had to get on with the job of recruiting a large network of intelligence agents in central, southern, and eastern Persia:

As I saw the situation when I was given the assignment, the Germans, in January 1942, were bogged down in south Russia by the winter, but would be on the move again when the spring thaw came and might, by my calculations, get through the Caucasus by the early autumn of 1942.¹⁵⁸

Magan could not afford to risk blowing his cover by recruiting agents personally. Therefore he delegated the task to three assistants: an American carpet dealer in Isfahan, an Indian police officer serving as vice-consul in Yezd, and a Greek carpet merchant in Kerman. Magan's job was also greatly facilitated by the fact that the IB assumed full responsibility for agent training. Once recruited, agents were sent across the frontier at Zahidan and on to the IB in Quetta.

The tradecraft insisted upon by Magan reveals the professionalism that marked his approach to any operation; it stands in contrast to the absence of policy and tradecraft among German operatives in Persia. In Magan's own words:

156. *Ibid.*, 22-23. Magan's accurate perception is never echoed in any of the German records. The Nazis' simplistic interpretation of Persian political opinion saw the majority of Persians throughout the country as pro-German. Typically, Abw I M noted, "There is no doubt that the mass of the Persian people have an extremely hostile attitude towards the Allies." Betr. Iran, 14 May 1943, RW 5/317A, BA-MA.

157. Magan, *Middle Eastern Approaches*, 23. Here Magan was reunited with his old friend from the IA, Alan Roger, who was ADSO Persia. It is unclear whether Magan improvised his position with CICI or was formally attached to them by the IB. He certainly appears to have been required to coordinate his plans with PAIFORCE and to keep the British Legation fully informed of his plans and undertakings. This suggests that his appointment was official.

158. *Ibid.*, 24.

I insisted that no potential agent was to be approached without my explicit permission. I also insisted that nothing was to be recorded on paper which could reveal details of the operation. We also wrote no letters. All communication must be oral, which was one reason for the immense amount of travelling I had to do, because I also insisted on visiting my subordinates rather than them visiting me. ... I did not meet any of the agents we recruited, and none of them ever knew of my existence.¹⁵⁹

After six months of very hard work, Magan had finished: he had nine trained agents stationed on the strategic routes leading from Persia to India. They were well paid by the Indian government and were promised significant bonuses if they ever had to work behind the German lines. But this was of course never to be. Sooner than anticipated, Magan had to deal with the dual questions of whether and how to wind up his organization in the event of a German defeat in southern Russia, which is of course what ultimately happened.

After Stalingrad, Magan stayed on at DSO Persia, maintaining liaison between Tehran and Delhi, to watch outside leakage channels on behalf of India, with a view to building up channels for Indian deception material and to operate them when and if they opened up, while ensuring that any material disseminated followed the general strategic deception policy of the “A” Force organization. At the same time Magan helped Joe Spencer out as much as he could, bringing his considerable professional expertise to the task of smoking out and capturing enemy agents—what he called “rat catching.”¹⁶⁰

I was not a member of the Tehran security office. I had two special missions to carry out for the Government of India. But the security people kindly put me up in their nest and allowed me free access to their records. And because I was there and they were short-handed, and I was the only regular soldier, I muscled in and took part in all their physical operations, mopping up German staybehinds and parachutists.¹⁶¹

Perhaps Magan’s most valuable contribution to the work of DSO Persia was the final, tricky negotiations that he and Major R. Jackson (ALO Shiraz) conducted with Nasir Khan and his mother Bibi Khanum in February-March 1944 for the release into British custody of Berthold Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group, who had been held captive by the Qashgai and the Boir Ahmedi in tribal territory since September 1943:¹⁶²

159. *Ibid.*, 26.

160. Clarke to Kenny, 27 July 1943, f 1a, WO 201/2853, TNA. As has already been shown, “A” Force was an inter-services deception organization created by Wavell in 1940 and ultimately absorbed in the Middle East under the command of Brigadier Dudley Clarke into MI9.

161. Magan to Pilditch, 3 February 1981, GB165-0199, MECA.

162. Magan to Spencer, Events related to the capture of the ANTON group, 29 March 1944, f 43b, KV 2/1484, TNA. One should not be misled by Magan’s prefatory disclaimer: “This is not a comprehensive factual report of the events which led up to the capture of the ANTON group.” In fact, Magan’s eleven-page report is as close to an accurate account as we are ever likely to get, although he modified the narrative in postwar

... I was introduced to an elegant and dignified middle-aged woman and a bony middle-aged man who was her secretary and confidant. She was Bibi Khan Clearly she ruled the tribe, she had an intellect and character as hard and sharp and clear as a diamond. In the next room her sixteen-year-old daughter was coughing her heart out dying of consumption, but Bibi Khanum showed no emotion. And her secretary was just such another. It was impossible not to compare them with Elizabeth and Will Cecil.

I do not remember for how many days I argued with them, but at length Bibi Khanum gave in. She told me that, if I was prepared to go out into the mountains to the tribe, Nasir Khan would arrange to hand over the Germans.¹⁶³

After the war, Alan Roger, who found Bill Magan's account of the part he played "a little modest," summarized Magan's contribution to the ANTON capture as follows:

[Magan's] offer to go to Shiraz was accepted with enthusiasm, because of his very good Persian and profound understanding of the way the Persian mind worked. Also we had a great respect for his diplomatic skill.¹⁶⁴

Bill Magan was not entirely alone in Persia as a representative of the Indian security forces. According to the British minister, early in 1943, the GOI sent Major Naqvi, formerly of the Indian CID, to study the Indian community in Persia with special reference to anti-British and pro-Axis activities. As a result of Naqvi's report on his return to India, eight Indian suspects were arrested as they crossed the Indo-Persian frontier. Subsequently, Naqvi was attached to the British Legation in Tehran to continue his work, with a clear mandate to keep a watch for any more pro-Axis or anti-British activities.¹⁶⁵

correspondence, attributing greater significance to the role of Bibi Khanum in tribal affairs and for some reason excluding Jackson from his account. See also p. 158n132.

163. Magan to Pilditch, 3 February 1981, GB165-0199, MECA.

164. Note by Mr Alan Roger, MBE, n.d., GB165-0199, MECA.

165. Bullard to Eden, 20 March 1944, E 2135/189/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL. According to an MI5 report, Naqvi (Nagri) was actually seconded to DSO Persia as IO (Indian suspects); he most likely used the Legation merely as diplomatic cover. See Appendix IX, Security: Persia, 16 February 1943, KV 4/240, TNA. In June 1944, Sir Olaf Caroe of the Indian External Affairs Department and the DIB, Sir Denys Pilditch, visited Tehran for a week and discussed problems of mutual interest with the British authorities. Unfortunately, however, their visit coincided with the height of Soviet obstructionism; consequently, the Russians refused them permission to visit Meshed (in the Soviet zone), where the Government of India had always had large interests. I was unable to find any further information about IB interest in or concern about wartime Persia in the records, which is hardly surprising, since the British had the security situation firmly under their control. Bullard to Eden, 9 March 1945, E 2050/31/34, IOR/L/PS/12/3472A, BL. Cf. also p. 173n189.

6.5 Standing down

*“The PGC is melting away before our eyes like the snows of winter.”*¹⁶⁶

At 10 o'clock in the morning of 8 January 1945, the commanders of PAIFORCE (Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Smith) and PGC (Brigadier-General Donald P. Booth) met to discuss the drawing down of British and American forces in Persia. Smith stated that, as soon as Lend-Lease functions ceased, only British security troops and a few disposal agencies would remain in Persia. Booth replied that the only US forces to remain would be certain supply troops, personnel to evaluate US property, and disposal personnel. The two men affirmed that British forces would not be required to provide security “within the fence” of American installations.

By the end of 1945, DSO Persia, replaced by Persia Section, had been virtually stood down. Staffed in Tehran by only two officers and one NCO,¹⁶⁷ it was in its final months reduced to the status of an *adresse de convenance*. As such, it was intended to facilitate the sorting of mail in CICI Baghdad registry in the weeks immediately following the transfer in August-September 1945 of all DSO Persia's records from Tehran to Baghdad. At that time, despite shrinking volume, a considerable amount of outstanding correspondence begun in Tehran still had to be processed by CICI Baghdad, so the retention of a Tehran address ensured correct rerouting of mail. Consequently, while Persia Section could no longer by late 1945 be regarded as an active and officially established component of CICI, it was necessary for the two Tehran officers to be completely intimate with the DSO Persia records, as indeed they were. One of them described their situation as follows:

[We] are ... in no sense officially running a “live” Persia Section capable of answering queries on events in present-day Persia. No new reports concerning affairs Persian are being added to Persia Section records, nor are such reports, where received by CICI Baghdad, even seen by us at all officially. We are both in daily expectation of repatriation to the UK, and it was simply decided to profit by our presence here in the interval to achieve the final organization of Persia records into a neat library of reference complete to about September 1945. We have also been able to give pertinent, personal counsel on cases primarily of interest to CICI Baghdad or other organizations, where Persians or former foreign residents in Persia were concerned, but again purely fortuitously.¹⁶⁸

Perhaps the best indication of the special character of Persia Section was the fact that the date of its liquidation was likely to be determined not by considerations of security but by the ultimate repatriation of the two officers theoretically composing it. Apart from the operational

166. Leary to Loud, Letter No. 139, 24 February 1945, RG 226, Entry 215, Box 3, NARA.

167. Captains Wickens and Watson, and one corporal-clerk seconded from CICI Baghdad. Wickens to Kellar, 19 November 1945, KV 4/223, TNA.

168. Ibid.

case files, which formed the bulk of the DSO Persia material transferred to Baghdad, the records included a massive card index containing some 61,000 names. The outgoing DSO, Alan Roger, felt at the time of the transfer that it would be useful for MI5 to card the names, in case they should disappear “into the maw of MI6’s records.” Should MI6 in future have “become sticky” about producing material originally compiled by DSO Persia, then MI5 would at least be in a position to say that they knew the material existed.¹⁶⁹

The postwar careers of those who operated what was arguably the Allies’ most successful security-intelligence response to German provocation are difficult to trace, for security protocol demanded of those former British officers nothing less than total secrecy and silence. Decorated and demobilized, both Joe Spencer and Alan Roger eventually disappeared into civilian life with little trace. Spencer actually served with MI5 until 1954, when he became De Beers’ chief illegal diamond buying (IDB) investigator, thus completing the transition from “amateur” to professional security expert.¹⁷⁰ Roger remained with SIME for some time after the war, serving as DSO Hong Kong. Alex Kellar, Bill Magan, and Dick Thistlethwaite rose to become very senior officers in MI5—members of the so-called “first eleven.”¹⁷¹ The others—Wickens the don,¹⁷² Carstairs the schoolmaster, and Caird the soldier—eventually returned as far as we know to civilian life, no doubt with many a tale to tell, yet never to be told. It is to be hoped that this study may in some measure remedy their enforced silence while filling a significant lacuna in Second World War intelligence history.

169. Roger to Kellar, 29 August 1945, KV 4/223, TNA. Roger also arranged at the time to have a subject list made, in case it should ever be necessary to refer to a particular matter with which DSO Persia might have dealt.

170. Private papers of Brigadier R. J. Maunsell, 4829:80/30/1, IWM; WO 373/62, TNA; WO 373/148, TNA; Spencer to Bullard, 5 October 1959, GB 165-0042-3/7, MECA.

171. Magan received a CBE in 1958, retired ten years later from MI5, and died forty-two years after that aged 101. “Brigadier Bill Magan (Obituary),” *The Telegraph*, 22 January 2010; Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, 320, 350-351 passim. See also, in connection with the postwar careers of both Kellar and Magan, Philip Murphy, “Intelligence and Decolonization: The Life and Death of the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau, 1954-63,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, (May 2001): 115n83; Tom Bower, *The Perfect English Spy: Sir Dick White and the Secret War 1935-90* (New York: St Martin’s, 1995), 144-145. Regarding Thistlethwaite’s postwar career (he succeeded Kellar on his retirement in 1965 as Director of F Branch, retiring himself in 1972), see Mike Hughes, *Spies at Work: The Rise and Fall of the Economic League* (Bradford: 1 in 12, 1994), <http://www.1in12.com/publications/archive/spiesatworkcontents/spieschapter9.html>.

172. George Michael Wickens would become a distinguished and prolific Persianist and humanities scholar, teaching at London, Cambridge, and Toronto, where he became founding chair of the Department of Islamic Studies in 1961. “Professor George Michael Wickens (Obituary),” *Globe and Mail*, 30 January 2006, <http://v1.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/Deaths.20060130.93023387/BDAStory/BDA/deaths>.

7 CONCLUSION

“To put it shortly and colloquially, the German Army missed the bus in 1942, and the German agents missed the bus in 1943.”¹

Of political intelligence pertaining to Persia, little may be learned from this study. Without apology, its focus has been not the Persian polity during the Second World War *per se*, which is not the business of the intelligence historian, but rather the interface between it and the Allies, who protected Persia from German invasion, subversion, and sabotage, not so much for Persia’s sake as for that of the Allied cause and the survival of the British Empire. Interest has therefore been deliberately limited to how German covert operations and Allied security measures played out in Persia, not how they were directly or indirectly affected by the attitudes and behaviour of Persian officialdom and the public at large, often referred to as “the bazaar” or “the street,” which is of sociopolitical significance perhaps, but which had little bearing on the work of either the Allied or the Axis intelligence services. It has to be realized from the outset that the connections between those fighting a secret war on Persian soil but with little vested interest in the Persian state, the Persian economy, or Persian culture were tenuous at best and frequently nonexistent. Between BARBAROSSA and Stalingrad, Nazi interest was not in the Persian polity itself: it was in *subverting* the Persian polity, which is something entirely different. After Stalingrad of course, the Nazis lost sight of even that goal, as Franz Mayr soon discovered when the FRANZ parachutists arrived with only sabotage on their minds. True, there were some at the RSHA who thought it worthwhile to have Roman Gamotha and VI C 14 dally with a handful of Persian quislings who could perhaps have formed some kind of ragtag opposition-in-exile, but there was no prospect of their ever returning to Persia and forming a government there, and the SD planners cannot have been so deluded as to have believed otherwise.²

If nothing else, by examining closely how the German intelligence services operated or failed to operate in Persia during the Second World War, this study has established beyond a doubt three historical truths: (1) that the functional supremacy of the SD over the Abwehr occurred long before it was organizationally finalized; (2) that, having devoured the Abwehr, the SD was unable to digest it; and (3) that almost nothing was done efficiently or effectively by either of the two German services whether combined or not. The performance of the British security-intelligence apparatus, on the other hand, was all that it needed to be: vigorous, persistent, and consistent. Furthermore, the main problems with the Abwehr and SD expeditions

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1. Joe Spencer in Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA.
 2. Certainly not Gamotha himself, who very likely proposed the infeasible scheme disingenuously in order to justify his role as the SD “authority” on Persia while squandering SD resources and postponing Operation NORMA indefinitely. See pp. 165-168.

launched against Persia were (1) that they were born not of sound strategy but of tactical expediency, and (2) that the tactics conceived by the Berlin planners conflicted with the tactics anticipated by their agents in the field. In a few brief months early in 1943, from their original operational strategy, which sought the conquest of Persia and the capture of its immense oil resources, Nazi ambitions shrivelled to nothing more than the short-term tactical objective of destroying Allied oil production piecemeal and harrying the Allied lines of communication and supply in Persia. After Stalingrad and the retreat from the Caucasus, the Nazi vision of strategic conquest on a vast scale was abruptly reduced to the operational concept of tactical incursion, interference, and disruption on a far smaller scale. Initially, the tactical sabotage targets under British and American control were ends in themselves; in the final year of the war, however, they became merely proxy means to the Nazi's greater ideological end of obstructing postwar Bolshevism.

As can be seen from the organizational descriptions and operational narratives in Chapters 3 and 4 of this study, the covert missions planned by the Abwehr and the SD in Persia were initiatives which the Germans were ill equipped to launch. Neither their rigid ideological thinking, their inappropriate personnel choices, their fierce inter-service rivalries, nor their increasing lack of resources and equipment suited them for covert warfare in an alien physical and cultural environment like Persia, where they found themselves confronted by highly motivated and implacable British and Russian security forces determined to eliminate them. At the individual level, on the basis of the qualitative considerations in this study, two key criteria of agent effectiveness emerge: *suitability* and *adaptability*. The former is of course used as the principle yardstick according to which prospective agents are measured at the initial selection stage; it is a very general benchmark requiring differentiation in terms of personality, character, previous background, mission-relevant skill sets, health, and so forth. As a screening criterion it appears to have been applied relatively effectively by Abwehr I and II to their agent-selection processes; the SD, on the other hand, seem not to have perceived the need for it, arrogantly and/or ignorantly assuming that to be a member of the SS was sufficient. The parachutists they sent to Persia were not at all well suited to their assigned roles. When, however, an agent is faced with radically altered circumstances, as were those who chose to stay behind in Persia after the Allied invasion, mere suitability is not enough. It is a fact of covert life that staybehind agents must usually perform roles for which neither their training has prepared them nor their mission intended them. In this sense then, if they are to survive and function productively, regardless of how well suited they may have been to their original task, staybehinds must be able to adapt quickly to new circumstances. The true measure of a staybehind's talent therefore is not how

suitable s/he was when selected for insertion, but rather the ease with which s/he transitions from an *assigned* to an *assumed* role in the field. In this context, neither the Abwehr nor the SD appear to have known how to preselect men who would be capable of interacting dynamically with a changed operational situation. It was pure good fortune that in the case of Schulze-Holthus, Mayr, and Gamotha they had found three exceptionally intelligent, resourceful men who proved capable of assuming operational functions for which they were unprepared—in the case of the two young SD officers, from the very start of their mission (see Figure C-2). But, much more importantly, it was the lack of a general strategic policy and sense of direction on which these men could rely to justify and sustain their tactical operations which ultimately undermined their confidence, eroded their motivation and morale, and confounded them at every turn.³

In terms of operational strategy, therefore, German covert initiatives against Persia may be divided into two periods: (1) strategic operations planned and/or executed prior to January 1943, coinciding with the first three phases of German interest in the region described earlier; and (2) tactical operations planned and/or executed after January 1943, during the fourth phase of German interest.⁴ The former (essentially political) operations were conceived of as long-term subversive missions designed to prepare Persia (and Iraq) for a two-pronged strategic invasion of the region from the west (Turkish Anatolia) and the north (Transcaucasia). The latter (essentially special-forces, military) operations were intended as short-term expeditions for the sabotage of Allied oil, railway, and port infrastructure and for the fomenting of tribal unrest.

During the second (tactical) period of operations from January 1943 onwards, there is so much that the Germans got wrong and did wrong—organizationally, systemically, and individually⁵—that one wonders how the stereotypical images of German ruthlessness and efficiency ever evolved. The fact that their manifest ineptitude—not so much at the planning stage, but mostly in the implementation and execution of their plans—was by no means confined to the creaking, corrupt Abwehr of Canaris’s invention but was shared at least equally by the spanking new Amt VI under Schellenberg is at variance with the notion that the Abwehr might have unilaterally scuttled undertakings in the Persian theatre as part of some conspiratorial anti-

3. For a thorough investigation into morale and motivation among German combatants in the Second World War, see Wolfram Wette, *The Wehrmacht: History, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 156-194. It would be interesting to conduct a comparative study of motivation in German volunteers for secret operations as opposed to regular forces, particularly from 1943 onwards. In this connection, a starting point might be Günther Blumentritt, “Warum hat der deutsche Soldat in aussichtsloser Lage bis zum Schluss des Krieges 1939-1945 gekämpft?” B-338, Document Centre of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, cited by Wette, *Wehrmacht*, 332n78.

4. See pp. 115-118.

5. Conversely, it can be safely asserted that British security intelligence in Persia succeeded in organizational and systemic terms, as well as at the individual level.

Nazi resistance programme. There may have been conspiracy, there may indeed have been resistance, but there was assuredly no organized programme to wreck operations. In fact, as this study has shown, the only alleged instance of operational sabotage was probably perpetrated not by the Abwehr but by Amt VI.⁶ Furthermore, this study has also shown that it was the SD who selected the least suitable personnel for missions, provided them with totally inadequate training, and abandoned them to their fate when things went wrong, as they inevitably did. By contrast, and against all odds, it was the Abwehr who persisted and ultimately succeeded in getting their lost agent Schulze-Holthus honourably repatriated in a unique prisoner exchange during the last months of the war.⁷ No doubt, there was an intention at the desk level of Abwehr planning—probably on the part of Hans-Otto Wagner and Werner Eisenberg—to send linguistically and culturally qualified operatives overseas, but they were never sent, possibly never even found and recruited. Instead, missions (including SD missions) were put at great risk because they were merely accompanied by a single Abwehr linguist (interpreter/guide), without whom the other members of the mission would be severely compromised: almost helpless and extremely vulnerable in an alien cultural environment.⁸ With Operations FRANZ and ANTON respectively, this became evident when Karl Korel suddenly died of typhus and after mission leader Martin Kurmis had alienated Homayoun Farzad; in the case of Operation MAMMUT, the survival of Gottfried Müller, Fritz Hoffmann, and Georg Konieczny devolved almost entirely upon Rashid Ramzi. So important were these key “cultural” roles and so stressful their execution that one is led to enquire into the motivation of those who played them.

Sir Reader Bullard, who perhaps came to understand better than anyone what motivated Persians enduring the hardships of occupation and a wartime economy, wrote after the war:

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6. First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Unternehmen MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.
 7. As part of the only formal exchange of active intelligence agents known to have been agreed between belligerent governments during the Second World War, Schulze-Holthus was repatriated from Egypt to Germany on 17 January 1945 in exchange for a British secret agent captured in France, Lieutenant Rodney, said to have been the principal liaison officer between the British general staff and the French resistance. See War Office to SOLOC, 13 January 1945, f 74a, KV 2/1486, TNA. It took Schulze-Holthus a week to travel from internment in the Middle East via Marseille and the Swiss-German border at Kreuzlingen/Konstanz to the German capital, where he was no doubt delighted to discover that he had been promoted to Luftwaffe lieutenant-colonel, but was disappointed to find “an even greater amount of confusion within the higher [German intelligence] circles than he previously believed had ever existed.” When he reported to Walter Schellenberg, his new superior, he was told to go home and rest for two or three weeks while writing his debriefing reports. After the war, Schellenberg could not recall if he had recommended Schulze-Holthus for a decoration at the time, but said that he had certainly deserved one. See Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, dealing with the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 29 August 1945, f 80a, KV 2/1486, TNA.
 8. The mission interpreters deployed were Rashid Ramzi (MAMMUT), Karl Korel (FRANZ), and Homayoun Farzad (ANTON).

That all the Germans were eventually captured by the British Security Service reflects great credit upon Colonel E. L. Spencer and his officers. Capturing German agents gave them nothing but satisfaction, but connected with it was a less pleasant duty: to prevent Persians, whether independently or in collusion with the Germans, from sabotaging the Allied war effort.⁹

In this context of collusion, one contemporary Persian source, an Abwehr agent named Parvis Wahabzadeh,¹⁰ stated that Persians who worked to further the German cause did so for one or more of the following reasons: (1) financial gain; (2) privileges accorded to them by the Germans; and (3) idealism, usually found among students.¹¹ While the first and third reasons were universal and commonplace, the matter of privileges was unique to Persia and concerned favoured economic status and the granting of visas to Persian merchants, at least for as long as Persia (and Turkey) remained technically neutral. The possession of economic privileges facilitated the export of Persian goods (such as carpets) to Germany and all German-occupied countries. Under the Nazis, all imports were controlled by the Reichsstelle für den Aussenhandel (Reich Office of Foreign Trade [RfA]), which normally set both the import tax and the approved retail price. Any Persian exporter of course needed RfA authorization to do business with Germany; however, those with privileges, like the Qashgai Brothers, could obtain special RfA permits stamped *ohne Genehmigung* (without approval), allowing them to import and set their own prices freely, leading to huge profits. As citizens of a neutral, Allied-occupied country, transit (entry/exit) visas permitting entry to Germany or German-occupied countries were not normally granted to Persians, unless placed on the privileged list maintained by the German Foreign Office. The snag was that this list could not be accessed directly but only through the clandestine services: first, via the Abwehr; and then, the SD (Amt VI) or, more specifically, the Gestapo (Amt IV). Thus, the Germans were in a position to demand collaboration of any Persian who attempted to obtain such privileges. Finally, for the exceptionally privileged few, such as Wahabzadeh himself, was reserved the granting of a German diplomatic passport, but that only came to those who had, or claimed to have, strategic schemes to peddle.¹²

9. Bullard, *Camels*, 250.

10. Wahabzadeh was recruited by the Abwehr in December 1942. KV 2/2640, TNA.

11. One of the most effective and least costly incentives was apparently the promise of permission to marry a German woman. Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA. According to Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy*, 322-323, Nazi racial policy actually prohibited marriage between (non-Aryan) Persians and (Aryan) Germans. On the other hand, Lenczowski, *Russia and the West*, 160, writes: "To remove any causes for misunderstanding under the Nuremberg Racial Laws, a special decree of the Reich cabinet in 1936 exempted the Iranians as 'pure Aryans' from their restrictive provisions." In other words, mixed marriages between pro-Nazi Persians and Germans seem to have been a "grey" area that lent itself to pragmatic interpretation and manipulation by the secret services. See also p. 93n140.

