

THE LABOR BRANCH OF THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES:
AN ACADEMIC STUDY FROM A PUBLIC HISTORY PERSPECTIVE

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List of Abbreviations

CD	Censorship and Documents Branch of the OSS
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COI	Coordinator of Information (predecessor of the OSS)
DIP	Division of Intelligence Procurement
DO	Directorate of Operations, a branch of the CIA
FBI	United States Federal Bureau of Investigations
G-2	The United States Army's intelligence service
HUMINT	Human intelligence
ISK	<i>Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund</i> , or International Socialist Militant League
J/E	Joan/Eleanor, a communications device created by the OSS during World War II
JCS	United States Joint Chiefs of Staff
Kripo	<i>Kriminalpolizei</i> , or criminal police. The German police force in the Third Reich
OWI	United States Office of War Information
PI	British Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department
R&D	Research and Development Branch of the OSS
SD	<i>Sicherheitsdienst</i> , or the German Security Police during the Third Reich
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force
SI	Secret Intelligence Branch of the OSS
SIGINT	Signals intelligence
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SO	Secret Operations Branch of the OSS
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i> , or the German "Protective Squadron" that served as the Nazi Party paramilitary organization in the Third Reich.
X-2	Counterespionage Branch of the OSS

Introduction

Historical fiction is a popular form of literary entertainment in the United States. Novels with historical themes like World War II, the Civil War, life in the Victorian age, and the Cold War appear regularly in bookstores and often have large readerships.¹ Unfortunately, many of these “historical” fictions are created without careful research, leaving the audience unsure of what events in the novel are historically accurate versus those that are seated in the author’s imagination. Some authors also incorporate popular historical misconceptions in their work, which serves only to further myths about and romanticize the past.

Historical fiction thus is a genre that needs to be handled with care. If a novel is not well-researched and puts forth only the author’s preconceptions about the past, readers are left ill-informed about historical events and, more importantly, what history is. This situation contributes to the ongoing inability of American adults to answer simple questions about history correctly and also makes readers less likely to think critically about past events. A recent study by historians Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen revealed that Americans ranked the trustworthiness of nonfiction history books only 6.4 out of a possible 10, with 10 being the most trustworthy.² It is vital that historians writing fiction keep Rosenzweig and Thelen’s findings in mind when reaching out to audiences beyond the academy, and strive to increase the trustworthiness of their publications if they wish to use historical fiction as a teaching tool.

¹ The Historical Novel Society, accessible online at www.historicalnovelsociety.org, attempts to review every work of historical fiction published in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia each year. On average, the Society reviews more than 800 works annually, providing insight into the popularity of historical fiction. Similarly, simply browsing the bestseller lists in the *New York Times* and *Publishers Weekly* reveals numerous novels with historical themes.

² Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 234-235.

One segment of historical fiction that leads the way in terms of historical accuracy and trustworthiness among readers is historical romance. Janice Radway, in *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, notes that female readers of historical romance novels say such books “teach them about faraway places and times and instruct them in the customs of other cultures.”³ Many authors of historical romance novels go to great lengths to research the era in which their tales of passion and love are set, and do so with the knowledge that their readers often pass the historical information they learn in the romance novel to friends and family members.⁴ An editor at Dell Publishing maintained an extensive research library on the English Regency in order to fact-check manuscripts in one particular romance series, revealing her understanding that “instruction is one of the principal functions books can perform for their readers.”⁵

Rosenzweig and Thelen also provide insight into how the academy defines history and how the American public defines it. The distance between the two is a space that historical fiction may be able to help bridge. For academic historians, the focus on the past tends to be towards large narratives that act as frameworks for their particular areas of study. For example, Rosenzweig, as a historian, expected to hear stories from survey respondents about “how the defeat of the South in the Civil War...shaped their identities...about how grandparents encountered ‘No Irish Need Apply’ signs...but these stories weren’t there. Neither were narratives of American national progress—the landing of the Pilgrims, the signing of the Constitution....”⁶ Instead, they discovered that Americans are acquainted with the past through their own families, their stories, their

³ Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 107.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 107, 111-112.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶ Rosenzweig and Thelen, *Presence of the Past*, 9.

ancestors' experiences. If a historian wants to reach a public audience through fiction, she must keep this in mind and write in such a way that a reader be able to identify with the story and characters, rather than create a set of circumstances so abstract as to make it feel like a textbook.

Fortunately, there are ways for authors of historical fiction to avoid the pitfalls of historical generalization and misinformation. This consists mainly of conducting responsible, scholarly historical research into the topic presented in the novel.

Investigating primary documents and sources, interviewing individuals who witnessed historical events or participated in them, becoming familiar with the secondary literature of a topic, and acquainting oneself with the real characters and settings of a past event are all crucial ways of making a work of historical fiction something far more valuable than just a novel. With the proper research, a historical novel can become a teaching tool that reaches more audiences than scholarly history texts and that is also, to a majority of people, more enjoyable to read.

Inclusion of either endnotes or footnotes within a historical novel also gives such a work a scholarly grounding that is often absent from historical fiction. By providing a reader with sources to turn to for further information and to document the work's accuracy, an author demonstrates that she has conducted her own research and is able to verify certain historical events. Similarly, using a note system allows an author to clarify when she is taking liberties with past events. Whether this consists of using an amalgamation of individuals from the past to create a fictional character or describing a certain setting with some exaggeration, the author can explain briefly in an endnote that which is not historically accurate versus that which is.

Including primary documents within the novel itself is another way of ensuring that readers are educated and entertained. Non-scholars are generally unfamiliar with historical documents, what they look like, how much or how little information they hold, their need for interpretation, and how powerful they can be to view for oneself. Seeing a memo signed by Franklin Roosevelt firsthand can be far more effective and exciting than making up quotation from him during a fictionalized dialog in a novel. Displaying and editing select documents is a potent way of both allowing the reader to become more intimate with the past as well as learning about history.

For the average writer, this emphasis on historical accuracy and responsibility might be overwhelming. However, to a historian venturing into the world of historical fiction, there can be no other way. A historian has been trained in all the necessary methods of research and notation, and it is her responsibility to write historical fiction as carefully and thoroughly as though she was creating an article for a historical journal. Yet there are two differences that the historian must take into account when writing historical fiction. The first is that historical fiction is generally designed to tell a story, not to argue the importance of that story explicitly. While the author does imply the significance of the events being addressed, most works of fiction do not ask the questions that historical monographs begin with. This can be difficult concept to grasp for the academic historian who wishes to write historical fiction. One must decide before beginning the writing process how to incorporate the significance of the history being explained into the narrative. Potential ways of doing this include having the characters ask the questions that the historian normally would begin with, writing a brief foreword or appendix clarifying the historical significance of the topic, including reference notes, working it into the

characters' dialog, or writing the historical portions as a flashback, which enables the author to include commentary on what happened in the past and its impact on later times.

The other thing that is different is her audience. No longer can she rely on jargon that only her scholarly peers can understand. Instead, she must focus on presenting her research in an entertaining and educating way to individuals who wish to spend their free time reading about the past, with a twist of fiction thrown in. It is the task of the historian, then, to revamp the genre of historical fiction, to make this written history more accessible to a wide readership and more valuable to professionally trained scholars.

There are also similarities between history and fiction that can make combining the two easier. As all historians should recognize, one can never know all of the exact facts and details about the past. The nature of history simply does not allow for such knowledge, and as a result history can never be complete, nor can it be entirely accurate. There exists in all historical studies the need for some conjecture, some guesswork, and some filling-in of gaps within the story. In its simplest form, these parts of historical scholarship are fiction. They may be based on surrounding facts and educated inferences, but they remain creations of the historian. Simon Schama took this concept to the extreme in *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)*, writing two historical events from the points of view of various participants, some real and some invented by Schama, in each event. The first deals with the British conquest at the Battle of Quebec led by General James Wolfe, and its far-reaching impact, not only on those who participated in it, but those who painted it and wrote about it.⁷ The second episode in the book deals with the murder of a prominent Bostonian and traces the investigation, trial, and conviction of

⁷ Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 327.

the murderer, told through trial transcripts, letters, journals, and, most importantly, Schama's own imagining of the events.⁸

This methodology allows Schama to illuminate more fully the historical events he is investigating and also gives him license to fill in the gaps that he encounters in his historical research. The end result is a powerful combination of history and fiction that remains at once educational and accessible to a non-scholarly audience. His endnotes clarify what is based on fact and what he has invented, and also directs readers to the sources that he used. Overall, Schama harmoniously marries fiction and history.

This is not to imply that methods like those used in *Dead Certainties* are accepted by all academic historians. Cushing Strout explains some of the complexities between history and fiction, and the dangers of closely combining the two, namely reducing historiography to "arbitrary aesthetic and political preferences." Yet he also reminds the reader that realism in fiction can enlarge historical understanding.⁹ This ongoing debate amongst historians and literary scholars underlines both how carefully historical fiction must be handled and also how valuable it is.

I believe that historical fiction, as a genre, can find a place within historical scholarship when done responsibly. The realm of public history perhaps is the best place to associate historical fiction within the world of historical scholarship. Public history aims to teach history to adults and children outside of traditional classroom settings. Keeping in mind that not everyone learns best from lectures or textbooks, teachers of

⁸ Schama, 331.

⁹ Cushing Strout, "Border Crossings: History, Fiction, and Dead Certainties," *History and Theory* Vol. 31, No. 2, May 1992, 153-162. I also suggest works by Carlo Ginzburg, Natalie Zemon Davis, Hayden White, Roland Barthes, and Lionel Grossman to gain a fuller understanding of the debate between academics on the role of fiction in history and vice versa.

history are burdened with finding new ways to teach the past. For adults and children alike, this can be accomplished by contextualizing factual, researched history within the wider framework of a fictional story. While the characters or events in historical fiction may be invented, or based on a conglomeration of real historical characters or events, the possibility exists to use such elements within the story to teach facts about the past. Using the tools I have mentioned above—endnotes, primary documents, historiographies—historical fiction becomes a means of both improving the educational resources available outside of the history classroom and garnering more support for public history within the field of historical scholarship.

With the above opinion in mind, I set out to begin my public history Master's thesis. My aim was to conduct the research necessary to write a responsible historical novel about the Office of Strategic Services' (OSS) infiltration of Nazi Germany.

The first chapter of this thesis provides the background of the Labor Branch and the OSS as a whole. From the OSS's inception in 1942 through its postwar transformation into the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), I cover the evolution of the foreign intelligence community in the United States. This includes sections on the politics within the OSS, the reasons the Labor Branch has not been a focal point of OSS research, and quirks about the Labor Branch that make it stand out from the rest of the OSS. The Labor Branch's specific role in the infiltration of Germany is also discussed in chapter one.

Chapter two is an extension of the materials presented in the first chapter. It focuses on a section of the Labor Branch called Bach Section. This section was devoted to making the infiltration of Germany possible by creating cover stories, forging documents, and preparing agents to go to Germany in the midst of Nazism and be able to

survive, gather intelligence, and create resistance networks. The bravery, intelligence, and will of the Bach Section are clear in this chapter, and the reader will recognize that, without the Labor Branch and their colleagues at the Bach Section, no one, be they with the OSS or British intelligence, would have had much success in infiltrating Germany during World War II.

My third chapter is a bit more complicated than the first two. In it, I discuss the nuances of writing historical fiction responsibly and as a viable means of public history. As guidance, I undertake a discussion of the OSS in published works of fiction. I give an overview of the way different novelists handle the bureaucracy, agents, accomplishments, and failures of the OSS, revealing what I feel each does effectively and poorly. While discussing each of the potential strengths and pitfalls of historical fiction, especially as seen in the OSS novels, I then provide real examples of how historical fiction might work with a case study involving the OSS Labor Branch. One particular OSS mission, known as the Hammer Mission, serves as my example. I detail different parts of the mission, the men who participated, their training, and the mission itself and discuss how to use these details within a novel.

Before I begin, however, I feel it is important to include in this introduction a brief historiography of the OSS in order to enable the reader to better understand this paper's contribution to that historiography, a topic which will be covered in the conclusion.

When OSS monographs were first published, they suffered greatly from the lack of available primary sources. For thirty years after the deconstruction of the OSS in 1945, historians and other researchers had to rely solely on oral history, personal memory, and a

few minor, non-contextualized documents indirectly relating to the OSS that had been released or recovered over the years. Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden's *Sub Rosa: The O.S.S. and American Espionage*, released in 1946, was the first attempt at a history of the OSS. Unfortunately, it has no bibliography or notes.¹⁰ An examination of the notes and bibliography in R. Harris Smith's *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (1972) reveals his reliance on memoirs, personal correspondence with former OSS staff, and some secondary literature.¹¹ He simply could not go to an archive and find original primary source material because it had not been made available.

Fortunately, in 1976, the first major OSS report was released by the government. *War Report of the OSS*, prepared by the U. S. War Department, was originally written in 1947, but for thirty years it was deemed too sensitive to release to the public due to the in-depth discussion it provides about the hierarchy and structure of the OSS.¹² A second volume of the *War Report*, entitled *The Overseas Targets*, was also published in 1976 and provides a breakdown of missions and actions undertaken in each theater of the war.¹³ Together, the two volumes of the report provide insight into the nature of the OSS and the operations it conducted. The release of these two top-secret reports was the first time any OSS document of major significance was made available to scholars, and was followed by the release of many other documents, memos, and reports. This slow release of documents impacted scholars' understanding of the OSS' many facets and fundamentally changed the historiography of the OSS.

¹⁰ Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *Sub Rosa: The O.S.S. and American Espionage* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946).

¹¹ R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 387-435.

¹² United States War Department, *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker and Company, 1976).

¹³ United States War Department, *The Overseas Target: War Report of the OSS: Volume 2* (New York: Walker and Company, 1976).

However, the most fascinating case in the progression of the OSS historiography involves the infiltration of Germany in 1944 and 1945, arguably the agency's single greatest achievement and the focus of my thesis research. The OSS sent over 200 men and women successfully into Germany proper, where they gathered intelligence about military strength and movement, reported on the status of infrastructure and industrial production, circulated both overt and covert propaganda, established and improved resistance groups, and even infiltrated the ranks of the Gestapo. Interestingly, the early histories of the OSS do little justice and pay little heed to the events that took place within Germany. Once more, the availability of information about OSS actions changed that situation dramatically and, after 1978, a slew of books dealing with different aspects of the infiltration of Germany appeared.

Before examining two of those books, *Sub Rosa* and *OSS* must first be analyzed for their handling of the infiltration of Germany. This will establish a means for comparison with works that followed the opening of the OSS documents. Amazingly, of the seven specific cases that Alsop and Braden emphasize in *Sub Rosa*, not a single one deals with the infiltration of the German state, although their two major cohesive themes in the book are intelligence and resistance. These two organizing themes fit perfectly with what the OSS accomplished in Germany, and the absence of any discussion about the infiltration is striking. This absence implies that the authors either did not know about the penetration of Germany or had a different understanding of its success and significance.

Interestingly, Smith's *OSS* has a chapter supposedly devoted to discussing the infiltration, but a simple reading of the chapter reveals Smith's consistent inability to actually tell what happened. He says, "...OSS infiltration of Germany became of supreme

importance in the fall of that year [1944]...,” implying the start of a discussion about that very topic.¹⁴ However, the following paragraphs have nothing to do with the importance of infiltration or even *if* there was any infiltration! The rest of the chapter continues to dance around the issue. He identifies who he says would have been involved in arrangements to infiltrate Germany, says that these people wanted to do so, even mentions the names of some infiltration missions, but never addresses the issue of how they did it. When he does lead the reader into thinking he will be discussing infiltration by mentioning dealings the OSS had with German groups and officials, he then undermines himself because these dealings had little aspects of infiltration—they were usually just negotiations.¹⁵ Despite Smith’s best efforts, with the sources he had available he was clearly unable to do justice to the level of significance of the infiltration of Germany. He obviously did recognize that it was important—he could not, however, tell how it was done.

Concerning the issue of infiltrating Germany, the sudden availability of OSS documents after 1976 turned the historiography of the OSS upside down, and two books in particular are indicative of the changes and advancements that have been made. The first, Joseph Persico’s *Piercing the Reich: The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents during World War II*, was published in 1979 and begins with the line, “This story could not be told for thirty years.” The story revealed is so richly nuanced and detailed, especially when compared with Smith’s book from just seven years before, that the value of OSS historiography grew exponentially with the utilization of the resources that Persico includes. Told in a chronological narrative, this book traces a multitude of

¹⁴ Smith, *OSS*, 227.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 212-213.

individual missions, how they were planned, who was involved, and how they were executed. They range from the so-called tourist missions where OSS agents would walk or drive across the front lines into Germany, gather general intelligence for a few days, then return to their handlers on the Allied side of the line, to the so-called HAMMER mission, whereby two former residents of Berlin who had been recruited and trained by the OSS would parachute back into Germany, make their way to the capital, establish contact with a known resistance group, transmit intelligence via radio, and prepare for the reception of more agents.¹⁶ In recounting this and many other missions, Persico reveals the agents' names, cover stories, personal experiences and biographies, and adventures within the OSS. He supports all of this with primary source material, and the result is a book so highly detailed that some of the significance of what these missions involved is lost or overemphasized.

Indeed, the greatest criticism of Persico's work is that he becomes so involved in telling the stories of the OSS infiltration of Germany for the very first time that he cannot objectively explain what it all meant. Other books published immediately after the opening of the OSS archives have the same problem. Time needed to pass before scholars became less concerned with relaying the stories and more interested in examining how such missions relating to the penetration of Germany fit in the larger realm of the OSS, intelligence history, and World War II. This was best accomplished in 1999 by a German historian, Christof Mauch, in *The Shadow War Against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service*.

¹⁶ Joseph Persico, *Piercing the Reich: The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents during World War II* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), 114-115, 177.

Unlike Persico, who jumps straight into the details of the infiltration, Mauch establishes “The Place of the OSS in American History” and the “Anatomy of the OSS,” according to two of his chapter sub-headings. Doing so provides the reader with some perspective on what he will encounter in terms of the infiltration and, essentially, gives context to all the missions he discusses. While Mauch delves briefly into exciting stories of espionage, parachuting, and sabotage, they are tempered by his discussions of what these missions accomplished. He claims “The significance of individual OSS projects was minor and...had hardly any impact on the outcome of the Second World War. The sum total of all the single operations did amount to something weightier. If [the OSS] had not existed, the end of the war would have been drawn out for at least several weeks.”¹⁷ Because of this argument, Mauch’s book does not lapse into simple retellings of missions and operations as do so many books about the OSS. His work, very heavily based in primary source research, instead finds a healthy balance between what the OSS did and the impact that those actions had.

This is a clear change from the other works examined in this brief historiography. The progression of the analysis of the OSS’ actions is perhaps natural, going first from a simple retelling of oral and popular stories, to a historical review by R. Harris Smith, to Persico’s natural fascination with the new possibility to accurately tell stories of espionage and intrigue. It is only fitting that one of the most recent books on the OSS, in *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, builds upon all of these traditions and takes the best parts from each. Mauch recognizes that the stories of individual agents, male and female,

¹⁷ Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America’s Wartime Secret Intelligence Service*, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 219.

deserve to be told, but at the same time analyzed in such a way that they are not left to stand on their own.

Most importantly, the growth in the level of scholarship on the OSS could not have been seen had the primary sources not become available in the mid-1970s. It is safe to say that, by the time the *War Reports* and a multitude of other documents were released, the historiography and study of the OSS had become stagnant through thirty years of withheld information. The combination of new sources and old traditions in the OSS historiography has raised the quality of OSS scholarship at present to its most advanced.

I believe that the information that follows will continue to build upon this OSS historiography and introduce new information and sources. My focus on the Labor Branch of the OSS is one of the most in-depth ventures into this particular subsection of OSS history. Thus I set out from here to lead you into a world of spies, intrigue, cover stories, and to be fair, bureaucracy. The OSS was a government agency, after all. But even bureaucracy can be interesting—I hope I have made it so.

