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Doc Spiegel
22 April 1953, 17

INTERMEZZO IN SALZBURG

Officials of the American Counter Espionage buttonhole one of the most crafty intelligence dealers in Europe, at the end of March.

During the Hitler Reich, this man was a Sturmbannfuhrer of the SS and deputy Gruppenleiter (for the Balkan States) in Office VI (foreign section) of the National Department of Security (RSHA).

Today he represents himself as an author (under the pseudonym of Walter Hagen) and publisher (M. Hagen Publishing House in Linz and Vienna) with European-wide contacts.

There is scarcely a single secret intelligence organization in Europe today with which this man has not had contact, either above or below board, and from which he has not received remuneration, either directly or indirectly.

The man is Dr. Wilhelm HOETTL, born 1915 and residing in Bad Aussee, Austria.

On 25 March, HOETTL was arrested by the American Spy-Catchers after he himself had been a star agent of this agency for years.

Last week, HOETTL was set free again by his Americans in Salzburg. This, in spite of the fact that upon Hoettl's arrest, the spokesman of the American Occupation Authority in Austria had haughtily declared that the ex-SS officer from idyllic Aussee was involved in the espionage affair around US-officers Captain Kurt PCNGER and Lieutenant Otto VERBER (formerly FAEBER), (see SPIEGEL, 7/53).

Both of these Austrian ex-Communists, emigrants, and naturalized citizens of the United States had been interrogating officers with the International Military Tribunal while the gallows were being constructed in Nuernberg (at the beginning of February the American

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High Commission in Austria felt itself obliged to make the following statement: there was not the slightest basis for the assumption that Kurt L. Ponger had "already been chartered by the Soviets at the time of the Nuerbberg Trials.")

After Ponger and Verbar had done their part to expose the Nazi conspiracy against the world peace, they settled down in their old Vienna home town and took quite luxurious lodgings in the Soviet Sector of the Danube-city on Paulanergasse. Their extravagant way of life was made possible through:

- (1) a scholarship of the US government for studies at the University of Vienna;
- (2) a new job as analyst for Eastern affairs with the US Military Intelligence Service;
- (3) the sale of agent lists of the American intelligence service and American maneuver plans to the Soviets;
- (4) recruiting high US officials for the intelligence service of the Soviet diplomat, Yuri V. Kovikov; and not the least through:
- (5) extensive transactions of non-taxed luxury articles such as coffee and cigarettes transferred from Austria to West Germany.

The American counter espionage also accused Hoettl of having very close contact with Ponger and Verbar (who were brought before a court in Washington in January, have submitted partial confessions, and are awaiting their trial on 20 April.)

At the time of Hoettl's arrest, correspondence with Ponger was found and confiscated, according to the Americans. A spokesman of the US military authorities declared that the correspondence comprised more than a hundred letters.

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Now the Americans found themselves obliged to state muckly that Hoettl's relations with Ponger and Verber had been of a purely "business nature."

Ponger, Verber, and Hoettl became acquainted with each other during the days of Nuernberg. At that time, Hoettl had been a voluntary witness from time to time in the large war crimes trials.

The relations of a purely "business nature" are ~~not~~ painful indeed. For in many of the smuggling affairs involving the movement of material from Austria to Bavaria, the headquarters of the American counter espionage in Salzburg played a shady role. The customs officials of Bad Reichenhall knew as well as the customs officials of Munich that thriving black marketeers equipped with vehicles and identification of this agency had supplied Munich's Koehlstrasse with illegal wares for years.

The Ponger and Verber firm also transported their unroasted coffee beans across the border with official CIC identification, using the autobahn from Salzburg to Munich. Intelligence-fox Hoettl had learned from his experience in the SD (Sicherheitsdienst-Security Service) that the expert must also pay heed to the shady things which take place in his own den. Hoettl has always had a good memory.

After the Linz CIC ousted Hoettl from his intelligence duties because of their fix "ineffectiveness," he dropped hints (through middlemen) into the ears of the officials of the Munich customs control office concerning US Intelligence black market activities.

Therefore speculation among those with intimate knowledge of the situation centered around the the number of days Hoettl would spend under CIC arrest--a period extending into weeks, or months.

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or that he would even be brought before trial, was not even considered.

It is indeed true that there are very few references to Hoettl's commercial ambitions in the files kept on him by the US authorities in Germany and Austria. Following is a report from the files of the American counter espionage on Hoettl:

In Austria, Hoettl advanced from the Catholic youth movement, "Neuland," to the SS, and then later to the SD. While with the Vienna SD section (Lagabschnitt), he handled Church affairs and was later transferred to the Foreign Affairs Office (VI) of the National Department of Security (RSMA), where he processed Italian affairs originally, and later Balkan affairs.