12. The Qashgai Brothers benefited perhaps more than any other Persians from their privileged status; however, it was probably their military rank and social position (both were Abwehr lieutenants and were addressed as

It is more difficult to analyze the motivations that drove the three exceptional German staybehinds to remain in Persia after the Allied invasion: Berthold Schulze-Holthus, Franz Mayr, and Roman Gamotha (see Figures C-1, C-2, and C-3). True, it is easy to see how Germany's initial military successes must have encouraged a professional military intelligencer (and nationalist) like Schulze-Holthus to fight on; equally, the SS had imbued Mayr and Gamotha with an ideology of superiority and invincibility, which no doubt led them to an overly optimistic appraisal of their own chances of survival. In view of Schulze-Holthus's vice-consular status, protocol required him and his wife to avail themselves of the neutral facilities of the Swedish Legation in Tehran, which would have then ensured their safe return to Germany via Turkey. Without such diplomatic cover, Mayr and Gamotha should have registered (as civilians) with the German Legation for internment and transport to Australia. Instead, and independently of each other, all three men decided to prosecute the German cause by staying behind and continuing their covert activity in the region. (Courageously, Gertrud Schulze-Holthus decided to accompany her husband rather than the German women and children, who, unlike the male Germans, were to be repatriated via Turkey). These decisions were to prove pivotal: everything that subsequently happened clandestinely in Persia is attributable to the original initiative shown by these three extraordinary individuals, whose chief adversary ultimately became the isolation they had to cope with rather than the Allied security forces. Their war essentially became an inner, psychological conflict: a struggle with their own demons and inadequacies rather than an all-out campaign against the Persian polity and CICI Tehran. Until the news of the staggering defeat at Stalingrad reached them, they were undoubtedly buoyed by the conviction that a German invasion of Iraq and Persia was imminent; this alone provided them with sufficient motivation to pursue the covert objectives they had set for themselves pragmatically in the absence of any orders from Berlin. After the strategic turning point in early 1943, however, their motivations became more opaque and their responses to adversity more sharply differentiated. As a nationalist, Schulze-Holthus was evidently stung by the loss of face that Germany had suffered in the eyes of Persians he respected, like the Qashgai leader, Nasir Khan. Consequently, Schulze-Holthus's motivation to carry out any further covert initiatives was swiftly eroded by disillusion, pessimism, and a growing sense of futility; the behaviour and attitudes of the inept SS men sent out to aid the Qashgai merely served to intensify his dark mood and his lassitude.

Fürst [prince]) which gave them extraordinary access to high-priority military flights between Germany and Turkey whenever they wished. SIME Report No. 4, 12 March 1944, f 2a, KV 2/2640, TNA.

On the other hand, Franz Mayr seems to have been driven to the very end by an intrinsic, unrealistic desire to succeed as a heroic agent of subversion—in fact (one senses) to succeed as a man *per se*—in spite of Germany’s manifest failure in southern Russia and, not unimportantly, his own personal failure to secure SS permission to marry Lili Sanjari, with whom he was deeply in love. In her bitter disappointment and most unwisely, Sanjari became unfaithful to Mayr with a US counterintelligence informant to whom she imparted many of Mayr’s precious secrets. Except perhaps for his avowed anti-Bolshevism, it is not at all that Mayr was motivated by the doctrinaire zeal of the SS leader-stereotype. On the contrary, having received no training whatsoever in political subversion and having been abandoned by the RSHA for two years only to have them ignore all his advice and requests, Mayr seems to have developed a singular romantic-idealistic rationale for continuing his struggle against overwhelming odds right up to the moment of his arrest, almost as if he had something to prove to himself and as if his real conflict were internal. Germany’s strategic failures and operational blunders dulled Schulze-Holthus and effectively neutralized him; conversely, Mayr’s personal inadequacies appear to have increased his compensatory need for subversive operational activity.

Roman Gamotha, of course, was always a law unto himself; his motivations, his cupidity, and his louche behaviour have been discussed elsewhere in this study. While the precise circumstances in which Gamotha was broken and turned by the Soviets will forever remain unclear, the question of his state of mind after Stalingrad and his *readiness to be turned* is equally obscure. Was he even perhaps already a double before his arrival in Persia? Certainly, Gamotha’s unwillingness to work jointly with Mayr in Tehran and his curious insistence on reserving exclusively for himself all covert operations within the Soviet occupation zone render all the more likely the possibility that his capture by the Russians was staged. What is clear is that this atypical individual always worked to his own eccentric agenda; consequently, Gamotha’s motivation and morale do not appear to have been subject to the same collective forces that bore down so heavily upon Schulze-Holthus and Mayr. Nor of course was Gamotha sustained by the anti-Bolshevist sentiments that appear to have invigorated Franz Mayr.

On a grander scale, therefore, it is to this very anti-Bolshevism that we must turn when seeking a reasoned explanation of what it was that motivated the Abwehr and the SD in strategic terms to continue planning covert operations in the Persian theatre long after any vestige of hope in German victory had been extinguished. Because they have tended to view Persia in terms of actual rather than potential outcomes, postwar historians have generally discounted the strategic contextual significance of the Persian theatre of operations. This is what has led them to leave much of the operational narrative unwritten, especially those covert aspects of it that interest the

intelligence historian—espionage, counterintelligence, sabotage, subversion, and to a lesser extent, deception and propaganda. Yet, until Stalingrad and Kursk, much of what happened regionally at various stages of the war in terms of Allied strategic planning and operational initiatives was dictated by an urgent sense of perceived threat emanating from overt German military operations in southern Russia and Caucasia and from covert German activities within Persia itself. This threat, not just to the region but generally to the Allied oil supply, to US aid for the Soviet Union, and to the lifeline of the British Empire in southern Asia and beyond, was chillingly significant at the time and sent Allied commanders spinning into something akin to panic, but perhaps not quite panic itself.

In the secret world of intelligence and counterintelligence too, this perception of Nazi menace was sustained by Allied security forces even as late in the war as the summer of 1944, for by then they knew exactly what Berlin's intelligence priorities were in Persia and that, however underresourced, the Nazis' desire to cause mayhem in the region had in no way abated. On 16 June 1944, for instance, SIME obtained from an important British double agent in Turkey the following prioritized list of German intelligence requirements concerning Persia:

- (a) Exactly what supplies the Russians are receiving from the Anglo-Americans via Iran.
- (b) The relations between Anglo-Americans and Russians in Iran.
- (c) The military strengths and positions of the Anglo-Americans and the Russians.
- (d) Suggestions as to sabotaging vital arteries, etc., disrupting them for short periods.
- (e) Information about Persian Gulf, very important for naval counteraction and for paragraphs (a) to (d) above.
- (f) Possibility of forming cells [in] Persia.¹³

However, on the basis of this list, one should not be fooled into thinking that either American or British assets and interests were the *Schwerpunkt* (focus) of German planning; on the contrary, they were merely convenient intermediate targets whose destruction or disruption would theoretically have had a profoundly negative effect on the Soviet Union, which was the ultimate focal point of SD operations. In other words, notwithstanding the fact that the Allies had just successfully established a second front in Normandy, in accordance with the Nazi doctrine that the war with the Soviet Union was primarily an ideological struggle, Germany's intelligence priorities—they hardly amounted to a cohesive policy—had by mid-1944 become entirely Russocentric. We have already seen how Heinz Gräfe's Operation ZEPPELIN became the

13. Directives given by Germans concerning Persia, September 1944, f 167, KV 2/1283, TNA. The double agent was BLACKGUARD, and the list was supplied to him unwittingly by Werner Schüler, Head of Abw I M.

overriding priority of VI C from 1942 onwards;¹⁴ in fact, Gräfe's interest in the Middle East was entirely based on his desire to use Persia as an operational base for further activity against the Soviet Union. And, after Gräfe's accidental death in January 1944, it was precisely this skewed ideological obsession that motivated VI C 12 (and the newly constituted VI C 3) under the command of Kurt Schuback, who had been close to Gräfe, to sustain operational sabotage planning directed against the American Lend-Lease supply routes through Persia and the British oil-industry infrastructure of southwestern Persia until the final months of the war, when the resources for such undertakings had long been expended.¹⁵

Only two conceivable reasons can explain such secret planning of infeasible clandestine operations (as opposed to military planning, which may be deliberately leaked for purposes of deception or propaganda): (1) technically inaccurate assessment of operational feasibility, based on unreliable or deceptive intelligence;¹⁶ or (2) ideological distortion of operational feasibility stemming from a doctrinaire mindset; and everything points to the latter in this instance. The SD/MilAmt planners, pragmatic though they were to become a few months later when engaged in saving their own skins, could envisage only one way of continuing the ideological struggle against Bolshevism: to inflict as much damage as possible on what would soon become *postwar* Soviet assets and *postwar* Soviet regional influence. In other words, for purely ideological reasons, although the war was hopelessly lost, the SD sought to the bitter end to diminish "Bolshevik" capability vis-à-vis the British and the Americans in any postwar realignment of the Powers. While realizing that the Soviet Union was not at all dependent on Persian oil, the Nazis nevertheless wished to thwart or at least obstruct Stalin's (to them) evident desire to dominate

14. Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. See also pp. 70-71, 75.

15. Documentary evidence of sustained SD interest in the Persian and Persian Gulf region late in the war is to be found in the following German records: R 58/46, R 58/821, R 58/1116, R 58/1117, R 58/1129, BA; RM 7/114, RM 7/1074, RW 5/364, RW 5/464, RWD 10/8, BA-MA. Although not directly concerned with Persian infrastructure *per se*, Objektbearbeitung Bagdadbahn, 10 October 1944, R 58/38, BA, is yet another extraordinary document: a detailed report on targeting and sabotaging the Baghdad railway, prepared for Schellenberg in the autumn of 1944 by Amt VI F 3 (Technische Hilfsmittel), with Skorzeny's Amt VI S atop the distribution list. R 58/821, BA, on the other hand, contains some seventeen pages of detailed technical instructions (including schematic drawings and photographs possibly traceable to the Charles Bedaux survey of 1938 [see p. 126]) on how to cripple Tehran and the Abadan refinery by destroying key electrical installations there (notably in ff 48-49 and 52-53).

16. We know that the British fed deceptive intelligence on Persia to Berlin through the notional Mohamed Salmassi (KISS), a factual Abw I M agent run by Werner Schüler who was turned by the British, and who then notionally transmitted to Germany from March 1944 onwards; we also know that the Germans were convinced of the notional KISS's authenticity and the reliability of his intelligence because none other than Schulze-Holthus himself transmitted to KISS in January 1945 after his return to Germany. For details of the KISS case, see KV 2/1281-1285, TNA; Seydi, "Intelligence": 741-750; O'Sullivan, *Dealing with the Devil*, 205-213.

the world oil market by controlling Persian sources of supply.¹⁷ This then was the kind of thinking that likely informed such late initiatives as Operations NORMA, REISERNTE, and KINO; that was probably behind even such earlier initiatives as Operations MERZ and BASRA; and that saw the retention by the SD of such old Abwehr plans as Operations KRÜGER and TRANSIRANISCHE BAHN.¹⁸ Clearly, however, an ideologically inspired sense of purpose or destiny was not in itself enough to justify laying clandestine plans that ignored significant practical impediments, hard military and political intelligence (or the lack thereof), inherent tactical risks, and the ultimate operational cost-benefit ratio. Consequently and not surprisingly, none of the plans for Persian covert operations hatched by the SD in 1944 and 1945 came to fruition.¹⁹

We close this study as we began—with Persia—for it needs to be emphasized finally that the Germans failed to achieve not only their ideological aims, political ends, and military goals in that difficult country, but they also failed to bring to it the depth of understanding of the region's complicated cultural nexus required to protect the integrity of their secret initiatives. It is one thing to be captured after achieving one's mission objectives; it is quite another to be betrayed to the enemy without having achieved anything. No matter how well intentioned, prepared, and executed a covert initiative; no matter how well trained, talented, and resourceful its participants—qualities which the German parachutists notably lacked—success will depend ultimately on the preservation of cover and secrecy, from which it often hangs by the slenderest thread, and which all involved must strive to protect. When an operation is blown by disaffected or vulnerable locals—villagers (MAMMUT), tribesmen (ANTON), handlers (FRANZ/DORA), and close associates (Mayr)—it is obliterated in an instant by the merest whisper of a street address or a map reference. The integrity and unsusceptibility of a mission's indigenous hosts and intermediaries therefore become the most significant factors underpinning the potential success of any covert initiative. In this final respect then, in addition to the resounding dysfunction of the Abwehr and the SD portrayed on so many levels in this study, the German intelligence services were unfortunate in that, due as much as to circumstances beyond their

17. See intelligence reports (radio messages) received from “reliable sources” (possibly KISS) in Tehran between 6 December 1944 and 5 January 1945, ff 62, 196, 202, 224, R 58/1116, BA. Also ff 68-69, R 58/1117, BA; f 36, 270a, Wochenbericht, Berichtszeit 1-7 July 1944, R 58/1129, BA; f 97, 273a, Wochenbericht, Berichtszeit 22-28 July 1944, R 58/1129, BA; ff 98-99, 294, Wochenbericht, Berichtszeit 16-29 December 1944, R 58/1129, BA.

18. See Table C-1, and operational narratives on pp. 122-171.

19. The ill-fated Operation REISERNTE, launched by the SD in 1945, was not originally an SD plan but an Abwehr (Brandenburger) operation, which, after endless disputes with the navy over competence and suitable vessels, was turned over to the SKL for execution (using a most unsuitable vessel). See RM 7/1074, BA-MA, and pp. 168-170.

control as to their own ineptitude, they failed to cultivate and therefore lacked in Persia the sustained indigenous support they needed to achieve their objectives. Quite ingenuously, the Nazis seem to have felt able to draw without limit on the depleted fund of nostalgic goodwill established among Persians during the First World War by the deeds and stature of the quasi-folkloric hero Wilhelm Wassmuss without recognizing that, beyond individual and anecdotal recollection, no real continuity existed between the influence of Wilhelmine Germany and that of the Third Reich in the region, especially in areas far from tribal southwestern Persia, where Wassmuss had operated. Certainly, insufficient intelligence capital had been accumulated as a derivative of Wassmuss's achievements, as Mayr, Gamotha, and Schulze-Holthus quickly discovered to their cost when they first arrived in the country and had to begin their work from scratch. Yet their misguided faith in the significance for them as covert operatives of the residual Wassmuss nostalgia they perceived around them persisted, and they relied too heavily on that faith alone to ensure Persian loyalty. Why else would Schulze-Holthus have bestowed on his personal journal the grandiose title "In the Steps of Wassmuss"? In reality of course, without any positive reasons—ideological or practical—for Persians' continuing to support Nazism, Germany's military failures in 1942-1943 swiftly eroded what remained of any residual pro-German sentiment among Persians, along with most Persians' confidence in the Nazi cause, rendering them unreliable hosts and—increasingly—potential turncoats, whether they now came under British, American, or Soviet influence. Thus the ultimate betrayals of Mayr (and the FRANZ/DORA group) and Schulze-Holthus (and the ANTON group) were as inevitable as they were sudden.

Of its very nature policymaking is a cohesive process. Both before and after Hitler's superficial and largely theoretical unification of the German intelligence services in 1944, the conception of an operational policy on Persia would have been at odds with the profound attitudinal differences and systemic polarization of the OKW and the SS, of the Abwehr and the SD, and therefore infeasible. However, it was the inability of the Abwehr and the SD to engage either separately or jointly with the alien complexity and remoteness of Persia, particularly when setbacks in other regions—notably on the Russian front—demanded ever greater attention and priority, that mainly accounted for the absence of any clearly formulated Nazi policy on covert initiatives in that country. As Joe Spencer put it: "The Germans have shown an extraordinary lack of consistency in their attitude towards Persia."²⁰ Even when, especially in 1943, Berlin

20. Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA. Spencer also wrote: "The antagonisms between Abwehr I and Abwehr II, between Shahrukh and the Qashgai Brothers,

made various attempts to mount operations against Allied infrastructure or to destabilize the Persian polity within the context of the Allied occupation, planning was neither preceded by any general clarification of strategic goals or tactical objectives, nor was it unified. Apart from the disparate aims of the two German secret services, this absence of policy allowed the leaders and planners of both organizations—Schüler and Putz of Abwehr I and II respectively and Gräfe of VI C—to support various proxy causes that were themselves in conflict. Meanwhile, unbeknown to Berlin, from the capture of Franz Mayr’s diary and documents in November 1942 onwards, the staff of CICI Tehran were able to identify the substantive disunity and dysfunction in German planning and to differentiate the diametrically opposed proxies selected by Berlin. Spencer called them “channels” and organized some of his most important security-intelligence reports accordingly, dividing them into appreciations of the tribal channel, the quisling channel, and the fifth-column channel (see Figure C-3):

In order to carry out all three branches of activity the Germans needed Persian instruments, and these were supplied from the large colony of Persian students in Germany. These three channels continually cross each other, and the whole story, especially where it touches on the students, is obscured by Persian intrigue.²¹

Thus British security, by methodically constructing a series of images of proxy activity, based on sound intelligence, were able to hypothesize all kinds of likely scenarios, although they were clearly bemused by the Germans’ support of Persian blocs that were in such obvious conflict. The Qashgai and Bakhtiari opposed the Shah and central rule, the quislings in Germany supported central government but sought to supplant the Shah with one of their own, and the fifth-column was a loose alliance of many different political groups that coexisted solely as a result of Franz Mayr’s inspired efforts, and that was united only in its collective desire to subvert the Persian polity, end the Allied occupation, and restore Persian autonomy. In fact, the only significant political group not supported by Berlin was the Tudeh Party, whose Marxist ideology of course rendered it unacceptable to the Nazis.²² Such confusion made it difficult for Joe

between the OKW and the Foreign Office, all doubtless helped to prevent any homogeneous policy from being followed.” Ibid.

21. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 23, 13 April 1944, f 53a, KV 2/1485, TNA. This document contains Spencer’s clearest and most comprehensive analysis of the Persian channels. For a schematic representation of the three channels, see Figure C-3.
22. *Tudeh* = masses. For useful socio-political background on the Iranian polity during the Allied occupation, including an entire chapter on the Tudeh Party, which provides a comprehensive account of the various stages in the evolution of the party between 1941 and 1945, see Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). The party was the main vehicle of Soviet propaganda in Persia during the Anglo-Soviet occupation. Consequently, the Soviet occupiers had no need to establish in Persia an elaborate internal propaganda apparatus, for the Tudeh functioned adequately on their behalf as a proxy purveyor of communist propaganda firmly ensconced within the Persian polity. The party consistently

Spencer to pinpoint the Germans' true operational intentions, yet he became convinced that, whatever they were, they must have been long-term:

... for plans were made for reinforcing ANTON and sending other expeditions. Perhaps the answer is that the Germans believed Persia to be so pro-German that a rebellion could be organized. They seem to have wilfully avoided limited objectives like sabotage and control of the elections in the hope that they could accomplish something much more grandiose. This was wise policy in 1942 but folly once the German troops began to retreat westwards.²³

Of course, Spencer's appreciation begs the much larger question of *how* senior SD officers like Schellenberg, who was very bright (though he knew little about the region), could have acted so foolishly. How could the SD leadership have believed in such nonsense about Persia after Stalingrad?²⁴ And how could the SD possibly have achieved "grandiose" objectives when no grand strategy had been formulated? Perhaps the duplicitous Roman Gamotha, whose Persian expertise Schellenberg certainly acknowledged, respected, and to some degree relied on, had bamboozled the Amt VI chief into believing that the Persians in the north could be incited. Perhaps Schellenberg, ever the opportunist, believed that it was ideologically and politically expedient to pursue the grand, long-term struggle against Bolshevism to the bitter end ... or at least to be seen doing so. This is undoubtedly why Schellenberg stated in the autumn of 1945 that it had been important at the time for Amt VI to mount its next operation against the northern (Soviet) sector of Persia.²⁵

And yet one can hypothesize a more straightforward reason for Schellenberg's detachment from reality and inappropriate decisionmaking that appears to have little to do with the demonization of Bolshevism, although the doctrinaire constrictions imposed on the SD by the ideological will of the Führer were undoubtedly the root cause. The fact is that throughout the Second World War Berlin acquired most intelligence about Persia from Turkish human sources, channeled to the Abwehr by Paul Leverkuehn at KONO and to the SD by Ludwig Moyzisch, SS police attaché at the German Embassy.²⁶ This intelligence progressively

parroted the Stalinist line, and there was every indication that it enjoyed direct command liaison with the Soviet Union. See also "The Tudeh Party: Vehicle of Communism in Iran," CIA-RDP80R01731R001300060066-4, CIA Research Tool (CREST) document, NARA.

23. CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

24. For a balanced discussion of German detachment from reality as the principal cause of intelligence failure, see the concluding chapter of Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 523-543, and "Why Germany Lost the Code War," *Cryptologia* 6, no. 1 (January 1982): 31. Beyond this specific collective flaw, David Kahn has also compiled a useful list of general reasons for the ultimate Allied victory in the secret war. See Kahn, "Intelligence in World War II": 20.

25. Extract from translation of report by Walter Schellenberg, Head of Amt VI of the RSHA, under interrogation at Camp 020, on the intelligence service in Persia and Palestine, 13 September 1945, KV 2/1492, TNA. See also p. 165.

26. It was also through Turkey that the Abwehr was fed most misinformation: "Turkey remained the principal channel for 'A' Force deception until the end of the war." Howard, *Strategic Deception*, 36.

diminished with a concomitant deterioration in product quality as neutral Turkey moved ever closer to the Allied side (from early 1942 onwards, by which time the British were regularly decrypting the German ciphers). By 1944, especially after the Vermehren defections in January of that year, the Turkish well was dry, leaving Berlin with almost no sources of Persian intelligence. Finally, although Turkey did not officially declare war on Germany until 25 February 1945, all Amt VI/MilAmt personnel in Turkey were interned in August 1944, effectively terminating communication between Berlin and the Near and Middle East.²⁷

Thus Schellenberg and the planning staff at Amt VI/MilAmt were ultimately operating in the dark with respect to real conditions in the region. Moreover, as the war drew to a close, it is likely that whatever sporadic intelligence Amt VI/MilAmt did receive about or from Persia was bad intelligence or, to an extent we cannot measure today, product fed to the Germans as part of Soviet and British deception operations, such as the KISS double-cross—product the SD were by then desperate for and rather too eager to accept. However, Schellenberg and Amt VI/MilAmt had no alternative but to rely on such severely limited sources of intelligence in the region because, in their ideological obsession with sabotaging and wrecking Soviet interests, which controlled them to the bitter end, the operational goals the SD elected to pursue after Stalingrad and Kursk had prevented them from undertaking the active-intelligence initiatives needed to establish alternative means of collecting information about the Near and Middle East, including Persia. Instead of using their field agents Franz Mayr, Berthold Schulze-Holthus, and Conny Jakob to build networks, reinforcing them with skilled operatives like Otto Grüning, and supplying them with the funds and equipment they desperately needed, the SD instead squandered their resources on a couple of sabotage operations, and then cancelled the rest. In a curious abdication from their mandate to learn everything possible about the enemy, Schellenberg's department were unable or simply unwilling to adjust their methods of obtaining and analyzing intelligence and of waging covert warfare after the military failures of 1943.²⁸ This inefficacy rendered Amt VI/MilAmt highly vulnerable to subsequent Allied

27. See Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence*, vol. 4, 163-164; Höhne, *Canaris*, 546-550; Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. From January 1941, SIME also kept a close eye on German activities in Turkey, posting liaison officers to Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, and Iskenderum. Curry, *Security Service*, 273.