Chapter One

The OSS Labor Branch and the Infiltration of Nazi Germany

The agents went into Germany with radios in their packs and cover stories committed to memory. They arrived on foot, pedaled into enemy territory on bicycles, and parachuted from planes on moonless nights. Once inside the German heartland, they sabotaged factories and machines, recruited laborers to their underground cause, and infiltrated the Reich's postal service with propaganda. Such agents had one thing in common—their infiltration was planned, prepared, and executed by the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). This agency, though only in existence from June 1942 through September 1945, became the United States' main intelligence organization during World War II.¹⁸ With its vast conglomeration of desks, branches, and divisions, the OSS was involved in a wide range of activities, from propaganda and infiltration to the creation of specialized weapons and disguises. Yet some branches were more active and important than others. The Labor Branch, for example, facilitated the penetration of Germany and caused an entire division of the OSS to be rearranged using it as a model. The Labor Branch's willingness to collaborate with other intelligence branches and agencies, its early planning for infiltration missions, and its insistence that Germany could be infiltrated enabled the successful penetration of Nazi Germany in 1944 and 1945 by nearly 200 agents.¹⁹

¹⁸ The OSS was dismantled in late 1945 and reorganized in 1947 by Harry Truman into the Central Intelligence Agency. For information on this topic, see Thomas Troy's *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1981).

¹⁹ Walter Lord, Report, Penetration Projects, June 4, 1945, Folder 59, Box 14, Entry 99, Record Group (RG) 226, Records of the Office of Strategic Services, 1919-1949, National Archives, College Park, Maryland (NA). Also, in the interest of clarity, in this paper the penetration of Germany refers to the

Before the Labor Branch can be examined, the development of the OSS must first be analyzed. The Office of Strategic Services was organized in 1942 to replace, consolidate, and clarify the intelligence responsibilities of its predecessor, the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI). Operational since June of 1941, the COI found itself quickly embroiled in turf battles with the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Army's intelligence branch, G-2, arguing over who could conduct cryptanalysis, covert operations, propaganda, and special operations.²⁰ The crisis inherent in this bickering became apparent in December 1941. Although the COI had come into existence six months before the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, army and naval intelligence had never allowed the COI to examine the intercepted Japanese radio traffic that hinted an attack was imminent.²¹ The attack by the Japanese demonstrated the critical need for a centralized foreign intelligence agency.

In an effort to coordinate the gathering and examination of intelligence and to resolve the squabbling between the plethora of American intelligence bodies, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Office of War Information (OWI) and the OSS in 1942. OWI was to handle matters of propaganda. The OSS, meanwhile, began planning and operating "such special services as may be directed by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff."²² While this directive was vague, it allowed the OSS to set up its new staff in a centralized plan that American intelligence had never had before. The army and navy would maintain their individual intelligence branches, but the OSS was clearly to be the

infiltration of pre-war German borders by Allied agents. The territory referred to here does *not* include territories that Germany acquired during the war, such as France, Czechoslovakia, or the Low Countries. Only Germany proper is discussed here.

²⁰ Joseph E. Persico, *Roosevelt's Secret War: FDR and World War II Espionage* (New York: Random House, 2001), 112-113.

²¹ William Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988), 7.

²² R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, 2.

dominant agency in foreign intelligence-gathering and analysis. By putting the OSS under the direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Roosevelt also ensured that the military would have a direct relationship with the OSS, that military leaders would be fully advised of OSS achievements and discoveries, and thus be able to use any intelligence the OSS gathered in military actions.²³

Despite Roosevelt's intentions to clear up competition between agencies, when the COI was reconfigured into the OSS there initially was misunderstanding and disagreement between OSS staff and the JCS over budget issues, responsibilities of the OSS, and acceptable psychological warfare operations by the OSS. A forceful memorandum from OSS Director William Donovan to a JCS committee finally resolved this quarrel. By December, the OSS staff had some clear direction on their duties: "the planning, development, coordination and execution of the military program for psychological warfare" and the "compilation of such political, psychological, sociological and economic information as may be required by military operations."²⁴ In 1943, the JCS gave the OSS an even more explicit directive. It would now

maintain liaison officers with Allied intelligence services, get information from and give support to underground groups, conduct propaganda, and accumulate and analyze economic, political and military information that would be used to prepare studies on how to "enforce our will upon the enemy by means other than military action."²⁵

With this directive, the OSS gained permission to become a true intelligence agency capable of spying, infiltrating enemy nations, and conducting sabotage and covert special operations. It would prove to be surprisingly capable in each of these tasks.

²³ Casey, *Secret War Against Hitler*, 11.

²⁴ United States War Department, *War Report of the OSS*, 105.

²⁵ Casey, *Secret War Against Hitler*, 12.

When Roosevelt formed the OSS, he appointed William “Wild Bill” Donovan director. Previously, Donovan had been the driving force behind the creation of COI. He traveled to Britain in 1940 on the orders of President Roosevelt and saw first-hand that country’s advanced network of espionage and intelligence groups. The British were happy to see Donovan, for they hoped to show the Americans the advantages of having a coordinated secret intelligence service. After all, the British recognized the United States as their best potential ally in the war against Germany. Helping the Americans understand the utility of secret intelligence and preparing them to organize their own American agency could only be of benefit to Britain in the future.²⁶ Donovan thus became the first link between U. S. and British intelligence agencies.

Donovan, born in New York in 1883, had fought bravely in the First World War, earning the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Medal of Honor as a colonel. After the war, he campaigned unsuccessfully for both lieutenant governor and governor of New York. He was, however, appointed a U. S. assistant attorney general in 1924 and through this position gained more contacts and influence in the federal government. He traveled often, keeping himself apprised of the military and political changes in Europe and in Germany in particular. He even had the opportunity in 1937 to attend maneuvers of the German reserves, observe their training, and inspect new German tanks. He included his observations in a report to the U. S. government that the War Department commended as “valuable and pertinent.” By 1940, the United States was on a path towards involvement in the war in Europe. Roosevelt called on Donovan to begin investigating the creation of a secret intelligence group. While Donovan initially

²⁶ Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, trans. Jeremiah M. Riemer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 6.

had hoped Roosevelt would call on him to become Secretary of State, he took his new appointment as an emissary to Britain in stride. This position would eventually lead to Donovan's selection as director of the COI and OSS.²⁷

Understanding Donovan's background is vital to understanding the OSS, as he had very direct influence on its day-to-day operation and organization. His outgoing personality led to a tendency to hire others who were audacious and extroverted, contributing to the long-running joke that OSS actually stood for "Oh, so social!" He traveled widely through the war zones, sent and received countless memos and reports, and oversaw the entire agency. This included organizing the OSS into a system of branches and offices that can be generalized as follows: at the top of the hierarchy was the Director (Donovan), aided by a Planning Group and Planning Staff. Beneath the Director were two Assistant Directors, who then oversaw the various upper-level managerial departments. Beneath these groups were the heart and soul of OSS, the Strategic Services Operation and Intelligence, which each contained a number of more specialized divisions overseen by a deputy director. Other logistical branches appeared further down the flow chart.²⁸ One must be aware, however, that this hierarchy was not static. Branches came under new leadership, new branches were formed and others were disbanded over the years, and some branches even took over others, making this a simplified representation of how the OSS was arranged (see Appendix, Fig. 1).

The most interesting work done by the OSS fell to the groups under the headings Strategic Services Operation and Intelligence. Strategic Services branches were supposed to "effect physical subversion of the enemy." Functions included sabotage and support

²⁷ Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1981), 23-32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.

and supply of resistance groups. Morale Operations specialized in so-called “black” propaganda, which is “subversive by every device, disguises its source, and is disowned by the government using it.”²⁹ Maritime Unit, as the name suggests, undertook Special Operations (SO) missions by sea: infiltrating agents, supplying resistance groups, executing maritime sabotage, and developing effective equipment to make such tasks possible and more successful. Other branches of Strategic Services Operation had similar goals, and the division can be summarized as the one responsible for physical action by the OSS.³⁰

The Intelligence group members were more subtle in their methods. Research and Analysis staff, for example, were a large group of talented historians, economists, psychologists, and other academics whose purpose was to understand the enemy and to analyze all intelligence gathered by the OSS. Secret Intelligence’s (SI) objective was to “obtain by secret means information which cannot otherwise be secured and which is not elsewhere available....An effective secret intelligence organization is one which not only can obtain such information at random but can secure it when needed.”³¹ This necessitated organizing Geographic Desks around the world to gather specific intelligence from specific places, thereby adding another layer to the OSS hierarchy. Finally, X-2, or Counterespionage, “embraces not only the protection of the intelligence interests of the government it serves, but, by control and manipulation of the intelligence operations of other nations, it performs a dynamic function in discerning their plans and intentions, as well as in deceiving them.”³² Thus, X-2 was OSS’ means to monitor enemy

²⁹ U. S. War Department, *War Report*, 211.

³⁰ U. S. War Department, *War Report*, 205-230.

³¹ U. S. War Department, *War Report*, 179.

³² U. S. War Department, *War Report*, 188.

intelligence services and protect America's intelligence as well. Overall, Intelligence was responsible for both the gathering and analysis of intelligence information.

Within this web of groups, branches, and divisions lay a number of smaller groups. One such branch was the Labor Branch, which initially fell under the direction of Secret Intelligence but eventually incorporated elements of Special Operations as well. The Labor Branch was established early in the history of the OSS, in July of 1942, and its original goal was to gather intelligence by working with established and underground labor organizations in the hopes of learning about enemy industrial and production capabilities.³³ It was made up of individuals who

knew labor problems, and who understood and respected the points of view of labor and its leaders—who had or could inspire their confidence.... At the same time, rivalries among various factions in the field of trade unionism made it impractical to staff the Section with men from the unions themselves....[they] sought to recruit...men who were thoroughly familiar with labor questions but who were not identified with any particular labor element or point of view.³⁴

As a result, a number of labor attorneys and scholarly experts found themselves on the OSS payroll. Absent from OSS, however, was anyone associated with any U. S. labor faction. This was not due to a lack of intelligence or ability among union leaders, but to avoid bringing the harsh rivalries between leaders of the U. S. labor movement into the OSS.³⁵ The Branch stationed their labor experts across Europe and North Africa, focusing on labor issues in both enemy and neutral European territories. These former attorneys, scholars, and union sympathizers would establish the Labor Branch's most significant efforts in Germany.

³³ George O. Pratt to David K.E. Bruce, OSS Memorandum, Plans for Proposed Operations on the Continent—Labor Desk, March 23, 1944, Folder 493 (ii), Box 48, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

³⁴ U. S. War Department, *War Report*, 184.

³⁵ Joseph Persico, *Piercing the Reich: The Penetration of Nazi Germany by American Secret Agents During World War II* (New York: Viking Press, 1979), 19.

The OSS did not initially comprehend the value of labor groups in intelligence work. Before the creation of the OSS and its Labor Branch, an Austrian émigré and former Communist named Paul Hagen approached the COI office in New York. Hagen had already distinguished himself in the United States by publishing *Will Germany Crack?*, a 1942 book that pointed out Germany's military and home front weaknesses at a time when the German army was rolling across Europe. This work impressed a number of people both in the U. S. military and government, though some were suspicious of Hagen's motives in writing it. Regardless, in April 1942 he approached the COI's chief in New York, Allen Dulles. Dulles was receptive to Hagen, as Hagen was respected for his research on affairs regarding Germany and had proven to be anti-Nazi and anti-fascist. In a memo to Dulles, Hagen pointed out the utility of American cooperation with German underground movements. He outlined ways the U. S. could contact these groups, primarily via a specialized agency designed to build up contacts with underground groups and keep careful records about organized unrest in Germany.³⁶ In a later memo, Hagen pointed out that there were more than six million foreign and conscripted workers in Germany, a potential army of underground anti-Nazi soldiers. He also stressed the number of German labor émigrés in the United States, Britain, and neutral Europe who could become part of the effort to create ties with the German underground labor groups.³⁷ Dulles and his co-workers took Hagen seriously and began to build off of his ideas, and by the time the OSS was formed, an organized Labor Branch was on its feet. Hagen had clearly laid the groundwork for the creation of the Labor Branch.

³⁶ Paul Hagen to Allen Dulles, OSS Memorandum, How to Prepare Collaboration with the Anti-Nazi Underground Movement, April 10, 1942, Folder 88, Box 12, Entry 106, RG 226, NA.

³⁷ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 170-171.

Arthur Goldberg, chief counsel to the Congress of Industrial Organizations, staffer with the COI, and future Supreme Court justice, had also had contact with Hagen in New York and was influential in getting the Labor Branch established. After a few meetings with Hagen, Goldberg recognized the untapped potential of labor intelligence and in a memo to Donovan wrote:

the working people of Europe have unparalleled access to strategic information. We must remember that they man the ships and the trains which transport the men and materiel of war. They pour the steel, dig the coal, process the food and make the munitions which are the sinews of war.... We can take advantage of the hatred of Hitler by members of the European labor movement. They fought the rise of fascism from its inception. They are its implacable enemy.³⁸

This quotation summarizes the inherent value of labor movements within Europe, and especially Germany, to the OSS. If the OSS could tap into the underground labor movements, they suspected they would find a greater wealth of information than could be gathered from any other single source. Donovan bought the argument, and the Labor Branch began its work.

In late August 1942, Donovan sent Goldberg to London to establish a division of the Labor Branch there. The proximity to continental Europe, German labor refugees, exiles, émigrés, and the intelligence operations of the British all influenced the decision to make London a major center of Labor Branch operations. By November, another former labor attorney, George Pratt, took over Labor Branch operations in London, allowing Goldberg to return to the United States. From here he continued to direct the branch's day-to-day operations and work out logistical matters like approving the budget and reviewing mission ideas and plans.³⁹ Pratt, meanwhile, became the lead man on

³⁸ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 19.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

Labor Branch operations in Britain, contacting German labor leaders living in London and setting up the future headquarters for the teams that would penetrate Nazi Germany.

The Labor Branch's first focus was simply gathering information in the United Kingdom and neutral European countries about the labor situation in Germany, and through that information, any other intelligence that could be gleaned about the military, political, and economic situation. Throughout 1942 and 1943, the Labor Branch was able to discern the location of important factories that had previously been unknown to the Allies, troop movements, the locations of ammunition stores, and strategic bombing information. All of this intelligence was gleaned from newspapers smuggled out of Germany to the OSS' friends in labor circles in Britain, the U. S., and North Africa. Their labor friends, especially those who had recently fled the Reich, told the Labor Branch about German methods of serializing manufactured goods, so that when guns, tanks, and vehicles were captured, the Allies could estimate production figures. German laborers abroad also gave detailed information about German uniforms, morale, and infrastructure.⁴⁰ Indeed, the information that the Labor Branch accessed was some of the most useful intelligence gathered during the war, as it allowed the Allies to plan and execute military missions and bombing sorties that otherwise would not have been conducted. While this is often overlooked, the fact remains that the Labor Branch, while small, made contributions throughout the war, and not just regarding the penetration of Germany.

While the Labor Branch originally served as a listening post for incoming intelligence about labor and other elements in and around Germany, by August 1943 it was actively discussing tactics for infiltrating OSS agents into Germany. This change in

⁴⁰ Ibid., 22.

focus was a key to the Labor Branch's success and forced the branch to become more flexible and interactive with the OSS as a whole, for the penetration of Nazi Germany would necessitate a high level of cooperation between itself and other groups within OSS. However, there were a number of tasks that needed to be accomplished before the penetration of Germany could be realistically considered. First, the extent of underground labor movements inside Germany needed to be determined. The Labor Branch also needed to figure out exactly who was involved in labor resistance, where they were located, how they could be contacted, and if they could be trusted. Finally, the OSS needed to work out how they would infiltrate agents into Germany and what they would do once there. Each of these processes must be discussed if the success of the Labor Branch in penetrating Germany is to be understood.

Donovan, Pratt, Goldberg and others recognized that they needed to learn how to obtain information from outside Germany's borders before they had any chance of going into Germany itself. Thus, the first step that the Labor Branch took in becoming more flexible in its means of intelligence gathering was to discern how active the labor resistance in Germany was. In order to do so, the Labor Branch in London began to establish ties with German labor members there. There was a vast and confusing collection of German labor groups in London; some were communist, some were socialist, some had no particular political affiliation, and others had members of mixed political interests. One such group, the Trade Union Center for German Workers in Great Britain, was the largest organized German labor group in Britain and maintained good connections with the International Federation of Trade Unions. This gave the OSS direct

access to the group through international labor channels.⁴¹ Other important groups that the OSS established contact with included the National Group of German Trade Unionists in Great Britain, the International Transport Workers Federation, and the International Socialist Militant League (ISK).⁴²

Members of the OSS' Labor Branch approached these unions in hopes of establishing relationships with individuals who had comprehensive knowledge about the underground in Europe and especially Germany. Eventually, these groups would also be mined for volunteers to return to Germany as OSS agents to start and supply resistance groups, bring back intelligence about industries, and commit acts of sabotage. Yet before any such action could occur, the German laborers first provided lists of underground labor resistance leaders still active in Germany. These names and their corresponding "safe addresses" eventually allowed for Germans and other OSS agents safely to penetrate the Reich.⁴³ The German laborers in Britain, by giving names and addresses of safe contacts in Germany, provided the Labor Branch with vital information without which the penetration of Germany would have been impossible.

The Labor Branch was also the first branch to consider how Allied agents would get into Germany and what they would do once they had established themselves. These plans date to early in the Branch's history, well before any other branch of the OSS or British intelligence had thoroughly considered trying to get information out of the German Reich. The first mention of a possible means of getting OSS Labor agents into

⁴¹ George O. Pratt, OSS Report, The German Political Emigration in Great Britain, August 1943, Folder 198, Box 205, Entry 108, RG 226, NA.

⁴² Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 174.

⁴³ A "safe address" was generally defined as a location, with telephone access or other means of contact, where an agent could stay for at least one night. Carl Auerbach to George O. Pratt, OSS Memorandum, Addresses inside Germany, October 9, 1944, Folder 147, Box 32, Entry 190, RG 226, NA.

the German heartland was in January 1943. Arthur Goldberg, now based in Washington, D.C., wrote to Pratt in London: “we would like to know...whether it is not possible to set up a courier system back and forth between France and Germany through the medium of French workers who go to Germany” as part of the German forced-labor program.⁴⁴ The workers would go in on foot, collect information on the factory in which they worked and the surrounding areas, and, on their return to France, pass information to an OSS agent already established there.⁴⁵ After some consideration, Goldberg and Pratt recognized this as a very feasible option: there were numerous French workers willing to report back against the Germans,⁴⁶ the OSS had means of communicating into and out of France, and such an operation would require little training of the French agents. They thus began campaigning for approval for the mission.

Goldberg went to Donovan with his branch’s idea about using French workers to get intelligence out of Germany and was rebuffed. There were a couple of reasons for the upper-level dismissal of the Labor Branch’s early overtures about using alien laborers to retrieve intelligence from Germany. The major one was the lack of trust that the US government and public alike had towards groups with communist leanings, including

⁴⁴ Arthur Goldberg to George O. Pratt, January 27, 1943, Folder 493, Box 48, Entry 110, RG 226, NA. The Germans conscripted millions of foreign workers to man various factories, farms, and other means of production to free up young German males to go to war. German women, unlike their American counterparts, were not drawn into the manufacturing sector in general.

⁴⁵ The OSS Special Operations branch, in conjunction with the French Desk, had infiltrated agents into occupied France quite easily. These agents generally experienced ease of movement and good abilities to pass information back to London, Washington, Switzerland, and North Africa. Overall, the OSS agents in France did not face many difficulties passing information. This situation is attributable to the extensive resistance movements in France, with which the OSS and other Allied intelligence agencies worked. On this matter, see Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler*, 69-75.