Hoettl had close contact with the successor to Reinhard Heydrichs, SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Dr. Kaltenbrunner, who was an Austrian himself. In 1943, Kaltenbrunner became Chief of the RSMA. Dr. Kaltenbrunner had his young friend, Hoettl, in mind for a minister's post in a National Socialist separatist government of Austria, even in 1945.

At this point in the American files on Hoettl, there is a special section. It contains certain elements of suspicion that Hoettl is in possession of the legendary SS-treasure.

OIC estimates Hoettl's monthly living expenses at between 10,000 and 14,000 shillings (1,000 shillings equals 196.60 U.S.). Just recently he bought his Mother a home of her own. He supports his parents-in-law and requires a/maid, a nursery maid, and a secretary for the comfort of his family of five.

The Americans have followed two leads in this direction:

- (1) according to one version, Hoettl allegedly deposited large

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sums of exchange money in Switzerland shortly before the end of the war.

(2) according to the other version, his Nibelungen-treasure is located in the immediate vicinity of his place of residence.

The most important bit of circumstantial evidence that Hoettl put aside treasures of the Third Reich on behalf of Gestapo Chief Kaltenbrunner--who was hanged in Nuernberg--is the following: shortly before his execution ~~is~~ at his last conversation with his wife he said, "Do not worry, Hoettl will take care of your future and that of the children." Hoettl was allegedly approached by Frau Kaltenbrunner in 1948 in this regard. He supposedly had no recollection of any such arrangements.

According to Hoettl, shortly before the end of the war he was in contact with the chief representative of American intelligence in Europe, Allen Dulles, who was located in Switzerland. CIC was, nevertheless not able to prove that Hoettl had set up illegal accounts in Switzerland at this opportunity.

Another clue gave promise of being more fruitful. Hoettl had befriended a young man by the name of Fritz Fischer to whom he paid a regular salary for obscure services. Fischer is the son of the manager of the salt-pits in Alt-Aussee and has access to the mines day and night.

However Hoettl allegedly came into the possession of greater wealth in the following manner.

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During the war, the former SS officer had one of the richest industrialists of Croatia, Fritz WESTEN, known as the "Schwabens-Rothschild, as an informant. Shortly before the capitulation, Hoettl obtained special permission from Kaltenbrunner for his friend to bring a convoy of trucks out of Yugoslavia.

The shipment consisted mainly of gold wares, exchange money, jewelry, carpets, and valuable machines, and was lead by Hoettl's personal driver.

Westen, who had a leading financial role in Italian electrical works, possessed large shares of wholesale lumber in Austria (through agents), and who had established the largest housing project in Rome during the holy year, ^(WITH 1500 ANTI-AIR SLEEPERS) became a Liechtenstein citizen after the war. CIC would like to consider it a matter of proof that Hoettl shared Westen's valuables.

Two years ago, Fritz Westen took a bet in Innsbruck while in an inebriated state: he was to approach an Austrian policeman on the street, slap him on the face, and settle the affair with 100 shillings.

Westen met the first policeman at the Innsbruck Bahnhof and, in accordance with the bet, poked his fist in the man's face.

The policeman countered with a K.O. blow. Westen fell on the pavement in such a way that he died immediately. Hoettl suffered a nervous breakdown.

So much for the special section on the "SS-treasure." The report on Hoettl continues:

Immediately after the war's end, Hoettl was assigned by CIC to get in touch with his former contacts in Budapest and Bucharest, by wireless.

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Hoettl's old SD wireless station at Steyring began to function again, with its beams directed toward the Southeast, in 1945 under the supervision of American G.I's.

Then the International Military Tribunal in Nuernberg found that it urgently required Hoettl as a witness. On 14 December 1945, prosecutor Major Walsh cited a sworn statement of Dr. Wilhelm Hoettl (Document 2738 Ps, US 296) which had the following text: "Eichmann (SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer and Chief of the Department for Jewish Questions, IV B 4 in the Secret State Police Office) told me at the end of August 1944, that in the various extermination camps approximately 4 million Jews had been killed, while another 2 million met death in another way.... He said the number was a state secret."

To this day, this statement is the only authentic basis for the figure of six million Jews murdered by the Nazis.

After leaving the Nuernberg witness stand, Dr. Hoettl was released in 1947 (while the release date of "Automatics" of his rank in general was not until the first half of 1948).