28. Unquestionably, the irreversible failures at Stalingrad and Kursk gravely undermined the collective confidence of the SD; there simply was no "Plan B" for intelligence acquisition. As David Kahn has pointed out: "The German confidence in victory over the Soviet Union, which was rooted mainly in arrogance, exacerbated by a blind abhorrence of communism and an invalid racism, debilitated all areas of German planning, including intelligence. The Germans were so certain that the Red Army would promptly surrender and that the Soviet government would collapse that elaborate planning and information-gathering seemed pointless." Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 461.

countermeasures and deceptions, and it ultimately cost them the intelligence war.²⁹ Nothing could be more succinct than the synopsis provided by the head of British security intelligence in his evaluation of the German threat to Persia shortly after the capture of Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group, leaving only the relatively innocuous Conny Jakob as Germany's sole representative still at large and on the run somewhere in tribal territory:

After expending so much energy and treasure, what in fact did the Germans accomplish? They did not influence the elections as Mayr intended and would have been able to do had Berlin helped. Both the Bakhtiari and the Qashgai made their peace with the government. The latter were actually encouraged to do so by Schulze[-Holthus], who maintains that he always told Nasir Khan to conduct the war in such a way that British troops were not involved. Finally the Germans, as far as it is known, instigated no act of sabotage to Allied installations. Their main success lay in establishing W/T communication with Berlin and reporting what information they obtained. Much of this was very inaccurate.³⁰

In summary then, this study has shown conclusively that the failure of the two rival German intelligence services to plan and execute any successful initiatives in the Persian theatre during the Second World War is to be attributed principally to the lack of any unified strategy, well-directed policy, or clearly formulated operational priorities; to the lack of interservice cooperation, coordination, and control; to the recruitment of unsuitable personnel for assigned and assumed covert roles; to the general inadequacy of agent training, except in the case of W/T operators and linguists; to the diminishing motivation of agents as the fortunes of war favoured the German cause less and less; and finally to the robust and sustained response of Allied security forces to any German attempts to threaten the integrity of the lines of communication and supply in Persia.³¹

The common denominator in all things was liaison. At their peril, the Germans ignored it; the Allies attached great importance to it and excelled at it. There was no effective liaison between the Abwehr and the SD; instead, the SD waged war on the Abwehr, seeking at every turn to undermine, manipulate, and subjugate the rival service. There was no effective liaison

29. My analysis of this specific aspect of German intelligence failure in Persia after Stalingrad parallels Michael Handel's general theory about German military-intelligence failure: "As long as the Germans maintained the initiative, their reliance on excellence in military operations as a substitute for intelligence went unnoticed. By the time the tide had turned against them, it was too late to change their outlook or build a more reliable intelligence system. Ultimately, this latent weakness was one of the major causes of Germany's defeat in the Second World War." Handel, "Intelligence and Military Operations": 20. Cf. David Kahn on defence and offence in "An Historical Theory of Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 85-86.

30. Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

31. It is worth noting that this successful response was effected at far less cost to the Allies than that incurred by the Germans' unsuccessful operations. According to Spencer, "... six officers have been kept continuously busy by the Germans, but the enemy's efforts had no effect on troop movements Our biggest debit entry is the cost of an internment camp, along with the guards to look after it." Appendix A, CICI Counter-Intelligence Summary No. 24, 11 May 1944, f 57a, KV 2/1485, TNA.

between Berlin and Tehran, partly due to a weak communications infrastructure in the Middle East, and partly to a system that perceived agents as autonomous operatives, divorced from their trainers and controls and left to fend for themselves. The assignment of half a dozen W/T operators to Operations FRANZ and ANTON indicates that Berlin was aware of the liaison problem, but their sheer number was an overreaction to it and came too late to remedy it. There was no effective liaison between Franz Mayr in Tehran and Berthold Schulze-Holthus in Qashgai tribal territory: their courier-based system of communication proved to be slow, unreliable, and insecure, which merely intensified the polarization of the two IOs, instead of mitigating it, as effective liaison should have. By contrast, liaison between DSO Persia in Tehran and MI5 in London was exemplary and central to the success of security-intelligence operations in the British zone.³² Liaison among the occupiers too—between the British and the Russians, and between the British and the Americans—was consistently cordial and effective, notwithstanding the mutual suspicions that accumulated as the Second World War progressed and the Allies gradually approached postwar realignment.³³

To demonstrate these facts, it has been necessary to construct an original historical narrative of German initiatives and of Allied countermeasures on the basis of adequate—though often scattered and fragmentary—evidence found in the German, British, and American archival records. Additionally, and sometimes in the absence of hard evidence to the contrary, it has also been possible to hypothesize certain significant events and circumstances, such as the doubling of Roman Gamotha, whose very high probability is tantamount to certainty. Also, the scope of the narrative has had to encompass both individual and organizational behaviour. The evidence of flawed behavioural responses of German field operatives to such adverse conditions as lack of leadership, policy, training, and success is as revealing and compelling as the clear lack of organizational vision, policy, and control in Berlin.³⁴ Seldom has it been necessary to resort to the secondary literature, meagre as it is, to prove any point: primary archival sources alone, supported by a few memoirs, have usually yielded sufficient information to tell this story

32. It has been shown that the friction between Section V of MI6 and SIME/MI5 over counterespionage was “largely resolved by the excellent personal relations between the officials concerned. Liaison was a matter of friendly and largely informal contacts, and the system worked reasonably well for the rest of the war.” Michael Howard, *Strategic Deception*, 32. However, on early liaison failure, see Curry, *Security Service*, 271.

33. For those interested in the emerging theoretical literature on intelligence liaison, a useful introduction and orientation is provided by Adam D. M. Svendsen, “Connecting Intelligence and Theory: Intelligence Liaison and International Relations,” *Intelligence and National Security* 24, no. 5 (October 2009): 700-729.

34. The main difference between analyzing military failure in purely organizational and systemic terms (cf. Cohen and Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*, 21-23), as opposed to analyzing operational intelligence failure in organizational and behavioural terms, lies of course in the fact that covert agents in the field, whether staybehind or inserted, are individually detached from their parent organization and its systems, especially if those individuals experience communications and control problems such as were found in Persia.

convincingly, without any need for reinforcement by noncontemporary analysts. Some thirty-two years ago, a respected Israeli scholar wrote:

There are very few records about the activity of the [German] agents [sent to Persia]. All the documents about their activity in Persia were destroyed. The only documents still in existence are copies of despatches in the German Foreign Office files. Consequently, we know nothing about the reasons for their deployment, nothing about their personal abilities, nothing about how they prepared for their assignments, and very little about what they actually did.³⁵

It is most satisfying to be able to conclude this case study in the certain knowledge that it has to a significant degree remedied all of the above-mentioned deficiencies. Its stated objective in Chapter One—of exploring *terra incognita* in both a literal and a historical sense—has surely been achieved.



35. Yair Hirschfeld in Hirschfeld, *Deutschland und Iran*, 256n37.

APPENDIX A: ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS AND SOURCES

AI: CHARTER FOR THE COMBINED INTELLIGENCE CENTRE IRAQ AND PERSIA

1. The full title of the Centre will be “The Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq and Persia”; short title CICI. The headquarters will be located at Baghdad.¹
2. The Centre will act as an intelligence organization for the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) Persia and Iraq, the Air Officer Commanding (AOC), and the Senior Naval Officer Persian Gulf (SNO PG) in the area concerned for all but operational intelligence matters. It will also be at the disposal of HM Ambassador Baghdad and HM Minister Tehran for such non-operational intelligence tasks as these latter may require.
3. The area to be covered by the Centre will be Iraq, that part of Persia which falls within Persia Iraq Command, the Arabian shores of the Persian Gulf, and the Sultanate of Oman.
4. The duties of the Centre are:
 - (a) To provide the Minister of State, the C-in-C, the AOC, SNO PG, HM Ambassador Baghdad, and HM Minister Tehran with collated political, tribal and security intelligence and to carry out such tasks of a non-operational intelligence nature as they may, either collectively or individually, require it to perform.
 - (b) To take or arrange for executive action in all matters in connection with civil security and counter-intelligence.

Civil security comprises the provision of intelligence on political, tribal, and minority activities of a subversive character; advice on security measures of all kinds, including frontier and communication control; passport and permit control; internment policy; the maintenance of security records; and the examination of persons applying for government employment.

Counter-intelligence includes the detection, penetration, and neutralization of enemy espionage, sabotage, and propaganda organizations or of any subversive political bodies controlled by such organizations.

As regards counter-intelligence, in view of the necessity for central coordination in the Middle East and Paiforce commands, the Centre will receive from Security Intelligence Middle East (SIME) direction on methods and policy to be followed in this branch of their work.

C-in-C Paiforce, being a member of the Defence Committee to which the Head of SIME is responsible, will, however, have the right to countermand any direction so received which he considers would prejudice the fulfilment of his responsibilities to the War Office.

In all matters of civil security and counter-intelligence, the Centre will work in the closest cooperation with SIME and the Intelligence Bureau (IB), India.
 - (c) To produce periodical intelligence summaries and appreciations as required.
5. To enable the Centre to fulfil its duties as given in paragraph 4 above, defence security organizations, which are an integral part of the Centre, have been set up in Iraq and Persia to carry out civil security and counter-intelligence work in their respective countries. Area Liaison Officers (ALOs) are located at various centres; their duties are two-fold: to report on the tribal and political

1. This revised charter was issued by the Office of the Minister of State, Military Division, in July 1943. See Appendix I, History of Combined Intelligence Centre Iraq and Persia, June 1941-December 1944, ff 1a and 57c, KV 4/223, TNA. The version provided here has been lightly edited for orthographic consistency.

situation, and to act as the local representatives of the defence security organizations. A port security organization has also been established for the Persian Gulf ports.

6. Other organizations in the area dealt with by the Centre will furnish the Centre with copies of their own intelligence summaries, appreciations, and papers of an important or relevant nature. Similarly, sections of the operations and intelligence directorates in the service departments will send the Centre copies of such important papers and appreciations prepared by them and dealing with the area covered by the Centre as are necessary to the efficient working of the Centre.
7. The Centre will similarly receive from the civil departments of HMG concerned in the area, and from their local representatives, copies of such telegrams and despatches dealing with the internal and external affairs of the area covered by the Centre as may be necessary to enable the Centre efficiently to discharge the duties as prescribed in paragraph 4.
8. In the execution of its duties, the Centre is empowered to call at all times on any member of the services for such assistance as may be necessary.
9. For the purpose of arrest and detention of undesirable individuals, the Centre will normally act through the administration and police of the countries in which action is to be taken. Should it not be possible to use these channels, the Centre will take such measures as it considers necessary for countering the activities of any persons or organizations dangerous to the security of the forces in the Command's area or to the war effort.
10. The Centre is not required to reveal its sources of information unless called upon by the C-in-C or AOC to do so.
11. The Centre will be accommodated and locally administered under arrangements to be made by the Headquarters, Royal Air Force Iraq and Persia. The necessary cipher and other facilities will be provided by the Army or RAF as is most convenient.
12. The establishment of the Centre will include Army and RAF personnel and may include RN or civilians. The political advisory staff of HM Ambassador Baghdad will be attached to the Centre for administrative purposes and work under the direct orders and control of HM Ambassador.
13. The Centre will be provided with Secret Service funds by the War Office; supervision over the expenditure will be exercised by the AOC.
14. The Centre will be quite independent of the Political Intelligence Centre, Middle East (PICME), with which, however, it will work in the closest cooperation.

A2: DIARY OF WERNER ROCKSTROH

*Germany is all.
Germany is what I need in order to understand life.
Germany is that which I love:
if Germany should die then will I also die.¹*

Monday 22 March 1943

0935 hrs. Departure from Berlin-Rangsdorf in the Ju 290.² A proud happy feeling as the bird begins to rise. A last greeting to those comrades remaining behind.

The longed-for operation now becomes reality. Intermediate landing at Munich. Major Sieben³ takes leave of us. The flight continues to Simferopol, which is today's objective. We pass the German frontier. Last greeting to our Fatherland.

2100 hrs. Arrival in Simferopol. I am quartered with Georg [Grille] in one bed at the house of a Russian family.

23-29 March 1943

I begin to get acquainted with Russia and value German culture and cleanliness. Terrible streets, old tumble-down houses, and people in rags are my first impressions of Simferopol, one of Russia's big cities. There is great activity in the town, particularly by the German occupation troops. The population is amicably disposed towards the Germans. They have no respect for Bolshevism and its destructive fury. A 90-year-old priest tells us about the violation of a 300-year-old church. The Soviets used this church as a bakery and destroyed the altar.

New quarters. We are now living in an SD house. I am sharing a room with Ernst [Köndgen].

Our first instructor, Captain Gartenfeld,⁴ tells us how to behave during our parachute jump. Excited and anxious faces. The captain tells us not to worry; everyone will get down. Up to now no one has remained "airborne." This is what one calls "humour." The order of jumping. Who will be the first to jump? I volunteer. The order of jumping is as follows: (1) Rockstroh; (2) Grille; (3) Korel; (4) Holzapfel; (5) Köndgen; (6) Blume.

Thursday 25 March 1943. Our onward flight is impossible, as the weather forecast reports rain and fog over the operational area. Excitement and increased tension. We cannot wait for the day of our parachute drop. Our days are occupied with sleeping, writing, eating well, going for walks, exploring the town, and going to the cinema, theatre, or variety performances. I send my last letter to my dear ones at home. I also send a last greeting to Inge with best wishes for her eighteenth birthday.

Good idea of Major Gräfe's!⁵ Car trip to beautiful Yalta, the "Russian Venice." Five hours' wonderful drive through Russian mountain scenery. Everywhere the winter sunlight shows up traces of the hard battle which raged in this region. We reach Yalta. Lunch at an SD office. Beautifully laid out—like a small castle. View of the Black Sea. Two hours' time in which to see the town. The coast of Yalta in its natural beauty will remain unforgettable for me. Suddenly we hear the hum of a British-Russian bomber. The people in the streets run into the shelters, the fear of death in their hearts. We drive on. We are told that from time to time bombs are still dropped on Yalta.

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1. The diary was captured with its author on 14 August 1943. The original English-language translation completed by staff at CICI Tehran, to be found in KV 2/1478, is reproduced here in its entirety; it exemplifies the translation-quality problems mentioned by Alan Roger (see p. 260n91).
 2. See Figure 4-14.
 3. SS Major Sieben (Jiepen) was head of W/T training at the Havel-Institut at Berlin-Wannsee, where SD signallers received their advanced W/T training; he also liaised with Hans-Otto Wagner of Abwehr II regarding W/T matters. Cairncross to Kellar, 11 December 1943, f 79, KV 2/1479, TNA; A note on the Sicherheitsdienst (SD), 9 December 1943, f 79c, KV 2/1479, TNA.
 4. For more about Luftwaffe Captain Karl Gartenfeld, see pp. 181-182.
 5. It was extraordinary that Gräfe should have accompanied the parachutists to Crimea; some records (e.g. Copy of letter from SIME No. 500/4/7, 15 August 1943, to MI5, f 32z, KV 2/1477, TNA) even suppose that Gräfe flew the final leg to the drop, although Rockstroh's account contradicts this. Definitely, Gräfe's presence was either a measure of the importance he accorded the mission or else simply an operational joyride, something in which his idol Reinhard Heydrich was known to indulge. See also p. 71n74.

Return journey. Winding roads in the mountain ranges. Heavy responsibility for our driver. He's brilliant. On our left the Black Sea sparkles in the evening sunlight. By 20:00 hrs we are back in Simferopol.

We are offered the chance of a second interesting drive to Sevastopol. We drive again through the Russian mountain scenery. Devastation left and right of our road. Everywhere one sees clean, well laid-out German soldiers' cemeteries. I think of my fallen comrades.

Sevastopol lies in the valley. We do not see a town but rather only ruins. Not a single house has been left standing; everywhere is in ashes and ruins. Lunch at an SD office. The chief tells us of the iron ring around this town. We look over former emplacements and communication trenches on the coast. In the afternoon we drive to the "Maxim Gorki" defence works. Gun barrels 30 metres long and one with a calibre of 50 cm astound us. Each one of us asks himself, "How could anyone destroy these fortifications?" "Maxim Gorki," once the strongest defence works in the world, now a heap of rubbish. On the roadway one still finds the skulls and bones of Russian soldiers. Return to Simferopol.

It is Sunday. Still no departure. Georg and I pass our time in playing handball with the police. I made the acquaintance of a chemist.

Monday 29 March 1943. Untersturmführer (SS 2Lt) [Günther] Blume goes along to the weather observatory. He promises to bring good news. We don't believe him and take our after-lunch nap. Suddenly we are awakened by the lieutenant. Take-off is set for 15:30 hrs. It almost seems like a dream to us, but no, it is reality. Happy faces, quickly down to business. We don our operational uniforms. They consist of long underpants, vest, Africa shirt (green), long yellow linen trousers, parachutist trousers, Africa suit, coat, and Africa cap. Weapons—one pistol and one trench knife. Last handshake with the comrades in Simferopol. The sun beams down on us during the drive to the aerodrome. Our packs are quickly loaded onto the aircraft. We put on our parachutes. It is no small weight on the body. Goodbye and good advice from Sturmbannführer (SS Maj) Dr [Heinz] Gräfe. At 15:30 hrs our "flying fortress" rises into the air, and Simferopol lies behind us. Last look at Russia. The flight continues over Turkey. Everyone is tired of his own company, because sitting with a parachute for a long time is uncomfortable. We fly at a height of 7,000 metres. We are given oxygen. The noise of the machine is so loud that one cannot hear oneself speak. The captain's orders are yelled into our ears and yet they seem like a mere whisper. The evening is just beginning. The moment for our jump comes nearer. White faces. Many look sick to the stomach. I am still quite well, in spite of having eaten a lot of chocolate. I shut my eyes. My parents' house, the youth movement, and young love revolve in my thoughts. Suddenly we are all alerted by the captain. First one to jump get ready. As quickly as possible I put my knee-pads on and my English parachutist's helmet. My comrades also get ready. We line up for the jump in the arranged order. I am tranquility itself and cannot help wondering at myself. In front of me on the slide is the big wireless chest with a "load parachute," i.e. a five-canopy cargo chute. Left and right of us are three long black boxes, which are to be thrown out after us. We've been standing now for half an hour. I'm beginning to feel slightly dizzy; I fight against it and come out the victor. The plane slows down. Three Luftwaffe comrades open the trap-door and hold the lines of the W/T-case parachute. I am to jump immediately after it. The W/T chest is slowly lowered out of the aircraft. We anxiously await the captain's order. He is in telephonic communication with the pilot. His face is serious and full of tension. Suddenly the ropes of the W/T case are torn away. The case is gone. The three airmen lie near the slipway, exhausted by the terrific jolt. I await my order to jump. I take my pack, lay it on the slipway, and pull myself after it. The next moment I am in the airstream. I lose my balance, and my loosely gripped pack is torn from my hands. A sharp tug, and my parachute opens. My stomach, too full a moment ago, has now settled down. I float in the air and think "you imagined it to be worse than it really is." A glance down. I see a marsh, or is it water? Maybe both. Have they dropped us in the wrong place? But no, it was only a mirage (*fata morgana*). I concentrate on the landing and on making all the correct movements. I cannot quite finish my thoughts. A turn, a bang on the head, and I am lying on the ground. I quickly loosen the parachute, and I am happy not to have broken any bones. My first thought is: what a good thing it is I wore the English rubber helmet. But my next thought is: where are my comrades? I can see pocket torches flashing: first one, then two, three, four, and now all six. I am inexpressibly happy. They are supposed to assemble on me. Georg, my best pal, is the first to arrive. Silent, hearty handshake. His head is still swimming as he banged it on landing too. Now the other comrades turn up. Hearty greetings all round. Nothing serious happened to any of them. Someone whispers that Lieutenant Blume is lucky to be alive. Apparently he

had yanked out the entire parachute line together with its iron spool. Nevertheless, the parachute had somehow freed itself. The line had curled itself around his neck and legs, so he came down trussed up like a chicken. Fortunately, he was able to free himself from its clutches and to breathe again.⁶

It is 23:30 hrs German Summer Time. We set our watches to Eastern Time, i.e. to 01:00 hrs. We do not yet know exactly where we are. I think of a saying of Markus Röseberg: “See, Sarah, see! What you see is desert!”⁷ This then is our operational area. For me the reality has yet to sink in. Germany still seems so near to me, yet it is really so far away. We leave our parachutes on the ground. We look for a valley, so as not to be so exposed to the whistling wind. We keep a lookout on all sides. Disappointingly, nothing is to be seen on the horizon, although we think we can see a lake, which is also marked on the map. Georg, who has a focussing screen, looks at the other side and discovers a fire in the distance. The lieutenant, Georg, and I walk towards it. We go over hills, dales, and valleys. We walk for fifteen minutes without getting any nearer to the fire. As we get a closer look—swearing and grumbling—another mirage! Georg’s fire was the sun going down behind a range of mountains. The ground is still damp and slippery from previous rainy days. We trudge back wearily. But where are our comrades? Where is the valley? At last we find it. We now seek a better place to stretch our weary limbs. We lie on my parachute. It is terribly cold. We huddle close together. It isn’t much use. Not one of us can sleep. Morning breaks very slowly. It is still dark. The lieutenant, Hans [Holzapfel], and Ernst look for their things together. The sun rises slowly. What will the new day bring?

Tuesday 30 March 1943. Georg and I also look around for parachutes and packs. It is difficult. After a long search we have at last found everything. But where are the boxes? We discover five boxes and wearily bring them to a dip in the ground. One box and the W/T chest are still missing. The lieutenant and Karl [Korel] look for the W/T chest; we look for the missing box. Nobody to be seen anywhere. On our left mountains, on our right mountains. We still do not know exactly where we are. There is of course no sign of M. and his men, who were supposed to welcome us.⁸ Far and wide not a soul to be seen. In the far distance isolated camels are grazing. We still have not found the box. Soon we will have to give up. I turn around. A parachute is rising, dragging a box behind it. It is about 500 metres away. I run as fast as I can. The parachute is moving quite fast too. But I must reach it, because we could be discovered and betrayed by it. I have already been walking 5 km under the morning sun, and I can hardly go any further, but I must. Now I have it. I try to pull it down, but I have insufficient strength. It is snatched away from me again. I think I will collapse soon. But I must get it, so I carry on running. I can no longer see any of my comrades. Again I catch up with the box. I sit on it and am pulled along with it. At first I feel a bit drowsy. Now I am alright again. I pull out my trench knife and cut through the lines. I have done it—the parachute sinks, and I sink exhausted and wait until Ernst comes to help me. He opens the box. Contents: 2 tents and tools. I am somewhat breathless. We drag the box and the things back. Hans and Georg help us with this. The sun is already burning steadily. After two hours we reach our objective. Exhausted and finished. It is already noon, 01:00 [*sic*] local time, and we have not eaten anything. Our meal consists of biscuits and water from our bottles. I feel as pleased as Punch; I feel like Robinson Crusoe. The W/T chest has not yet been found. But Georg makes another discovery. Through his telescope he thinks he can see the white parachute of the W/T chest on the horizon. In my ardour I run after it, sacrificing my siesta. The third mirage. I curse Georg and his discoveries.