⁴⁶ By the end of 1943, some 666,610 French workers had been conscripted for labor in Germany. This rampant increase (there had only been 134,518 French foreign workers in Germany in late November 1942) had driven many French to the Maquis and other resistance movements, and made many workers increasingly willing to work as agents, spies, and saboteurs for western intelligence organizations. See Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler’s Foreign Workers: Enforced Foreign Labor in Germany Under the Third Reich*, trans. William Templer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 273-278.

labor groups. This was due to the U. S. government's tendency to associate labor groups with Communism. Of course, labor groups were what the Labor Branch worked with, and as a result, few in the OSS respected it or the relationships it had formed with labor circles. "Most OSS staff, if they knew anything at all about the existence of the Labor Division, merely tolerated or ignored it."⁴⁷ This outlook of mistrust would continue after the war, especially by the Central Intelligence Agency, which succeeded the OSS. Unlike the OSS' Labor Branch, which reached out to labor organizations and used their assistance to make the infiltration of Germany possible, CIA-labor relations centered on the CIA attempting to quiet labor organizations and prevent them from gaining influence in any portion of the world. This left-wing against right-wing struggle, seen in the Labor Branch's efforts to get approval to work with labor movements, was dominated by the right-wing by the end of the war, a tradition that continues in the CIA today.⁴⁸

With anti-communist sentiments growing in the United States, the Labor Branch was not immune to these feelings. Indeed, until late 1944, the Labor Branch itself took pains to work with socialists, avoiding Communists whenever possible.⁴⁹ This changed in October 1944, when Bill Donovan, now realizing how desperate the need to get into Germany was becoming, said, "I'd put Stalin himself on the OSS payroll if I thought it would help defeat Hitler." David Bruce, who was chief of the OSS in London, concurred in principle that the OSS should use every possible resource to gain intelligence on or access to Germany. The Labor Branch then received formal authorization to use

⁴⁷ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 168-169.

⁴⁸ Winslow Peck, "The AFL-CIA," in Howard Frazier, ed., *Uncloaking the CIA* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 238-241.

⁴⁹ United States State Department. *OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries*, 8 microfilm reels (Frederick, Maryland: University Publications of America, 1985), reel 7, vol. 6, pg. 237, hereafter *OSS/London War Diary*.

Communists in their infiltration campaign, a move that would be essential in their success.⁵⁰

This did not, however, mean that the use of Communists by the OSS was common knowledge. Indeed, on March 15, 1945 an article appeared in the *New York Times* with the headline, “Denies Reds are in OSS: Donovan Says the Agency Bars Men with Subversive Views.” The article read, in part,

William J. Donovan, Director of the Office of Strategic Services, an investigative and interjurative agency operated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, denied today that there are any Communists and fascists in that organization.... “I have never taken in any man of whom I have even a doubt,” Mr. Donovan said, adding that the OSS was very careful and that since he alone was responsible for the men in the OSS, all doubtful cases were referred personally to him.⁵¹

The article attempted to refute rumors that Communists had infiltrated the OSS and were running missions, which caused a public uproar. So powerful were these rumors that the article mentioned above ran in newspapers around the world. This shows the growing public unease with Communism, which is why, as late as March, 1945, Donovan and the government publicly denied the use of Communists within the OSS. The role of Communists in the OSS remains an issue to this day, with former German Communist OSS agents’ families having to fight for years to obtain the military decorations for which their family members had been recommended.⁵²

⁵⁰ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 167.

⁵¹ “Denies Reds are in OSS: Donovan Says the Agency Bars Men with Subversive Views,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1945. As accessed in Folder HS 8/12, SOE, America, no. 21, British National Archives, Kew, England.

⁵² This comment relates to the recent fight of two German families to obtain the Silver Stars that were recommended for the two agents of the Hammer mission, Paul Linder and Anton Ruh. Jonathan Gould, a New York attorney whose father recruited the two men for the mission, successfully led legal efforts to have the medals awarded. In April 2006, German nationals were awarded the Silver Star for the

There was another reason the Labor Branch's overtures about infiltration were ignored early on. The British, while they had established and maintained relations with German labor groups, had made no efforts to use these connections as a means of getting the best intelligence possible, straight from the Reich itself. They had deemed the infiltration of the Reich impossible by any means very early in the war, and did not seriously think of it anymore. While occasionally the British intelligence agencies would mention teaming up with OSS to make arrangements for penetration, such overtures rarely went beyond a few early discussions. One must also remember that the British had access to Ultra, the German top-secret intelligence code that the British had cracked.⁵³ While the OSS was privy to very little Ultra-based intelligence, by 1943 it seems that the upper-level staff of the OSS agreed with the British that penetrating Germany was not likely, and continued to ignore the Labor Branch's pushes for infiltration.

Social elements may also have played a part in upper echelons of the OSS overlooking the Labor Branch early on. As the OSS counted baseball stars, actors, safecrackers, scientists, tycoons, and socialites amongst its ranks, the Labor Branch tended to be a little less flashy and more reserved. While Labor Branch staff certainly had the credentials as powerful attorneys and scholars, they did not work in the most glamorous arena, were not known outside the labor world, and as such may have been overlooked.⁵⁴

first time in history. Gould has become a valuable source of primary and secondary documents to this author.

⁵³ Nelson MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London: The Story of the OSS* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), 160-163; Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 180-181.

⁵⁴ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 18.

Yet, the Labor Branch was not to be dissuaded from what it saw as a great opportunity to get intelligence from within enemy territory. In a February 1943 memo Goldberg tried once more to convince Donovan of labor movements' utility and value:

Very early in the work of the Office of Strategic Services it was recognized that the labor movements in Axis and occupied countries were important allies in the common struggle against the Axis powers...they constituted the bulwark of the movements of resistance. Although their organizations were dissolved, they nevertheless waged an unremitting struggle underground...We are entering upon a period of the war in which it becomes more important than ever to capitalize upon the forces of internal resistance behind enemy lines.

Successfully entering into action with these groups, whether via contact with French workers or some other way, Goldberg continued, would "mean much in the shortening of the war and in the lessening of our casualties. They will also mean much in the restoration...of democratic institutions" which the underground and exiled labor movements had pledged to reestablish. Yet Donovan and other top-level staffers remained unconvinced of the necessity of using the Labor Branch, or any branch for that matter, to get information out of the Reich.⁵⁵

With the OSS chiefs leery of trusting anyone involved in labor movements and having seemingly shoved the possibility of infiltrating Germany out of their minds, the Labor Branch staffers were left alone to do what they could, in the hopes that, at some point in the course of the war, they would have the opportunity to prove their worth. While other OSS branches continued to send agents into France, Switzerland, and Turkey, the Labor Branch kept coming up with plans to get into Germany. They continued gathering safe addresses, recruited German prisoners of war as agents, readied foreign workers to establish underground resistance groups in Germany, and planned

⁵⁵ Arthur Goldberg to William Donovan, OSS Memorandum, Labor Division of OSS, February 23, 1943, Folder Goldberg, Box 2, Persico Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, CA.

missions to parachute agents into Germany to spread propaganda, send back radio communications, and sabotage German factories. These plans required establishing cover stories and documents for recruited agents, training the recruits, and determining where each agent would best operate. This planning process, though ignored for over a year by the Labor Branch's administrative superiors, would eventually prove crucial to the successful penetration of Germany.

One example of the planning that was underway in 1943 can be seen in the Labor Branch based in Algiers. Under the direction of Gerhard Van Arkel, the Algiers' Labor Desk took the first steps towards recruiting Germans suitable for infiltration. Recruiting from German prisoners held by the British, the Branch, by the beginning of September 1943, had placed seventeen POW agents in training in and around Algiers. The Labor desk in Algiers indeed became so active in German operations that it was unofficially known as the "German Labor Desk."⁵⁶

In spite of this planning and training, the OSS and Allied military commands were unwilling in 1943 and most of 1944 to attempt any sort of infiltration of Germany, especially if it involved using German prisoners to do so. This attitude would change a few months after the Normandy invasion, when the OSS and Allied military commanders realized the invasion had not ended the war as they had expected. That is to say, immediately following the invasion in June of 1944, the American and British armed force commanders and the public alike suffered from a so-called "victory fever," expecting the war to simply wrap up on French soil as a result of an "imminent" German collapse. Of course, this did not happen. While France fell relatively quickly to the Allied

⁵⁶ George O. Pratt to John Creedy, Algiers Labor Desk and Germany, March 5, 1945, Folder 493, Box 48, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

invaders, the German army was able to re-form its lines on the western borders of Germany and prepare for a counterattack.⁵⁷ Yet the Allies continued to underestimate the German resolve and overestimate their own military impact. As late as August 1944, intelligence officers in the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) “had no specific intelligence objectives within Germany and...had not done any planning for tactical intelligence inside Germany.” Nor was the OSS in any mood for talk of German penetration—by this point, Donovan was more concerned about what would become of OSS after the war and how to see out the remainder of the war on a shrinking budget.⁵⁸

By September 1944, the Allies recognized that Germany was not on the verge of collapse as they had imagined. The realization dawned on Donovan and his OSS and military counterparts that, without intelligence from inside Germany itself, the war might drag on endlessly.⁵⁹ Now they were left with the question of how such a seemingly impossible task could be done; after all, the OSS upper-level staff and British intelligence had been saying for years that it could not and did not need to happen, that the risks were too great, that German security was too good. The internal divisions in the OSS, which were inherent ever since its inception and arrangement into a web of divisions, branches, groups, and subunits, finally became operationally apparent. When it came to one of the most crucial moments of the war, when Germany refused to collapse, there was only one

⁵⁷ Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 752.

⁵⁸ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 168.

⁵⁹ Office of Strategic Services, Division of Intelligence Procurement Air Operations Final Report, Appendix 1, June 7, 1945, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

branch in the entire OSS organization that had consistently prepared for the possibility of sending intelligence teams into the German heartland: the Labor Branch.⁶⁰

Fortunately for Donovan and the Labor Branch, senior level OSS staff had finally started to recognize the Branch's value. William Casey, the OSS London Secretariat and future director of the CIA, was the first high-level OSS staff member to call openly for the infiltration of Germany based on the Labor Branch's accomplishments and the insight they had gained over the past two years. As Casey recalled after the war, "the labor desk people were the only people who had any preparation for working into Germany. We had to turn to them to get information about the controls, the rationing, how the hell to stay alive."⁶¹ In August 1944, during a trip through the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations, Casey commented on the Labor Branch:

These fellows here as in ETO [European Theatre of Operations] seem to have shown more forward planning and recruiting for the penetration of Germany than anybody else....I like the way the Labor Desk is integrated into the Central European Division at Bari. They run their operations jointly or in close collaboration with the appropriate geographic desk.

Casey reported that the Labor Branch had fashioned itself into the model branch of the OSS: they worked in conjunction with other agencies and branches and were willing to share information they obtained with other groups in the OSS and other Allies' intelligence services.⁶² This kept the Labor Branch apprised of military, political, social, and economic developments across Europe and especially in Germany and, as a result,

⁶⁰ By the end of the war, other segments of OSS had infiltrated agents as well. Initially, however, the Labor Branch was the only group fully prepared to begin the infiltration. Other OSS branches that participated in the infiltration included the Seventh Army Detachment, which specialized in so-called tourist missions, and Special Operations, which infiltrated a negligible number of missions. See Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 113, 319.

⁶¹ William Casey, interview by Joseph Persico, August 27, 1976, transcript, Folder Casey, Box 1, Persico Papers, Hoover Institute, Stanford, CA, 9-10.

⁶² William Casey to David K.E. Bruce and Colonel J.R. Forgan, OSS Memorandum, August 21, 1944, Folder 21, Box 565, Entry 92, RG 226, NA.

made it the only branch prepared to infiltrate the Reich. Casey would thus become one of the Labor Branch's greatest supporters and help to make it a central component of the OSS, finally opening his co-workers' minds to the value of labor groups in intelligence. While Casey alone was not responsible for the infiltration of Germany, his support for the Labor Branch's plans did propel those plans into action. In short, Casey demonstrated the power of the perceptive individual in a bureaucracy.

Two days before Casey sent the above memo, the Labor Branch finally received approval from the OSS and SHAEF to send teams into the Reich. This plan, code named Faust (after Johann Goethe's famed literary character), had been in the planning stages since October 1943. The agents involved were all recruited by Arthur Goldberg and his staff, spoke fluent German, and had "experience in underground activities in Germany" and contacts with "anti-Nazi groups."⁶³ The first Faust mission to be deployed was called Downend and involved the very first OSS agent (and Allied agent in general) to infiltrate Germany.

Downend reflected the ways in which the Labor Branch was able to prove its worth and served as an example for future mission planning. Launched on September 1, 1944, Downend parachuted Jupp Kappius into the industrial Ruhr region of northwest Germany (see Appendix, Fig. 2). He was a German émigré forced to flee Germany with his wife in 1937. As active members of the International Socialist Militant League, an extremist socialist group that believed capitalism to be morally wrong, they were among the first to be persecuted by the Nazis and seek freedom elsewhere.⁶⁴ Kappius had found

⁶³ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 179.

⁶⁴ Kappius was so opposed to capitalism that, when he was recruited by the OSS, he would only accept five pounds per week to cover his living expenses; he refused to accept a wage. See Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 75.

the socialist and labor circles in London welcoming, and was quickly seen by Goldberg and the others in the Labor Branch as a reliable and trustworthy anti-Nazi. As a result, Kappius was recruited by the London Labor Branch in 1943.

Kappius's mission objectives were extensive and would be difficult for one man to carry out alone: "you will create an underground organization for the purpose of (1) promoting internal resistance to the Nazi regime; (2) committing acts of sabotage against the war effort; (3) encouraging subversion in all its forms."⁶⁵ Nonetheless, Kappius hurled himself out of a Royal Air Force plane around midnight on September 1, 1944, and set about his assignment. After landing in a field, Kappius buried his parachute, took a two-hour nap, and then caught a train to his hometown of Bochum. Once here he located his safe house, home of a young ISK couple; while associating with known ISK members posed a risk to Kappius and the mission, the Labor Branch had no other option when setting up the safe address. From this location he began making contacts in local labor circles.⁶⁶

Despite the odds stacked against him (being the first Allied agent to infiltrate Germany, operating alone in the Nazi heartland, associating with known socialists—the list goes on), Kappius succeeded in his mission to a remarkable degree. In the seven months between his landing and his being overrun by the U. S. Army

He organized a group of seven men, each of whom had contact with two to five other men, who were shop stewards or union organizers in the Ruhr. He established sources in Essen and Witten also, including the director of a mining firm, a director of the Deutschebank, and a high official in Krupp. These men were used to collect information, pass on propaganda, and foster slow-downs and sabotage....He gained information also from ISK couriers from Hamburg, Bremen, Berlin, Goettingen,

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 76-77.

Kassel, Darmstadt, Ulm, and Frankfurt-am-Main.⁶⁷

Unfortunately, because of communication difficulties, much of the information Kappius gleaned from his contacts was not available to the Allies and the OSS until after he was assimilated behind U. S. front lines.

Kappius had trouble getting information to his OSS handlers because at this point in time there were few reliable options for sending out information via radio or telegraph.⁶⁸ Instead, in the early OSS infiltration missions into Germany, the agents had to rely on couriers to shuttle messages back and forth between the agent and OSS officers, usually located in a neutral country. Kappius had two courier agents, Kappius' wife Anne and another woman, Hilde Meisel. The couriers infiltrated Germany on foot via the Swiss border, made their way to Kappius in the Ruhr (a distance of a few hundred miles), and then returned with parcels of information to Switzerland. They only made this trip twice, but along the way Anne Kappius also managed to gain information from other labor resistance members. In essence, however, Jupp Kappius carried out most his resistance work out of contact with the Allies.

While the OSS did not receive copious amounts of information from Kappius, the information it did receive about industrial strength, manufacturing, underground groups, and troop movements was promising. More importantly, the Labor Branch had proven that Germany could be penetrated. While there were glitches, most notably with communications into and out of the Reich, Kappius had not been captured; on the contrary, he had managed to blend into the populace with little apparent difficulty and set up a network of internal spies and saboteurs. These achievements were highly significant

⁶⁷ United States War Department, *The Overseas Target*, 309.

⁶⁸ MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London*, 176.

and encouraged the Labor Branch and the OSS to prepare for an onslaught of infiltration missions.

During Kappius's deployment, William Casey was so impressed with the Labor Branch's ability to work with other branches and organizations and their success in infiltrating the Reich that he began to push for the rearrangement of the Secret Intelligence Division in the Labor Branch's image and under its tutelage, at least when it came to infiltration operations. Casey recognized that, if the penetration of Germany was to succeed, intra-agency cooperation like that seen in the Labor Branch would be needed, but on a larger scale. As early as September 1944, Casey recommended appointing a single geographic authority for the infiltration of Germany, establishing a separate penetration task force using all branch resources, and designating someone to run the recruiting drive for agents capable of infiltration missions.⁶⁹

Then, in November 1944, the Secret Intelligence Division was reconstructed.

Now called the Division of Intelligence Procurement (DIP)

the Labor Desk nucleus which had been assembled over a period of two years by George O. Pratt was given direction of the SI [Secret Intelligence] German program...it was placed in charge of all SI London Desks, Air Operations, Bach Unit, and the Labor Desk field missions...In addition, R&D [Research and Development], responsible for equipping agents, and C&D Branch [Censorship and Documents], responsible for manufacturing documents, were to work full-time for DIP.⁷⁰

This group would coordinate all Secret Intelligence resources in London and direct and control all penetration operations. No longer were there to be a multitude of branches working on disjointed intelligence operations. Instead, like the Labor Branch, which had

⁶⁹ William Casey to David Bruce, OSS Memorandum, September 11, 1944, Folder 61, Box 220, Entry 92, RG 226, NA.

⁷⁰ Captain Robert Thompson to George O. Pratt, OSS Report, Final Operations Report, May 26, 1945, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

pooled its resources with other branches and stepped outside its role of gathering labor intelligence and into the realm of planning operations in foreign countries, the DIP would coordinate and consolidate as many areas tied to secret intelligence as possible and use their combined strengths to get into Nazi Germany.⁷¹

Not surprisingly, the first OSS missions under DIP direction into Germany had strong Labor Branch connections: the Labor Branch had recruited or trained the agents, designed their cover stories, or determined their mission objectives.⁷² In any case, the Labor Branch had clearly laid the foundation for German infiltration by obtaining information from POWs, German exiles, and American agents, as well as training these individuals to enter Germany. As with the Downend mission, all further missions had their ups and downs. As technology improved, couriers gave way to the wireless telegraph, which in turn gave way to Joan/Eleanor, a high frequency radio transmitter which enabled more agents to get more information out of Germany. As pilots and agents gained confidence and experience, their rates of successful parachute drops improved. The first operative who reached Berlin even managed to establish himself within the ranks of the Nazi *Sicherheitsdienst*, or Security Service. The OSS had done what upper-level officials had once thought impossible: entered the enemy's heartland and infiltrated a key organ of the German fascist state.⁷³

Overall, the losses incurred by OSS agents in Germany were far lower than expected. The total casualty rate of all Secret Intelligence teams run from London

⁷¹ MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London*, 172.

⁷² The Labor Branch had, over the previous two years, even set up a division within itself that handled creating cover stories and documents for Labor's agents. Known as Bach, this unit became the central group for creating and verifying all cover and documentation for any agents entering Germany. For information on what BACH did, and how, see Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 40-44.

⁷³ Peter Karlow to Joint Chiefs of Staff, OSS Memorandum, June 5, 1945, Folder 59, Box 14, Entry 99, RG 226, NA.