On assignment of the US Secret Service, Hoettl returned to his native country in the Salzkammergut, and set up a half-intelligence and half-military organization which was predominantly made up of former members of the SD and Waffen SS, but also included former Wehrmacht officers and refugees from the Balkan states.

Task of this group: in the event of hostilities between the Russians and Americans, to furnish security for intelligence activities of the US troops stationed in the Alps; to prevent

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Communist sabotage work, and to actively engage in sabotage itself against the enemy. And before X-day: to obtain information on the Communist movement in Austria.

Hoettl received several thousand dollars monthly from the US secret service in Salzburg for this activity. From a rank, model SS strapping, he had become a sleek figure in canary-yellow leather coats and hand-painted neckties.

American intelligence officers, who in private life had been students, small business men, policemen, or emigrants, found nothing to complain about in Hoettl's work. On the contrary, Hoettl and his SD friends knew not only Austria but also the Balkans like the well-oiled palms of their hands. The former SD specialists soon turned Salzburg into what Vienna had been in the old days: the great intelligence market for the Southeast. So far everything was in order.

There was one hitch however. Even for the tastes of the by no means penny-pinching US officers, Hoettl and his friends were extremely extravagant.

Hoettl, who came from a family of small means but had gone through the school of the SS which in no sense did things in a small way, found it beneath his dignity to have to account for every paltry dollar. He offered his resignation and left.

To the astonishment of the officers of the Salzburg secret intelligence, however, his whole organization disappeared with him.

With the money of the American (or also the Austrian) taxpayers, he had not only set up an intelligence net, of which he was the focal center, but had also built up his Niebelungen publishing house.

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For the sake of security, security-~~expert~~ service specialist Hoettl had the business registered in his wife Friedl's name. (investments plus two additional payments ^{to Friedl} ~~of~~ 70,000 to 90,000 shillings).

Ho entered the business with a borrowed mental investment. Under the cover name of Walter Hagen, he published his first work "The Secret Front. Organization, Persons, Actions of the German Secret Service," ("Die geheime Front. Organization, Personen, Aktionen des deutschen Geheimdienstes") in the Nibelungen Publishing House.

The book was a hit on the German market, was translated into all languages of the world, and even Churchill wrote "very nice" to the author. As Hoettl had to concede, however, he is not the author of the "Secret Front." His friend from the days of common "Houliard" experiences, and former Balkan specialist in the Information Department of the Foreign Office, Dr. Toni Loeb, wrote it for him.

Aim of the book: "an attempt should be made to restore the reputation of the German secret service in the eyes of the German people and the entire world, after so much dirt ^{had} heaped upon us and our activity placed in an entirely false light through the writings of enemy or unfriendly personalities." The author admitted in a letter to a former German intelligence officer,

On the side, he attempted a political project: together with the Catholic-nationalist, Viennese historian, Professor Fares Forelajewitz, he tried to convince the Austrian People's Party in Oberweis in June 1949, that it needed a blood transfusion through the National Socialists who had become clerical-minded again. The negotiations broke down.

The Americans in Salzburg (born in Hoettl's native land) were

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was dumbfounded at so much intelligence and business enterprise.

But his business was just beginning to spread its wings. Hoettl gladly placed his SD experience and his illegal net of agents at the disposal^{of} all who cared to fish in the waters of European intelligence--and could offer attractive financial bait. The Salzburg CIC swore bloody revenge against him. It was, after all, its dollars which were now bearing D-Mark fruit for Hoettl.

Then West German intelligence organizations switched themselves in on the Hoettl network. Point of contact was Hoettl's friend, retired Captain (Hauptmann) Baron Harry Mast (also called "Graf Bobby" in professional circles) who was supported at Bethlehemstrasse 1 d in Linz by his friend and wife, Edith Berndt. (sic)

The Sudeten-German Baron was installed as military security officer (Abwehroffizier) in Austria before 1939 by the AST (Abwehrstelle-Military Security Office) in Munich. Under the Schuschnigg regime he was arrested because of espionage against Austria, and in March 1939 liberated by the invading German troops. During the war he was a "subversive influence against the will to defend the Hitler Fatherland."

From his earlier days, he had good Yugoslavian and Italian contacts. In addition, "it is almost certain" (as is given to understand from the CIC file) that his friend Edith--in her late thirties, and an office employee with AEG in Linz on the Danube--had contact with the Czech intelligence service.