My watch shows 16:00 hrs local time. We maintain our lookout. Through the telescope we spot a man who is coming towards us. General commotion. What does he want from us? Now he comes nearer.

6. From later prison photographs (KV 2/1481, TNA), it is evident that Günther Blume was a very tall man; he towers over his comrades in the group (see Figure 4-2). His long legs possibly saved him from death; a shorter man might not have snagged the parachute lines and might even have choked to death.

7. Obscure reference.

8. M. is Mayr. Clearly, the parachutists had no notion of Mayr’s restricted circumstances as a fugitive hiding from British security forces in Tehran. Consequently, they later had to improvise their desperate alternative plan of sending the capable and Persia-savvy Korel to Tehran to find Mayr—a veritable needle in a haystack. Korel’s success is testimony to his considerable experience and ability as an in-country Abwehr agent. Obviously, the planners at Amt VI still imagined Mayr to be a free agent, capable of organizing and leading tribal forces at parachute drops such as this. Had they known otherwise, they would perhaps have cancelled the FRANZ mission entirely.

We daren't utter a word. It is a shepherd. *Salaam aleikum!* Karl, our interpreter, talks to him. I am amazed at the shepherd's clothing. "Clothing" I dare not call it; old and torn rags cover his body. His face, arms, and legs are burnt almost black. He is a man of the desert. His life belongs to it from birth until death. At last we find out where we are. We establish that we were dropped 60 km too soon. To the west is Tehran, to the northeast Qum. To the north in the mountains there is a spring. This is to be our next day's objective. Karl goes with the herdsman to his desert home to get camels. Evening falls. Karl has not yet returned. We take precautions. Have they taken him captive and will surprise us tonight? Tommy guns and pistols are held ready. We make light signals. See nobody. Steps are heard. Somebody is coming. It is Karl, the herdsman, and his brother. Behind them trot two heavily laden camels. We breathe more freely. But what are they bringing with them? Karl beams and says, "I've found the W/T chest." We can scarcely believe it and are out of our minds with joy. By chance Karl spotted the W/T chest deep in a hollow. We could have been searching a long time yet for them, as they lay in a deep ravine 2 km away from us. What luck we have!

The herdsman must also join us in our happiness. We give them chocolate and cigarettes. We arrange for them to return the next morning at 07:00 hrs, with the camels to convey our burden, to go to the well. At last comes the well-earned peace of night-time. We sleep in a bunker. We lie on parachutes like sardines. We keep nice and warm.

Wednesday 31 March 1943. 07:00 hrs. Sleepy, swollen faces appear out of the hole. We need a wash. But without water it is unfortunately impossible. We quickly devour a nourishing breakfast of crispbread and tea. The herdsman and four camels appear punctually. The cases are loaded on the camels. The caravan sets off slowly in the direction of the well. On the way we find strewn all over the place bags of sweets and partially devoured soya cakes which fell out of a box when they were thrown out of the aircraft. Everything is quickly gathered up, because we dare not leave any traces behind. The sun is burning. The march through the desert seems endless. The mountains seem so near, yet they are infinitely far away.

We have now already been marching for five hours. Our bodies must first get used to the climate. That is why we are exhausted, sleepy, and seedy. The camel, the fastest means of conveyance in the desert, determines our marching speed. We slowly drag our bodies forward. We are thirsty and have no water. But humour is always at hand. "Oh boy," I say, "just imagine, chaps, a case of ice-cold coca-cola or a nice pilsener right now!" Tongues are hanging out. Visions appear in front of us, and I get some dirty looks. Don't drive us crazy! With this there is much shouting, which continues with little encouragement.

Siah Kuh!

The mountains come nearer. It is even too much for the camels, and they throw off their loads. Damned beasts. Warily we load them up with the heavy cases again. This occurrence is repeated four more times. One could almost despair of it. But who could ruffle a camel? They are like tanks. At last we reach the mountains. Water, water! But it is still a little way to the well. Meanwhile the loads fall off once more. General cursing. It is no help though—we still have to load them up again. At last, by 2 o'clock in the afternoon local time, we have reached our objective. Lapping of jaws at the spring. One cannot get enough of the precious moisture. And yet it is silly, because one sweats it all out again.

We must not lose any time. Before it gets dark, the tents must be up. A meal is the next thing. So one quickly gobbles up soya cake and crispbread, nourishing and good. We begin putting up the tent. By 17:00 hrs the camp is standing: two tents, the leader's office tent, the adjutant's and lieutenant's tent. Clearing-up begins. Everything is nicely arranged. The W/T chest is a pillow, and the parachutes serve as beds. We lie as if on a haystack. We keep warm too. The nights are still damned cold. The leader's tent administers the supplies and rations them as from 1 April 1943. I am quartered with the lieutenant and act as adjutant. The administration and sharing out of the supplies is assumed by the lieutenant himself. He teaches us thereby to manage our hunger. But it is also necessary because we do not know how long we must live in the desert. At next dawn Karl is off to Tehran to make contact with M. Everything depends on him, our life or death. We have supplies for 14 days. So he must accomplish it in that time.

We now lead a real camp life and I feel fine. Provisions are short but one gets used to that. Mornings: two pieces of crispbread and sausage; midday: two pieces of crispbread and soup; and evenings: two pieces of crispbread and a little soup or sausage. It's not much. But one is contented with every meal even if one gets first real appetite from it itself.

The domestic duties are finished now. The lieutenant orders a wireless trial. Georg and I are very enthusiastic about it. Hans, however, hasn't yet the mind for it. He wants first to recuperate from his exhaustion, the weak old man.⁹ It comes to a first quarrel. I try with Georg. Weary, we drag the heavy apparatus up to the ridge. There is a great danger of slipping. We must be very careful. At last we have climbed to the summit. We put up the aerial—try out day and night times—no success. We cannot make contact. So we must try again. Hans is swearing and grumbling at us. I don't bear him malice and urge him to do something. He refers to his service with the mountain troops and thinks it is no use at all trying to call up in the mountains. I do not agree with him. Because we must go on trying until we do get through; that's the main reason we're here. The lieutenant is on the side of the Rockstroh-Grille axis, and that is decisive. Hans can now look for another mountain. We stay the whole night on the crest and try our luck—unsuccessfully. It is a terrible night. The wind howls and it streams down with rain. We spread a parachute over some bushes and lie down underneath. In time, however, the rain gets through and we become nicely wet.

Thursday 8 April 1943. The morning breaks through. Time for experiments. 07:00 hrs Central European Time. I send out call signs. Hans and Georg sit on the box. Georg waves me over happily. They are hearing Berlin with Strength 2 (just audible). Now everything depends on this. Hans calls for ten minutes. They anxiously listen in at the receiver. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Terrific! Berlin has heard us with Strength 2. How marvellous! We are overjoyed. The first words are transmitted. In Berlin telephones will ring and glasses will clink because of our success. Report to the lieutenant.

(1) Communication accomplished. (2) Message sent, special addition to supplies necessary. Approved. The lieutenant agrees to a cognac for those who drink, for the teetotallers 10 grams of sweets. Midday and evenings there are, as an extra, soya cakes. We are contented.

Every evening we have a man on two hours guard. This night guard is necessary to protect ourselves from any surprise attack by the herdsmen.

Guard from 00:00 hrs to 02:00 hrs. Corporal Rockstroh. Starry clear night. Two hours is a long time. I marvel first at the appearance of the stars. I look for the Great Bear and the North Star. All around me it is quiet. Only now and again I hear a comrade in the tent snoring. Time drags on. The mountains seem to be alive. The mountain sprite slinks about over there. The eye, unaccustomed to darkness, sees shapes everywhere. I dream at random. But of what can the lancer then dream? Home, youth movement days, and my first love go around in my thoughts, in the midst of this idle dreaming. Was that not a golden, blameless period? I shall always think back with joy and pride over the past young and ideal life. Thus never to forget the good comrades with whom one had an understanding and served fanatically an idea. Whoever with wholehearted and complete devotion has worked together in this young association will for his whole life draw strength therefrom for eternal faith and the fulfilment of duty. He will have constantly a strong protection and the guidance to act.

From straying into the past, my thoughts go on into the future. Love is indeed the highest and holiest thing in man's life. Unfortunately this word is so often on the tongue and so often dragged in the dirt. It is an idea of which one never gets to the bottom. Only rarely have I found a comrade who was of the same opinion as myself. How many, however, try to teach me another outlook? Much is even reasonable and true, but I cannot give in. I must remain true to myself—the future lies before me. A girl comes into my mind. I do not know myself quite why this particular one. My thoughts were never of her before. Only now, during the first guard of the operation (in the presence of my thoughts), do I think of Isolde. I value and esteem her bearing and upbringing. In her purity and innocence she is for me the ideal of a young girl. Not guessing that a soldier in a far-off country is thinking of her, she fulfils her duty at home. But I love her and name Isolde the star of my dreams of the future.

Twelve days already we have lived in the desert, and Karl is not back yet. Whatever shall we do if he doesn't come back. That's the question of the moment. Ernst and Hans are going to fight their way through to the Japanese. Georg and I want to be camel drivers, and the lieutenant will march through the streets of Tehran as representative of the Waffen-SS. Oh what an ironical nation we are! W/T message to

9. Rockstroh barely conceals his sarcasm. After all, Hans Holzapfel, though a staff sergeant, was only 29 years old. It is likely that his general incompetence as a radio operator was the real reason for his reluctance to participate in the wireless test and for Rockstroh's lack of respect for him. See p. 77 passim.

Berlin. The affair is serious but not hopeless. If we reduce the ration of crispbread to one slice per meal, then we can last out another six days. Finally, we also have some sweets as a substitute for provisions.

Tuesday 13 April 1943. The glorious early sunshine entices us out of the tents. Hans has made up his mind after thirteen days to approach his body just once to the water. Ernst, Hans, and Georg are trying out the “Belzig” set.¹⁰ On the western peak. The lieutenant looks sleepily with swollen eyes out of the tent door. Hans, whose mind is somewhat built up today by the cool moisture, spies from the tent a caravan coming towards us.

It is Karl!!! Hurrah, we are saved! Karl high up on a camel in a drapery of skins takes off his hat and beckons to us. He brings five attendants and four camels with him. Happy greetings. *Salaam aleikum!* Now everything must be done quickly. Georg and I can't find a moment's time (with Hans) to question Karl. He hands over to us a W/T message from RABI'I¹¹ and that satisfies us above all. We rush to the wireless station. LEIT (Berlin) hears us Strength 2. We make an appointment for half-an-hour later since the [illegible] message must first be enciphered. Hans comes with us again to help with the ciphering. But he makes a blunder, and there's another row. I tell him steadily what I think. Unfortunately we can't get the message off owing to too strong interference. Through sheer zeal we did not notice that Hans is already wearing mufti and has stained his hair. Now we must also trust in that. But first comes breakfast, with a good shareout from Tehran. Ah, what a delight it is when one can once again really “dive in.” The lieutenant and Ernst are already sliding around like real gentlemen with their hair dyed a ruddy brown. They had, of course, picked out the best suits for themselves. Only a pair of old rags remain over for us. I get a pair of yellow breeches, a silk shirt that was more holes than material, and a sports coat which was too small. I looked like a thief in civilian clothes. Now the hair dying was the funniest of all. One had a green paste like cow dung smeared into the hair three or more times until it acquired a black sheen.

Tuesday 13 April 1943. The next morning, we were to load up the boxes and ourselves on ten camels. Everything was packed and ready for the departure. Only the camels were missing. The Iranian unreliability showed itself for the first time. We keep a lookout. There's nothing to be seen. We spend another day in Siah Kuh. In the evening we all gather round a small fire and dream away there. The Iranians sing their Koran and read aloud from the Book of Hafiz. Karl translates. We sip another cup of tea and then tired limbs are stretched out to sleep in the open air. The next morning, the herdsmen with their camels are still not there. Everybody swears and grumbles. Georg goes off with an Iranian towards a herdsman's camp. The lieutenant and I keep a lookout and discover a long way off a big herd of camels. Snap decision. We run over and try to catch them for ourselves. Finally we have also our pistol. We are there all but 500 metres. Someone is waving to us. It is the stranger and Georg. They have organized the camels all ready for us. They come in.

The last meal in Siah Kuh. The camels are heavily loaded, and the caravan sets off slowly. A wandering tribe moves through the desert. The going makes us sleepy, and we mount our four-legged comrades. At first it's fun, but later when one has ridden for six hours, one's seat is considerably painful. A camel is and always will be a camel. Nothing can disturb it from its slow trotting gait. At every blade of grass it stops and munches. But we also trot along peacefully. As long as we still have a packet of crispbread in our pockets, nothing can happen to us. About 21:00 hours local time, we reach a herdsman's camp and make a halt for two hours. One cannot help wondering at the simple existence these people lead. A barn of a tent is their home. The floor is their table and chairs. Tea, rice, and mutton form their main meals. Lice, fleas, and bugs are their household pets. Nearby they still keep a few cattle. They need a day to get water from the well. They are cut off from the world and fight for a mere existence.

We are dead tired and sleep in our seats. Georg is already snoring as he rides along. But the trot goes on. All through the night we ride. Sleeping on the camels is sheer torment.

At 05:00 hrs we halt. Five hours sleep is granted. The parachutes are our couch again, and in a few minutes all are sleeping the sleep of the just. The night was damned cold. We are frozen.

10. Rockstroh states that Köndgen called his set the “Belzig” in order to distinguish it from the SS type of set. Köndgen had learned to use it at the main Abwehr wireless station (BURG) at Belzig, near Berlin.

11. Mayr's codename.

At 11:00 hrs we set out again. Bitter, aching ride in the wind. Our good humour is indestructible. We have a sing-song and feel quite happy.

Again we rest in a herdsman's camp. One has the same impression as before. At our meal a fat bug crawls over my arm. But that doesn't matter. It gives the meal just the right seasoning.

Night breaks upon us again, and we ride on irrepressibly towards Tehran. The camels have already become a burden on us, and they go too slowly for us. Our Iranian friend, the lieutenant, Georg, and I hurry on ahead on foot. A fire flickers in the distance. It must be our friends who are expecting us. Now and then we strike a light too, and we walk so fast that our legs can barely hold out. It is an endless march. In front of us desert, behind us desert. We soon give up hope of ever reaching our objective. We have been marching for five hours already through the night. Stars and moon are our sole companions. We meet a herd of camels. Now we must be almost there. It should be another 5 km. The 5 becomes 10 km. We sleep as we walk and drag ourselves wearily forward. Suddenly a light shines near us. We take complete cover and take off our trousers and coats. Our friend goes carefully to the fire and comes back joyfully. Yes, it is our friends. We are at our goal. Hearty greetings. An Iranian captain (Goring?) and a civilian receive us. We board a truck, and we're off to Tehran.

A3: TRANSCRIPTS OF RADIO BERLIN BROADCASTS BY ROMAN GAMOTHA

Below are copies of the German broadcasts concerning Ramon Gamotta [sic].¹ All these were in German, some for home consumption, some for the Americas, and one for Africa. It would seem that other instalments for Africa may have been missed or may have been identical with instalments intended for the Americas.

BBC Monitoring have been asked to report any further references to Gamotta.

Item No. 8 was actually broadcast during the early hours of June 3rd D.B.S.T. but is recorded here as part of a broadcast commencing on June 2nd. The times do not agree with those given in the telegram from DSO Cairo, but these broadcasts are repeated (from recordings) over and over again at times convenient for the intended recipients, and it is probable that DSO Cairo will find in these transcripts the material in which he is interested.

1) Inter 24.5.43 / Station Allouis / In German for Germany / Wave Length 1648 metres (Long Wave) / Paul Gluba speaking from Sofia.

Soon after, in Sofia, I met a German who, until August 1941, was a correspondent of Transocean in Tehran. After the British and Soviets had marched into Persia, in defiance of international law, he escaped the arrest threatening all Germans by a flight lasting eighteen months, which was full of adventures, persecution by the invaders, and help from the natives. Now, before his return to Germany, he is busy writing his reminiscences. Perhaps he will read part of what he has written.

Transocean Correspondent's Escape from Persia

Another voice speaking. A clock struck four a.m. on 25th August 1941. The day began to dawn. Voices could be heard. The capital seemed restless. One of my best Persian friends rushed into my house: "Get up quickly, the British are leaving their houses and fleeing into their legation. There is talk of war. " The flame of the dawning day lit the fire from which Persia and its proud people are suffering so severely. The British Legation was swarming with people. Columns of cars drove up bringing the British to Tehran from all parts of the provinces—a proof of their penetration of Persian territory. The guard before the Legation entrance had been reinforced by Indian soldiers.

The Soviets did not yet appear on the scene, but the subhumans were organizing. The Germans were slumbering in their houses. Slowly the town woke to life. Wild rumours were current of British and Soviet penetration into Persian territory, of pitiless bombing of open towns like border province Tabriz and Pahlevi, of many civilian victims, and of the heroic stand of Persian officers and soldiers. The militant spirit was still awake and a wave of resistance inspired the nation. Troops left the capital and marched to the border. All barracks were emptied and Tehran was declared an open city but the brutal British will to destruction became active at once. There was already a lack of oil in the city. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company stopped its transports. Thus a foreign economic power, within a few hours, robbed the nation which had given it hospitality of its most necessary economic goals, and began a fight directed in the first place against civilians, against children, women, and old men, and also against the workers, whom it delivered slowly to a death of starvation.

Soviet Russia was delighted at the strength of her ally, for at that moment she could not stop the German advance. The British and Soviet armies could advance only slowly, owing to the resistance of the Persian Army and to the open distrust which the two allies could not hide from each other. The struggle against the home front was waged ever more strongly. Terror raids and millions of pamphlets tried to sap the nation's belief in its national strength. The Germans were described as the cause of all the suffering, but the answer given to this trickery was unequivocal. Everywhere in the towns the pamphlets were publicly burned. The whole population then expressed their thanks to the German nation for the development which the Germans had brought to the country, as merchants, engineers, and scientists, not from a desire for domination, but as a "big brother" from the Aryan family of nations. I, myself, for whose capture a price was fixed, was warned by all classes of the population. By the evening of 25th

1. See Hughes to Kellar, 22 June 1943, f 10a, KV 2/1492, TNA. The microfilms of these transcripts are of poor quality and illegible in places. It is impossible to assess how much of the narrative, in all its vagueness and with its propagandistic digressions, was scripted for Gamotha by either the Soviets or the SD, or both.

August, the torches of war were burning in Persia. In the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Persian fleet perished heroically in a struggle against a far superior enemy.

2) Inter 27.5.43 / Station Allouis / In German for Germany / Wave Length 1648 metres (Long Wave) / Persia: Former Transocean correspondent on his experience.

Between British and Bolsheviks—the course of an adventurous flight—Otto Freuendorfer talks with Roman Gamotta [sic], former Transocean representative in Tehran.

Freuendorfer: You have kept your promise very quickly, Herr Gamotta. Last Monday you sat with a comrade of mine in Sofia and began to recount your experiences on your flight from Persia back to the Homeland, to Germany. We would again remind our listeners how it started. You were a German abroad in Tehran?

Gamotta: Yes, I acted as press correspondent for Transocean in Tehran and on 25th August 1941, when the British and Soviets penetrated into Persia, I was naturally in the same danger as all other Germans of being interned by the attacking powers, or worse, of death, for a price of 100 000 rials had been set on my head.

Freuendorfer: And how did you escape this fate? The word flight sounds very simple when spoken in safety at home, but what dangers and risks lay between that day in August 1941 and today? Can you tell us quite briefly the stages in your flight?

Gamotta: Yes, I shall be pleased to. In Tehran, when after the entry of the British and Soviets in northern Persia, and also southern Persia, the frontier to Turkey was completely closed, there was for me and many of the other Germans no possibility of reaching neutral territory. Consequently, I had to resign myself to disappearing for some time on Persian territory so that at a favourable opportunity I might either wait for an advance of the German troops, or, if that took too long, might somehow or other get through the Russian or British zone of occupation.

Freuendorfer: You said you had to remain on Persian territory. So you had to hide there. Probably you had to feel your way further kilometre by kilometre, always in danger of being stopped and discovered by Soviet or British troops, or at least by their advance guards. So please tell us what kind of country you had to stay in. Did it give you any sort of assistance?

Gamotta: Yes, the country is very favourable for such a stay. The whole of inner Persia comprises large areas of desert but the surrounding mountains, with their numerous stretches of wood and forest, offered natural opportunities for a man to disappear. The greatest danger for me was that the Soviets and Britain were able to incite the Persians against a German with propaganda, by dropping leaflets, offering rewards, and by notices in public places. So I was very surprised and naturally very glad that, despite this propaganda, the Persians had by no means abandoned their faith in Germany and the German mission. To whoever I went, whether to simple peasants or day labourers, shepherds, educated people, or the mullahs and priests of the Shi'iah church, there was always a cordial reception: as soon as I made known that I was a German, these Persians received me hospitably and helped me to go on.

Freuendorfer: And what is the explanation of this friendship towards Germany and Germans as a whole? I presume that in earlier years and decades the Germans played a certain part in developing the Persian area.

Gamotta: Actually, it is very easy to explain. The German spirit, German science, and also German techniques have made great progress in Persia and [have] given a great deal of cultural value to the Persian people. The construction of the Trans-Persian Railway—that miracle of German engineering—really made the Persian people admire the ability and capacity for progress of the German people.

Freuendorfer: And what is the attitude of the Persian population to the interlopers, to the Soviets and the British who illegally attacked the area?

Gamotta: Their attitude is easily explained. The Soviet Russians, the British—and now also the Americans—have pushed their way into the country as completely alien people and occupied large areas of the Persian state and, as occupation powers, have extracted and taken possession of all kinds of economic property. They have not even kept the agreements Persia had to sign under pressure, and certainly not their promise one day to withdraw their troops again.

Freuendorfer: Now, actually, we have failed to tell the story of your experiences which we really wanted to hear. So I suggest, Herr Gamotta, we should make up for it tomorrow at the same time.

3) Inter 28.5.43 / Station Allouis / In German for Germany / Wave Length 1648 metres (Long Wave) / Ramon Gamotta [*sic*] interviewed on flight from Persia.

Between British and Bolsheviks—Otto Freuendorfer talks to Roman Gamotta, on an adventurous flight.

Freuendorfer: Mr Gamotta, you wanted to tell us yesterday about your experiences during your flight from Persia to Germany. But we spoke more of conditions in Persia and the attitude of the Persian population to the invaders, to the British and the Soviets, who illegally occupied the country in August 1941. You said the Persian population is a deadly enemy of these invaders, even if the British and Soviets try to win them round by all kinds of propaganda. You, as a German, have been protected all the time by the Persian population and I beg you now to tell us of the different stages of your flight.

Gamotta: When the arrival of the Soviets and British became known in Tehran and the Persian government, pressed by both powers of occupation, had to hand over all Germans, it was clear to me that I could evade seizure and thus certain death only by flight. Taking with me bearers to carry me, mules and horses, and disguising myself as a Persian, I therefore tried to get out of Tehran, which was well occupied by enemy forces, and then to pass through the desolate area east of Tehran to reach the safety of North Persia. I had to cross an area of enormous primaeval forests and the lonely high mountain chains of the Elburz. This march took approximately two weeks, and we were repeatedly forced by the advancing Russian troops to leave the intended road and use lonely mountain paths away from the main traffic routes.

Freuendorfer: You said “we.” That means you were not on your own on this flight?

Gamotta: Of course I was accompanied by several Persian friends, to whom I have to be thankful that I could disappear at all in Persia. For a German travelling on his own it was very difficult in those days to contact Persians, as all of them were impressed with fear by the marching in of the Russians and of the British.

Freuendorfer: The last part of this report will be transmitted by the “Mirror of the Times” tomorrow at the same time.

4) Inter 29.5.43 / Station Allouis / In German for Germany / Wave Length 1648 metres (Long Wave) / Between British and Bolsheviks.

Ramon Gamotta [sic] completes his report on his adventurous flight from Persia.

Freuendorfer: You have related your flight from Persia on three occasions, Herr Gamotta. I think the best way for us to introduce this, our last interview with you, is to ask you to read the end of your diary.