(including those directed by the Labor Branch) ran under 5 percent, admirable considering that nearly 200 agents entered the Reich.⁷⁴ Some agents, however, found themselves in difficult and sometimes deadly situations. The Dubuque agent was killed in action the day after he crossed the German border. The two agents on the Fat mission went missing as soon as they arrived and were never heard from again, and Alphonse was “caught on landing and lost.”⁷⁵ On a mission unrelated to Downend (which she served on as a courier to Jupp Kappius), Hilde Meisel was shot in the legs by a German policeman as she attempted to reenter Switzerland from Austria; before the Germans reached her she bit into her cyanide capsule and died instantly.⁷⁶

While most agents survived and were recovered during or after the war, they did not achieve high rates of success in passing information to the OSS while they were in Germany. Of eighty-five attempted contacts with teams using the Joan/Eleanor equipment, the OSS made successful connections 45 percent of the time. Success rates with wireless telegraph technology were even lower.⁷⁷ Agents who went in as so-called tourists also faced dangers crossing enemy lines and repatriating themselves to the Allies. They were often overrun by advancing Allied forces before they could gather useful

⁷⁴ U. S. War Department, *The Overseas Target*, 305. Other branches and organizations that sent teams into Germany included the Polish desk (the majority of whose missions failed miserably), the Seventh Army Division, which had connections to a number of different OSS desks and was primarily a facilitator for infiltrations, and the DGER, a French intelligence groups which OSS worked with on occasion. However, the Labor Branch was by far the most successful and active in getting agents into Germany.

⁷⁵ Walter Lord, OSS Report, Penetration Projects, June 11, 1945, Folder 59, Box 14, Entry 99, RG 226, NA.

⁷⁶ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 89.

⁷⁷ MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London*, 179.

information.⁷⁸ There simply were no easy means of communicating out of Germany, and that remained the OSS' biggest challenge.⁷⁹

In general, scholars agree that the intelligence the OSS obtained through the penetration of Germany was limited. No agents returned with shocking news: no secret weapons were found, no mountain fortress was discovered, and Hitler was not kidnapped or attacked. But the pieces of information OSS agents managed to smuggle out did help the war effort. Reports on troop location, war materiel production, home front morale: all of these seemingly miniscule details, when taken together, armed the Allies with new targets for bombing attacks, better preparation for impending German counteroffensives, and a generally improved understanding of the enemy homeland. There is general agreement that OSS actions inside the Reich shortened the duration of the war and lessened casualties on both sides, and the sheer ability of the OSS to get into the German heartland at all is widely acknowledged as a major espionage triumph.⁸⁰

Yet very little attention has been paid to the role of the Labor Branch in all of this. This is likely due to the Labor Branch's suspected Communist links and the desire by the Central Intelligence Agency (which succeeded the OSS) to keep any connection of U. S. government agencies, defunct or otherwise, to Communist organizations from becoming common knowledge. The fact that the Labor Branch did not have any famous actors,

⁷⁸ A tourist mission involved an individual agent infiltrating enemy lines, usually by land, attempting to reach a city where they would simply observe the military, political, social, and economic situation, and then either retreating back towards the Allies to give their report or else waiting to be overrun by the Allies during their advance on Germany. See Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler*, 192.

⁷⁹ The communications difficulties experienced by the OSS during World War II had a lasting effect on U. S. intelligence. After the war, the CIA began to focus heavily on signals intelligence, or SIGINT, which relies on methods of electronic communication to gather intelligence. The limited success of Joan/Eleanor, which greatly surpassed regular human intelligence, or HUMINT, of the sort gathered by Jupp Kappius, was the impetus for this favoring of SIGINT. See Robert Baer, *See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2002), xvii.

⁸⁰ See Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 183; MacPherson, *American Intelligence in War-Time London*, 160; and Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 334.

baseball players, or scientists on its staff also caused historians to overlook it. Instead, prominent intelligence scholars focus on the role of the individual in the success of the infiltration. Some, like Christof Mauch, have claimed that Bill Donovan, as overall chief of the OSS, was responsible for the penetration, while Joseph Persico and Nelson MacPherson argue that William Casey enabled the infiltration and should receive full credit for the successes. In contrast, my research has shown that the triumph of infiltration simply did not belong to one man alone, as that is not how the Labor Branch operated. Instead, it belongs to a group of individuals, including Germans, Americans, socialists, Communists, labor leaders, analysts, and activists, who worked together in the Labor Branch to do the impossible.

My argument that a group of people were responsible for the infiltration also reveals that the infiltration simply could not have happened had the Labor Branch not organized itself the way it did. Its organization and methods, rather than its focus on labor, was the true cause of the Labor Branch's success, and also the foundation for its lasting legacy in the American intelligence community. It is important to remember that the CIA and FBI throughout the Cold War and even today view with derision organized labor, as upper-level OSS officers did. The CIA and FBI have carried out actions against organized labor, and there is an undercurrent of suspicion among the American public about certain unions and how powerful they should be.⁸¹ Hence, the Labor Branch's methods had a far greater impact than its subject. Indeed, its influence was so great that

⁸¹ Ernest De Maio, "The CIA versus Labor," in *Uncloaking the CIA*, 223-225.

an entire division of the OSS was rearranged in its image, and the methods of the Branch's Bach Section are practiced to this day.⁸²

The ability of the Labor Branch's staff to work with other branches and desks, their early understanding of the situation and attitudes of German labor exiles, their ability to adapt to the changing needs of the OSS, and above all, their persistent insistence that infiltration was possible made the Labor Branch of the OSS the force of success behind the infiltration of Germany. Without them, the penetration of Nazi Germany would never have been organized, let alone achieved.

⁸² For a detailed discussion of the Bach Section, its relationship with the Labor Branch, and its lasting impact on American intelligence methods, see chapter 2.

Chapter Two

The Bach Section

As has been shown, the infiltration of Germany in 1944 by the Office of Strategic Services was primarily the achievement of the OSS's Labor Branch. The Labor Branch, from its bases in London, Algiers, Switzerland, Bari, and elsewhere, had focused on getting into Germany relatively early in the war. It had utilized connections with labor groups throughout Europe to advance its mission of penetrating the Reich. However, in its earliest phases, the Labor Branch had no viable way of enabling its agents to survive in Germany as spies. In 1943, even if the brass at OSS had approved a mission into Germany and provided an aircraft or other means of entry, the agent would have been without a viable cover story, documents, or understanding of day-to-day life in Germany. This situation was not rectified until the OSS created the Bach Section on 1 April 1944 as part of the London Labor Branch. Bach, with its small collection of experts on German language, culture, economics, history, and politics, as well as detail-oriented intelligence officers, was able to build up the OSS's first comprehensive library of intelligence on Germany. From this, Bach became the section through which most agents entering Germany were provided with cover stories, identification papers, and the minute details they would need to blend into everyday life in the Reich. Together with its parent, the Labor Branch, the Bach Section made the infiltration of Germany possible. The two also conjoined in influencing the organization of the OSS's successor, the CIA.

When OSS established the Bach section in April 1944, its immediate aim was to serve the cover, documentation, and briefing needs of the London Labor Section, which at that point was in the early planning stages of missions to infiltrate Germany. By that

time, OSS London's main Censorship and Documents Division had not done any serious work on analyzing and forging German documents, obtaining clothing and accessories, or creating viable cover stories for life in Germany. Meanwhile, the Research and Analysis Branch in London had done research on Germany, but mainly by way of gathering biographical information on selected Germans, producing studies on the German air-raid defenses, and creating some economic reports that were valuable to the military but not to those working to covertly enter Germany.⁸³ With the lack of gritty details needed to make infiltration of Germany possible, the men at the top of the Labor Branch realized the critical need for a group devoted solely to preparing spies for life inside Nazi Germany.

Indeed, in 1943, under London Labor Branch chief George Pratt's direction, Isaiah Sol Dorfman, a Labor Branch staffer, started gathering information to be used for briefing agents. Dorfman, however, could only give some of his time to researching life in Germany, as he was also working with German labor refugees and exiles in London. He did make enough headway to open his superiors' eyes to the fact that more detailed research on Germany would be essential to their aims of infiltrating the Reich.⁸⁴

In a memorandum by Pratt dated 28 April 1943, one begins to see the early realization by the upper levels of the Labor Branch in London that intelligence could and should be gathered on Germany: "...the experience of 5 months in London has demonstrated that there exist actual present sources of information, and a large potential if properly organized. So far, such information has been largely economic and political in

⁸³ *The Overseas Target*, 148.

⁸⁴ *OSS/London War Diary*, Reel 7, volume 6, book II, 137-138.

its nature with a goodly sprinkling of information as to factors affecting morale and civilian life.”⁸⁵ It was up to Dorfmann to supplement and improve this intelligence.

By February 1944, Dorfmann made progress in his research into Germany while realizing the limitations of his one man project. On 4 February, he responded to a request by the director of the OSS, William Donovan, to compose a memorandum discussing the early brainstorming for infiltrating Germany. Dorfmann’s early plans called for recruiting people

who themselves at one time participated in underground work in Germany. Agents recruited on the continent from among trade union resistance groups will, of course, know well the areas of operation, the living conditions, and the practices and procedures of underground work. Their instruction therefore will be of a more summary nature; mainly briefing, the essentials of communication, military reporting and means of entering Germany.⁸⁶

Later experience proved that the hope of using agents recruited “on the continent” would be difficult, as those who had worked in trade union resistance groups had fled long before 1944. Instead, most prospective agents actually were contacted in Britain. The German agents that were found in Britain, in contrast to the hopes expressed in Dorfmann’s memo, required more than “summary” instruction. Most of the trade unionists that the Labor Desk and Bach Section worked with had been outside of Germany for many years and had little knowledge of current living conditions, regulations, and controls in Germany. Yet this pre-Bach memo to Donovan shows that Dorfmann, and the rest of the Labor Desk in London, seriously began to prepare for covert infiltration of Germany.

⁸⁵ George O. Pratt, Memorandum, The Function of the Labor Desk in an Operations Base in London, 28 April 1943, Folder 493(ii), Box 48, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 3.

⁸⁶ Isaiah Sol Dorfmann to William Donovan, Memorandum, 4 February 1944, folder 493 (ii), Box 48, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, ii.

In the same memo, Dorfmann referred to the need for cover and documentation that any infiltration of Germany would require. “Necessary German papers vary, of course, with the cover employed. The following, among others, will be especially helpful: *Arbeitsbuch*, ration book, special traveler’s food stamps... We are attempting to obtain originals of these and other documents to facilitate their reproduction for use by our agents.”⁸⁷ This excerpt provides an interesting insight into the state of the Labor Desk’s preparedness in February 1944 to go into Germany. That is, they knew that they needed such papers, but did not yet have the papers or even a definite means of obtaining them. Clearly there was much groundwork left to do.

Dorfmann’s memo provides one final glimpse at how the Labor Branch sought to penetrate Germany but how limited its actual preparation was. In a section of the memo entitled “Activities inside Germany,” Dorfmann stated correctly that the degree of freedom an agent would have in moving about Germany depended on the type of cover that agent was provided. Dorfmann then explained that travel on local trains in Germany for distances less than 30 kilometers was “relatively free of official supervision. An agent could travel for considerable distances, but only about 30 kilometers on any one ticket.”⁸⁸ He had no way of telling Donovan how such a limitation might be overcome, and instead tried to make it sound as if the solution to travel restrictions in Germany was to have agents make very short trips on a great number of tickets, which would have been impractical. He also implied that agents would only work in a limited geographic area. However, because the Labor Branch was pushing for agents to be infiltrated both on foot

⁸⁷ Ibid., iv.

⁸⁸ Ibid., iv-v.

and by parachute, it seems logical that land travel over distances greater than 30 kilometers would be required.

The memo discussed above demonstrates that, while the Labor Branch staff had started to make initial investigations into how to get into Germany, their thinking and planning were still limited. Yet the fact that Donovan had requested such a memo be sent to him showed that the Labor Branch's efforts, though limited by manpower and time, were being taken seriously at the top level of the OSS.

As a result, Lazare Teper, formerly of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and in 1944 working with the Labor Branch in London, set up an office committed to researching day-to-day life, government restrictions, and transportation in Germany. This became the Bach Section, taking the name of Teper's favorite composer.⁸⁹ Teper was immediately appointed chief of the section. Henry Sutton, who before the war had worked on a major labor research project in New York, worked alongside Teper, helped him create the professional research office devoted to Germany, and was Bach Section's assistant chief. As of 1 April 1944, Teper and Sutton's goal was to gather sufficient intelligence to make possible the briefing and preparation of agents for successful German infiltration.

Before examining how Bach prepared agents and their cover stories, the structural organization of Bach Section must be discussed. Doing so allows one to understand its role and place in the OSS, its connection to the Labor Branch, and the two groups' influence on the OSS's successor, the CIA. As mentioned, Teper and Sutton were already

⁸⁹ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 179. Teper initially wanted to name the new section Pabst, as in the brand of beer, since the section was originally housed in a building code-named Milwaukee. Pabst, after all, was brewed in Milwaukee. Apparently his superiors in OSS dismissed Teper's first choice for the name as "too frivolous." See Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 33.

in London and connected to the Labor Branch when they were assigned to Bach. Initially, they were the only two members of Bach's staff. Both had extensive labor as well as research experience and could use these skills in their work for Bach. However, as the Labor Branch began to expect more and more detailed information about life in Germany, Teper and Sutton were overwhelmed and requested more staff be hired. By the end of 1944, Bach's staff had grown from its original two members to eleven full-time staff and two paid consultants. Typical requirements of these workers were a good knowledge of the German language, research experience, a high IQ, and background knowledge of Germany, its culture, heritage, and history.⁹⁰ These requirements reduced the need for on-the-job training of staff and greatly speeded up the time frame in which new staff could become effective members of Bach. In this way, Bach reflected the OSS's tendency to hire individuals who were ready and able to begin working on a task immediately, with little intermediate training required.

By the end of 1944, Bach Section experienced an extreme demand for information on Germany, as well as for covers and documentation by a variety of groups, both in the OSS and outside. Naturally, the London Labor Branch called on Bach to meet its needs, but so did the OSS's Secret Intelligence (SI) and Special Operations divisions in London. Even OSS Labor Branches based outside London hounded Bach for materials. Gerhard van Arkel, part of the Labor Branch staff in Bern, Switzerland, in December 1944 requested blanks of forged German papers and documents to speed up his office's ability to penetrate Germany. George Pratt responded that

⁹⁰ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 150.

...the reluctance on this end to send blank documents was due to the fact that we had never had a clear, complete picture of what the situation was and/or just how the documents would be used or the facilities you had there to fill them in properly, and suggested that the only solution I could think of was to send a person from either Bach or C&D for a period of two to four weeks to familiarize himself with the situation...I am trying to arrange it. So far there is a question of the usual lack of personnel. There is no one we can spare at the moment for this assignment.⁹¹

The British Special Operations Executive and Secret Intelligence Service also placed orders for briefing of their staff and agents, as well as documents.⁹² Clearly, the Bach Section was swamped with a volume of requests that they could not handle even with a full-time staff of eleven. More importantly, Bach began to expand beyond the Labor Branch. It now became responsive to both internal OSS neighbors and also those of Allied forces, revealing its respect amongst other branches and its many talents.

With this overwhelming demand for materials and the shortage of personnel, Bach needed to rearrange itself so as to allow it to work to its full potential. Thus, when an Secret Intelligence (SI) order in November 1944 reorganized SI London into the Division of Intelligence Procurement (DIP), Bach was no longer a subsection of the Labor Branch but a section all its own, known as the Briefing Division of the DIP. This led to even more work, and by 28 April 1945, the personnel of Bach numbered 28. At the end of the war in Europe, Bach had three executive officers (including Teper and Sutton), eight briefers, two document analysts, seven members of the research unit, four people working strictly with the library and files of the division, and four secretaries and translators.⁹³ Together, these men and women worked to find, organize, and use any

⁹¹ George Pratt to Gerhard Van Arkel, Letter, 19 December 1944, Folder 147, Box 32, Entry 190, RG 226, p. 3.

⁹² *Overseas Target*, 308.

⁹³ Appendix H, Operations Report, Bach Unit, 28 May 1945. Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

information, no matter how tedious or insignificant it may have seemed, to prepare for covert entry into Germany.

The information that Bach needed to gather in order to prepare agents adequately to enter Germany did not fall within the realm of typical wartime intelligence gathering like troop movements and weapons capabilities. Instead, Bach staff looked for “authoritative information on laws, regulations, customs and requirements regarding every occupation, male or female, which might be a useful cover for the intelligence activities of the Labor Division.”⁹⁴ Bach was interested in understanding how documents and identity papers were examined and circulated, what the rationing system was, what types of jobs men and women would be expected to hold, which jobs allowed for travel, and how to mail a letter in the Reich. They wanted to know about particular towns, if and when areas had been bombed by the Allies, and the state of factories and companies. All of this type of information was critical in creating reliable cover stories.

These minute details were also the type of information that the Central Intelligence Agency, formed after President Harry Truman disbanded the OSS in late 1945, would gather. Interestingly, this was the type of intelligence that U. S. spy groups had previously frowned upon gathering, in the spirit of Henry Stimson’s famed line, “Gentlemen don’t read each others’ mail.” In fact, this nosing around in other nations’ business, gathering minute details and then using it to the United States’ political advantage, became one of the central aspects of the CIA. Bach and the Labor Branch laid the groundwork for a new realm of American intelligence gathering and use.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 137.

⁹⁵ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 219.

When Bach was first formed, Teper and Sutton had a few sources from which to begin compiling this kind of information on Germany. Naturally, there was the material that I. S. Dorfmann gathered in 1943 and early 1944. As mentioned, however, this was a limited amount of material and more would definitely be needed before any sort of attempt to penetrate Germany could commence. Thus they also started with source material already available in London, especially that which had been gathered by the Political Intelligence Department (PID) of the British Foreign Office. From this collection Teper and Sutton used miscellaneous reports and studies to acquaint themselves with Germany and the current way of life there. Newspaper clippings from Germany and enemy-occupied territories proved exceptionally helpful as well. Every day the PID put out a 50-page *News Digest* of all politically interesting items appearing in a variety of German newspapers two to four days earlier. This proved to be an invaluable source in learning about the location of prisoner of war camps, rationing systems, and general matters like what people were doing in their free time.⁹⁶ Similarly, Bach accessed a number of small-town German papers, which were less heavily controlled by the Nazis; these often provided a more accurate insight into the morale of the local population as opposed to being filled with propaganda.⁹⁷

The Bach section early on relied on other British resources as well. Ministry of Economic Warfare reports, the Military Intelligence Research Section of the British War Office's captured documents collection, and the Ministry of Information's regular library all were rich resources when Bach was first establishing its own library of information.⁹⁸ Soon, however, Bach section staff made their own headway in research on Germany.

⁹⁶ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, pp. 143, 147.

⁹⁷ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 32.

⁹⁸ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 144.

They found the interrogation of German soldiers and civilians exceptionally useful. Teper would personally visited the prisoner of war camps in Britain and found that most captured soldiers, while reluctant to speak about military affairs, usually did not mind answering questions about daily life in Germany and their particular town. From this Bach was able to learn how easy or difficult travel was, how and when papers were checked, where people greeted one another with “Heil Hitler” as opposed to a more traditional greeting, and the other minutiae that Bach needed to get agents integrated into German life as safely and thoroughly as possible.⁹⁹ Another commonly used source was telephone books, for they showed what addresses were still in use, where local government offices and agencies were, and a multitude of other details that would be crucial in devising cover stories.¹⁰⁰

As the war progressed and the Allies became more firmly entrenched on the European continent, Bach gave assignments to OSS staff attached to various Allied armies to collect the type of intelligence Bach required. One area of particular need was the physical documents and papers the OSS agents would need to live in Germany. Bach Section thus created lists of documents that they wanted to procure and relied on the SI field army units to get them. Another area that Bach was lacking in was the information necessary to prepare female agents; field agents were asked to secure both identification documents and information:

Identity papers; what feminine occupations are considered war-essential; German women serving in the armed forces and the auxiliary organizations; status of women in the public and private welfare institutions in Germany; jobs entitling women to travel in and outside Germany; employment of women in transportation and communication

⁹⁹ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 170.

¹⁰⁰ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 149.

facilities; and details about women's wear and apparel including underwear and accessories.¹⁰¹

That Teper himself requested this information for his unit demonstrates the lengths to which Bach went in order to ensure that its agents be as well-prepared as possible, and also the fact that they were preparing to have women agents participate in the infiltration.