Contact between Mast and Hoettl was brought about by a common friend, Dr. Schrott, manager of the Hoettl Nibelungen Publishing House at the time, and now serving in the "Gesellschaft fuer neue Staatspolitik" in Ulm.

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The West German intelligence organizations were agreeable to the siphoning out of information from the Hoettl net. Munich became a relay station which was composed of former German officers. Hoettl's SD men procured information from Austria and the Balkans. The pay was good.

Couriers travelled back and forth between West Germany and Linz twice a month. The Baron supervised the central office in Linz. (For reasons of cover he was represented as an employee of the Wibelungen Publishing House.) Hoettl transmitted West German instructions to his agents at regular meetings in Bad Ischl, Attnang-Puchheim, and occasionally in Voecklabruck in the Cafe am Stadtplatz.

Hoettl told an intelligence official in West Germany that, "I consider myself the administrator of the Schellenberg legacy." SS-Brigadefuehrer Walter Schellenberg was the highly intelligent Chief of the Foreign Office of the National Department of Security.

(Schellenberg died in 1952 in North Italy. He had received a bid from the Swiss Scherz Publishing house to write his memoirs.)

~~To the West German offices~~ ^(BELIEVE THE FRENCH FILE) it must be said that the French also shared in Walter Schellenberg's legacy.

Liaison man between the Hoettl organization and the French intelligence service was Surete-Capitaine Maurice Blondell in Bregenz on the Bodensee. With identification papers from Blondell, Hoettl travelled to his friends in Switzerland and Italy. To get into West Germany, the army truck of the French intelligence Capitaine was sufficient.

In the meantime, Blondell had given up his job and gone into an import and export business in Bregenz. However, Blondell is

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not Hoettl's only contact to the French. In Paris he had contact through:

(1) Count (Graf) Barchen, who works for the intelligence apparatus of the French General Staff;

(2) through Baron Mast to the French retired General Mast, who in 1949 left the service together with France's Chief of the General Staff, Revers, because both were involved in a sensational affair concerning the disappearance of secret documents on France's plans in Indo-China (SPIEGEL 19/51). In addition to his pension the illustrious General draws an expense allowance from the second office of the French General Staff.

In the meantime, Hoettl made another excursion into politics: The "Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung" in Munich had been infiltrated by Hoettl followers for a long time. He himself became Austrian correspondent of the newspaper.

This lasted until suddenly an Upper Austrian Lieutenant turned up at the Publishing offices, who knew about secret contacts of Hoettl to known communists of the Salzkammergut.

The Hoettl group, including Chief editor, Cornelius Pfeiffer, went. The last to leave the staff was former SS General Steiner, who departed in December 1952.

There are a few references in the American counter espionage files on Hoettl to the effect that he also had more or less intimate contact with the Soviets.

According to such, the SS man was in contact with the former Vienna Police Kommissar, Gamotta, who is active today as a functionary of the State Security Service in the German Democratic Republic.

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Hoettl had already admitted in Nuernberg that he had been in contact with the Austrian resistance movement "Fred" under the leadership of Albrecht Gaiswinkler. The group was organized and equipped by the British, dropped in the Aussee area by parachute, and then became completely communistically oriented.

According to the files, Hoettl not only had the closest personal contact with Gaiswinkler's intimate friend, Alois Renner, an Aussee manufacturer of mountain boats, deserter from the Wehrmacht and presently a member of the Military Aktiv of the Communist Party of Austria, but also joined his business with 30,000 shillings in 1949. The money, Hoettl boasts, comes from the Linz CIC.

Further agent reports say that Hoettl was in contact with the former NS officer (Fuehrer), Dr. Jedlischka, who contacted the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Austria in 1946 and possesses a scholarship to study history at the University of Moscow. Jedlischka, wearer of the Golden Badge of Honor of the NS, is the manager of the Vienna "Institut fuer Gegenwartsforschung." (Institute for Contemporary Research). In the Summer of 1953 he was given a reception by Otto von Habsburg.

Other indications of cooperation with the East:

Through the former SS-Obersturmbannfuhrer and teacher of "Weltanschauung" at the Tolz SS Junker School, Luis Edler of Linz, Hoettl had contact with the ex-SS officer Dr. Slavik, who founded the "Nationale Liga" in the Soviet Zone of Austria as a "bullwark against Western imperialism" and as an association of the oppressed in the Democratic Regime (sic).

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Eder himself advocates a course in the wake of the Soviet policy in Austria. In 1950 he was removed from the position of State Secretary (Landessekretär) of the "Verband der Unabhängigen" (Association of Independents) because he gave pro-Russian assembly speeches and had contact with Soviet officers.