Gamotta: I am lying in a mosque and very ill. As in every Temple of God, it is quiet all round. A scanty light shines through the barred windows. Soviet troops go shopping in the village. I hear abrupt commands and sharp notes of anger. Over there in the poplar copse a young girl gives a sudden shriek. The mullah and the kuddah—the priest and the headman of the community—hide me and look after me, because the Soviets behave so abominably. [Illegible] there they drive off the cattle and carry away wheat and fodder. With worthless paper money they buy up everything the peasants possess. They try to sow the seeds of discord among the population, dishonour women and girls, and carry away men to a dark future. The headman of the village runs the risk of getting me across the frontier. One night, with the moon hidden behind a heavy curtain of clouds, and only the cries of sentries echoing through the quiet streets, I leave the mosque. I leave Persia and my friends behind me. Today I am back home in Germany and talk to young and old of you, Persia, of your national disaster, your sacrifices, and your faith in a better and free future.

5) Inter 30.5.43 / Station Zeesen / In German for the Americas / Wave Length 31.38 metres (Short Wave) / Hermann Ley interviews Ramon Gamotta [*sic*].

(Substantially as item 1 above to which should be added ...).

Gamotta: The waters of the Persian Gulf reflected the agonies of the heroic end of the Persian Fleet in a struggle against a far superior foe. Side by side with them, German ships too were sinking. The deepening dusk spreads a veil of mourning over Iran.

Ley: More than eighteen months have passed since you wrote this in your diary. Today you are back in Germany. During the intervening period you have led a life of most dangerous adventure, always inspired by your burning desire to get back home. May I ask where, during your flight, you encountered Germany, the great Fatherland, the community of the people, for the first time?

Gamotta: When I arrived in Ankara, I was met for the first time by German representatives and then the German national community. I was given clothes (*eingekleidet*) and was given every other advantage which accrued to Germans abroad.

Ley: We shall continue our conversation tomorrow at the same time, Herr Gamotta.

6) Inter 31.5.43 / Station Zeesen / In German for the Americas / Wave Length 31.38 metres (Short Wave) / Hermann Ley interviews Ramon Gamotta [*sic*].

Diary of escape from Tehran.

Ley: Herr Gamotta has previously told us of the days when the British and Soviets marched into Persia and of the fate in store for all Germans there, and would have been in store for you, had you fallen into their hands. We come to the conclusion of your report today. More and more irresistibly, the advance of the invaders continues. They succeeded in paralyzing the resistance of the Persians by bringing economic pressure to bear. And how was it then with you?

Gamotta: The Germans went to the summer seat of the German Legation at Shemiran. No provision had been made for the housing and feeding of so many people, but German organization overcame all difficulties. German firms installed all capabilities required for a prolonged stay. Cows were brought to provide proper diet for mothers and children. A field kitchen was set up. Persians of all sections shirked no sacrifice to help us. Their prayer was the same as ours: "O Lord, let the Germans come!" The British intelligence service and the Soviet secret service sent out their felons. High rewards were offered to induce Persians, against all their better impulses, to catch dead or alive Germans whom the enemy considered dangerous or troublesome. The not very original attempt to launch a German Freedom Party collapsed, owing to the solid faith in the Führer. Persians from all sections of the population warned those who were in danger. The Soviets and British then reached the town of Kazvin, a key position 150 km west of Tehran. The old Soviet-British differences promptly came to the fore again. The Soviets threatened to continue their advance, while the British hastily tried to bring some order into the chaotic government conditions arising from the flight of Riza Shah. They put the son of Riza Shah on the throne to prevent the Soviets from fishing in troubled waters. The military prestige of the Soviets was so weakened, through the German victories, that they had to submit to the British demands. But the tension grew more acute.

The oft repeated demand for the handing over of all Germans to the tender mercies of the enemy powers, coupled with threats to bomb Tehran, prompted the Tehran municipal authorities to introduce the blackout. It was late at night. I was on the way to the Post Ministry to despatch an important telegram to Berlin, when suddenly the lights went out. Weird searchlights cut through the clouds. Rumours that the Soviets were continuing their advance and were due to reach Tehran next morning threw the Persians into a panic. Scanty reports came in of Soviet advances on all other fronts as well. At these critical moments, I made up my mind not to get caught by the Soviets and British but to escape certain death. At one o'clock in the morning I left the camp through a dried-up ditch. For hours I climbed the slopes of the mountain ranges to the north of Tehran, until I dropped exhausted into a crevice in the rocks. At eight in the morning I heard the noise of engines. A strong Soviet bomber formation headed for Tehran from the northwest. AA guns opened up, and the first bombs were released. Seconds later, hell had broken loose. The reports of the explosions reverberated in the rocks. Clouds of dust rose hundreds of metres high. The

second attack was directed against the southern part of the town, the poor quarter. The attack caused tremendous havoc. The Persian clay walls, parched dry by the sun, could not resist such air pressure. The unfortunate town was hidden beneath a sea of dust. Meanwhile, I kept an eye on the Kazvin road, but was unable to see any troop movements. So I decided to return to the German camp.

I lost no time in making preparations for my escape, which took place in the end under far more difficult conditions, after the Persian government, under increasing enemy pressure, had yielded to the demand for extradition. The camp at Shemiran, where the Germans had gathered voluntarily, became an internment camp. No German was allowed to leave. Persian soldiers and policemen guarded all the exits. The homes of the Germans in the city were visited by mobs in Soviet pay. Murder lurked in the streets. The soul of the Persian people withered with shame at the violation of the sanctity of the right of hospitality, while neutral diplomats, at a loss what to do, faced the oncoming horror.

Persians found mules with pack saddles for me, disguised me in native torn clothes, and gave me provisions and recommendations. Then I selected a comrade from among the Germans, one who had lived for a long time in Persia.² A dice throw decided the fate of two brothers. Night had fallen again. The darkness was as intense as it can only be in the tropics. Suddenly the light of the blue lamp was extinguished. In motor cars, camouflaged as diplomatic cars, my Persian friends took me from the camp. There was a sharp turn over the bridge—the car skidded a little. We raced towards the town. On the grounds belonging to the German colony at [illegible], a suburb of Tehran, we saddled the animals, which became restive. I cursed my profession. Why hadn't I become a donkey driver! Slowly we rode our way through the dark country, interlaced with water ditches. Somewhere in the dark the lock of a rifle was clicking. Hastily I went on. The animals snuffled. Another hour and the moon would be up. Then we were discovered. A sudden shout. "Who are you? What do you want?" Then the sentry saw us, and his eyes lit up in sudden understanding. He showed us the way to freedom. Turning, we traversed the wadis to the east. Then dawn broke. We cowered under the bridge. Dark waters moved and gurgled below, while above, like spooks, camel caravans moved towards the town. For a long time afterwards their trampling remained in our ears.

7) Inter 1.6.43 / Station Zeesen / In German for Africa / Wave Length 25.51 metres (Short Wave) / From the diary of Ramon Gamotta [*sic*].

Mistaken for a Russian spy in Persia

Announcer: The diary in which Ramon Gamotta told you about his flight from Persia to Germany yesterday and the day before has by no means been perused yet. Today we shall hear another chapter, one chosen at random from this adventure and difficult journey home from abroad. Please continue, Mr Gamotta.

Gamotta: The Soviet and British occupation and penetration of Persian living space is proceeding again. Many months have passed; a winter lies behind and men are filled with new faith in a new spring. Hundreds of Persians from all strata of the population, the peasant as much as the townsman, sheiks as well as mullahs, the priests of the Shi'ia sect, assist the solitary German visitor. They accept me and grant me the hospitality which is sacred to them; they help me on my numerous wanderings and assist me repeatedly in escaping from Soviet persecution. Hunger and death have entered a peaceful land with the hammer and sickle. The large numbers of livestock have been decimated by a brutal system of confiscation and purchase. Rice, grain, and fodder stocks are being taken away to Soviet territories for the use of the Red Army, despite denials by official Persian government quarters. Soviet secret agents are everywhere and hand over all upright Persians to the Soviet secret service. Excesses by Soviet soldiers against the defenceless civilians in the towns of the North Persian province of Mazanderan, as well as in the province of Azerbaijan, are increasing steadily. Women and girls are insulted. The entire Persian

2. Theodor Staisch, a thirty-year-old Siemens employee, originally from Cologne, who had lived in Persia for ten years. After their return to Germany, Gamotta retained Staisch as an interpreter with the rank of SS corporal on the staff of Operation NORMA at the RSHA. Alan Roger was certain that, if Gamotta had been turned by the Soviets, then so too had Staisch; otherwise, they would not have been released together. See Roger to Kellar, 30 October 1944, f 42a, KV 2/1492, TNA.

people feels this dishonour and clashes result between Soviet troops and groups of Persian freedom-loving fighters and also Persian militia. The victims accuse their opponents.

What has happened to the promises to leave the country as soon as the Germans had been ousted? What has been done towards fulfilling the [illegible] treaties Persia was forced to sign with Britain and the Soviet Union? The stark, brutal wish to dominate Persian oil production and the old Russian imperialist pressure towards the Persian Gulf, combined with the Soviet propagandist watchword of the liberation of the oppressed masses, have made Persia and her people the helpless [illegible] of bloody and cruel events. The will for liberation from this yoke of oppression flares up repeatedly; the day is still distant. German soldiers are also fighting for the freedom of the Persian people. I have a very large number of Persian friends. There was never one among them willing to earn the price on my head of 100,000 rials. And yet, how poor were those simple shepherds and peasant labourers! The systematic search of holdings for counter-revolutionary elements by Soviet search parties [illegible] by a linguist often made to disappear into the black Persian hills on a last-minute warning. I was frequently regarded as a Russian spy owing to my luggage. This happened once in the flat country stretching from the high mountains of Elburz to the Caspian Sea. Late one night, accompanied by a group of companions, I arrived in a large place. I was feted generously according to Persian custom and asked for my name and origin. Then I was invited to stay the night. As many Russian troops are quartered nearby I do not trust this friendliness and fear to meet an agent of the Soviet group. I therefore decide to march on at night and thank them for the hospitality they offer. I must have behaved conspicuously however. They bid me farewell without further ado, but we have not gone far when a mob, armed with sticks and all sorts of agricultural implements, rushes after us, shouting [illegible], shouting threats and curses which suggests that they take me to be a Russian informer. Despite the people's threatening attitude, I allow myself to be led to a mosque. But when the regional prefect of the area makes preparations to have me hanged in front of the mosque as an unbelieving Soviet dog to the general satisfaction of his countrymen, I begin to feel uncomfortable and disclose my German nationality. I possess the necessary documents and public feeling immediately changes. Guards are immediately placed to prevent a surprise by Soviets. I am able to help some sick women and children. This so increases my prestige that I and my companions are offered hospitality and given packhorses, guides, and food. I stay three days in the place and get to know splendid types of Persians. Old and young assemble in front of the mosque to listen to the German speaking to them of the German Führer and his people. Innumerable questions are asked and admiration is undisguised. No one thinks of treachery or submission. A nation waits for its hour of rising to break its British and Soviet chains.

8) Inter 2.6.43 / Station Zeesen / In German for the Americas / Wave Length 13.38 metres (Short Wave) / The flight of Ramon Gamotta [sic].

Persians help German traveller

Interviewer: Today Ramon Gamotta [sic] wishes to conclude his reports. His diary lies before him, and I should think the chapter "The march to the Homeland" would be the most fitting conclusion.

Gamotta: My return to the Homeland. For days, months, years, I waited. Often I mounted a summit and looked down to the Caspian. "When will you come, our liberators, when?" asked all the Persian people. The day came when I had to leave. I thought little of the immense danger of the Soviet and British zones of occupation, for I carried within me the irresistible yearning for my Homeland and Führer. I had assimilated myself to my Persian friends. My hair and beard were dyed with henna. For twenty-one days I had been wandering through the primaeval forests and marshes, over the rocky deserts of the Elburz mountains. Sun and bread were my companions.

It was about eight in the evening when we approached a small village nestling in a ravine below the Nalus Pass. Encouraged by the loyalty of the Persian people, we went to the village elder and told him I was a German and wanted to get into Turkey. Would he kindly lodge me and my companions for the night? We would be out of the village the next morning. He deliberated for a long time. Finally, he agreed. He allowed us to stay the night, and we had tea and food. He asked, however, that we should surrender our Persian documents. Although this seemed odd, I did not think of treason then. But at seven in the morning, when we were sitting round the samovar drinking tea, the hall doors swung open and Persian gendarmes, with rifles, entered. I stepped to the window, and saw that the whole village was

surrounded. We must have been betrayed by a Soviet agent. The villagers, when they heard we were German, turned at once against the elder. We were bound and slowly taken to the road over the pass leading to Tehran.

Life passed before my eyes like a film. I was not in despair, only rather sad that I should never see the Homeland again. At the pass I was received by the commander of the post, a *sarjukhe* (Persian corporal). He said it was his duty to deliver me to Tehran. In long negotiations which, according to Persian custom, were conducted throughout in a soft voice, in the manner of polite conversation, I persuaded him at last to act as a Persian patriot and save Germans, i.e. citizens of a nation fighting against the enemies of his own people, from certain death. I promised him money, clothes, my first-aid outfit. He looked at me astonished, shook his head, and said: "I do not want money from you. You are German. I want to be respected by you. I want to become an officer, and my son[s] to become NCOs. I want you to confirm this and get it done when the German troops come." It was late in the afternoon. Russian military convoys rolled past the tent. My journey continued westwards.

For seventy-five days I had been travelling through primaevial forests, rocky mountains, and wastes of sand. I was severely ill. Often I collapsed unconscious under the blazing sun; often I was shaken with fever when I trudged beside my mule, drenched by downpours with despair in my heart and distress in my eyes. Always Persians gave me hospitality and cared for me. Defying the death penalty, threatened by the Soviets, they hid me. Persians conducted me through the Soviet border fortifications in the Kurd region, and gave me back to freedom and life.

Interviewer: After all you have experienced, Herr Gamotta, you must believe in the reality of the hope which you just expressed. No doubt your return to Germany has further strengthened your belief. You have now witnessed one of the great secrets of national strength and national community, the principle of actual help. May I remind listeners that we said, when we introduced the first instalment of your report, that the NS Welfare Organization passed on your name to us and arranged for your broadcasts. Tell us in conclusion how you have been received at home by the German people.

Gamotta: I was received by the NS Welfare Organization at Ankara and passed on from there to the Berlin Welfare Organization. Since I arrived utterly destitute, I was provided with clothes in Berlin. And all the other formalities which one has to observe in the Reich as a German coming from abroad were also seen to at once. In addition, a stay at the Tropical Institute at Tübingen was arranged for me. This is necessary, since I am suffering from malaria. I shall travel to Tübingen in a few days.

Interviewer: This shows how the national community helps one of its members to regain the health lost in the struggle for the nation. I do not doubt, Herr Gamotta, that, like the lives of all of us, your regained health will again serve to work for Germany.

A4: INTERROGATION REPORTS

Personality	Interrogated	Report	Operation	Source
Müller	date unknown	IR 1	MAMMUT	WO 201/1402B, TNA
Köndgen	date unknown	IR 1	FRANZ/DORA	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-19/21	IR 1	FRANZ	KV 2/1477; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-23/24	IR 2	FRANZ	KV 2/1477; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-25	IR 3	FRANZ	KV 2/1477; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-26	IR 4	FRANZ	KV 2/1477; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Holzapfel	1943-08-26	IR 1	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-27	IR 5	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Grille	1943-08-27	IR 1	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Grille	1943-08-28	IR 2	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-08-30	IR 6	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Rockstroh	1943-09-04	IR 7	FRANZ	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Köndgen	1943-09-07	IR 2	FRANZ/DORA	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Blume	1943-09-08	IR 1	FRANZ/DORA	WO 208/1588B, TNA
Köndgen	1943-09-09	IR 3	FRANZ/DORA	KV 2/1478; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Blume	1943-09-10	IR 2	FRANZ/DORA	WO 208/1588B, TNA
Wahabzadeh	1944-03-6/8	SIME 4	-	KV 2/2640, TNA
Qashgai Brothers	1944-03-22,23/29	SIME 3	-	KV 2/1941, TNA
Schulze-Holthus	1944-03-27/28	IR 1	-	KV 2/1484; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Piwonka/Harbers	1944-03-28/29	TR 1	ANTON	KV 2/1484; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Piwonka/Harbers	date unknown	TR 2	ANTON	KV 2/1486, TNA
Schulze-Holthus	1944-04-05	IR 2	-	KV 2/1484; WO 208/1588B, TNA
Qashgai Brothers	1944-04-07	IR 3	-	KV 2/1941, TNA
Wahabzadeh	1944-04-27	SIME 6	-	KV 2/2640, TNA
Brandt	1945-01	Camp 020 Interim IR	-	KV 2/752, TNA
Kuebart	1945-04-18	PIR	-	RG319/E134B/ B472, NARA
Kuebart	1945-04-25	CIC IR	-	RG319/E134B/ B472, NARA
Kuebart	1945-05/08	Camp 020 Interim IR	-	KV 2/410, TNA; RG319/E134B/ B472, NARA
Ferid	1945	Misc IRs	-	RG263/EZZ18/B35, NARA
Schulze-Holthus	1945-05-23/09-01	Detailed IR (US)	-	KV 2/1486, TNA
Schulze-Holthus	1946-05-10	PR (US)	-	KV 2/1486, TNA
Schulze-Holthus	1946-11-18	IS AIU/IS/34	-	KV 2/1486, TNA

Table A-1. Cited interrogation reports on Abwehr, SD, and other personnel detained in the PAIFORCE theatre and elsewhere. IR = interrogation report; PR = preliminary interrogation report; TR = technical interrogation report; IS = interrogation summary.

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATION BI: ORGANIZATION OF THE ABWEHR

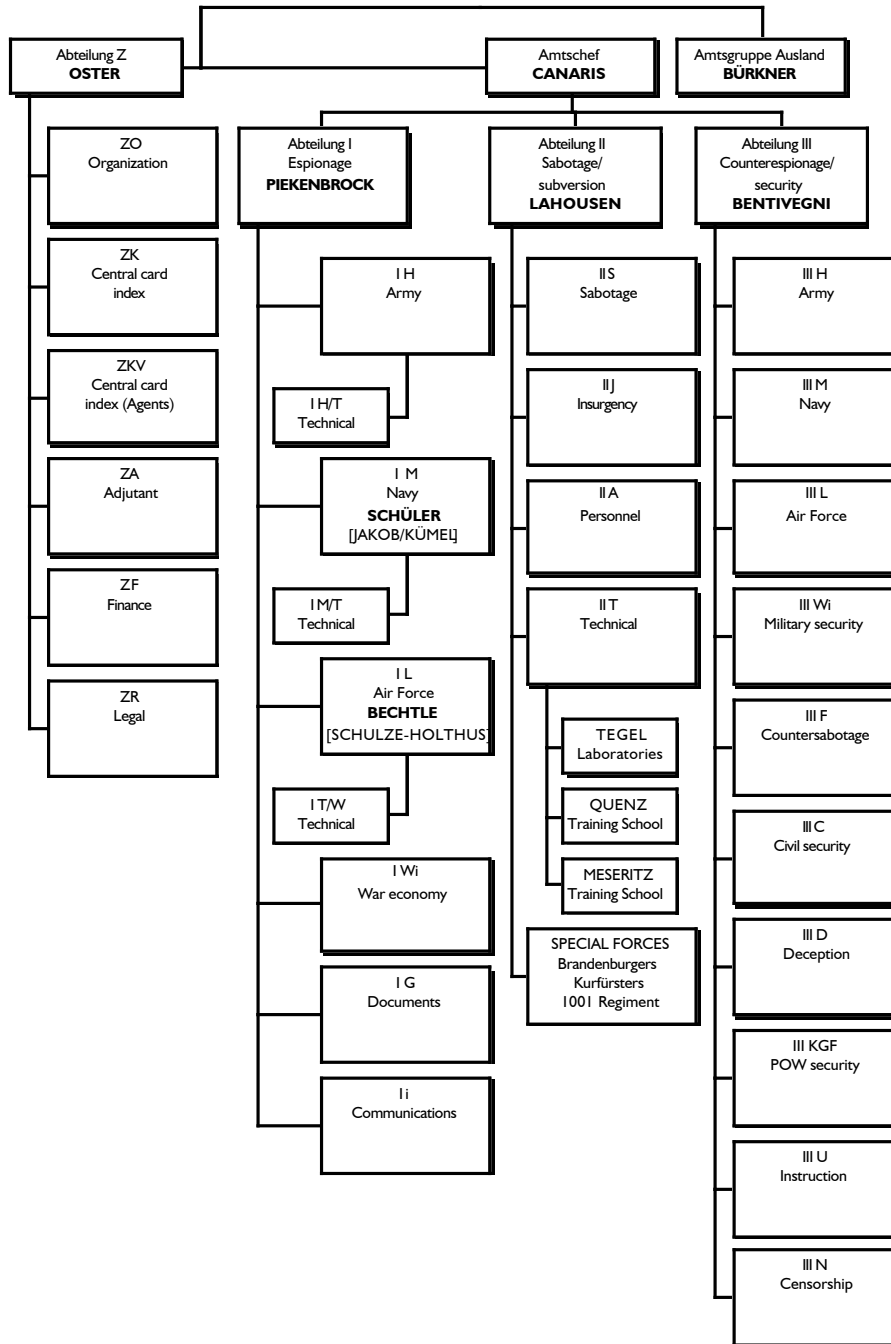


Figure B-1. *Organization of the Abwehr (simplified).* This is how the Abwehr was constituted for most of the Second World War prior to its absorption into the SD in 1944 as the Militärisches Amt.¹

1. Based on information in Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RHSA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA.