From the information that they gleaned from newspapers, phone books, reports, interviews with prisoners, front-line OSS field agents, and other sources, the people in Bach Section could glean the minute but critical details that could make or break a mission. For example, early in its research Bach gained access to a study on the German postal system intended for a civil affairs officer. The study was supposed to allow an officer to "go to Berlin, walk into the office of the postmaster and run the German postal system."¹⁰² Yet this report provided absolutely no information on how to actually *post* a letter in Germany. Hence the report was of little value to Bach, but it did make clear that there were some intricate nuances of everyday life that they had to uncover before sending any mission into Germany. Bach eventually discovered that stamps could only be put on by a postal official, that letters going abroad required a special form from the police, and that padded envelopes were forbidden.¹⁰³ Because agents, especially those engaged in the early infiltrations into Germany, were often told to use the mail system as a means of contacting their couriers, this information was crucial and removed yet another barrier standing between the OSS and getting its agents into Germany and helping them communicate effectively.

¹⁰¹ Instructions to Field Units by Teper, undated, Mf R-8 F-189/194, as appears in the OSS/London War Diary, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 142.

¹⁰² *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 141.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Other challenges faced Bach in creating the documents and identity papers that its agents required. For example, did the eagle stamped on a document face left or right? Did it matter which way the eagle faced? The Bach Section discovered that it certainly did matter, as a left-facing eagle indicated a Nazi party document, and right-facing meant it was a government document. A mistake on this sort of detail could cost a spy his life.¹⁰⁴ Bach also required that staff use German typewriters when filling in documents, that the photographs affixed to the papers were of the proper size and type of headshot, that documents were aged so that the papers looked as if they had been carried around for months or years, and that the types of inks used on documents were available and used in Germany.¹⁰⁵ The Bach section also knew that any agent going to Germany would require an *Arbeitsbuch*, or work pass. This had to be forged, but Bach staff could not do it until they could figure out the geographical significance of a number code on the book. The code system could not be deciphered until they captured a complete set of instructions for the operation of the code. As a result, Bach sent out specific orders that all army officers place their soldiers on the lookout for work passes or anything related to them. This led to the capture of a key to the code system, and Bach was subsequently able to provide agents with a vital identification document that was accurate and would not arouse suspicion.¹⁰⁶

All of these details were shared and exchanged between Bach and the Censorship and Documents Branch (CD) in London, which handled document and equipment intelligence. The two branches had a highly functional relationship: Bach usually secured the originals of documents to use as templates, kept a copy, and forwarded the original to

¹⁰⁴ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 141.

¹⁰⁵ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 30.

¹⁰⁶ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 146.

CD, although sometimes CD secured the original on its own. Whenever Bach staff needed a document, they called on CD operatives to fill out the necessary papers, instructing them line-by-line on how the document was to be completed. Thus CD would do the physical work on the papers—forging signatures, typing information, aging the papers, ensuring that the handwriting and typesetting were appropriate. Yet Bach provided all the details the CD needed to fill in the documents, i.e., the agent's cover name, age, weight, height, and biographical details. Information provided to CD would also contain the name of the project, code name of the agent, and the date by which documents were needed. CD also required details on the German authority or office that would issue the document; the (forged) name of the official who should sign the document; the date of issue, taking care to ensure it was not dated from a Sunday or holiday; any numbers which corresponded to any code the German issuing authority might use; term of validity; and information on whether any fee or dues stamps needed to go on the document.¹⁰⁷ Bach section had gathered all of this information and passed it on the CD every time they needed a document.

Bach called on CD for clothing and equipment as well, and this too had to be attended to with the utmost attention and care. Were the buttons on a shirt sewn on in the German way (criss-crossed) or American (parallel)? Clothing also had to properly fit an agent's cover; a workman could not escape questioning if he wore a finely tailored suit as opposed to appropriate work clothes. These details could usually be overcome by issuing agents with articles of clothing directly from Germany. However, as more missions went into Germany, Bach had fewer clothes to choose from. As a result, in early 1945, an OSS

¹⁰⁷ Memorandum to Bach Section, Instructions for the Ordering of Documents, undated, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 1.

supply officer joined the First Army in Cologne in order to re-supply the CD section. He did this, obtaining suits, dresses, shoes, hats, cigarette lighters, underwear, tubes of toothpaste, and other assorted clothing and accessories. Altogether, his stash filled three C-47 airplanes, which he ordered back to London and used to outfit the remaining missions into Germany.¹⁰⁸

After the agents were fully equipped with documents and clothing, Bach once again assumed the main role in preparing them, making sure that the agents fitted the cover story.¹⁰⁹ By necessity, the cover was created before any documents or clothing were ordered and followed a rigorous process. Before work on a cover could begin, Bach first needed to be provided with as much detail as possible about the agent, the nature of his mission, and, interestingly, the agent's own ideas for his cover story. Details about the agent included a complete physical description, which incorporated nuances like age, height, weight, build, face shape, hair color, eye color, complexion, clothing measurements, and shoe size. The Bach Unit, in hopes of making some of their work simpler, required that any measurements be given in the "measurements and language of the target country." Bach also sought to know all national characteristics, language peculiarities like dialects and odd pronunciation, distinguishing marks like scars or birthmarks, smoking habits, and any physical weaknesses or handicaps.¹¹⁰

A biographical sketch of the agent was also essential when preparing his cover. Schooling, with details of any special training; domicile and travel, including a list of cities agents resided in for more than a few weeks; occupation, including line of business

¹⁰⁸ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 171.

¹⁰⁹ *OSS/London War Diary*, 139.

¹¹⁰ Memorandum, Bach Unit, Labor Division, Secret Intelligence, London, "Preparation of Cover and Briefing," 22 November 1944, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 1.

of the firms for which the agent worked, the nature of the jobs held, and a full job description; service in any armies, including rank and branches of service; and the social environment of the agent (did he volunteer in his community, was he politically active, what circles did he move in?) were all types of details around which a false identity was created.¹¹¹ The more that Bach knew about the agent's previous life in Germany, what types of people he was most comfortable with, where he could move around without attracting too much attention, the better his chances for success.

Bach administrators also requested that their cover creation staff be thoroughly briefed on the nature of the mission for which they were creating the cover. This included knowing the means of entry into the target country, where in the target country the mission was to originate, the amount of travel expected to be undertaken by the agent, and how long the mission was expected to last. They asked the agent's handling officer, "Do the objectives of the mission require any special considerations in the make-up of a cover?" Bach also inquired about the social strata the agent would be expected to move in. The amount of time available to prepare cover and documents was another key issue for Bach, as the launch date for each mission dictated when documents and clothing needed to be ordered, and how soon a firm cover be established.¹¹²

Bach did not simply take the information mentioned above about the agent and cobble together a cover. Instead, Bach actively sought the agent's own ideas for his cover. "Does the agent have any preference for the role he is to play, or for the type of people with whom he is apt to feel most at ease? Agent's ideas with regard to his cover

¹¹¹ Ibid., 2.

¹¹² *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 153.

story will be given full consideration within the limit of practicality.”¹¹³ Allowing the agent to express his thoughts about a cover accomplished several things. First, it gave Bach Section insight into how the agents thought and imagined themselves in their lives as secret agents, which in turn allowed Bach to make the cover stories sounder. Secondly, the agents often had excellent ideas for covers that Bach would never have imagined, as such ideas were usually unique to the individual agent’s own past and experience. This also helped prevent them from repeatedly recycling the same stories, though many covers were based on the same premise. Instead, by speaking with the agent directly, a more personalized cover could be created, and, more importantly, the agent would be more confident in his cover as he himself had played a role in devising it.

All of this material was then used to write the first draft of a cover story that was quite broad and contained vague descriptions of what kind of job the agent would hold and a general idea of where he supposedly was from. Details only followed after taking into consideration the availability of papers, documents, clothes and other items that would be necessary to carry out the cover successfully. This occurred once an agent’s mission aims were finalized by the Branch running his operation. After all, a mission designed to last only three days did not require nearly as elaborate a cover as one intended to last three months. As the plan evolved and Bach gained a better understanding of the agent’s goal and target area, the agent would be given a new name, authentic address, a school and occupation history, even the color of the buses in the town the agent was supposedly from.¹¹⁴ As each stage of this cover preparation was completed, the agent was called in to review it with the people at Bach. This allowed the

¹¹³ Memorandum, Bach Unit, Labor Division, Secret Intelligence, London, “Preparation of Cover and Briefing,” 22 November 1944, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 2.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (New York: Viking, 1990), 74.

agent to begin internalizing his cover early on as well as to be comfortable with it as it grew from a general overview to a specific, customized tale.¹¹⁵

Once the cover was complete, the tedious process of fully briefing the agent began. By this point the agent would have already participated in a collective briefing, where all agents were informed of matters like rationing, police controls, and the Nazi party organization. The agent had to understand how Gestapo checkpoints worked so as not to give himself away while passing through one. He needed to know how to post a letter, how to get ration stamps, how to greet someone on the street. This information was usually prepared by Henry Sutton himself and the briefings were held in London at a place known as Milwaukee School.¹¹⁶

The final briefing, however, was tailored to each individual mission and was handled specifically by Bach officers. Target information, a description of type of intelligence the agent was expected to gather, how he was to report it back to OSS, and what items of intelligence were viewed as most important by his handlers were all explained to the agent. He needed to be able to answer all questions about all documents he held. He needed to be prepared to explain how he got to where he was, his family history, his work history, to account for any scars on his body. An agent's briefings would also include detailed information on the towns and cities that his cover claimed he had been to or lived in and a supply of miscellaneous items to make his cover more convincing in case he was searched. This included ticket stubs from cities he had supposedly visited recently, German cigarettes, local currency, and a variety of other

¹¹⁵ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 157.

¹¹⁶ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 138.

minutiae that could possibly make his cover story that much more convincing.¹¹⁷ Since the tiniest mistake could blow an entire cover, the process of briefing also involved the agent being subjected to a mock Gestapo interrogation, being awakened in the middle of the night by a case officer shouting “What is your name? Who is your mother? Where are you from?”¹¹⁸

Obviously, a number of details had to be established in preparing an agent to utilize his cover. It is important to examine some of these details so as to understand what exactly Bach did and how accomplished his staff was at providing covers. First, Bach had to establish a field of employment for the agent, as “all men and women in Germany must work as directed by *Arbeitsämter* [the Nazi work and employment offices]. Agents must account for their not working at any particular moment or show that they have an essential job.”¹¹⁹ As a result, covers were dictated by the type of job an agent was supposed to hold. Some fields of employment worked better than others, and examples of successful cover jobs were truck drivers, members of the *Abwehr* (a German intelligence service), foreign workers, and railway workers.¹²⁰ Such fields of employment also allowed the OSS to infiltrate areas in which they had an interest. For example, the Labor Branch’s early goal was to establish a network of underground trade workers to resist Hitler and Nazism; fields like the railway and manufacturing in which foreign workers were employed would be ripe territory for possible recruitment to a resistance league.

¹¹⁷ Memo, Bach Section, Preparations for a Cover Story, undated, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 7.

¹¹⁸ William Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler* (Regnery Gateway: Washington, DC, 1988), 192-193.

¹¹⁹ Memo, Bach Section, Preparations for a Cover Story, undated, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA.

¹²⁰ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, p. 157.

Bach also paid close attention to family history, taking care to ensure that the agent's cover story birthplace was "sufficiently far away from the area of operation" so as to minimize the number of checks that could be done into his history while on his mission. The farther away his birthplace, the more difficult it would be for the Gestapo or other police agency to search for his records and discover that there were none. A similar procedure was followed in creating the agent's cover story parents. In most cover stories, the parents were listed as dead, either having died long before or during the war in an air raid. In both instances, the parents' homes were located in towns or cities far from the agent's area of operations. Close checks were also done to ensure that there were graves for the agent's cover story parents in the town they were supposedly buried in, as well as verification that, if the story said they had died in an air raid, that an air raid had occurred in that town at the time of the death.¹²¹ Bach was getting better at the creation of cover stories with every mission they helped to dispatch.

In short, Bach made significant efforts to improve the agent's chance of survival if asked any questions, by any person, at any time. While Bach's intent was to allow the agent to both achieve his mission aim and to survive, survival seemed to take precedence over obtaining specific intelligence. In all likelihood, the thinking was that a live agent who could not quite achieve his exact mission was still more valuable than a dead agent. As such, and despite the details mentioned above, Bach aimed to keep cover stories "as simple as possible... The story will be laid out in the areas with which the agent is personally familiar."¹²² This maximized the agent's ability to maintain his cover, as he would be able to truthfully answer certain questions and not have to search his memory

¹²¹ Memo, Bach Section, Preparations for a Cover Story, undated, Folder 23, Box 49, Entry 110, RG 226, NA, 4.

¹²² Ibid., 3.

for answers to others. For example, if he was to infiltrate Berlin, it would be much easier for a native Berliner to move comfortably around the city rather than putting in someone who had never even been there. Likewise, if a man had been a steelworker while living in Germany before the war, it made sense to have him use that occupation as his cover. He could then converse easily about his job skills and raise fewer suspicions than if Bach had a farmer posing as a steelworker. The same held true for the documents that Bach put in the agent's possession. Genuine documents were best, partially forged papers the next best, and least desirable of all were wholly fabricated ones. The same principle held here as with the cover stories; the closer to the real thing, the better.¹²³

Bach Section's cover techniques began a tradition in U. S. intelligence that carried over into the CIA. The Directorate of Operations branch (DO), the component responsible for running foreign agents, takes a new DO agent's credit cards, drivers license, bank cards—anything that has his name on it. These are then replaced with both everyday forms of identification, i.e. store membership cards, licenses, et cetera, and then supplemented with any special documentation his mission may require. Whether a passport, visa, or employment identification, the CIA, like the OSS Bach Section, has gained the uncanny ability of making one man disappear and replacing him with one who had never before existed.¹²⁴

Bach Section's process of creating a cover story and finding documents and equipment that would support it was clearly complicated. Even though Bach strove to keep the stories as simple as possible, one can tell that any cover story would have been subjected to numerous cross-checks, document verifications, and clothing inspections.

¹²³ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 42.

¹²⁴ Robert Baer, *See No Evil: The True Story of a Ground Soldier in the CIA's War on Terrorism*, 34.

Yet when a cover was as ready as possible, Bach staff and their superiors in OSS put their faith in their creation and sent the agents in to do their jobs.

One series of Labor Branch missions handled by Bach section was known as the Tool series. Comprised of five separate missions using one or two men each, the Tool missions were intended primarily to contact members of the Free Germany National Committee still living in Germany in order to create underground resistance groups. They would also report any relevant military intelligence when available.¹²⁵ Adolf Buchholz, the agent on the Mallet mission which was dropped on 1 April 1945 near Berlin, took on cover as a Gestapo official; his documents identified him as such and enabled him to move around the Berlin area with minimal suspicion. Bach gave the Buzzsaw mission's agent, Walter Fischer, cover as a *Schutzstaffel*, or SS, member who was supposedly in Leipzig to trace a group of French foreign workers believed to be preparing sabotage against the German government.¹²⁶ In actuality, he was there to gather labor, industrial, and military intelligence against the Nazis. Other covers provided for the Tool men included machinists, laborers, and other trade workers. The covers for the two men on the Hammer mission will be discussed in depth in the next chapter. The Hammer mission will also serve as the main subject of fictionalization in the historical novel portion of this work.

Interestingly, Bach gave many very similar stories, even when the agents were going to be working together on the same mission. The Doctor mission, which was launched on 23 March 1945, provides one example. The covers for the two agents on the Doctor mission, Jan Denis and Jean Smets, followed their real lives, education and work

¹²⁵ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows: The OSS and the London 'Free Germans,'" in *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2002, p. 15.

¹²⁶ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 7, vol. 6, book 2, part B, 485.

history exactly until a certain point. Both men's covers used their birth names (Denis and Smets were names the men had each adopted while students; their given names were Alfonse Blontrock and Jan Blocks respectively). Denis's cover was entirely true up until 7 February 1944. Smet's story was also completely true until September 1943, tracing his real career and education step by step. It is at this point that the agents' stories stop following their real lives and their covers begin. Both men supposedly volunteered for labor in Germany; Denis in February 1944, Smets in September 1943. Both men's documents showed that each was assigned (at different points in time) to work for the Optische Werke in Munich; Bach chose this plant because it has been partly destroyed by Allied bombing on 25 February 1944. Conveniently, with some of the factory destroyed, it would have been difficult for the Gestapo to check the company's records to see if Denis and Smets had ever really worked there. Instead, both men also carried papers giving them leave from the Optische Werke to travel to the nearby town of Kufstein (just across the Austrian border but under German control) after the air raid, a practice not unusual after a factory became inoperable. Indeed, Kufstein was the area into which Denis and Smets parachuted in 1945.¹²⁷

Ironically, even though the men were using their own names, Bach forged all of their identity documents. They each carried a Belgian identity card (as their nationality was Belgian), the standard-issue foreigner's passport, an employment card, a travel certificate for foreign workers, and ration cards. The fact that the Doctor mission was able to send back numerous wireless telegraph messages to the OSS, act as a reception committee for two further OSS teams, organize a resistance movement, coordinate supply drops, and gather valuable intelligence demonstrates just how effective their covers were.

¹²⁷ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 8, vol. 12, p. 147.

Furthermore, both Denis and Smets were successfully recovered when the American army reached southern Germany and northern Austria.

Another interesting cover story appeared in the Chauffeur mission, which entered Germany just eight days after Doctor had landed. Like the Doctor agents, the two men participating in Chauffeur were supposedly Belgian workers, though this time fleeing to Regensburg from Nuremberg, via Frankfurt, ahead of the Allied advance. One of the agents, however, took action to create a cover different from the usual one that Bach provided for their Belgian agents. Albert Lavare wanted to use a real name for his cover, but using his own was too risky. Instead, Lavare insisted that he be given the name of one of his friends, even though this man was known to be alive and living in Germany. He had a picture of this friend, and the two looked enough alike for Bach to agree with the idea. Bach also thought it might be helpful that, if the Germans did check up on his identity, they would at least find a real name in the records. Thus, Bach and Lavare worked together to craft a complete history for Lavare's friend, in whose name Lavare would travel and work.

Lavare's partner in the Chauffeur mission, Andre Renaix, had a more traditional Bach-established story. Posing as a Belgian railway worker, his cover stated he had simply gone to work in Nuremberg until he decided to leave with Lavare. Like the Belgians on the Doctor mission, the Chauffeur agents each received a Belgian identity card, a work card, foreign worker's passport, and also factory passes to the plant they had both supposedly worked at in Nuremberg. Also like the Doctor mission, the Chauffeur mission was a success. The two men used the Joan/Eleanor radio communication system, and were able to make two contacts with the OSS. They successfully observed military

traffic, and were recovered safely, their false identities having held up satisfactorily in the Reich.

The cover stories that Bach provided varied by the agent's history, his intended target, and a number of other factors. What is important to note is how excellent the covers, and especially the documents, were. According to William Casey, head of the Secret Intelligence branch, only two sets of documents, of the hundreds of documents produced by Bach, failed to pass German inspection. "On two occasions German military officials issued orders warning that American agents in southern Germany were equipped with papers that could not be detected as false."¹²⁸ The 85th Army Corps (German) stated in their 12 March 1945 Order of the Day that "The enemy forges identity papers so perfectly that only trained experts of the Security Police can recognize the falsification."¹²⁹ Perhaps the highest compliment to the Bach associates' abilities to produce falsified documents came upon the recovery of one of their agents, who was unable to convince the American officer to whom he had been taken that he was an OSS agent. When he claimed that his documents were all forged and produced them for inspection, a German POW with expert knowledge of authentic German documents, testified that the documents were genuine!¹³⁰ Once more, the quality of Bach's work was proven in practice. Bach had nearly perfected the art of documentation, a tradition that, as will be shown, continued and expanded in the era of the CIA.