It was the same Eder, Luis, who was one of Hoettl's contact men to West Germany. For the last time before Hoettl's arrest, Eder was in Munich to pick up instructions for the work in Austria, ON 22 MARCH.

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Von den ersten Reaktionen in Moskau zu urteilen, läßt sich nicht entscheiden, ob Eisenhowers Friedens-Offensive die Geschichte zum Wohl oder zum Wehe der Welt führen wird. Die Pravda kritisierte lediglich (ohne die üblichen Haßspritzen), daß der Präsident das Problem Rot-Chinas und „die Frage der Wiederherstellung der deutschen Einheit nach den Bestimmungen des Potsdamer Abkommens“ übergangen habe. Im übrigen, betonte die Pravda, habe Präsident Eisenhower kein Problem als unlösbar bezeichnet.

SD

Intermezzo in Salzburg

Die Beamten der amerikanischen Spionage-Abwehr in Salzburg legten sich Ende März mit einem der raffiniertesten Nachrichten-Händler in Europa an.

Im Hitlerreich war dieser Mann Sturmbannführer der SS und stellvertretender Gruppenleiter (für die Balkan-Staaten) im Amt VI (Ausland) des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes (RSHA).

Heute firmiert er als Schriftsteller (unter dem Pseudonym Walter Hagen) und als Verleger (Nibelungen-Verlag in Linz und Wien) mit intereuropäischen Beziehungen.

Es gibt zur Zeit in Europa kaum eine geheime Nachrichten-Organisation, zu der dieser Mann nicht auf geraden oder ungeraden Wegen Kontakte hätte und von der er direkt oder indirekt nicht auch Tantiemen in verschiedener Höhe bezöge.

Der Mann ist Dr. Wilhelm Höttl, Jahrgang 1915, wohnhaft in Bad Aussee, Österreich.

Am 25. März wurde Höttl von den amerikanischen Spionen-Jägern Salzburgs verhaftet, nachdem er selbst jahrelang Star-Agent dieser Dienststelle gewesen war.

Letzte Woche wurde Höttl von seinen Amerikanern in Salzburg wieder auf freien Fuß gesetzt.

Dabei hatte noch bei seiner Festnahme der Sprecher der amerikanischen Besatzungsbehörden in Österreich großspurig erklärt, daß der Ex-SS-Offizier aus dem idyllischen Aussee in die Spionage-Affäre um die beiden Ex-US-Offiziere Captain Kurt Ponger und Leutnant Otto Verber (früher Färber) verwickelt sei (SPIEGEL, 7/53).

Diese beiden österreichischen Ex-Kommunisten, Emigranten und Neubürger der Vereinigten Staaten waren während der Zeit, als in Nürnberg Galgen gebaut wurden, Vernehmungsoffiziere beim Internationalen Militär-Tribunal gewesen (Anfang Februar hatte sich das amerikanische Hochkommissariat in Österreich zu folgender Erklärung veranlaßt gesehen: es gebe nicht den geringsten Grund für die Annahme, daß Kurt L. Ponger „von den Sowjets bereits zur Zeit der Nürnberger Prozesse gechartert“ gewesen sei).

Nachdem Ponger und Verber ihren Teil dazu beigetragen hatten, die nazistische Weltverschwörung gegen den Frieden aufzudecken, setzten sie sich in ihre alte Wiener Heimat ab und richteten sich recht luxuriös in der Paulanergasse im sowjetischen Sektor der Donau-Stadt ein. Ermöglicht wurde ihnen ihr kostspieliger Lebensaufwand durch:

- ein Stipendium der US-Regierung zum Studium an der Universität Wien;
- einen neuen Job als Auswerter für Ostfragen beim US-Military Intelligence Service;
- den Verkauf von Agenten-Listen des amerikanischen Nachrichtendienstes

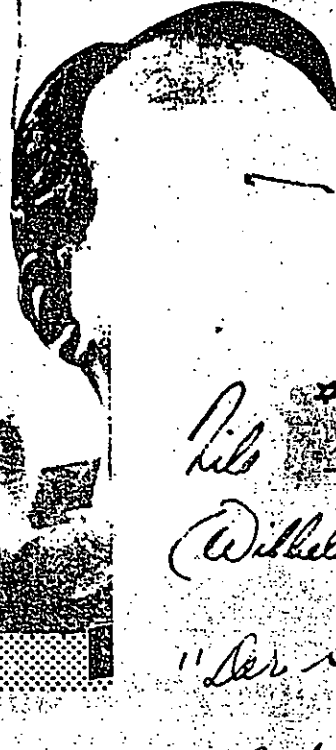
Rasieren — endlich ohne Schmerzen!