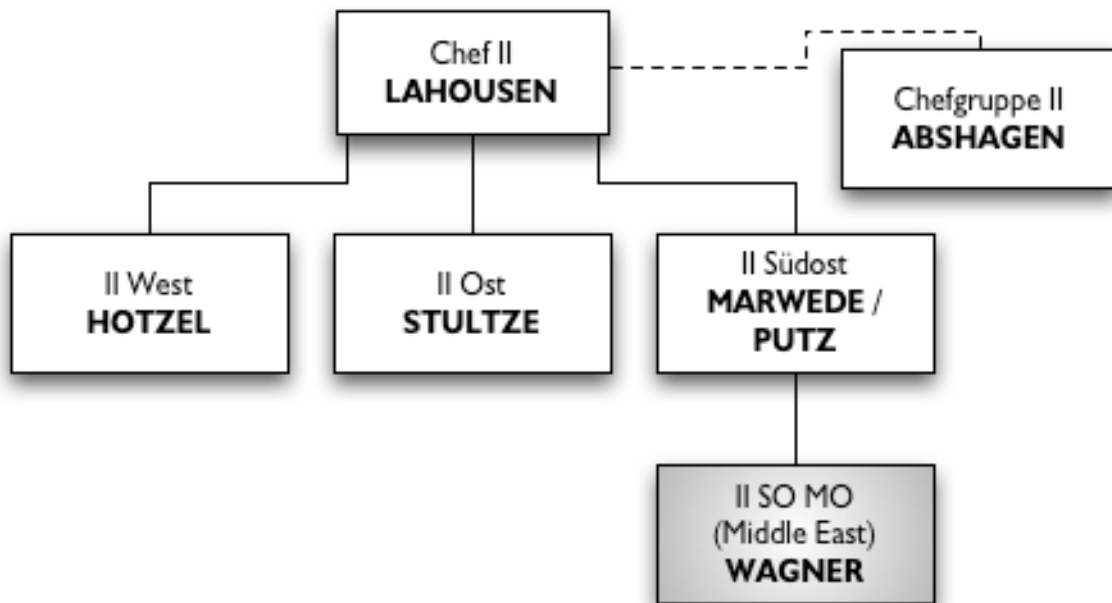


Figure B-2. Geographical subdivisions of Abwehr II (simplified) up to the winter of 1943.²

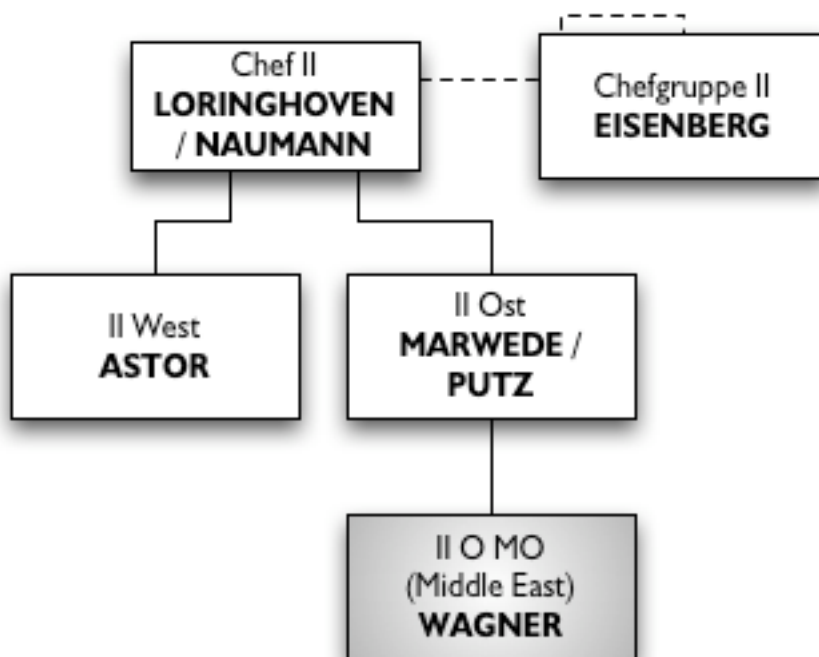


Figure B-3. Geographical subdivisions of Abwehr II (simplified) from the winter of 1943 until the establishment of the RSHA Militärishes Amt in 1944.³

2. Based in part on information in Interrogation Report (Dr Murad Ferid), 11 July 1945, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

3. Ibid.

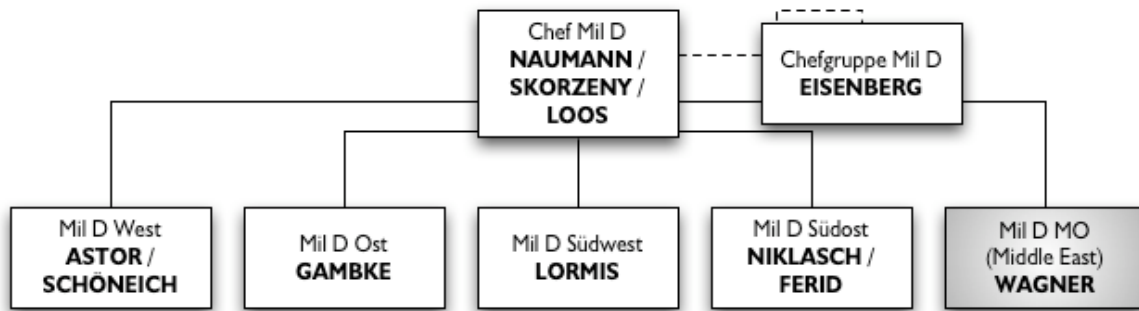


Figure B-4. *Geographical subdivisions of MilAmt D.* Skorzeny succeeded Naumann as department head in October 1944. Murad Ferid succeeded Niklasch as desk head of Mil D SO in December 1944. Around that time Hans-Otto Wagner’s Middle East desk was dissolved, and he was transferred to Leitstelle (HQ) West.⁴ There is no subsequent trace of Wagner in the records, and his ultimate fate remains a mystery.

4. Ibid.; File 2386, Ferid, Dr, Interrogation report 11, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 468, NARA; Intermediate interrogation report (CI-IIR) (Dr Murad Ferid), 18 January 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ18, Box 35, NARA.

B2: ORGANIZATION OF THE SD

Gruppe	1939-1940	Early 1941	Mid 1941-1942	1942-1944	1944-1945
VI A	Administration	General overseas intelligence	Administration	Administration	Administration
VI B	Technical	Europe Africa Near East	Slovakia Hungary Romania Yugoslavia Greece Turkey Iraq Persia Afghanistan	France Low Countries Switzerland Spain Portugal	France Low Countries Switzerland Spain Portugal Italy
VI C	Russia Baltic States Far East	Russia Far East	Russia Japan China Finland Baltic States	Russia Near East Far East	Russia Near East Far East
VI D	Hungary Slovakia Yugoslavia Romania Bulgaria Greece Turkey	Anglo-American sphere	Britain British Empire USA South America Sweden Norway Denmark	Anglo-American sphere	Anglo-American sphere
VI E	Italy Spain Portugal Central America South America	Ideological enemies abroad	France Low Countries Spain Portugal Italy Switzerland	Central Europe Balkans Italy Scandinavia	Balkan states
VI F	France Low Countries Switzerland Luxembourg	Technical	Technical	Technical	Technical
VI G	Britain British Empire USA Norway	-	Ideological enemies abroad	Research	Research
VI H	Ideological enemies abroad	-	-	-	-

Table B-1. *Organization of Ländergruppen within RSHA Amt VI (1939-1945).* Additional non-geographic groups were VI S (Sabotage), VI Wi (Economics), and VI Kult (Culture).¹

1. Based on information in Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. The *S* in VI S actually stood for *Schulung* (training), not for sabotage. However, the officer in charge of SS special forces training, the notorious Otto Skorzeny, designed a curriculum with heavy emphasis upon sabotage skills. For further details see Otto Skorzeny, *Skorzeny's Special Missions*, 27-40, and p. 57 passim.

Desk	1939-1941 [VIETINGHOFF-SCHEEL]	1941-1942 [GRÄFE]	1942-1944 [GRÄFE]
VIC 1	Russia	Russia and Baltic states	Russia, Baltic states, and Ukraine
VIC 2	Baltic states		
VIC 3	Far East	Ukraine	
VIC 4-6	-	Japan	Japan
VIC 7-8	-	China	China
VIC 9	-	Manchukuo and Mongolia	Manchukuo and Mongolia
VIC 10	-	Thailand and French Indo-China	Thailand and French Indo-China
VIC 11	-	Dutch East Indies and Phillipines	Dutch East Indies and Phillipines
VIC 12 [SCHUBACK]	-	Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan	Turkey, Persia [1942- 43], and Afghanistan
VIC 13	-	Arab countries	Arab countries
VIC 14 [GAMOTHA]	-	-	Persia [1944]
VIC Z			ZEPPELIN

Table B-2. Organization of RSHA Amt VI C (1939-1944), Note the names of *Gruppenleiter* (group heads) and *Persia Referente* (desk heads).²

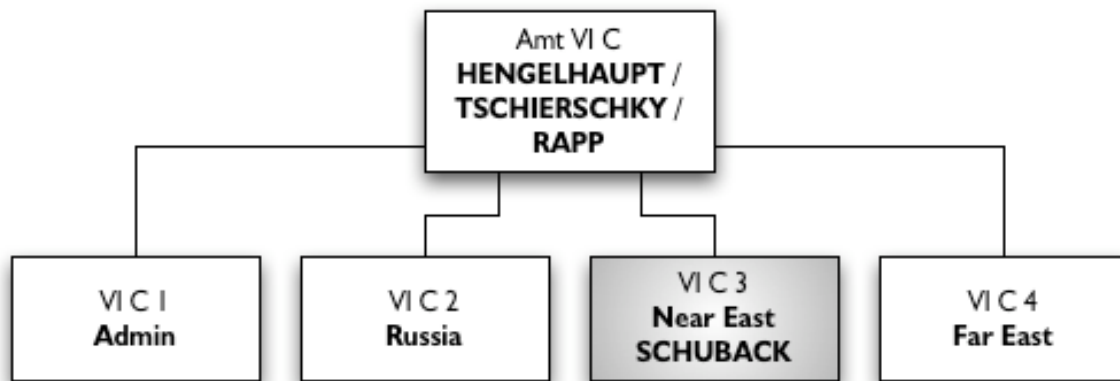


Figure B-5. Organization of RSHA Amt VI C (Late 1944-1945). Note the names of the *Gruppenleiter* (group head) and *Persia Abteilungsleiter* (branch head).³

2. Based on information in Situation Report No. 8, Amt VI of the RSHA, Gruppe VI C, SHAEF Counter Intelligence War Room, 28 February 1946, RG 263, Entry ZZ17, Box 3, NARA. See also Geschäftsverteilungsplan des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes, Stand: 1.10.1943, Dokument L-219, R 58/840, BA.

3. Ibid. Rapp was apparently considered by Schellenberg to be very efficient. See Appendix II, Notes on MilAmt C and other departments of RSHA, 11 September 1945, f 6a, KV 3/195, TNA.

B3: ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS

From	To	Commander
1 September 1941	21 August 1942	Lt Gen Sir Edward Pellew Quinan
21 August 1942	17 February 1943	Gen Sir Henry Maitland Wilson
17 February 1943	27 September 1943	Lt Gen Sir Henry Royds Pownall
27 September 1943	25 February 1944	Lt Gen Arthur Roland Selby
25 February 1944	Postwar	Lt Gen Sir Arthur Francis Smith

Table B-3. British military commanders in Persia (PAIFORCE/PAIC, 1941-1945).

From	To	Commander
20 October 1942	24 December 1944	Maj Gen Donald H. Connolly
24 December 1944	Postwar	Brig Gen D. P. Booth

Table B-4. US military commanders in Persia (PGSC/PGC, 1942-1945).

From	To	Commander
1 September 1941	December 1941	Lt Gen Dmitri T. Kozlov
1942?	1943?	Lt Gen Aleksandr M. Korolev
1943?	February 1944	Lt Gen Kondrat S. Melnik
1944?	1944?	Lt Gen Ivan Gerasimovich Sovetnikov
February 1944	Postwar	Lt Gen Mikhail I. Glinsky

Table B-5. Soviet military commanders in Persia (1941-1945).

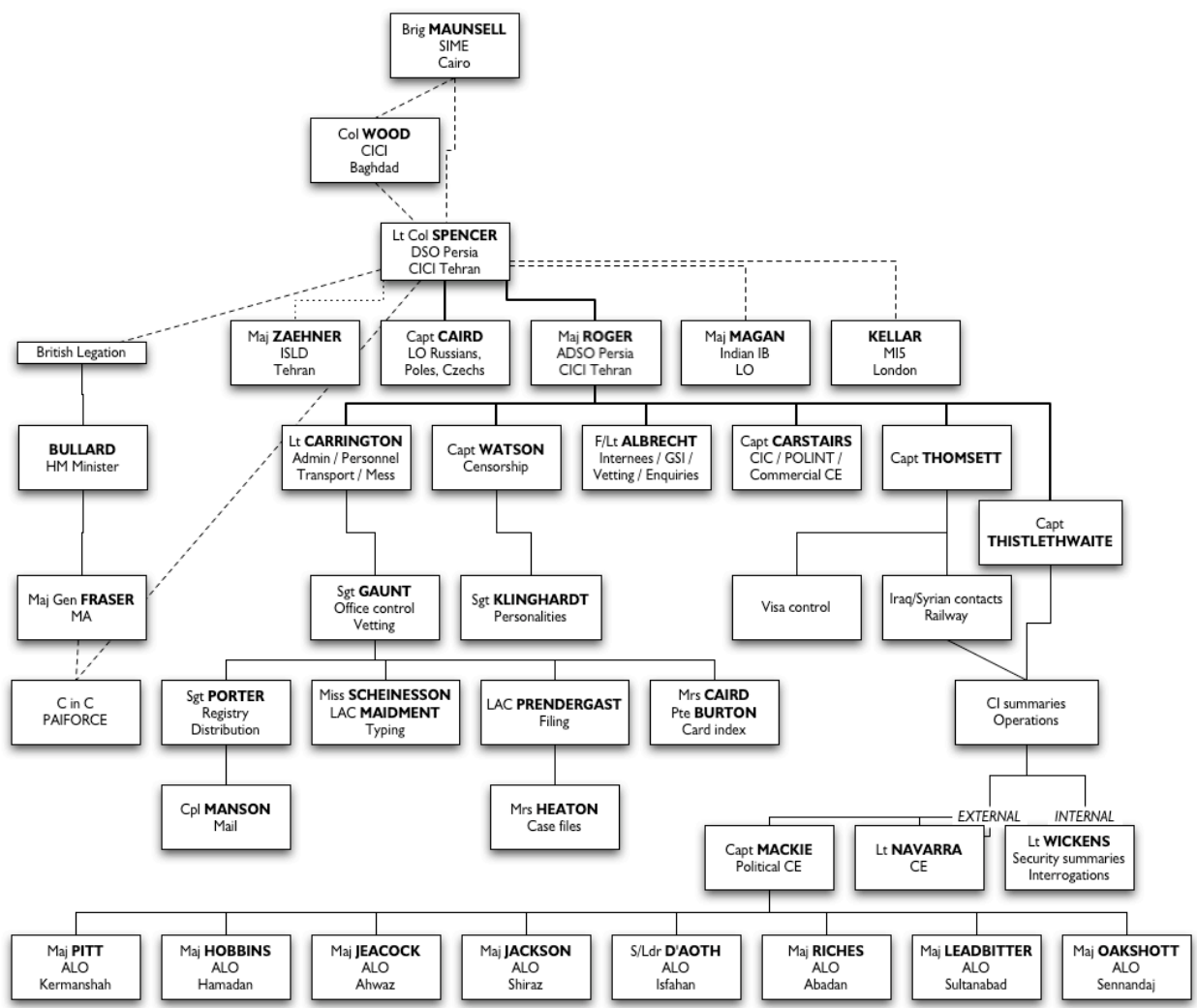


Figure B-6. Organization of DSO Persia/CICI Tehran (ca 1943-1944). This chart has been extrapolated from many disparate sources, though mostly from information found in KV 4/223, TNA.

APPENDIX C: OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES
CI: GERMAN COVERT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Operation	Other names	Organization	Planning	Objective	Leader	Personnel	Insertion	Location	Execution	Outcome
4.1 RUVANDIZ- SCHLUCHT	-	Abw	Wagner	Sabotage	-	2-3	Parachute	Rowanduz- Rayat road	-	Cancelled
4.2 ABADAN	-	Abw	Wagner	Countersabotage	Bedaux	SF	Land	Abadan and SW Persia	-	Cancelled
4.3 FRANZ	BERTA; SALZSEE IRAN; IRANEINSATZ	Abw/SD	Wagner/ Gräfe/Schuback	Sabotage/supply	Blume	6	Parachute	Siah-Kuh, SE of Tehran	1943-03- 22	Capture
4.4 DORA	-	Abw/SD	Mayr	Espionage/sabotage	Blume	2	Land	Bakhtiari tribal region	1943-06- 28	Capture
4.5 BERTA	-	SD	Mayr/Gräfe/Schuback	Sabotage/supply	Schwerdt	4-5	Parachute	Varamin, S of Tehran	-	Cancelled
4.6 MADER	-	Abw	Wagner	-	Mader	2	Aircraft	N Persia	-	Aborted
4.7 MAMMUT	SAID SCHA(H)SWAR	Abw	Wagner/Müller	Reconnaissance/ espionage/ sabotage	Müller	4	Parachute	Kurdistan	1943-06- 17	Capture
4.8 MAMMUT 2	-	Abw	Wagner/Müller	Sabotage/subversion/ supply	Oehler	7	Parachute	Kurdistan	-	Cancelled
4.9 MAMMUT 3	-	Abw	Wagner/Müller	Subversion/propaganda	-	5+	Parachute	Kurdistan	-	Cancelled
4.10 ANTON	QASHGAI- FUNKGRUPPE	Abw/SD	Wagner/ Gräfe/Schuback	Sabotage/supply	Kurmis	4	Parachute	Qashgai tribal region	1943-07- 17	Capture
4.11 ANTON 2	QASHGAI; IRAN 2	Abw/SD	Wagner/ Gräfe/Schuback	Supply	-	100	Aircraft	Qashgai tribal region	-	Cancelled
4.12 WERWOLF	-	Abw	Wagner/Kirchner/ Div Bbg	Sabotage	Kirchner	50	Parachute	Bakhtiari tribal region	-	Cancelled
4.13 KRÜGER	-	Abw/SD	Wagner	Sabotage	Krüger	-	Parachute	Southern TIR	-	Cancelled
4.14 TRANSIRANISCHE BAHN	-	Abw	Wagner	Sabotage	Eigner	2	Parachute	Southern TIR	-	Cancelled
4.15 MERZ	-	SD	Mandl/Beissner	Sabotage	Merz	1	Land	Persia and Iraq	1943-10	Capture
4.16 BASRA	FRITZE	Abw	-	Espionage/sabotage	Fritze	1+	-	Basra/Abadan/ Gulf	-	Cancelled
4.17 NORMA	MAZANDERAN	SD	Gamotha	Espionage/sabotage	Gamotha	-	Parachute	N Persia	-	Cancelled

Operation	Other names	Organization	Planning	Objective	Leader	Personnel	Insertion	Location	Execution	Outcome
4.18 REISERNTÉ	-	Abw/SKL	Heye/Klaehn	Sabotage	-	-	Sea	Abadan	-	Lost at sea
4.19 KINO		SD (MilAmt D/F)	Brüggebors	Sabotage	-	-	-	Abadan (and Middle East)		Cancelled

Table C-1. *German covert operations targeting Persia, 1941-1945.*

Date	Place	Training
10-22 Dec 1942	Quenz	[Müller only] sabotage (blasting, arson, demolition, small sabotage); small-arms weapons training.
2-4 Feb 1943	Hannover	[Müller and Hoffmann] sabotage (oilfields and refineries).
7-28 Feb 1943	Kitzbühel	[Müller and Hoffmann] skiing
1-15 Mar 1943	Berlin	[Müller and Hoffman] W/T; languages
22-27 Mar 1943	Berlin	W/T; Kurdish; ethnology and tribal customs; Hamilton Road; general military and geographical training; tropical medicine
28 Mar-3 Apr 1943	Quenz	W/T; sabotage; map reading; weapons training
6-15 Apr 1943	Bodental	W/T; mountaineering; physical conditioning; parachute demonstration; map reading; small sabotage; celestial navigation
17 Apr 1943	Wiener Neustadt	parachute jump (550 m)
22 Apr-7 May 1943	Bodental	mountaineering; physical conditioning; map reading; celestial navigation; sextant location; Hamilton Road; general military and geographical training
15 May 1943	Quenz	firing exercises
17 May 1943	Rangsdorf	orientation with Luftwaffe (Gartenfeld squadron)

Table C-2. Operation MAMMUT training programme.¹

Org	Codename	Leader	Target	Comments	Source
Abw	LANGE	Lange	unknown	Reported by Wolfgang Kirchner in May 1943. No known details.	WO 201/1402B
Abw	ASLAN	Contopoulos	Kurdistan	Planning by Werner Eisenberg (Abw II/OR). Reported by Murad Ferid.	WO 201/1402B; RG 263 Entry ZZ18 Box 35
Abw	KLEEBLATT	unknown	Near East?	Planning by Werner Eisenberg (Abw II/OR). Hans-Jürgen Kirchner withdrawn from leadership.	WO 201/1402B
SD	unknown	unknown	Kurdistan	Reported by Karl-Edmund Gartenfeld. Planning by Gräfe. To be given priority over MAMMUT. Never executed.	WO 201/1402B
Abw	unknown	unknown	SW Persia	Reported by the Qashgai Brothers and Parvis Wahabzadeh. Persia specialists to be dropped into Qashgai or Bakhtiari tribal territory. Possibly confused with ANTON 2, although that was an SD operation.	KV 2/2640

Table C-3. Additional covert initiatives probably targeting Persia in 1943.

1. This table synthesizes the information contained in: First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt by Major Edmund Tilley, F23 Operation MAMMUT, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

Landing ground	Codename	Operation	Radio code	Location
A	ANTON	not used	HARTEISEN SANDHOFER	Farrashband, 89 km SW of Shiraz, recce and prep by Jakob (and Schulze-Holthus?). Aircraft runway. Remote area in tribal territory. Identified by RAF reconnaissance in November 1942 and occupied by Persian Army from May 1943 onwards.
B	BERTA	FRANZ [SALZSEE] [IRANEINSATZ] (offzone)	LAUTENSCHLÄGER	Near Siah Kuh in the Salt Lake region, 113 km SE of Tehran, recce for Mayr by Ghulam Kashefi and Abdul Faghi. Remote, inhospitable area. Not M/T accessible. 60 km-offzone landing of FRANZ party 22 March 1943.
C	-	not used	SANDHOFER HARTEISEN	48 km S of Aliabad "on the Caspian," recce for Mayr by Mohamed Vaziri. Forested area; very tricky for aerial approach; close to Soviet forces. ²
-	-	ANTON	-	Khan-i-Zinian, at 29° 40' and long 52° 8', 45 km W of Shiraz, recce by Schulze-Holthus and/or Jakob. Remote area in tribal territory. Successful landing of ANTON party 17 July 1943.
-	-	not used [BERTA]	-	Lat 35° 8' and long 51° 30', between Rud-i-Shur and Gul-i-Dah, nr Varamin, 40 km S of Tehran, recce by Mayr, who considered it very dangerous: too close to Tehran and requiring illumination. M/T-accessible.
-	-	DORA Resupply		Unspecified remote location in Bakhtiari tribal region, recce by Blume. 60-70 km offzone drop too far SE (near Isfahan) 2 August 1943.

Table C-4. *Landing grounds in Persia.*³

2. In the absence of any indication of coordinates, I have been unable to locate Landing Ground C because there are at least forty towns and villages in Persia named Aliabad, several of them in contemporary Mazandaran, which included the modern province of Golestan. Possibly, the reference is to the modern town of Aliabad Katul; however, that would be 67 km from the Caspian, as the crow flies.
3. I compiled this table in part on the basis of information reported in Summary of information, 14 September 1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA, together with additional cartographic information (evidently supplied by an American source) found in a sketch map dated 16 September 1943, appended to the same summary although postdating it, showing the approximate locations of landings and movement in Persia of German agents, 1941-1943, RG 319, Entry 134B, Box 147, NARA. Also consulted: The Schulze case, 20 July 1944, f 67a, KV 2/1486, TNA; Plan for breaking the German fifth column, 11 August 1943, f 14, WO 201/1402B, TNA.

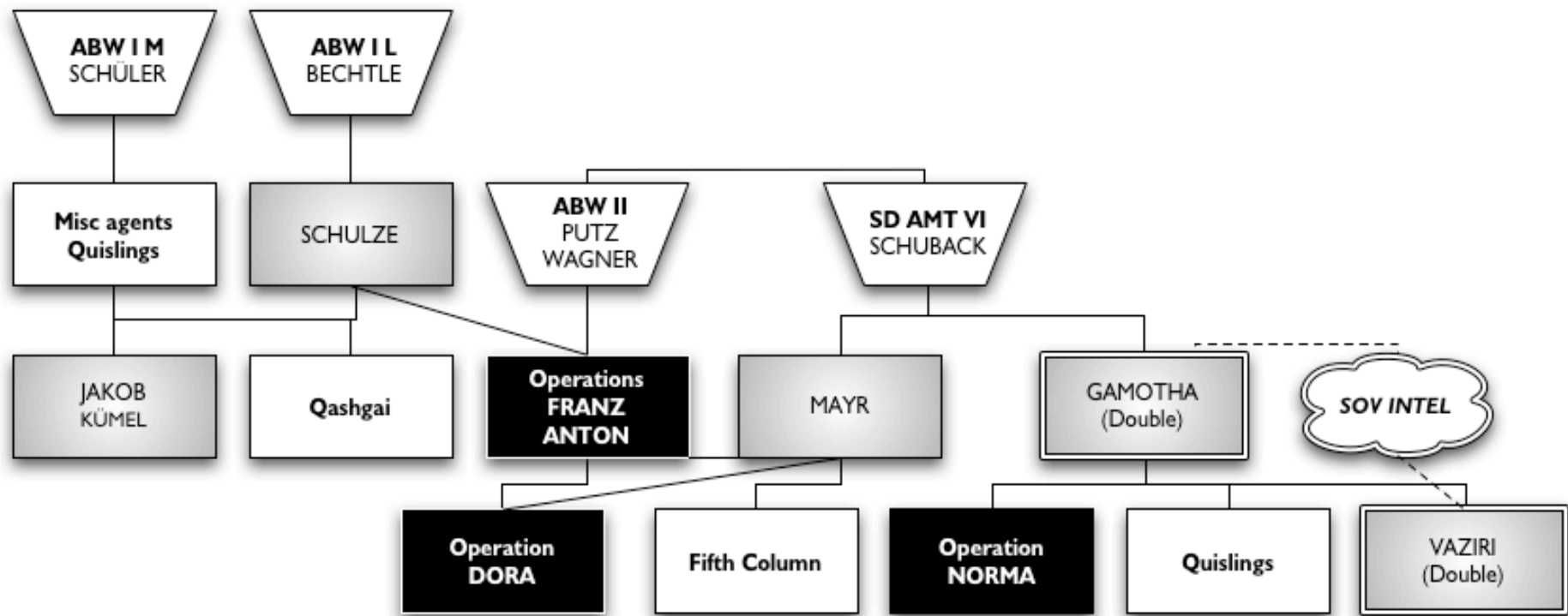


Figure C-1. German command-and-control structure and operational relationships in Persia (1940-1945).