The agents themselves also had high praise for the covers provided by Bach. When they were in the Reich, agents could expect identity checks ranging from

¹²⁸ Memo, Final Report on SI Operations into Germany, from Chief, SI, ETO to CO, OSS, ETO, 24 July 1945. As found in Casey, *The Secret War Against Hitler*, 293.

¹²⁹ *The Overseas Target*, 308.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

superficial spot checks by local police and civil defense groups, to intense interrogations by the Gestapo, SS, SD, and other government and Nazi party agencies. The Chauffeur team was confronted by two *Volkssturm* men (a civil defense agency), the mayor of Kufstein, the police in a town called Abensberg, a group of military police, and the SS. Each time they passed the confrontation easily and without trouble. One of the Chauffeur agents recorded in his debriefing report: “I cannot say too much in praise of the thoroughness with which this mission has been prepared—a fact which has helped us greatly in our work. The documents given to us were particularly well prepared; they were checked several times without any hazards to us.”¹³¹ Similarly, the Hammer team reported upon its return to England that their papers were perfect, as did a number of other teams after their recoveries.

Unfortunately, the agents’ papers and covers were not perfect all the time. One agent whose cover and documentation did not hold up was part of the Martini mission dispatched to Augsburg on 18 March 1945. The agent, known as Adrian, encountered the *Kripo* (Criminal Police) while seeking work on the railroad. The *Kripo* demanded to see Adrian’s traveling orders, which Bach had unfortunately failed to provide him with. Adrian claimed to have lost his travel orders. This began a chain of events which involved Adrian paying off a railroad official in order to get himself out of the situation. Believing that he was out of danger, he then continued on his way to report to another office to begin work. When he arrived there, they ordered him to report to another office to have some of his papers renewed. Upon arriving at an office to have his soldier’s book updated, the official noticed that his physical description had not been entered in the book. The official also noticed that his citizenship status would have made it impossible

¹³¹ *OSS/London War Diary*, reel 8, vol. 12, 113.

for him to be a railroad official as he claimed; suspicions were raised even further when the official realized Adrian was single, childless, and had never served in the military. This was practically impossible at this time in Germany. The official called in the police, who recognized his name from a bulletin the *Kripo* had sent out earlier putting police officers on alert to watch for unusual behavior from Adrian, as his papers did not appear to be in order. The police took him into custody and soon turned him over to the Gestapo, who beat and severely tortured him for five days. On the sixth day, he was to be shot as a spy. Fortunately, that morning an American air raid was unleashed over the prison where he was held, and Adrian managed to escape and flee into a nearby forest. He took shelter with some Russian and Polish slave workers, who sympathized when he told them he had been beaten by the Gestapo for being a deserter (he could not tell them he was a spy, obviously). Eventually, the U. S. army entered the forest where Adrian was hiding and recovered him. Despite his extremely weakened physical condition, he stayed on with the army in order to help them recognize and capture Gestapo officials. Among those officials captured were the two who had tortured him for five days; he executed both of them.¹³²

Adrian's story demonstrates how terribly wrong things could go if an agent's papers and documents did not hold up. To Adrian's credit, he never cracked under the physical and psychological trauma of torture, and did not reveal that he was a spy or that he had a partner working nearby. While he was lucky to escape with his life, a few other agents went missing in Germany, never to return. Whether they were discovered to be spies by the Germans, mistaken by the Red Army as the enemy, or simply caught in

¹³² SI War Diary, vol. 12, Book 3, 301-305, History Files, as appears in the *Overseas Target*, 312-313.

bombing raids may never be known. But the fact remains that the vast majority of agents who infiltrated Germany carried out their missions and returned alive, having lived their cover stories successfully.

More important than the intricately contrived cover stories themselves is, of course, what the cover stories that Bach provided enabled. From the passing of intelligence to Allied bomber squadrons to the creation of small resistance forces, the cover stories Bach provided for the men and women entering Germany became critical.¹³³ One must remember that the German Reich was one of the most tightly controlled, document-heavy police states ever created. Records on the ancestry of most Germans went back four and five generations, and the Gestapo was known to search these records. Captured German soldiers were known to carry up to 30 different documents.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Germany had become a state of informants, with neighbors reporting the slightest misdeeds of neighbors and children turning in their mothers and fathers to the police for a careless word of criticism. Even when the Reich began its final collapse and some government controls faltered, Nazi Germany remained a place of intimidating police and random searches. Without the covers and training provided by Bach, an OSS agent could not be expected to stay alive in Germany, let alone gather intelligence and circulate it back to his handlers.

Bach, assisted by the flexibility and talents of the Labor Branch, was an exemplary intelligence system, one whose legacy lived on after the dissolution of the OSS on October 1, 1945. Recall that William Casey, who served as both OSS London secretariat and CIA director, remarked after the war that “the labor desk people were the

¹³³ For a detailed discussion of what the missions that Bach assisted on accomplished, see chapters 1 and 3.

¹³⁴ *OSS/London War Diary*, Reel 8, vol. 12, book 2, 142.

only people who had any preparation for working into Germany. We had to turn to them to get information about the controls, the rationing, how the hell to stay alive.”¹³⁵ This quotation makes a few points clear. First, the Labor Branch was a group who had provided absolutely essential intelligence about Germany, intelligence that kept agents safe, allowed them to complete their missions, and proved that the difficulties of infiltrating an enemy police state could be overcome. The material provided in this chapter makes clear that the Bach Section played an enormous role in this process.

Yet the Bach Section, within its context of the Labor Branch, had a longer-reaching impact. Bach and the Labor Branch’s ability to infiltrate Germany were a key factor in shaping the future of foreign intelligence in the United States. Not surprisingly, Casey himself was influential in the circles that established the Central Intelligence Agency, and served as director from 1981 until 1987. The CIA, having people like Casey, Allen Dulles, and other former OSS officers on its staff, grew into an organization that actively participated in subversive infiltration and warfare, especially during the Cold War. This tendency stemmed from the OSS’ success in penetrating a number of countries in World War II.¹³⁶ Arguably, their success in Germany gave them the most confidence to continue on with infiltrations, making contact with underground resistance groups, and subverting foreign governments.

The CIA, while not a replica of the OSS, followed the example set by Bach and Labor Branch in another way as well. Unlike most intelligence services, which separate intelligence-gathering from covert operations, the CIA took on the model of the Labor Branch and handled both. As shown earlier in this chapter and in chapter 1, the Labor

¹³⁵ William Casey, interview by Joseph Persico, August 27, 1976, transcript, Folder Casey, Box 1, Persico Papers, Hoover Institute, Stanford, CA, 9-10.

¹³⁶ MacPherson, *American Intelligence in Wartime London*, 181.

Branch refused to be an intelligence-gathering branch only. They strove and succeeded in using that information, with the assistance of Bach, to plan and execute infiltrations into Germany. Casey and others had seen firsthand the value of using intelligence-gathering and mission execution together, and the CIA hence took on this style as well.¹³⁷ In the 1960s, however, the CIA started to stray from using this coordinated method. As a result, the intelligence they gathered and missions they sent out were of poor quality, resulting in calls to return to the system that had first been gleaned from Bach and Labor Sections experiences:

At the heart of this problem, as far as the CIA effort is concerned, lies the fact that the Agency is a house divided between intelligence collection [through covert operations] and intelligence research. Mr. Kent noted a decade ago that the segregation of covert collection activities was dictated by the need for secrecy....In today's highest-priority intelligence problems, I suggest, the segregation of intelligence collection from research is a luxury we no longer can afford.¹³⁸

Thus, while the CIA varied how closely intelligence gathering versus intelligence research was related, when troubles arose during the Cold War calls were made to return to what had worked in World War II, and the system established by Bach Section and the Labor Branch.

Bach's legacy of cover and documentation methods and success was also carried over to the CIA. In 1979, six employees of the U. S. State Department found themselves trapped in Iran during the hostage situation at the United States embassy in Tehran. The six had not been at the embassy at the time of the takeover, and had thus avoided capture. However, the threat against them remained, and their exfiltration to the U. S. was critical.

¹³⁷ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 219.

¹³⁸ Walter E. Seidel, "Great Frusina Revisited: The Problem of Priority-Positive Intelligence," in *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 5, no. 1, Winter 1961, p. 6.

The CIA undertook this task in a mission called “Argos,” after both an inside joke shared by members of the team that ran the mission and also after the ship of Greek mythology. The procedure of creating the covers and creating identities contained remarkable similarities to Bach Section projects. Ephemera such as matchbooks and movie stubs were collected to be used by the six being smuggled out of Iran as “pocket litter,” evocative of the same materials OSS agents were provided with. The CIA forged passports for the six, arranged visas, false identities, and disguises. The chosen covers: members of a Canadian movie crew scouting a location for a feature film. Cover names were carefully chosen, and in Tehran, the six were asked to choose which cover they were most comfortable with, evoking Bach practices of involving agents in creating and personalizing covers that would be most comfortable to them. Indeed, throughout the article describing the Argos mission, there are many similarities to the way Bach had arranged missions thirty-five years before. Indeed the greatest similarity was the mission’s success. All six State Department employees and the CIA agents who had gone in to free them escaped Iran safely and were returned to the U. S. While in this case the aim was exfiltration instead of infiltration, the ways and means of moving individuals from a hostile territory demonstrates the lasting legacy Bach’s practices had on the CIA.¹³⁹

Simply put, the Bach Section, facilitated through the Labor Branch, became the essential agency enabling infiltration of Nazi Germany’s police state. Of the 102 SI missions and nearly 200 agents infiltrated into Germany between 1 September 1944 and the end of the war in Europe, the Bach section completed work on cover and briefing for

¹³⁹ The Argos mission is detailed in Antonio J. Mendez, “CIA Goes Hollywood,” *Studies in Intelligence*, Winter 1999/2000, 1-16.

72 missions involving 145 agents. March and April 1945 were certainly their busiest period. On March 18, 1945 only four teams had been infiltrated into the Reich. After that date the number jumped dramatically, with up to four teams *per day* being sent in.¹⁴⁰ In this collective clandestine group, the loss rate of agents came in under 5 percent. Some of these agents were killed in plane crashes en route to their destinations, while others fell victim to friendly fire. Extraordinarily few agents had their covers blown. Their documents did not give them away, nor did their clothing. The stories they told as their life histories held up, often without question. Bach enabled, in one year, what older and more established intelligence agencies deemed impossible: the covert penetration of Nazi Germany. Their coordination with the Labor Branch, their joint accomplishment of German infiltration, and their remarkable talents at creating cover stories, obtaining intelligence, and forging documents would establish a tradition in U. S. intelligence that would carry over into the CIA.

¹⁴⁰ Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 181.

Chapter Three

The OSS in Fiction: What has been Done and How to do it Better

The previous two chapters have demonstrated both the bureaucracy and the drama that coexisted in the Labor Branch of the OSS. With true stories of espionage, cover stories, disguises, the constant potential for arrest and torture, the Labor Branch is naturally suited to be a topic for novelists and historians alike. People enjoy reading adventure stories, whether based in fact or entirely fictional. While the bureaucratic side of things might not be as captivating, it too reveals some of the more complicated nuances of secret intelligence and reiterates just how advanced American espionage became in a few short months. However, it can be difficult to balance these two sides of the OSS: how does one incorporate the day-to-day administrative activities that were crucial to the success of the OSS with the limited but enthralling episodes of infiltration? One such way is through crafting a work of historical fiction. Doing so enables an author to interweave all sides of the OSS Labor Branch history with dialogue, a plot including an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement, descriptions of historical scenes and events, and characters and conflicts that a reader can relate to. Within this framework, the less interesting parts of OSS history can be less obtrusively included and used to support the dramatic events.

The OSS Labor Branch as a topic of historical fiction also has the potential to reach a larger audience than it would if handled conventionally. The American public reads a significant amount of historical fiction every year.¹⁴¹ As a result, Americans

¹⁴¹ In 1997, 36 percent of all fiction books reviewed by the *New York Times* were historical in theme. See http://web.utk.edu/~wrobinso/574_lec_hisfic.html. Also, at major trade publishers, over 21 percent of history books published in 2004 were fiction. See <http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/issues/2005/0512/0512new1.cfm>.

receive some of their understanding of history from historical novels, and schoolteachers often use historical fiction in the classroom.¹⁴² This presents some challenges, especially when one considers that many historical novels are written without thorough research by a professional historian. As a result, some historical novels fall victim to historical clichés and anachronisms, which in turn leave readers confused and misinformed. These challenges require action and solution by authors of historical fiction. If an author is to use real historical events as a form of entertainment, she must do so with a responsibility to both the past and her readers. The author must recognize that her handling of history is influential and that readers can mistake historical fiction as fact.

There are many works of historical fiction that take the OSS as a main topic and include some measures of historical accuracy. In *Shining Through*, by Susan Isaacs, a 31-year-old American woman named Linda Voss ends up spying for the OSS in Berlin, employed as a cook by a high-ranking member of the *Abwehr*. Isaacs details Voss's time at the OSS Assessment School and at Training School, with both descriptions matching reasonably well with historical accounts and official OSS records of both places. Isaacs mentions the type of cover documents that Voss has as well: her passport, *Arbeitsbuch*, and ration card. These historical details are reassuring to the historian who is familiar with OSS history. However, Isaacs provides the average reader with no means of knowing whether the descriptions and events in the book are very factually accurate, somewhat accurate, or entirely invented. A note at the beginning of the book merely

¹⁴² One teacher has listed the “Seven Reasons I Teach With Historical Fiction,” including that it “piques kids’ interest,” makes history accessible to kids who do not have a solid grounding in history, and “presents the complexities of issues.” All of these aspects, and many more, are perfectly desirable when teaching history to children and adults alike. See Tarry Lindquist, “Why and How I Teach With Historical Fiction,” in *Scholastic Instructor*, accessed online, 5/31/2006 at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/lessonplans/instructor/social11.htm>.

states that, “Apart from obvious historical references to public figures and events, the characters and incidents in this novel are fictional.”¹⁴³

Unfortunately, it can be difficult for a non-historian of the OSS to know what the “obvious historical references” are. Is it an obvious historical reference, for example, when the main character sneaks into Berlin in 1942? Hopefully not, as the OSS did not have any agents infiltrated into any part of Germany at that time. Is it an obvious historical reference when the character describes her training experiences? What about the scenes in Berlin, the way the rationing system functioned, or the types of documents from which the character was able to glean intelligence? There is such a large overlap and so few means in this novel to distinguish historical accuracy from what Isaacs is assuming about what happened. As a result, the reader takes away little more than a mental image of how the OSS might, or might not, have operated.

Also problematic is the way in which the historical details are included in *Shining Through*, that is, they tend to be outside the lines of the rest of the general dialogue and flow. Isaacs has difficulty weaving the facts into the narrative and it is when the reader notes this abrupt change in pacing that she suspects she has stumbled on a bit of history rather than continued with the story. It feels like the historical details are being related by a voice other than the main character, who is also the narrator. For example, when remembering an event at the Training school, Linda Voss relates, “But on other nights...like after the Scare House, where I’d been sent up a dark flight of stairs with my pistol and heard footsteps behind me, and threatening German voices off so low I couldn’t make out where they were or what they were saying...”¹⁴⁴ This description,

¹⁴³ Susan Isaacs, *Shining Through* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), preface.

¹⁴⁴ Isaacs, *Shining Through*, 297.

while accurate of an OSS exercise, within the context of the rest of the novel feels like it has been dropped in for effect. The character's voice gets lost, and it feels like Isaacs came across this interesting tidbit about OSS training, thought "I could use this!" and inserted it into the text. This type of issue could be solved if the author had a greater historical understanding of the OSS. Being familiar with the facts of how an agent was recruited, trained, and infiltrated will make creating a story encompassing those elements much easier. If Isaacs were to know the history about this training exercise, her description of it would not come off as flatly as it does.

Granted, it is likely that Isaacs did not intend to educate her audience, but primarily to entertain them with an exciting adventure and love story. This she accomplishes. However, I still believe that a historian handling historical fiction can both educate and entertain effectively. The OSS has a huge number of exciting stories that do not have to be forced into the framework of a historical monograph. The things that a historian cannot always know, such as what the agents did while they were waiting for their documents to be processed; how they felt; what their rooms looked like; what they said to each other: these things are not always part of the historical record but can be created and inferred to connect the things that were known to have happened in a narrative. As mentioned in the introduction, Simon Schama does this well in *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)*. Natalie Zemon Davis in *The Return of Martin Guerre* readily admits that her telling of this famous French case of stolen identity is "in part my invention, but held tightly in check by the voices of the past."¹⁴⁵ Carlo Ginzburg is another master at bringing historical truth and conjecture together into a narrative.

¹⁴⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 5.

Doing as these historians do, but for an even wider audience, using a topic of greater general public interest, and taking more liberties with plot construction is my end goal.

As mentioned above, Susan Isaacs includes some historical facts, but they are difficult to distinguish within the book. This may be partially attributable to the fact that Isaacs is not a military or intelligence “buff,” and thus she lacks some of the background knowledge to enable her historical interludes to flow more freely within the narrative. W. E. B. Griffin, on the other hand, has written more fiction about the OSS than any other author. His *Men At War* series currently comprises five books following OSS agents in World War II. His *Honor Bound* series, consisting of three books, details OSS operations in Argentina.¹⁴⁶ Griffin employs a few methods of combining history with fiction, and his works demonstrate a clear understanding of some of the nuances of the OSS. He is especially adept at interweaving the bureaucratic intricacies of the organization into the narrative, having his characters continually battle through and overcome the challenges and stresses that were part of the day-to-day reality of working for the OSS. For example, in *The Soldier Spies*, a scene between head of the OSS William Donovan, OSS-London chief David Bruce, and a fictional character reveals the internal debates over who should know what details about a specific mission, and when.¹⁴⁷ The dialogue reflects the same type of debates that were held in real OSS memos and reports and captures the ambience of the bureaucracy.

However, Griffin does struggle, like Isaacs, to underscore what is fact and what is fiction. One source of this confusion is the appearance of many real individuals in his

¹⁴⁶ Griffin is fortunate to have friends and close contacts who served in the OSS who assist him in capturing the nuances of the OSS. See Griffin’s biography at his website, www.webgriffin.com, accessed 3/27/07.

¹⁴⁷ W. E. B. Griffin, *The Soldier Spies* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1999), 247.

novels, such as Donovan, Bruce, and a number of high-ranking German government, army, and intelligence officers. While including these individuals puts the reader in direct contact with history, it also raises the issue of delineating what actually happened from the author's own creations. While he begins many of his works with a prologue setting up some historical context, Griffin could more fully solve this problem by including some type of notes. Interestingly, in *The Soldier Spies* one footnote appears, explaining a reference to a battle between Russian and Hungarian forces in 1943.¹⁴⁸ The reader now quickly gains an understanding and an education about something he or she might otherwise have completely overlooked. Unfortunately, there are no other footnotes in that book or the others in the series. I found the appearance of real historical figures with little historical context to be confusing, and feel that Griffin's works would be better served were he to include some system of explaining who each person actually was.

Another method that Griffin could improve upon is his inclusion of made-up telegrams, memos, and OSS documents. He uses this device at least thirty times in *The Fighting Agents*, and relies on it numerous times in his other works as well. While the documents are interesting, move the plot forward, and grab the reader's eye (they are set in a different font and placed in gray text boxes), they do not carry the weight or impact of seeing a real OSS document, with its "Top Secret" stamp across the top and the initials of the recipient or sender at the end.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, the use of actual OSS documents would expose the reader to primary source material, something one does not normally encounter when reading for pleasure. However, primary documents are the most enjoyable part of historical research. They are what bring the past to life and relay a

¹⁴⁸ Griffin, *The Soldier Spies*, 269.

¹⁴⁹ W. E. B. Griffin, *The Fighting Agents* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1987). For a good example of a created OSS memo that Griffin uses, see pages 220-222.

person's voice and inflection. Griffin would be better off if he selected and edited authentic OSS documents that would fit his plot and incorporate those into his novels, and made note of this technique in a prologue or afterword.