Mühsam fuhr ich früher ins Büro. Die rasierte Haut schmerzte.



Dann wurde mir Pitralon zur guten Gewohnheit. Jetzt rasiere ich mich glatter, und die Haut tut nicht mehr weh.



PITRALON erzieht Ihre Haut zur schmerzlosen Rasur. Es belebt die Haut,

schmeidigt, reue Rasier- rath kurzes stragen bes- er Tiele der wirkt. Der scht - er hat die Note.

nen die zeldot, hchen. 275



*Pils # 600
(Wilhelm Höttl)
"Der Spiegel"
22 April 53*



... und dann ging ihr ein Licht auf!
*strahlend hell wie PHILIPS Licht

Casino Travenerunde
ROULETTE BACCARA ARKADENSPIELE
CRAZY / TRUC / CLOUET

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Diese beiden österreichischen Ex-Kommunisten, Emigranten und Neubürger der Vereinigten Staaten waren während der Zeit, als in Nürnberg Galgen gebaut wurden, Vernehmungsoffiziere beim Internationalen Militär-Tribunal gewesen (Anfang Februar hatte sich das amerikanische Hochkommissariat in Österreich zu folgender Erklärung veranlaßt gesehen: es gebe nicht den geringsten Grund für die Annahme, daß Kurt L. Ponger „von den Sowjets bereits zur Zeit der Nürnberger Prozesse gearbeitet“ gewesen sei).

Nachdem Ponger und Verber ihren Teil dazu beigetragen hatten, die nazistische Weltverschwörung gegen den Frieden aufzudecken, setzten sie sich in ihre alte Heimat ab und richteten sich recht luxuriös in der Paulanergasse im sowjetischen Sektor der Donau-Stadt ein. Ermöglicht wurde ihnen ihr kostspieliger Lebensaufwand durch:

- ein Stipendium der US-Regierung zum Studium an der Universität Wien;
- einen neuen Job als Auswerter für Ostfragen beim US-Military Intelligence Service;
- den Verkauf von Agenten-Listen des amerikanischen Nachrichtendienstes

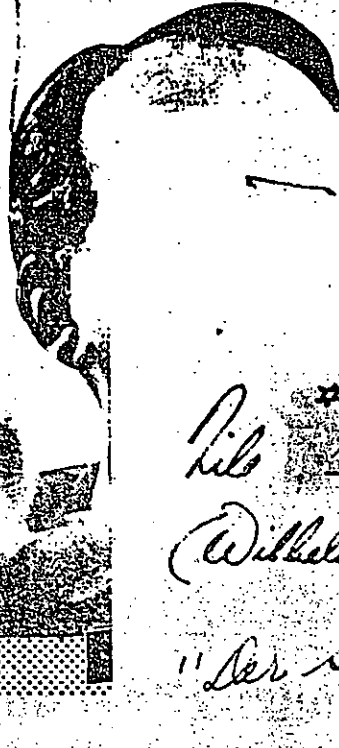
Rasieren — endlich ohne Schmerzen!



Mühsam fuhr ich früher ins Büro. Die rasierte Haut schmerzte.



Dann wurde mir Pitralon zur guten Gewohnheit. Jetzt-rasiere ich mich platter, und die Haut tut nicht mehr weh.



*Pils #600
Wilhelm Höttl
"Der Spiegel"
22. April 53*

PITRALON erzieht Ihre Haut zur schmerzlosen Rasur. Es belebt die Haut,

schmeidigt, teure Rasier- rasen kurzes tragen be- schiede Haut- er Tiefe der wirkt. Der sch- er hat die Note.

nen die zeldorf, hchen. 2,75



... und dann ging ihr im Licht auf!
*strahlend hell wie PHILIPS Licht

Casino Travenerunde
ROULETTE BACCARAT AKADENSPIELE
G. 12/10000 GUMBIELG WIST

und amarikenischer Manöver-Pläne an die Sowjets)

● Werbung hoher US-Beamter für den Nachrichtendienst der Sowjet-Diplomaten Jurij W. Nowikow, und nicht zuletzt durch

● recht umfangreiche Transaktionen unversuorter Genussmittel wie Kaffee und Zigaretten von Österreich nach West-Deutschland.