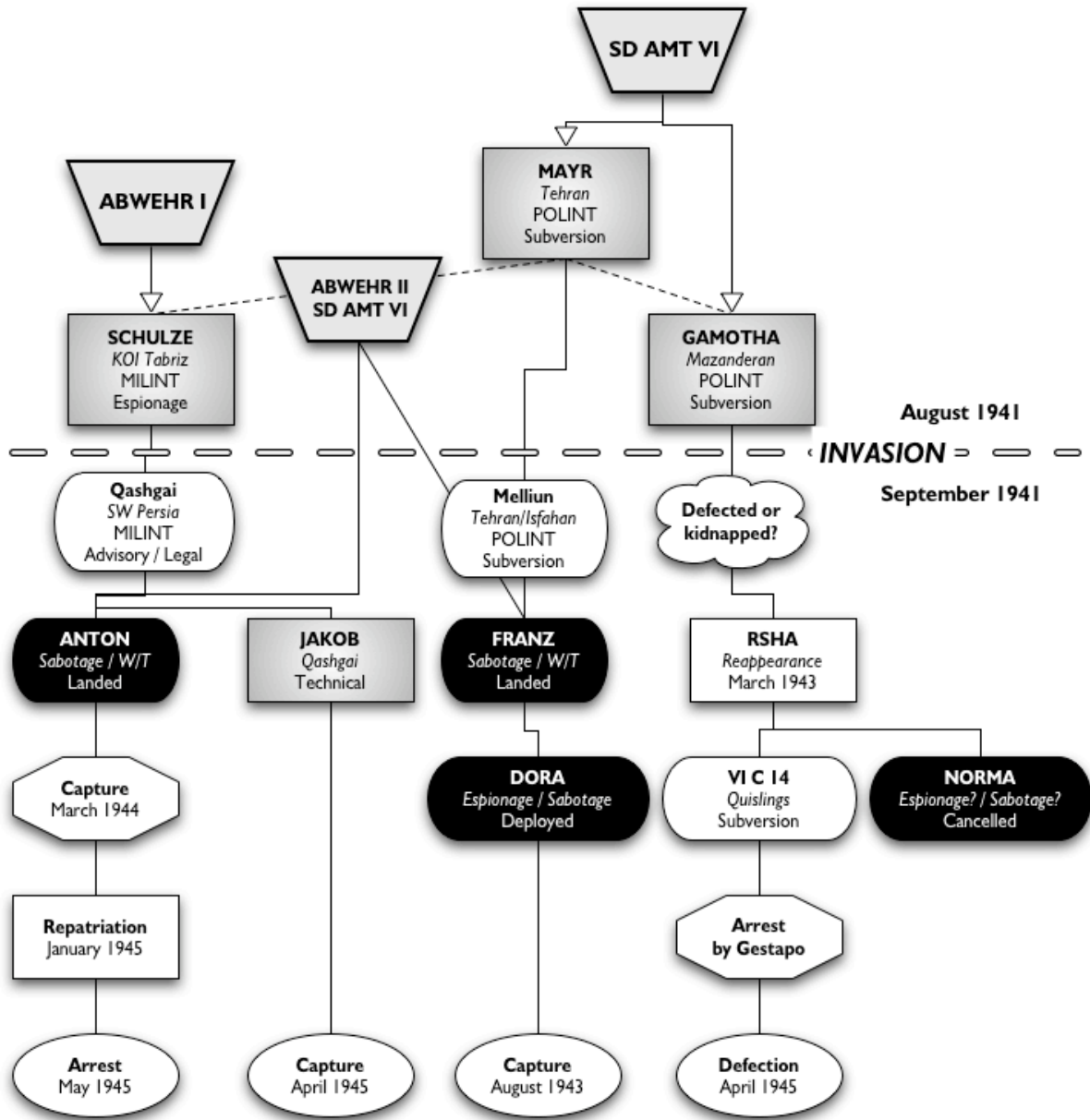


Figure C-2. Assigned (preoccupational) and assumed (postoccupational) roles of German staybehind agents in Persia. Also shown are postoccupational missions (black boxes) and outcomes.

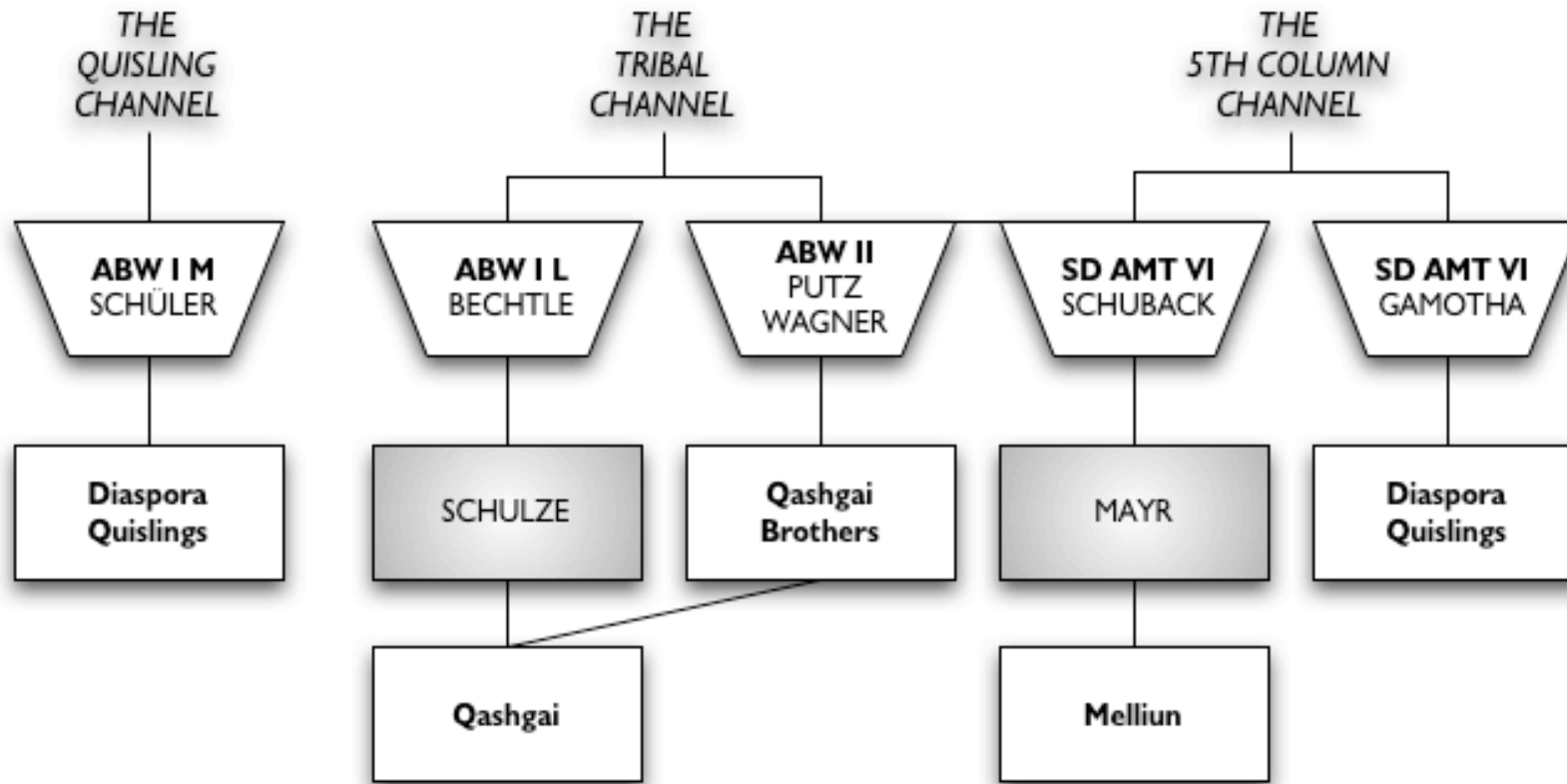


Figure C-3. German operational channels as conceived by CICI Tehran. This chart is extrapolated mainly from information found in WO 208/1588B, TNA.

C2: GERMAN W/T EQUIPMENT

Type	Power supply	Size (cm)	Details
SE 85/14	Pedal dynamo		Standard Abw suitcase issue
SE 99/10	Battery		Range < 1000 km
SE 90/50			
SE 100/5	Petrol generator	30 x 15 x 15	Ostmarkenwerke (Prague)
SE 100/5 (new)		20 x 10 x 10	
STEFAN (T) RADIONE (R)			T Output 20 W
[Mayr]	Battery/mains	T 7.5 x 6.5 x 6.5 R 13.5 x 6.25 x 9	Elz (Vienna) Output 10 W

Table C-5. Types of W/T equipment used by German covert missions to Persia. SE = Sender/Empfänger (sender/receiver); the first number indicates the design and/or drawing number; the second number indicates the antenna output power. T = transmitter; R = receiver.¹

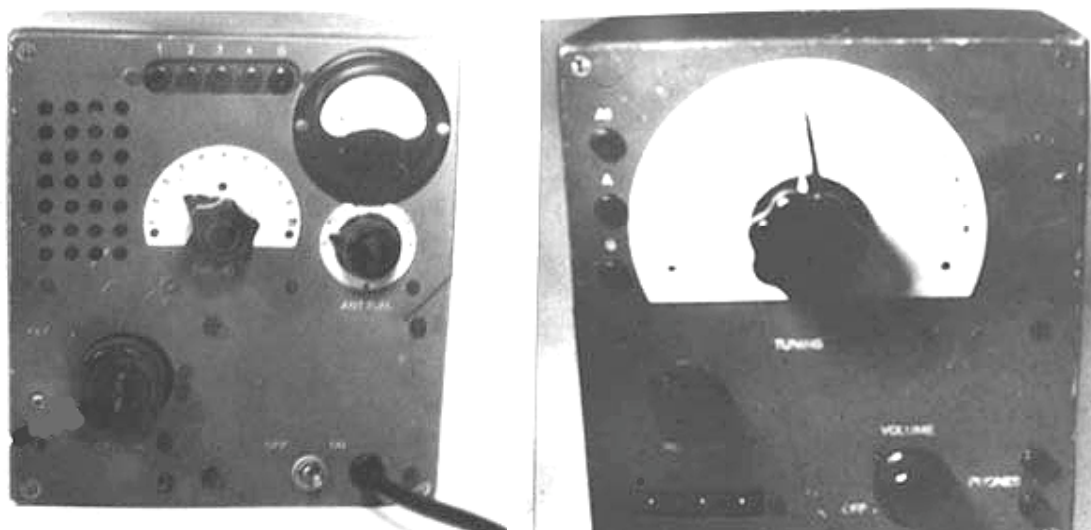


Figure C-4. SE 85/14 Abwehr W/T set. The S 85 transmitter module (l) and the E 85 receiver module (r) were combined to create a so-called suitcase station. Powered by a pedal dynamo, this robust type of set was standard issue for Abwehr agents. The MAMMUT team were equipped with two such sets: one for use and one for spare parts. (Photos courtesy of the Centrum voor Duitse Verbindungs- en aanverwante Technologieën).

1. Compiled from data in the following archival sources: First detailed interrogation report on Mueller, Agt., E19 Apparatus, 27 October 1943, WO 201/1402B, TNA; German portable receiver and transmitter, Report No. 140, 30 August 1943, f 37x, KV 2/1477, TNA. The most authoritative source on Second World War agent radios is former Abwehr signaller Rudolf Staritz, who co-authored (with Louis Meulstee) *Clandestine Radio: Wireless for the Warrior*, vol. 4 (Ferndown: Wimborne, 2004).

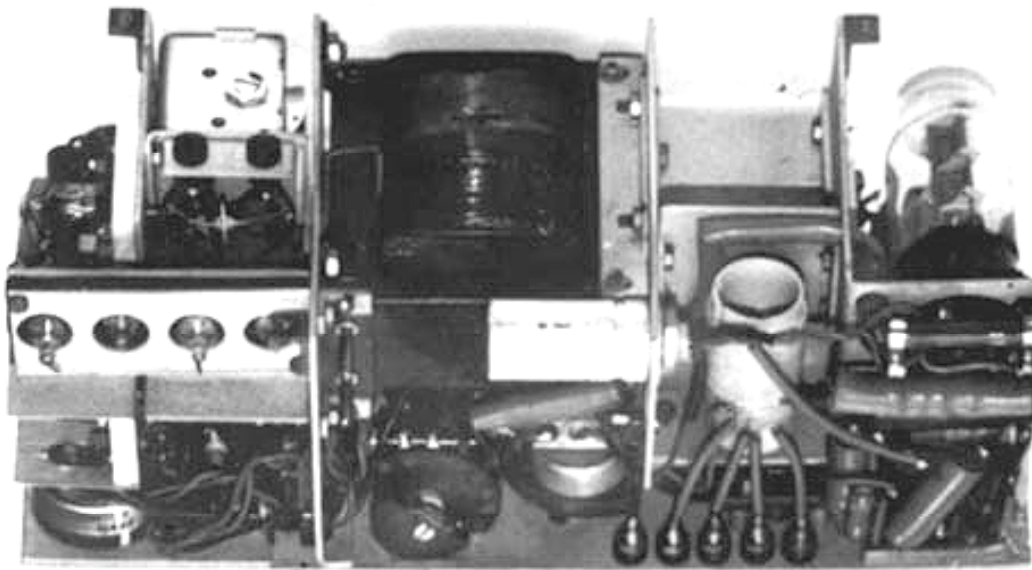
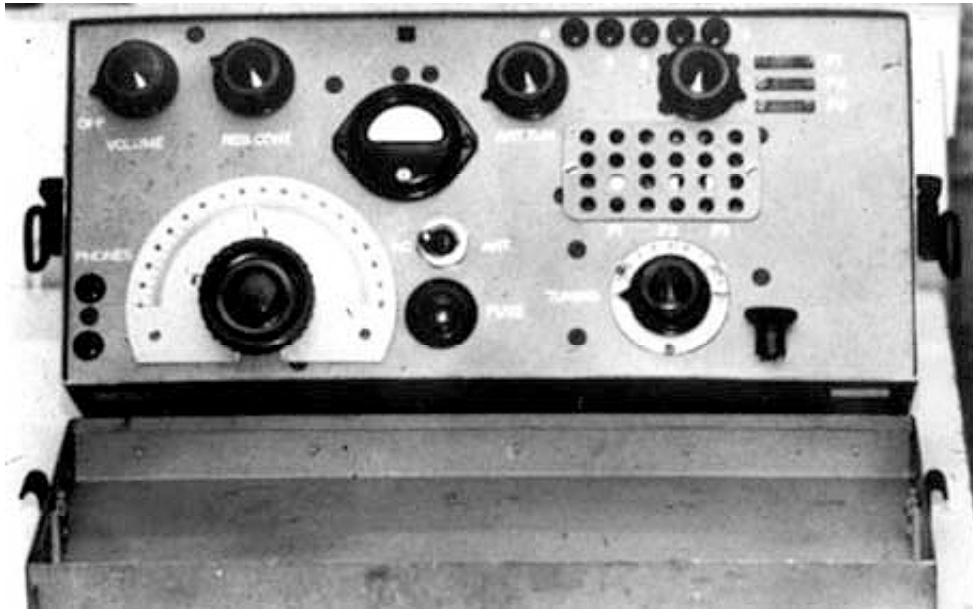


Figure C-5. *SE 99/10 Abwehr W/T set.* This type of transmitter-receiver came into service in 1943. With battery power, it was extremely compact and was built to resemble a cigar box. (Photos courtesy of the Centrum voor Duitse Verbindungs- en aanverwante Technologieën).

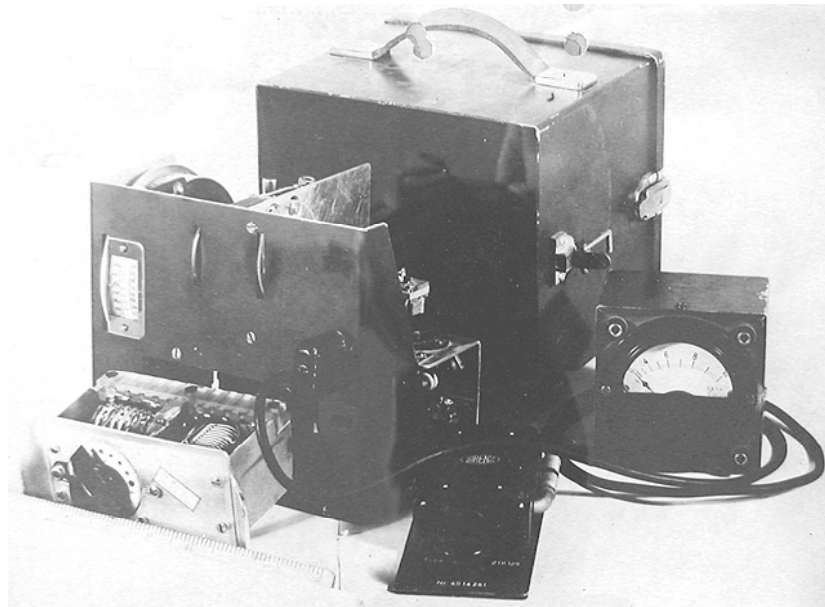
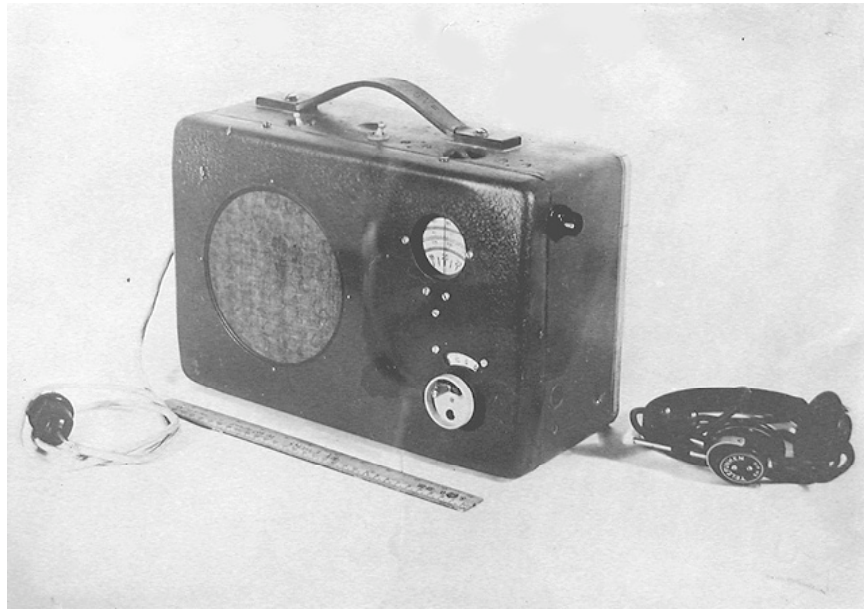


Figure C-6. *SD receiver and transmitter used by Franz Mayr.* This unwieldy assembly consisted of a 110-220V AC or 6V DC commercial receiver (top) of reasonably high sensitivity and good signal-to-noise ratio, to which a beat frequency oscillator (BFO) had been added, combined with a battery-powered, poorly ventilated CW transmitter (bottom), which, because it overheated, could only be used to transmit Morse code intermittently. Packed in three cases, the total weight of the set exceeded 21 kg. (Photos courtesy of The National Archives).

C3: ALLIED OPERATIONS

Project	Codename	Identity	Role
NE2	TIGER	Richard Lowe	Senior agent in Tehran, recruited in Washington in 1941, who had resided many years in Persia, engaged in intellectual pursuits. His activities there were so natural that he was not suspected even by Americans who had known him for many years. He knew the language, history, and customs of the country and was considered by the Section to be an efficient and tireless worker. He worked closely with TAPIR, both travelling extensively throughout the country, reporting on roads, economic conditions, and popular feelings and prejudices. ¹
NE7	TAPIR	Eliot Grant	Close associate of TIGER, recruited in Washington in 1942, he had lived in Persia and other parts of the Near East for several years working in a cultural capacity. He worked under cover as a volunteer civilian employee of PGC, which had no knowledge of his connection with OSS. He subsequently obtained a position at the US Embassy in Tehran as a quasi-official cultural attaché, which brought him into contact with interesting and important sources of intelligence. Both he and TIGER were scholars rather than spies, but the accuracy of TAPIR's observations and the strategic importance of his sources made many of his reports very solid.
NE23	TIMUR	Harold Lamb	Distinguished writer, recruited in Washington in 1943, who had become very popular throughout the region and who had access to leading personalities in Persia and Iraq. He exploited his unusual opportunities to probe the minds of these leaders and to observe the plans and projects of their governments.
NE16	KANGAROO	Calvin Warne	A young man well acquainted with the languages of western Persia. Recruited and trained in the United States, he arrived in Persia in July 1943. His first cover activity proved rather thin, but he managed within three months to secure a position as a Persian civil servant in what Near East Section described as "an area of major interest and difficulty of access." ²
NE28A	TIMBER WOLF	Ed Wright	US Army officers recruited together in Washington and deployed to Persia in August 1944, where they were assigned as cover to the staff of PGC in accordance with an agreement struck between General Donovan, Head of OSS, and General Connolly, Commander of PGC. ³ Their military cover permitted them to travel widely throughout the country without impediment. There was clearly never any intention of employing these agents against the Germans; TIMBER WOLF in particular seems to have targeted the Russians, submitting what Cairo described as "exceedingly valuable reports."
NE28B	TEDDY BEAR	Arthur Dubois	

Table C-6. Long-term OSS SI projects in Persia.⁴

1. It is important to note that, according to OSS records, TIGER also reported (i.e. spied) on the British (and Russians) in Persia. Yet at the same time Near East Section in Cairo to whom he reported claimed to have established liaison and "friendships" with such British groups as ISLD. History of the Near East Section, OSS Cairo, from 15 May 1943 to 15 September 1944, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 261, NARA.
2. Warne worked for the cereals and bread section of the Millspaugh Mission to the Persian Department of Finance with the cover identity of Thomas B. W. Allen, occasionally signing his reports to SI as "Tom." Coincidentally, his supervisor at the mission happened to be Archie Crawford's brother, J. F. Crawford, who does not appear to have had any intelligence connections. Early in his posting, Warne incurred the displeasure of numerous individuals in Persia, not least several influential British officers, and had to be reprimanded severely for his wayward behaviour by Penrose. However, he thereafter settled into his work and became a productive agent.
3. Connolly's association with OSS was, initially at least, entirely clandestine. "The General would have had a conniption fit if he believed that USAFIME was informed of his collaboration with us." Penrose to Loud, 1 June 1944, RG 226, Entry 215, Box 3, NARA.
4. This table has been compiled on the basis of evidence found in the following specific records: History of the Near East Section, OSS, Cairo, 22-25, Document No. 11384/004; McBaine to Toulmin, Report on Trip through the Middle East, 3-18 May 1944, 20 May 1944, Document No. 11397/019; Crawford to Penrose, Near East Section SI, Period 1 January-30 June 1944, 22 June 1944, Document No. 11383/002, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 261, NARA. Also generally in RG 226, Entry 215, Box 3, NARA and Series 8: OSS, Box 5, Folder 4, PP, WCNA.