Another work of fiction involving the OSS that has both positive and negative elements is Nelson De Mille's *The Talbot Odyssey*. While this novel is more concerned with the CIA during the Cold War, De Mille uses the history of the OSS to set up his story line. He does so quite capably, weaving the functions and accomplishments of the OSS into his narrative, giving his characters personal and family connections to the OSS, and exploring how the OSS was the forebear of the CIA. His acknowledgments recognize "Joseph Persico for sharing with me his knowledge of the Office of Strategic Services...." Persico is one of the foremost OSS scholars, and knowing that De Mille consulted with Persico is evidence that he undertook some degree of historical research with a highly reliable source. However, in a section titled "Regarding Persons and Places," De Mille also points out that "The Veterans of the Office of Strategic Services have in no way helped with or endorsed this novel," thereby leaving a potentially valuable source unutilized.¹⁵⁰ His best option, of course, would have been to work with both Persico and OSS veterans, combining their input and thereby improving his understanding of OSS history even further. Had De Mille conducted a more complete historiographical study of the OSS, his understanding and incorporation of the facts could have been even better integrated into the novel.

Having examined the novels mentioned above, it becomes clear that there are a few ways that authors of historical fiction can minimize reader misinformation. First and foremost, good historical research should be conducted before beginning any work of

¹⁵⁰ Nelson De Mille, *The Talbot Odyssey* (New York: Delacourt Press, 1984), preface.

historical fiction. Relying solely on one's own understanding of a historical era or event leads to misinterpretation by the author. Instead, one should have at the least a basic understanding of the historiography of the topic. Knowing what scholars and historians have argued about and researched in the past gives the author of historical fiction a balanced idea of the event or historical character and allows her to utilize that knowledge within the novel.

Doing a case study is another way that an author of historical fiction can help ensure that her work is both accurate and entertaining. Having first established the historiography of the topic, a responsible author should then be able to choose one among a variety of events or individuals who appeared in the historical context. This singular event, while unique in some ways, should still relate closely to the accepted history of the topic. The chosen individual or event should also provide the author with inspiration for the fictional aspect of the novel. The case study should be investigated with as much thoroughness and detail as was devoted to the historiography. Accuracy and the fullest possible understanding are once again vital, for the event will serve as the author's "illustrated reference." That is to say, a familiarity with the specific event should illuminate in the author's mind an image that she wishes to convey to her readers in the novel. Through a case study, she should begin to develop a picture in her mind's eye of her characters, their traits, what influences them and their decisions, how they speak, where they live, and what they think, feel, and see. Only a close relationship with the past, which is most thoroughly obtained through a case study, will enable an author of historical fiction to illuminate for her audience the full, broad spectrum of everyday life in the past. A case study will allow the author to suggest, not affirm, what happened in

the past. This ability to suggest, rather than lecture, is crucial to successful fictional writing.

The author also has the responsibility to delineate for her readers what is fact and fiction within the novel. Including notes at the end of a historical novel provides a reader with unobtrusive guidance about the history that appears in the book. The notes might be organized not by including numbers within the text, but simply by beginning the note at the end with the first part of the sentence within the text to which the note relates. Notes might inform a reader when a statement is true or has been fictionalized, provide brief contextualization about historical events where appropriate, and give source citations for the historical references made in the text. Doing so can help minimize confusion by a reader about historical events versus fictionalized ones. For example, if one is reading a historical novel set during the Civil War and the actual historic events at one plantation are used as inspiration for specific fictional events in the novel, inserting a note at the end of these sections can be very valuable. The note would allow the author to talk briefly about the real events that inspired the fiction, to acknowledge that these particular events in her book did not take place but are relevant because similar events actually did, and also to give the reader a scholarly source to consult for the full historical discussion. Proceeding in this manner can significantly reduce confusion by the reader and also raise the standard of historical fiction in just a few words.

One effective way of using notes within a work of historical fiction is to first point out their inclusion in a brief preface or introduction and explain the purpose of the notes. Alerting the reader that the author has provided further information and explanations about what appears in the text gives the reader the knowledge that what he

or she is about to read is only based partially on historical research and fact. The notes themselves will direct the interested reader to available sources, or clear up confusion or disagreements between the fictional text and the known historiography of the event or time period in question. Notes are one of the most direct ways of communicating history within historical fiction, and failure to include those notes is irresponsible on the part of the author.

Including primary source documents efficiently and dramatically within works of historical fiction is another highly effective way of teaching readers about the past. Not only do primary documents substantiate statements occurring within the text, they often get readers excited about the past. There is something very visceral and personal about being able to see firsthand what someone from the past has written, what they looked like, or, in the case of the OSS, how the documents they carried as part of their cover stories appeared. Another example would be including an old map within the text of a historical novel. A reader with an interest in geography or travel might find this a far more effective learning tool than simply being told in words where a character was based. Primary documents can serve to validate history within historical fiction and also encourage and excite readers about how history is studied. There is no reason to exclude such valuable sources within historical fiction.

Obviously, taking the steps suggested above means that the author of historical fiction would have to do a fair amount of research before even beginning the novel. One might then ask herself, why even bother? What is the objective of doing fiction in such a way? Certainly there are plenty of histories already written—why not direct readers to those? For this author, the answer is clear. Historical fiction, since it is consumed so

rapidly and readily by the public, is an excellent outlet for public history; that is, conducting historical research with the intent that the end product is designed for a lay audience. Public history plays an enormous role in teaching children and adults alike about the past, be it in a museum, a documentary film, or a historical novel. Yet the difference between a museum or documentary and a historical novel is that the first two have already integrated a level of historical and scholarly research needed to make them educational. I would contend that historical novels, as a genre, are not yet to that level on a consistent basis. That is not to say, however, that historical fiction cannot equal the level of teaching value of museums and documentaries, because it very readily can. Writing a novel based on scholarly research is one way. Encouraging authors of historical fiction who do not have backgrounds in history to use primary sources, to investigate a topic's historiography, to use their talent to teach *and* entertain, is another. Doing so requires making these authors, and their readers, aware of public history's potential, and to use that potential to raise the standard of historical information in the historical novel.

Historical novels also have inherent qualities that make them useful public history tools. First and foremost, historical novels have the ability to make the past come alive. The author can focus on a singular event, and describe it in vivid detail without having to worry about explaining the overall significance of it. For some, history is a boring recitation of names and dates. All too often, history teachers leave out the role of the individual in history, the context in which humans experienced the past, an understanding of the different sights, smells, and sounds that would have been prevalent. While these details may be discussed in historical monographs, scholars tend to use a jargon intended for other scholars and not the general public. Historical fiction is therefore less

intimidating for the average reader and far more accessible. It provides the author with an outlet for including adjectives, creating dialog between historical characters, both real and fictional, and making even the driest history livelier. The fictional aspect gives the author creative license to slightly change facts, to tell a story from the past from multiple perspectives, and to do so in a way that will both educate and entertain readers. This style of bias is more acceptable in historical fiction than it will ever be in the historical monograph. Again, as long as the author includes notes and bases her story in historical research and an understanding of her subject, then she has enabled herself to embark upon the path of historical fiction.

With all of the above having been said, what follows is an attempt by this author to conduct a historical case study and place it within the context of the greater historiography and research that has appeared in chapters one and two of this work. The case study details some aspects of the OSS's Hammer mission to Berlin in March 1945. The study is intended to lay the groundwork for a historical novel about the OSS infiltration of Nazi Germany. It includes a running commentary of how the case study can be used to create the novel.

On March 28, 1945, from a field in Berlin, the following conversation between two OSS agents and an OSS crew circling overhead in an airplane took place:

“Hello Heinz, here is Vic...”

“Hello Vic, here is Heinz. I did not understand well. Can you repeat, please. Over...”

“Hello Heinz, I am receiving your news, go ahead.”

“Klingenburg power plant on Rummelsburg Lake is fully functioning and is furnishing electric power to vital industries.... The following plants are located in one area on a branch canal, North bank of Teltow Canal, between Teltow and Licherfelds...Zeiss-Ikon, periscopes and instruments for tanks; Telefunken, nautical instruments...gyroscopes, contacts and instruments....We need groceries.... We need coffee, cigarettes, candles, knitting wool, salt, butter, fat, powdered egg, chocolate, powdered milk, Vaseline, cod liver oil, soap.... We need medicine that soldiers can take in order to become ill. We need four pistols and three knives; also food stamps and blanks or paper on which papers can be forged; likewise certificates of public employment offices from Berlin and outside Berlin....And rubber stamps to make new papers, and ration cards of every kind....[I] want to tell you to speed up as much as possible the supplies we ordered. Our landing field number one is to be used for dropping.... [Also,] the City Railroad is the only system of transportation in working order. The Ostkreuz junction is functioning again. If you interfere with the City Railroad, all traffic will be stopped....The City and Ring Railroad is the only working transportation in Berlin....The block of Kalitzer Street, Southeast, between Zaughof and Wrangel Streets, North Side, is the main post and telegraph office....Warschauer Street Freight Terminal, 700 meters from bridge, four sides. Main freight yards. On the 10th and 18th of March, respectively, there were 26 and 25 freight trains, 18 and 10 passenger trains...4 locomotives.”

“I understand. Have you anything more to say?”

“Hello Heinz, this is Vic. Thank you very much. Best wishes from us. Good night, we shall hear you again. Over.”

“Hello Vic, good night. Come again soon.”¹⁵¹

Such was the communication between the OSS and two of their agents in Germany in late March 1945. In this particular instance, Heinz was the OSS spy team of Paul Lindner and Anton Ruh, sent into Berlin on March 1, 1945, and formally known as the Hammer team. The aim of their mission was similar to other missions sent by the Labor Branch into Germany: gather intelligence about local industry, production, military situations, and morale; set up resistance networks to harm these sectors; and report back to the OSS on their progress or lack thereof. This brief exchange between the men on the ground and their OSS colleagues thousands of feet above them in the air gives insight

¹⁵¹ Excerpt, Operations Report, DIP, SI/ETO, May 26, 1945, RG 226, E 110, Box 49, NA.

into what the agents, who had been on the ground for less than a month, saw and accomplished. Like other missions into Germany, the impact of the Hammer team on the outcome of the war is debatable; they did not hasten the end of the war, they could not locate Hitler's secret bunker, and the intelligence they provided did not play a significant role in the collapse of Berlin. However, they did demonstrate that Berlin could be breached, that the capital of Nazi Germany was vulnerable, and that state controls were collapsing. Most impressively, they survived to tell their stories. Thus, while their individual impact may not have been great, the Hammer mission, among others, stands as an excellent representation of the capabilities of the OSS.

However, the Hammer mission should not be seen as just another interesting OSS mission. It is also a valuable case study for me, as I attempt to write an historical novel about agents who penetrated Germany. Yet instead of rehashing the entire Hammer mission moment by moment, I will focus on specific elements within the mission, like the communication transcribed above, that best provide material for transforming this information into a historical novel.¹⁵² This will mean comparing these details with other missions, with earlier chapters in this work, and with my thoughts on how such elements can be used in a historical novel. Doing so will demonstrate that historical fiction can be done responsibly and lay the groundwork for a novel based in the real history of a time and place. While the novel itself is not part of this thesis, the following pages provide an outline of methods, events, and general chronology that I will follow when I do begin the novel.

¹⁵² For more information and chronological narratives about the Hammer mission, including details that might not appear in this chapter, see Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, and the *SI/OSS London War Diary*.

The Hammer mission is especially helpful to one writing an historical novel about the OSS because the records on the mission are extensive. From the OSS's very first interviews and analyses of Lindner and Ruh to their postwar reports and debriefings, the OSS files on these two men reveal firsthand who they were and what they did as relates to their infiltration. However, before Hammer can be discussed in detail, one first needs place it within the greater intelligence effort from which it stemmed. Documents show that the planning for the Hammer mission began in 1944 as part of a larger infiltration plan. In August of that year, Secret Intelligence (SI) requested authorization from the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) to train and infiltrate thirty secret agents into Germany. This plan, known as Faust, was to collect military information and transmit it back to OSS and SHAEF. To do so, SI recognized that building relationships with underground, anti-Nazi networks would be vital to a successful infiltration.¹⁵³

As explained in earlier chapters, by 1944 SI had finally realized that some underground labor groups in Germany were ardently anti-Nazi and well-positioned to aid OSS agents in surviving in Germany. Thus it was logical that SI would now turn directly to the Labor Branch for assistance. In SI's original proposal for Faust, George Pratt stated that "The SI Branch of OSS has already recruited agents—men and women—thoroughly qualified and trained to carry out the Faust plan."¹⁵⁴ These men and women were the agents being handled by the Labor Branch, and would be among the first and most often infiltrated. Pratt also revealed that "...the SI Branch has a group of experts currently engaged in the collection and marshalling of available information on German controls,

¹⁵³ Memorandum, George Pratt to John Haskell, "Plan for the Penetration of Germany for Intelligence Purposes," August 15, 1944, RG 226, NA.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

regulations, documents, clothes and everyday life in general, necessary for the training and briefing of agents.”¹⁵⁵ Here he was referring to the Bach section and revealing its capabilities and importance to his superiors in an attempt to finally get the infiltration of Germany underway.

The ongoing resistance of the Germans and the inability of the Allies to extract an early unconditional surrender from Hitler meant that the high ranks of OSS and SHAEF were finally willing to consider the secret infiltration of Germany. On August 19, 1944, four days after Pratt’s memo was sent, SHAEF approved the plan, and the Labor Branch finally received the support it needed to do what they had been discussing and preparing for well over a year: send in its spies.¹⁵⁶ The very first mission, called Downend and deployed on September 1, 1944, is discussed in chapter one of this work. Downend’s success, while hampered by the limited communication the agent had with OSS, nonetheless demonstrated that infiltration was possible. With this, recruitment, training, and execution of OSS missions to Germany swung into greater action.

The Hammer mission fell under the aegis of the Faust plan. The official proposal from the mission was sent on November 6, 1944 from Thomas Wilson, Acting Chief of the Labor Division, to the then-chief of SI, Lieutenant Colonel Alan Scaife. In the proposal, Wilson called for three specific objectives, in addition to those laid down for all Faust missions. The agents were “to establish and maintain contact with the Free Germany Committee group in Berlin...to secure and transmit intelligence obtained through such contacts as prior and continuing directives of the military authorities will

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See chapter one, page 35, for the details on this approval.

require...[and] to arrange for the reception of additional agents.”¹⁵⁷ Obviously, this would be a risky mission. Not only was the Labor Branch staff preparing to enter Germany, they were aiming for the capital itself. The Labor Branch would expect the agents to make contact with illegal underground groups who had been long persecuted and had lost countless members to the Gestapo, prisons, and concentration camps. Amazingly, the Branch had two agents willing and able to take on these challenges.

Before discussing these agents, on whom my two main characters in the novel will be loosely based, I will note that this lead-up to the Hammer mission will be a necessary part of the novel. Setting up the bureaucracy of the OSS and providing the reader with some context about how the idea for the mission developed will be vital. This background information could be related in a brief prologue along the lines of what W. E. B. Griffin sometimes includes. This would allow me to introduce the OSS to the reader straightaway, without having to worry about disrupting the narrative. I could also begin the novel without a prologue and have my characters, who are officers in the OSS, set in a meeting, reviewing how they have arrived at the point they are at, and where they will go from there.

Once the background information has been established, the main characters can be brought in. They will be based on the two men who served on the Hammer mission. Paul Lindner was 33 years old when he was recruited in 1944 for the mission. The preliminary report on him, sent to the Bach Unit, described him physically as weighing 126 pounds, measuring 5 feet 2 inches tall, with a “thin, wiry, tough” build. His face was square and small, hair and eyes both brown. His German was tinged with a Berlin accent,

¹⁵⁷ Thomas S. Wilson to Alan M. Scaife, Memorandum, “Faust Plan- Hammer Project,” November 6, 1944, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

he could speak a smattering of Czech, and was also fluent in English. His handler, Joseph Gould, noted Lindner could drop his Berlin accent to a degree, but that “certain syllables [were] clearly identifiable as Berlinese.” Gould’s report to Bach also describes a scar Lindner carried to the right of his nose, a result of an encounter with a group of Nazis armed with knuckle rings. He carried other scars from Nazi handling as well, including a bayonet scar in his upper-right buttock dating to 1933. He was noted to be a fairly heavy smoker but in overall good physical condition.

Lindner’s biography is also detailed, discussing his education in Berlin from 1917 to 1929, where he apprenticed as a machinist, or turner, and studied drafting and engineering as well. He lived in Berlin until 1935, when he was forced to flee the Nazis to Czechoslovakia. From there he fled to Britain, at which point he was interned as a potentially hostile enemy (he was held first in Britain and then sent to Canada to finish his internment). Lindner had no military background and no familiarity with German military equipment. The Bach report chronicles Lindner’s political activities as well, including his illegal work with the Labor League of Youth in Berlin, and contact with the Social Democrat party in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵⁸

Lindner’s partner in the Hammer mission was Anton Ruh, age 33. Ruh was bigger than Lindner, standing nearly six feet tall, weighing 170 pounds, with a medium build and a round face. His hair was recorded as being dark brown but graying, and he had gray-blue eyes and a fair complexion. Ruh could speak German without any regional dialect as well as with a Berlin accent. His English was quite good, as was his Czech. Like Lindner, Ruh’s scars were described: a small scar on his upper lip, resulting from

¹⁵⁸ Lt. Joseph Gould to the Bach Unit, Memo, Cover Detail, LFB 150 (Paul Lindner), January 23, 1945, Hammer mission folders, RG 226, NA.

falling on a pointed rock, and some burn marks on his forearms as a result of his work as a welder.

Also like Lindner, Ruh was an avid smoker yet in “excellent physical condition.” He reported occasional headaches “from blow by SA over head with rifle butt,” but otherwise his health was good. His biographical sketch reveals study in Berlin from 1918 until 1930, including time spent as a printing apprentice. After his schooling he was employed as a newspaper lithographer. A consistent Nazi enemy, he went into hiding in 1933 but was arrested later that year and held without trial for seven months. After his imprisonment, he established an illegal pamphlet printing shop. When the Nazis discovered it, Ruh fled to Czechoslovakia. Ruh remained in Czechoslovakia until the Nazis occupied the entire country, at which point he fled to England where he studied welding until being interned and deported to Australia in 1940. Ruh was without military experience.¹⁵⁹

It is helpful to have these physical and biographical descriptions of Lindner and Ruh. From them, the historical novelist can begin to piece together fictional characters based on individuals with historical significance.¹⁶⁰ One begins to gain a sense of the past experiences an OSS agent might have had, what sort of education they held, their run-ins with the Nazis, and their age and ethnicity. The photographs that are available of Lindner and Ruh are likewise of value, for they illustrate the clothing they wore, their hairstyles,

¹⁵⁹ Joseph Gould to Bach Unit, Memo, Cover Detail LFB-174 (Anton Ruh), January 23, 1945, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

¹⁶⁰ In some ways, this creating of characters from a conglomeration of real historical figures is reminiscent of the methods used by living history museums to create citizens of their created towns and farms. This requires thorough research into the societal history, as well as food, clothes, hairstyles, technology, and a myriad of other topics if the character is to be historically accurate. For more information, see the *Midwest Open-Air Museums Magazine* and Jay Anderson, ed., *A Living History Reader: Museums* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 1995). Scott Magelssen’s forthcoming book, *Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2007) also promises to be an excellent resource on this topic.

and the look in their eyes.¹⁶¹ All of these are important details to have when crafting a fictional historical character, for they will bring the character to life in the eyes of the readers. This crafting of the characters is a crucial stage in any book. In my novel, the characters will be developed and their backgrounds revealed as they progress through the various stages of recruitment and training by the OSS. While they will not resemble Lindner and Ruh physically, they will be of a similar age and demographic.