Recht intensive Beziehungen zu Ponger und Verber (die im Januar einem Gericht in Washington zugeführt wurden, inzwischen Teilgeständnisse abgelegt haben und ihre Verhandlung am 20. April erwarten) beschuldigte die amerikanische Spionage-Abwehr nunmehr auch Höttl. Bei seiner Festnahme sei seine Korrespondenz mit Ponger sichergestellt worden. Sie enthalte über hundert Briefe, erklärte der Sprecher der US-Militär-Behörden.

Jetzt sehen sich die Amerikaner etwas kleinlaut zu der Erklärung veranlaßt, daß Höttls Beziehungen zu Ponger und Verber nur „geschäftlicher Natur“ gewesen seien.

Ponger, Verber und Höttl können sich aus Nürnberger Tagen. Damals war Höttl zeitweise freier Zeuge im großen Kriegsverbrecherprozeß. Seine Beziehungen zur „geschäftlicher Natur“ sind allerdings etwas peinlich. In sehr vielen Schmuggel-Affären von Österreich nach Bayern spielte nämlich das Hauptquartier der amerikanischen Spionage-Abwehr in Salzburg eine dunkle Rolle. Die Zollner in Bad Reichenhall wußten genau so wie die Zollfahnder in München, daß seit Jahren, mit Fahrzeugen und Ausweis-Papieren dieser Dienststelle ausgerüstet, ein schwungvoller Schwarzhandel Münchens Mählstraße mit illegaler Ware versorgte.

Mit amtlichem CIC-Ausweis transportierte auch die Firma Ponger & Verber ihre ungebrannten Bohner über die Autobahn von Salzburg nach München. Und Nachrichten-Euchs Höttl, gesteuert vom CIC in Österreich, hatte bereits in allen Tagen beim SD gelernt, daß der Fachmann sich auch um dunkle Dinge kümmern muß, die im eigenen Bau passieren. Ein gutes Gedächtnis hatte Höttl seit je.

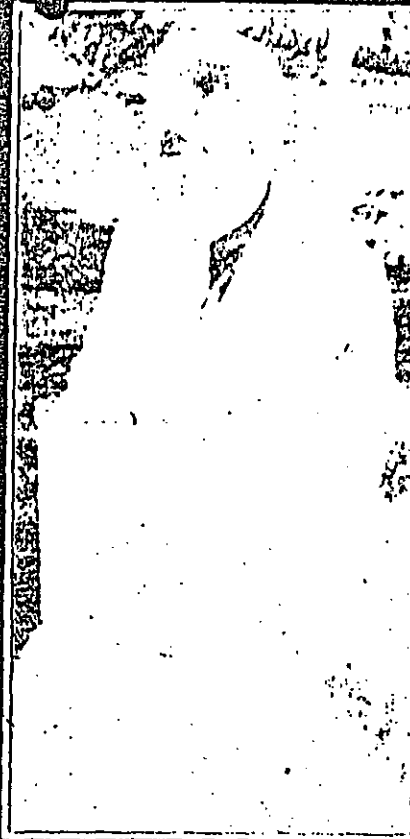
Nachdem der Linzer CIC 1948 Höttl wegen „Ineffektivität“ seiner nachrichtendienstlichen Arbeit „abgehängt“ hatte, tröpfelte er (durch Mittelsleute) der Zollfahndungsstelle München Hinweise über die US-nachrichtendienstlichen Schwarzhandels-geschäfte ins Ohr.

Unter Kennern der Verhältnisse wurden daher in den beiden letzten Wochen Werten veranstaltet, wieviel Tage wohl Höttl dort beim CIC einsitzen werde. Eine Halbtage von Wochen, Monaten oder gar ein Verfahren gegen ihn wurden gar nicht erst diskutiert.

Tatsächlich sind in den Personalakten des Dr. Wilhelm Höttl, die bei US-Behörden in Deutschland und Österreich geführt werden, nur sehr wenige Hinweise über dessen kommerzielle Ambitionen. Hier ein Akten-Bericht aus den Unterlagen der Dienststellen der amerikanischen Spionage-Abwehr über Höttl:

Von der katholischen Jugendbewegung „Neuland“ her war Höttl in Österreich zur SS und später zum SD gekommen. Beim SD-Lettabschnitt Wien bearbeitete er u. a. Kirchenfragen und wurde später im das Amt Ausland (Vn) des Reichsicherheitshauptamtes kommandiert, wo er ursprünglich Italien, später Balkanfragen bearbeitete.

Höttl hatte enge Beziehungen zu dem Nachfolger Reinhard Heydrichs, SS-Obergruppenführer Dr. Kaltenbrunner, der selber Österreicher war und 1942 Chef des Reichsicherheitshauptamtes wurde.