APPENDIX D: MAPS

DI: GERMAN COVERT INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES



Figure D-1. Map of German initiatives and activities targeting Persia, 1940-1945. Solid line indicates boundary between British/American and Soviet occupation zones.

D2: AERIAL INSERTIONS

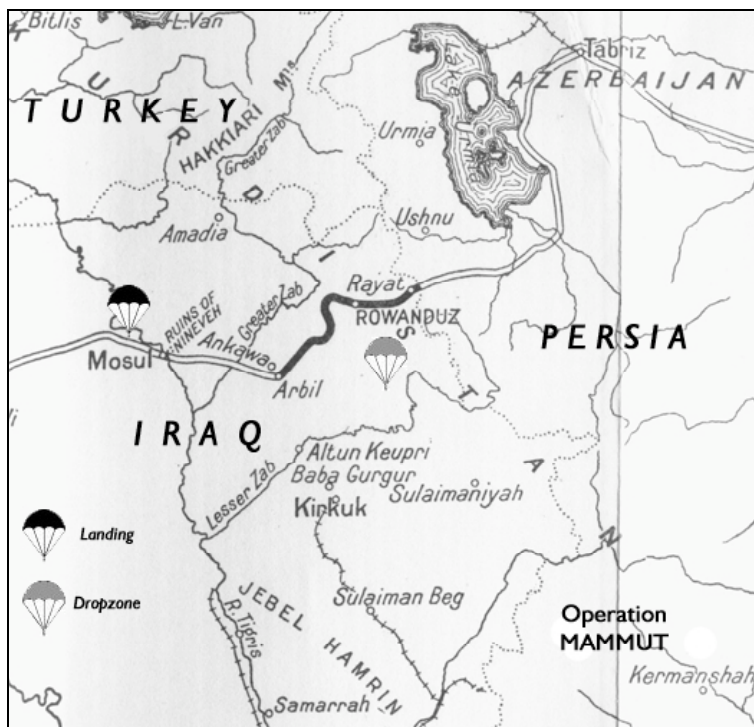


Figure D-2. Aerial insertion: Operation MAMMUT designated dropzone near the Lesser (or Little) Zab river. The actual landing point near Mosul on the Tigris was approximately 220 km off-zone.

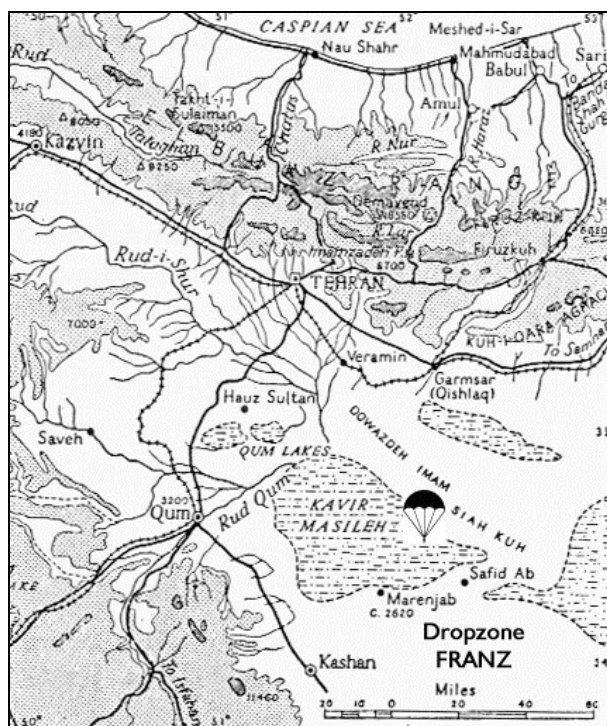


Figure D-3. Aerial insertion: Operation FRANZ dropzone near the Siah Kuh range. Note the relatively close proximity to Tehran. The stick was dropped offzone and their cargo was widely dispersed.



Figure D-4. Aerial insertion: Operation ANTON dropzone at Khan-i-Zinian (Khaneh Zenyan) and Operation ANTON 2 airfield at Farrashband. ANTON was a textbook insertion at a well-prepared site; the clearly marked Farrashband airfield, which measured 2000 x 2000 m, was never used. Nasir Khan’s camp was a four-day ride from the airfield.

D3: ALLIED OPERATIONS

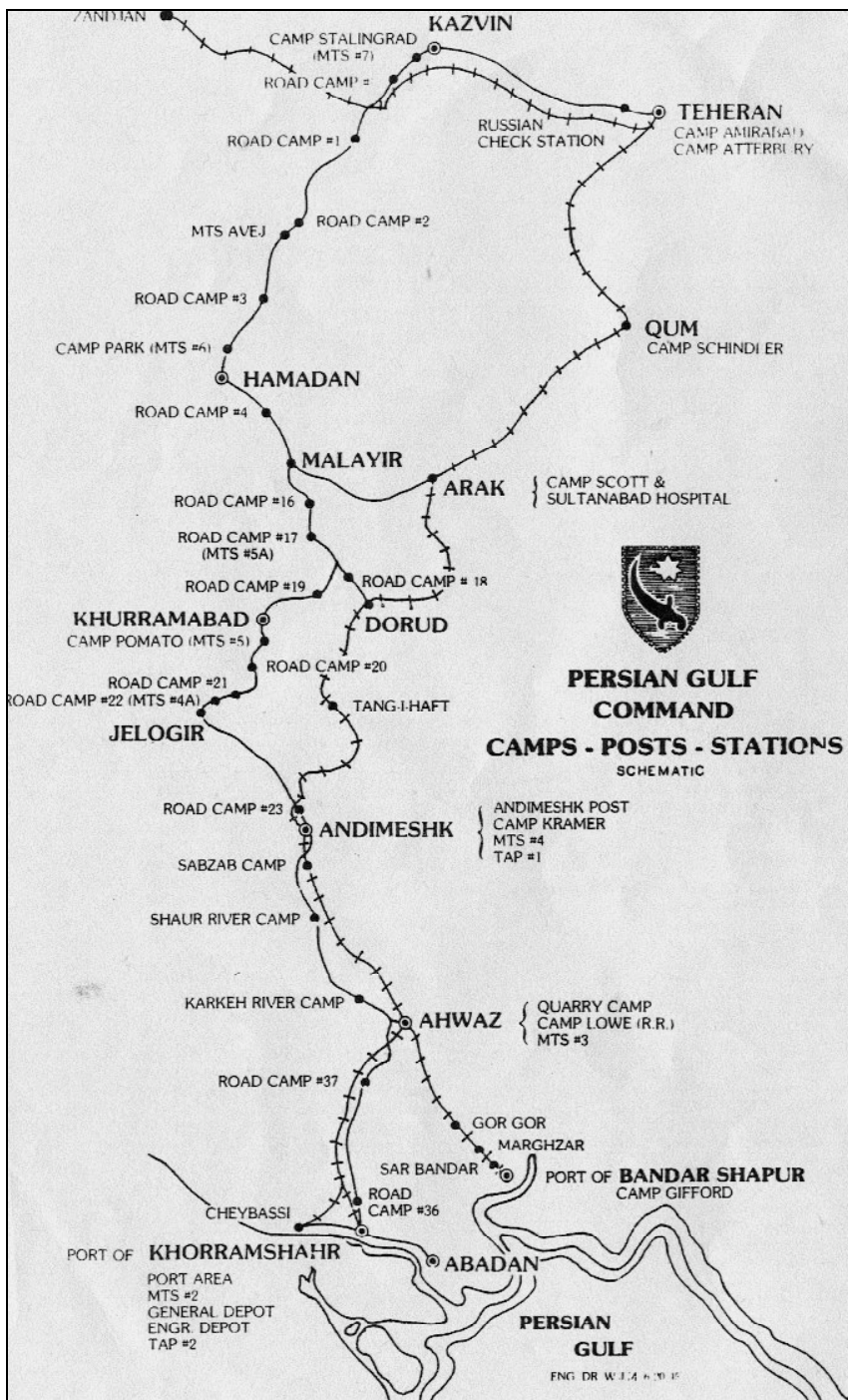


Figure D-5. PGC supply routes. (Courtesy of Persian Gulf Command Veterans Organization).

APPENDIX E: REFERENCE

EI: CODENAMES AND COVER NAMES

According to customary practice in official intelligence records, codenames are shown throughout this study in upper-case letters (e.g. ABDULLAH, not Abdullah).

ABDUL RAHMAN	Abdul Qasim Khan Bakhtiari
ABDULLAH	Ernst Köndgen
ADOLF	Ast Athen (W/T station)
ANTON CHIEF	Nasir Khan Qashgai
ARMADA	Fred Wilhelm Brandt
BALDER	Nasir Khan Qashgai
BÄR	Rashid Ramzi
(Prof) BAUER	fnu Caskel
BLACKGUARD	nu [SIME Persian double agent]
BROTHER BALDER	Malek Mansur Qashgai
BURG	Belzig (W/T station)
CICERO	Elyesa Bazna
DORA CHIEF	Abdul Qasim Khan Bakhtiari
DRILLIG	Hans Georg Georgiades
EICHE	Werner Eisenberg
EIDAM	Werner Eisenberg
EISEN	Werner Eisenberg
EISENHAUER	Werner Eisenberg
ESKANDAR KHAN	Konstantin Jakob
FAMINE	Murad Ferid
FATHULLAH	Habibullah Naubakht
FEREJ	Kurt Harbers
FERST	Murad Ferid
(Dr) FÖRSTER	Murad Ferid
FREEMAN	Fritz Hoffmann [CSDIC]
HABIB	Javid Ramazani
HARDY	Georg Konieczny [CSDIC]
HASSAN	Georg Grille
IDA	Ast Istanbul (W/T station)
IRA	Ernst Köndgen (and, before his death, Karl Korel)
JAVAD	Konstantin Jakob
JIMAND	Ahmed Akbari
KANGAROO	Calvin Warne [OSS]
KARIM	Werner Rockstroh
KARIM KHAN	Firuz Khalilnia

KASPAR	fnu Caskel
KASSAKOWSKI	Konstantin Jakob
KEIL	Manfred Oberdörfer
KISS	Mohamed Salmassi
KÖCHIN, KOECHIN	Heinz Gräfe
KUCHIK	Kurt Harbers (also nickname)
LEIT	Havel-Institut, Berlin-Wannsee (W/T station)
LEO	Friedrich Kümel
LOKI	Khosrow Khan Qashgai
LÖWE	Herbert Schmidt
LUTFULLAH	Günther Blume
MAKI	Fritz Hoffmann
MARABU	Karl-Heinz Oehler
MARTIN	Martin Kurmis
MAUS	Mahmoud Barzanji
MAX	Franz Mayr
MESSNER	fnu Messow
MORITZ	Roman Gamotha
MUSA	Moses Gasparian
NIAZMAND	Sadiq Khan Feruhar
ODYSSEUS	Werner Eisenberg
OVID	Murad Ferid
PANTHER	Gottfried Müller
PARVIS	Martin Kurmis
(Dr) PAUL(I)	fnu Putz
POLLUX	Paul Leverkuehn
POLSTER	Paul Leverkuehn
PRIESTER	Ayatollah Kashani
QUATSCH	Quenz (Abw II sabotage school)
RABBI	Franz Mayr
RAHIM	Hans Holzapfel
REZA	Ghulam Kashefi
REZA GHULI	Ahmed Akbari
SABA	Berthold Schulze-Holthus
SCHLOSS	Berlin-Stahnsdorf (W/T station)
SEEHUND	Hans (Johannes) Müller; Simferopol (W/T station)
SEIDL	Parvis Wahabzadeh
SEPP	Ast Sofia (W/T station)

SHAHPUR	Kurt Piwonka
SHUKRULLAH	Karl Korel
SULTAN MAHMOUD	Martin Kurmis
TAPIR	Eliot Grant [OSS]
TEDDY BEAR	Arthur Dubois [OSS]
TIGER	Gottfried Müller [CSDIC]; Richard Lowe [OSS]
TIMBER WOLF	Ed Wright [OSS]
TIMUR	Harold Lamb [OSS]
UHU	Georg Konieczny
WEBER	Willy Weiss
(Dr) WENDEL(L)	Hans-Otto Wagner
WERA	Ast Wien (W/T station)
WIESEL	Karl Schmidt
WILLIS	Rashid Ramzi [CSDIC]
(Dr) WÖHLER	Werner Schüler
WOLF	Henry Maitland Wilson
YUSSUF	Bahlul Zanouzi (Sanoussi)
ZEBRA	Rudolf Keleita
ZIDAN	Werner Eisenberg
ZOLA	Murad Ferid
ZWILLING	fnu Putz

E2: COMPARATIVE RANKS

Kriegsmarine	Royal Navy	Heer/ Luftwaffe	British Army	Royal Air Force	SS	
<i>Grossadmiral</i>	Admiral of the Fleet	<i>Generalfeldmarschall</i>	Field Marshal	Marshal of the RAF	<i>Reichsführer-SS</i>	SS Reich Leader
<i>Generaladmiral</i>	Admiral	<i>Generaloberst</i>	General	Air Chief Marshal	<i>Oberstgruppenführer</i>	SS General
<i>Admiral</i>		<i>General</i>	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal	<i>Obergruppenführer</i>	SS Lieutenant General
<i>Vizeadmiral</i>	Vice-Admiral	<i>Generalleutnant</i>	Major General	Air Vice Marshal	<i>Gruppenführer</i>	SS Major General
<i>Konteradmiral</i>	Rear Admiral	<i>Generalmajor</i>	Brigadier	Air Commodore	<i>Brigadeführer</i>	SS Brigadier
<i>Kommodore</i>	Commodore				<i>Oberführer</i>	SS Senior Colonel
<i>Kapitän zur See</i>	Captain	<i>Oberst</i>	Colonel	Group Captain	<i>Standartenführer</i>	SS Colonel
<i>Fregattenkapitän</i>	Commander	<i>Oberstleutnant</i>	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander	<i>Obersturmbannführer</i>	SS Lieutenant Colonel
<i>Korvettenkapitän</i>	Lieutenant Commander	<i>Major</i>	Major	Squadron Leader	<i>Sturmbannführer</i>	SS Major
<i>Kapitänleutnant</i>	Lieutenant	<i>Hauptmann</i>	Captain	Flight Lieutenant	<i>Hauptsturmführer</i>	SS Captain
<i>Oberleutnant zur See</i>	Sublieutenant	<i>Oberleutnant</i>	Lieutenant	Flying Officer	<i>Obersturmführer</i>	SS Lieutenant
<i>Leutnant zur See</i>	Warrant Officer	<i>Leutnant</i>	2nd Lieutenant	Pilot Officer	<i>Untersturmführer</i>	SS Second Lieutenant
<i>Stabsoberbootsmann</i> <i>Staatsobersteuermann</i>	Chief Petty Officer	<i>Stabsfeldwebel</i>	Regimental Sergeant Major	Warrant Officer	<i>Sturmscharführer</i>	SS Regimental Sergeant Major
<i>Oberbootsmann</i> <i>Obersteuermann</i>	Petty Officer	<i>Hauptfeldwebel</i> <i>Oberfeldwebel</i>	Company Sergeant Major		<i>Hauptscharführer</i>	SS Company Sergeant Major
<i>Bootsmann</i> <i>Steuermann</i>		<i>Feldwebel</i>	Staff Sergeant	Flight Sergeant	<i>Oberscharführer</i>	SS Staff Sergeant
<i>Oberbootsmannsmaat</i> <i>Obersteuermannsmaat</i>	Leading Seaman	<i>Unterfeldwebel</i> , <i>Hauptgefreiter</i>	Sergeant		<i>Scharführer</i>	SS Sergeant
<i>Bootsmannsmaat</i> <i>Steuermannsmaat</i>		<i>Obergefreiter</i>	Corporal		<i>Unterscharführer</i>	SS Corporal
<i>Matrosengefreiter</i>	Ordinary Seaman	<i>Gefreiter</i>	Lance Corporal	Senior Aircraftman Leading Aircraftman	<i>Rottenführer</i>	SS Lance Corporal
<i>Matrose</i>		<i>Oberschütze, Schütze, Flieger, Jäger</i>	Private	Aircraftman	<i>SS-Schütze, SS-Mann</i>	SS Private

Table E-1. Comparative ranks of the German and British armed forces during the Second World War (simplified). Officer cadet ranks are not shown.

E3: ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

German	English
<i>Ministerium</i>	ministry
<i>Hauptamt</i>	administration (SS only)
<i>Amt</i>	department
<i>Amtsgruppe</i>	division
<i>Hauptabteilung</i>	bureau
<i>Abteilung</i>	branch
<i>Hauptgruppe</i>	office
<i>Gruppe</i>	group
<i>Referat</i>	desk
<i>Stelle</i>	post, station, centre

Table E-2. Translation of German organizational units.¹

1. Based on Kahn, *Hitler's Spies*, 548.

E4: CHRONOLOGY, 1940-1945

- 1940-11-08 | Mayr and Gamotha arrive in Persia under commercial cover.
- 1941-05-19 | Schulze-Holthus arrives in Tabriz under diplomatic cover.
- 1941-06-22 | Schulze-Holthus establishes himself as *Kriegsorganisation Iran* (KOI).
- 1941-07 | Mayr and Gamotha visit Schulze-Holthus in Tabriz.
- 1941-08-25 | Operation COUNTENANCE: British and Soviet troops occupy Persia.
- 1941-09-13 | Gamotha disappears into the Soviet zone.
- 1942-01-29 | Anglo-Soviet-Persian Tripartite Treaty signed.
- 1942-03-23 | Gertrud Schulze-Holthus escapes over the Turkish border.
- 1942-06-22 | Schulze-Holthus joins Nasir Khan in Qashgai territory
- 1942-08-03 | Harris/Griffiths murder in Bakhtiari territory.
- 1942-10-27 | Gamotha crosses the Turkish frontier.
- 1942-11-02 | Mayr's house in Isfahan raided and documents seized.
- 1942-12-07 | Operation PONGO: Zahedi arrested.
- 1943-02-12 | White holds important meeting with SIME staff in Beirut.
- 1943-03-17 | Gamotha released from Turkish custody and sent back to Germany via Bulgaria.
- 1943-03-22 | FRANZ expedition dropped at Siah Kuh.
- 1943-04-15 | FRANZ parachutists enter Tehran.
- 1943-05-24 | Gamotha's first broadcast from Berlin.
- 1943-06-17 | MAMMUT expedition dropped offzone in Kurdistan.
- 1943-06-28 | MAMMUT parachutists captured.
- 1943-06-28 | DORA group (Grille and Köndgen) spun off by Mayr.
- 1943-07-17 | ANTON expedition dropped near Shiraz..
- 1943-08-02 | Gartenfeld makes DORA supply drop (offzone).
- 1943-08-02 | Schulze-Holthus joins the ANTON group.
- 1943-08-14 | Rockstroh captured.
- 1943-08-15 | Mayr captured.
- 1943-08-17 | Holzapfel captured.
- 1943-08-26 | Grille captured.
- 1943-08-29 | Blume and Köndgen captured.
- 1943-09-09 | Persia ends its neutrality and declares war on Germany.
- 1943-09-23 | Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group transferred to Boir Ahmedi territory.
- 1943-11-28 | Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin meet in Tehran.
- 1943-12-21 | Last W/T communication between ANTON and LEIT.
- 1944-01 | Gamotha visits Istanbul; on his return Operation NORMA is cancelled.
- 1944-02-12 | Hitler decrees one unified German intelligence service.
- 1944-03-01 | Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group returned to the Qashgai by the Boir Ahmedi.
- 1944-03-23 | Schulze-Holthus and the ANTON group surrendered to CICI by the Qashgai.
- 1944-03-27 | Kurmis commits suicide.

1944-04	Kellar visits CICI Tehran.
1944-06-01	Militärisches Amt established by Himmler.
1945-01-17	Schulze-Holthus repatriated to Germany in exchange for British agent.
1945-02-13	Operation REISERNTE (SKK 203) launched from Norway.
1945-02-19	Schulze-Holthus joins Abwehr outstation in Vienna.
1945-03-25	Schulze-Holthus visits Gamotha at Schwechat.
1945-04-01	Gamotha deserts to Soviets.
1945-04-02	Last agent in Persia (Jakob) captured.
1945-05-23	Schulze-Holthus arrested near Kitzbühel.

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FO 371/27155	Situation in Persia.
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FO 371/27196	Anglo-Persian relations.
FO 371/27197	Anglo-Persian relations.
FO 371/27199	Germans in Persia.
FO 371/27200	Germans in Persia.
FO 371/27201	Germans in Persia.
FO 371/27205	Operations in Persia.
FO 371/27206	Operations in Persia.
FO 371/27208	Operations in Persia.
FO 371/27209	Operations in Persia.
FO 371/27224	Operations in Persia.
FO 371/27230	Anglo-Soviet military cooperation.
FO 371/27231	Anglo-Soviet military cooperation.
FO 371/27233	Anglo-Soviet military cooperation.
FO 371/27238	Enemy propaganda.
FO 371/27241	Intelligence report, Tehran.
FO 371/27244	Iraqi-Persian relations: Kurds.
FO 371/27245	Iraqi-Persian relations: Kurds.
FO 371/27246	Persian Minister in London.
FO 371/27254	Japanese Legation at Tehran.
FO 371/29489	Soviet-German relations.
FO 371/31335	Proposed establishment of an advanced base in Persia.
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KV 2/410	Wilhelm Kuebart.
KV 2/517	Edward Szarkiewicz.
KV 2/752	Fred Hermann Brandt.
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KV 2/1133	Cheese, alias Lambert, Mr Rose.
KV 2/1281	Kiss.
KV 2/1282	Kiss.
KV 2/1283	Kiss.
KV 2/1284	Kiss.
KV 2/1285	Kiss.
KV 2/1317	Mohammed Hussein Hissam Vaziri.
KV 2/1318	Hans Georg Georgiades.
KV 2/1469	Massud and Homayoun Farzad.
KV 2/1470	Massud and Homayoun Farzad.
KV 2/1473	Friedrich Kuemel.
KV 2/1477	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1478	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1479	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1480	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1481	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1482	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
KV 2/1483	Franz Mayer, alias Mayr.
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KV 2/1485	Julius Berthold Schulze, Kurt Pirwanka [<i>sic</i>], Kurt Harbers, and Martin Kurmes [<i>sic</i>].
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- GB165-0234 Sir Thomas Rapp. Unpublished memoirs.
- GB165-0298 Geoffrey Wheeler Collection.
- GB165-0344 Edward Sykes Collection.

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Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr Papers

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- 5/2 CIA Letter explaining the declassified papers from the Office of Strategic Services. Key to some abbreviations in OSS letters.
- 5/3 34 OSS letters, Washington, DC.
- 5/4 22 OSS letters, Cairo.
- 5/5 13 OSS letters, Washington, DC.
- 5/6 18 OSS letters, Cairo.
- 5/7 17 OSS letters, Cairo.
- 5/8 20 OSS letters, Cairo.
- 5/9 31 OSS letters, Washington, DC.
- 5/10 16 OSS letters, Washington, DC.
- 5/11 15 OSS letters, Washington, DC.
- 5/12 16 letters, including OSS job description, regarding OSS and Central Intelligence Group.
- 5/13 Certificate from the Armed Forces Institute, Arabic 1 "with Distinction."

Stephen B. L. Penrose Jr Papers

Additional Declassified OSS Records

- Folder 1/4 NARA, RG 226, Entry 210, Box 389, Folder 16 (Penrose Pending).
- Folder 3/4 NARA, RG 226, Entry 215, Box 7, Folder WN 26229.
- Folder 4/4 NARA, RG 226, Entry 215, Box 3, Folder WN 25968-25969.

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