Die Beziehungen...
Nachrichtenhändler und SS-Führer Höttl

Kaltenbrunner hatte seinen jungen Freund Höttl sogar 1945 dazu ausersehen, einen Ministerposten in einer NS-separatistischen Regierung Österreichs zu besetzen.

Bereits an dieser Stelle findet sich nun in der amerikanischen Personalakte Höttls ein Sonderheft. Er enthält gewisse Ver-



waren aus geschäftlicher Natur.
Sowjet-Spion und US-Leutnant Verber

dachtsmomente, daß Höttl im Besitze des ausgenutwobenen SS-Schatzes sei.

Der CIC schätzt Höttls monatlichen Lebensaufwand zwischen 10.000 bis 14.000 Schillinge (1000 Schillinge = 100,00 DM). Erst kürzlich hat er seiner Mutter eine eigene Wohnung gekauft, er unterstützt laufend seine Schwiegereltern und benötigt für den Komfort seiner fünfköpfigen Familie ein Dienstmädchen, ein Kinder mädchen und eine Sekretärin.

Zwei Spuren haben die Amerikaner in dieser Richtung verfolgt:

● Nach der einen Version soll Höttl kurz vor Kriegsende größere Devisenbestände in der Schweiz deponiert haben.

● Nach der anderen soll sein Nibelungen-Schatz in unmittelbarer Umgebung seines Wohnortes lagern.

Wichtigste Indiz, daß Höttl im Auftrage des in Nürnberg gehetzten Gestapo-Chefs Kaltenbrunner Werte des Dritten Reiches auf die Selts gebracht habe, kurz vor seiner Hinrichtung hatte Kaltenbrunner ein letztes Gespräch mit seiner Frau, Kaltenbrunner: „Sorge Dich nicht, die Zukunft für Dich und die Kinder wird Höttl sicherstellen.“ Höttl soll im Jahre 1948 von Frau Kaltenbrunner gestellt worden sein. Angeblich konnte er sich an nichts erinnern.

Nach eigenen Angaben hatte Höttl kurz vor Kriegsende Kontakt mit dem damaligen europäischen Chief-Residenten des amerikanischen Nachrichtendienstes (Allen Dulles), der in der Schweiz sei, gehabt. Der CIC war jedoch nicht in der Lage, Höttl nachzuweisen, daß er sich bei dieser Gelegenheit schwarze Konten in der Eidgenossenschaft zugelegt habe.

Ein anderer Hinweis versprach mehr. Höttl freundete sich nämlich in Bad Aussee mit einem jungen Mann namens Fritz Fischer an, dem er regelmäßig für nicht durchschaubare Dienste ein Gehalt zahlte. Fischer ist der Sohn des Verwalters der Salzsalinen in Alt-Aussee und hat Tag und Nacht Zutritt zu den Bergwerken.

Auf folgendem Wege aber soll Höttl in den Besitz größerer Werte gekommen sein.

Während des Krieges hatte der ehemalige SS-Führer einen der reichsten Industriellen Kroatiens, Fritz Westen, genannt „Schwaben-Rothschild“, zum Vertrauensmann. Kurz vor dem Zusammenbruch erreichte Höttl für seinen Freund Westen eine Sondergenehmigung, bei Kaltenbrunner, daß dieser eine Lkw-Kolonie aus Jugoslawien herausbringen dürfe.

Der Transport bestand vor allem aus Goldwaren, Devisen, Schmuck, Teppichen und wertvollen Maschinen und wurde von dem persönlichen Fahrer Höttls angeführt.

Westen, der an Elektrizitätswerken in Italien führend beteiligt war, in Österreich durch Mittelsmänner große Anteile am Holzgroßhandel besaß und mit 1000 Schlafwagen während des Heiligen Jahres in Rom das größte Unterkunftsunternehmen aufzur, wurde nach dem Kriege Liechtensteiner Bürger. Der CIC will es ihm erwiesen hinstellen, daß Höttl an den Werten Westens partizipierte.

Vor zwei Jahren ging dieser Fritz Westen in betrunkenem Zustand in Innsbruck eine Wette ein: er werde einem der besten österreicherischen Polizisten auf der Straße eine Ohrfeige verabreichen, und die Angelegenheit mit 100 Schillingen bestrafen.

Allen Dulles, der Bruder des jetzigen amerikanischen Außenministers, John Foster Dulles, ist zur Zeit Chef der Zentralbehörde des US-Nachrichtendienstes, der CIA.