The biographies also lead the historian to more questions about the two men and their experiences that need to be answered if they are to be used as inspiration for a novel. One question that Lindner and Ruh's biographies both raise is their connection to Czechoslovakia and how and why they learned to speak Czech. Lindner and Ruh both fled to Prague in the mid-1930s after encounters with various Nazi police organizations. Czechoslovakia was a natural destination for both of them, as it had a number of ethnic Germans living there. The two were thus comfortable in Czechoslovakia in terms of language and culture. There was also a strong tradition of labor unionism in Czechoslovakia, which was allowed there until after the Munich Agreement of September 29, 1938. Communism was also allowed until October 20, 1938, giving Lindner and Ruh an opportunity to exercise their political beliefs and their resistance work without as great a threat of persecution as they faced in Germany.¹⁶² Lindner especially took advantage of his time in Czechoslovakia, moving in January 1937 from Prague (where he had arrived in October 1935) to Reichenberg in northern Czechoslovakia in order to be closer to the German border so as to intensify his contact

¹⁶¹ See Appendix, Figures 3 and 4.

¹⁶² Trade unions and the German Communist Party were both outlawed in Germany on May 2, 1933. Theodor Prochazka, "The Second Republic, 1938-1939," in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomir Luza (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 262.

with the underground social-democratic groups.¹⁶³ However, the Munich Agreement in September 1938 foretold difficult times for men like Lindner and Ruh. The ethnic Germans in Czechoslovakia, or Sudeten Germans, began to make moves to favor the Nazis, with the major Sudeten party endorsing the Nazis' attempt to pick apart Czechoslovakia.¹⁶⁴ To Lindner and Ruh this would have meant the acceptance by the Sudeten Germans of Nazi institutions like the Gestapo and SA, certainly cause for alarm for two men who had been arrested and tortured by such agencies. Indeed, in late 1938 Ruh was classified as a political fugitive by the Nazis.¹⁶⁵ Finally, on March 15, 1939, when the Nazis began to take over the remainder of Czechoslovakia that they had not been granted at Munich, Lindner, Ruh, and thousands of other German national refugees in Czechoslovakia realized that, in order to at the least avoid arrest and at the best, survive, they would once more have to flee.¹⁶⁶

Lindner and Ruh both fled from Czechoslovakia to Britain with the assistance of an agency known as the Czech Refugee Trust Fund.¹⁶⁷ This agency began as the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the Munich Agreement. Its aim was to provide relief and evacuation for refugees, including political Sudetenland victims such as Lindner and Ruh. In the end, the Czech Refugee Trust Fund aided some eight thousand individuals, including Lindner and Ruh, in escaping persecution in Europe.¹⁶⁸ While the details of Ruh's escape from Czechoslovakia are

¹⁶³ Paul Lindner, Petition to British Government for Early Release from Internment, August 5, 1941, Folder 56, Box 43, Entry 115, Record Group 226, NA.

¹⁶⁴ Radomir Luza, "The Czech Resistance Movement," in *A History of the Czechoslovak Republic, 1918-1948*, ed. Victor S. Mamatey and Radomir Luza (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 344.

¹⁶⁵ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 9.

¹⁶⁶ Prochazka, "The Second Republic, 1938-1939," 270.

¹⁶⁷ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 9.

¹⁶⁸ Tony Kushner and Katharine Knox, *Refugees in an Age of Genocide: Global, National and Local Perspectives During the Twentieth Century* (London: Frank Cass, 1999), 141.

unknown, Lindner connected with the Youth Refugee and Relief Council, a section of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund. In March 1939, the Council managed to evacuate him to Chatham, Kent, where the local branch of the Youth Refugee and Relief Council provided him with food and housing.¹⁶⁹ However, Lindner and Ruh's journeys did not end in Britain; each was deported and briefly interned until the British government determined that they, as Germans, did not pose a threat to British security. In any event, both men followed similar paths to reach their new lives in London.¹⁷⁰ No doubt the similarities of their experiences must have drawn them even closer together as they prepared to penetrate their homeland, now under fascist control.

This information about the men's Czech connections, while fascinating, will not be a part of my novel. Indeed, it is such an interesting part of Lindner and Ruh's experiences that this part of their stories could be a novel of its own. Thus, here is an example of where an author of historical fiction can take some liberties with the plot. Every miniscule detail does not have to be uncovered to the reader of a novel. Were I to make Lindner and Ruh's mission into a historical monograph, however, I would certainly devote a chapter to their escape from Germany to Czechoslovakia. The idea of doing so in my novel, however, threatens to hold back to main part of the story, which is their infiltration of Germany. I do not envision my characters spending time in internment camps, nor do I wish to explain the complicated nuances of the Czech Refugee Trust Fund. Instead, their escape will be simplified and hastened, using other exiles' stories as inspiration.

¹⁶⁹ Paul Lindner, Petition to British Government for Early Release from Internment, August 5, 1941, Folder 56, Box 43, Entry 115, Record Group 226, NA.

¹⁷⁰ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 9.

Lindner and Ruh's backgrounds also leave the researcher curious about resistance movements in Germany before World War II, some of which can be examined by looking at the types of resistance these men were involved in. Lindner's primary focus on resistance while still in Germany was with the League of Labor Youth. By 1935, he had trained over four hundred German youths, under the guise of hosting a hiking club, in matters relating to resistance activities, including distributing pamphlets, painting anti-Nazi slogans, and evading capture by the Gestapo.¹⁷¹ The League of Labor Youths was similar to other underground resistance organizations in that members were young, willing to take risks, and relatively few in number. The papers available on Ruh do not reveal any particular organizational affiliation for his resistance activities, although he was involved with Lindner in producing political pamphlets. Ruh also risked his life by delivering forged passports to Germany after he had taken refuge in Czechoslovakia. He returned to Germany six times on such missions.¹⁷² Even though one cannot determine any official affiliation with a resistance group, Ruh was clearly active in protesting Nazi activities and doing what he could to save others from persecution at their hands. This again speaks to the nature of resistance movements in Germany in the 1930s. By the time Hitler began to dominate every facet of life in the mid-1930s, independent resistance movements (those with no ties to the army or other official organizations) had been forced to shrink to smaller sizes to avoid detection, to require individuals to take

¹⁷¹ Paul Lindner, Petition to British Government for Early Release from Internment, 5 August 1941, Folder 56, Box 43, Entry 115, Record Group 226, NA.

¹⁷² Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 9.

extraordinary risks on their own to execute their work, and to rely on themselves to spread their message.¹⁷³

The biographical backgrounds of these men also allow the historian to analyze how the OSS Labor Branch worked practically, for one can evaluate the Hammer mission and see how it fit into the greater context of the Labor Branch. The results of these evaluations allow the historical novelist to decide whether the Hammer mission is representative of Labor Branch work, and, as such, whether elements of the mission should be used as inspiration for scenes in the novel. As the reader may recall, the first chapter of this work described how the Labor Branch worked with an array of German labor groups with differing aims and interests, from socialists to communists and a range of ideas in between.¹⁷⁴ The men of the Hammer mission came from such an organization, one known as the Free Germany Committee of Great Britain.

The aim of the Free Germany Committees, which were off-shoots of the Moscow-based National Committee for a Free Germany, was to support the war against the Nazis by providing information to the Allies about conditions inside Germany, to encourage underground resistance groups to rise up and overthrow Hitler, and to convince German POWs to rally against the Nazi regime.¹⁷⁵ The men affiliated with the branch of the Free Germany Committee in Britain were Communists. This group was approached by Labor Branch officer Joseph Gould in late August 1944, and certain members of the group showed an interest in working for OSS. As was typical of the Labor Branch at this time,

¹⁷³ Anton Gill, *An Honorable Defeat: A History of German Resistance to Hitler, 1933-1945* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1994), 2-3.

¹⁷⁴ See pp. 11-12 of chapter one.

¹⁷⁵ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows: The OSS and the London Free Germans," in *Studies in Intelligence*, vol. 46, no.1, 2002, 13.

Gould did not worry about the new recruits' political persuasion.¹⁷⁶ However, the fact that Lindner and Ruh, as well as the other seven recruits who were plucked from the Free German Committee of Great Britain, were Communists initially caused hesitation among upper-level OSS staff. In late 1944 and early 1945, Free Germany Committees were springing up in nations across western Europe. The top staff in the OSS and U. S. government was concerned that an "international Moscow line," or plan overseen by Moscow to Bolshevize Germany after the war, was forming, and feared that using OSS agents with connections to the Free Germany Committee would only weaken the United States' postwar position in Germany.¹⁷⁷ Even William Casey, who had so strongly supported the Labor Branch and its plans for infiltration, had reservations, fearing that working too closely with the Communists would distance the OSS from its relationship with British intelligence.¹⁷⁸

Eventually, the fear of using Communists to execute missions for the OSS was trumped by the assurance that they were willing to penetrate their Nazi homeland on behalf of the United States in order to provide valuable intelligence to assist the Allied war effort. Arthur Goldberg, head of the Labor Division, took the matter to Bill Donovan, director of the OSS. Goldberg argued straight from the directive that had created the OSS, claiming that "the letter and spirit" of that directive had "expressly referenced the potential enlistment of irregular forces in fighting the war."¹⁷⁹ Donovan approved, and on February 22, 1945, the Hammer mission received the final approval. This argument within the OSS represents the Labor Branch's continuing insistence that the sheer need to

¹⁷⁶ Joseph Gould, "An OSS Officer's Own WWII Story: Of His Seven German Agents and their Five 'Labor Desk' Missions into Germany," unpublished memoir, 4.

¹⁷⁷ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 166.

¹⁷⁸ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 8.

¹⁷⁹ Joseph Gould, unpublished memoirs, 7, and Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 8.

defeat the Nazis outweighed political ideology in the struggle to infiltrate Germany. The approval of Lindner and Ruh's mission in late 1944 also demonstrates the change in the OSS leadership opinion about penetrating Germany, for they finally were willing to allow the Labor Branch to use Communists as part of the Allied war effort.¹⁸⁰

Knowing Lindner and Ruh's backgrounds in resistance movements is important for a few reasons. First, awareness of their participation in the resistance enables me to choose what my characters' backgrounds should be. Were they involved in printing anti-Nazi propaganda, like Lindner and Ruh, or do I want to reach elsewhere for inspiration and have them participate in underground subversive activities, like tampering with machines? I actually will use a combination of these and have one of my characters be more of the intellectual frame of mind, and the other more physical. Having a character of each trait will arrange for tensions between the two men as they work their mission together. It will also enable me to inform readers about the various types of resistance that occurred early on in the Nazi regime.

Lindner and Ruh's resistance work is an example of how the Hammer mission reflects two facets of OSS and Labor Branch history. First, the Labor Branch recruited Communists, and second, the OSS leadership did use Communists to infiltrate Germany. This confirmation gives me free reign to include a plot line like this in the novel. However, it also presents a potential challenge: will readers be able to relate to Communist agents? Should I depict the characters based on Lindner and Ruh as Communists? In my estimation, it is necessary for my two characters to be Communists. It sets up a dramatic conflict between the agents and their handlers, and also sets the stage

¹⁸⁰ See p. 13 of chapter one, which discusses the reasons behind the OSS leaderships' reluctance to use Communists, Socialists, and others they considered to be unreliable.

for post-war political problems. Furthermore, their being Communist will provide a motive for them wanting to infiltrate Germany and bring down the Nazi regime, a critical part of this novel. The characters need a convincing reason to turn traitor against their homeland, and the fact that they and their friends would have been persecuted from the earliest days of the Hitler government is such a reason.

Lindner and Ruh's connections to the Free Germany Committee also raise questions about how I will have the OSS recruit my two characters. I would feel most comfortable following a storyline that is close to Lindner and Ruh's experiences, because the way they were recruited is among the most common of methods used by the OSS. Also, having the characters as members of an exile group will open a door to a world of individuals chased out of their homeland, mistrusted by the English population, struggling to make ends meet in a foreign land. The opportunities to discuss the emotional turmoil plaguing my characters would be many in this situation. It will also be easier for me to discuss a recruitment method with which I am familiar from the OSS perspective as well. There are many documents and reports that I will be able to access to best understand and describe how OSS officers were able to persuade men like Lindner and Ruh to join them.

Perusing the training and mission files of the men is similarly helpful to an aspiring novelist and historian. One can compare and contrast the actual experiences of the agents with the way training was supposed to proceed according to Bach standards, such as the type of covers created, the use of the agents' own ideas in creating their covers, and the types of documents they were issued to complete their mission. This exercise again allows the researcher to discover where the mission fits in the larger

spectrum of OSS history, and reveals the extent to which the mission can be used by a historical novelist as a reliable model for events in a novel.

As mentioned in chapter two, one of Bach's first steps in creating a cover story was gathering a biographical sketch on the agent. The biographies for Lindner and Ruh, documented earlier in this chapter, were standard in terms of the biographical information they included. One knows from their sketches, for example, what their smoking habits were, their school histories, where they had worked and what they had done in each job, and the types of individuals and groups that each man was most comfortable associating with. All of this information was essential to Bach staffers and commonly requested by them.¹⁸¹ In the instance of Hammer, Bach knew everything necessary to create strong cover stories.

Remember that Bach also paid close attention to an agent's family history when creating cover stories. Generally speaking, Bach ensured that in a cover story the agent's hometown was some distance away from the area of operation so as to reduce the number of checks that might be done into his background while on his mission.¹⁸² In Hammer's case, both men were cast as refugees, Lindner from Koenigsberg, Germany and Ruh from Breslau, Czechoslovakia. Both of their stories had them fleeing to Berlin to find work and avoid the approaching Russians.¹⁸³ The fact that both were refugees from cities east of Berlin and along the Russian lines made their covers difficult for any German officials to verify, and therefore safer for Lindner and Ruh to use. After all, by March 1945 it would have be extremely difficult for a Nazi officer to call and investigate whether their papers

¹⁸¹ See chapter two, 13-14.

¹⁸² See chapter two, 18.

¹⁸³ OSS/London War Diary, reel 7, vol. 6, p. 434; also Report, Lt. H.C. Sutton, "Hammer team, Interrogation on Operational Experience," June 27, 1945, RG 226, Hammer files.

were valid, considering Lindner and Ruh's "home towns" were on the verge of being overrun or already captured by Allied forces. The covers that Bach crafted for the Hammer mission thus followed their usual pattern and once more proved impregnable.

Ruh's cover as a Czech refugee came in especially handy at one very tense moment in the mission. While returning to Berlin from a trip to pick up materials and supplies, the two men were stopped by an SS officer who demanded to see their papers and also the contents of their bag. Ruh, who was carrying the bag, pretended to have very limited understanding of German (he was, after all, using the cover of a Czech refugee). Lindner, meanwhile, attempted to explain to the SS officer that his friend could not understand what he was being asked. This little skit went on to include Ruh pulling dirty laundry out of the bag, the SS officer getting frustrated with the "inferior" Czech imbecile before him, and ended when the officer simply concluded that there was only laundry in the bag.¹⁸⁴ After the mission, Ruh commented that if the officer had persisted in asking questions or attempted to search the bag himself, he and Lindner would not have hesitated to "blow out his guts" with the pistols they carried at all times.¹⁸⁵ In actuality, neither man on the Hammer mission drew their pistols while executing their mission. Indeed, the only time that they used their weapons was during the fall of Berlin, when they attempted to prevent a bridge into the city from being blown up by Germans.¹⁸⁶

This is a classic story of OSS agent close calls in Germany. Both primary and secondary sources detail story after story like this, and there will certainly be room for inclusion of a few in my novel. Such moments allow for heart-stopping suspense and

¹⁸⁴ OSS/London War Diary, vol. 6, reel 7, p. 442.

¹⁸⁵ OSS Report, "Interrogation-Hammer Team," June 27, 1945, p. 5, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

¹⁸⁶ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 13.

drama. The occasional search by a Gestapo officer also reminds the reader of the constant peril facing the characters. Such scenes like these can be played out on a street corner, on a train, or near a store. Wherever it does happen, it is sure to be a tense moment and one which keeps the reader firmly grounded in the terror of the German state.

Lindner and Ruh obviously had to make use of the covers that had been provided to them by Bach; Ruh used his Czech cover (aptly suited to him after his years of exile in Czechoslovakia) to his advantage when confronted by the SS officer, and Lindner had no trouble pulling off his story either. One of the reasons their stories worked so well was due to the documents they received from Bach that supported their stories.¹⁸⁷ Lindner, to complete his cover as a German national, carried a *Kennkarte* (identification card), *Wehrpass* and *Wehrpassnotiz* (military documents), a *Mitgliedskarte NSDAP* (showing him to be a member of the Nazi party), and an *Arbeitsbuch* (containing his work orders). Ruh, as a Czech refugee, carried only the *Kennkarte* and *Arbeitsbuch*. Both also carried ration cards.¹⁸⁸ Their cover names appear on their papers as well; Lindner was Ewald Engelke, and Ruh was Antonin Vesily. These documents and false names stood up to three detailed inspections by German officials and never once raised suspicions. In fact, after the mission Lindner commented that his Nazi party membership card was the most useful piece of fake identification, for it put him on an even footing with those who inspected his papers, and made those inspectors feel more trustful of him.¹⁸⁹

The Hammer agents' covers clearly were strong and well-thought out. The thoroughness that was applied to Hammer's covers was indicative of Bach's consistent effort to make OSS agents as safe as possible while deployed. Hammer's work with Bach

¹⁸⁷ For more on Bach's handling of documents, see chapter two, 4.

¹⁸⁸ See Appendix.

¹⁸⁹ OSS Interrogation, Hammer Team, June 27, 1945, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

was also closely reflective of many of the policies the Bach employed, from the information about the agents' backgrounds to the issuance of documents. Hence, Hammer once again shows itself as a good representative mission of the OSS penetration of Germany.

The creation of my characters' cover stories may be one of the more challenging aspects of the novel. In a way, it will be like creating a third and fourth main character and adding them to the plot. In order for their mission to succeed, their covers will need to be as good as those that Bach created for Lindner and Ruh. Fortunately, my extensive research on the Bach Section will enable me to embark on this process more comfortably. Much of the process of creating the cover stories will be based on Bach's own procedures: since I will already have my main characters created and developed, I should have an excellent understanding of what cover would work best for each of them, the documents that they would require, and so on. This portion of the novel will directly follow my characters' recruitment and lead into the training portion of the novel.

The Hammer team's training and preparation for deployment was also standard within the Labor Branch. Lindner and Ruh's mission training files and processing forms show that each passed their medical exams, completed parachute training, obtained a security clearance, completed general agent training, and finished all communications, cover, equipment, financial, and briefing exercises. These checklists were standard to all missions sent from London and thus provide good insight for the historical novelist about what the training and preparation procedures were, as well as what point in the training process each area might be addressed.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, Lindner and Ruh's "Course Control

¹⁹⁰ OSS Report, Phil Land and Toni Reuss (aliases), Processing Form #3, personnel folders, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

Sheets” identify exactly which training courses the men underwent, from “Alibi (and Problem)” to “Meet your Enemy Exercise” to “German Road Signs.” Again, a perusal of the checklists allows the historical novelist to glean how well the mission fit within the larger practices of the OSS; in this case, the Hammer mission was once more quite standard.¹⁹¹

Comparing the Hammer mission to Labor Branch and Bach procedures is necessary in order to establish a solid idea of what an OSS mission into Germany was like and how it fit into the framework of the OSS organization. Failing to do so would jeopardize any legitimacy a historical novelist would like to maintain. However, there are unique moments in the Hammer mission, as in others, that on their own are fascinating and excellent inspiration for events to include in a historical novel about the infiltration of Germany. One of the most interesting nuances of the Hammer mission occurred during Lindner’s training. His handler and members of the Bach Section were constantly trying to improve their agents’ chances for survival. To do so, someone had the idea of infiltrating agents-in-training into German prisoner of war camps to practice a cover story for a week. In this setting, agents might learn to improvise when asked questions, gather intelligence about the situation in Germany and the soldiers’ morale, and glean information that would help them blend in better when they entered Germany on their missions. Most of all, it would get them comfortable with lying about who they were and where they had come from.

Lindner was among the few agents who underwent this unusual aspect of training. Before entering a German POW camp in early 1945, he first spent two weeks

¹⁹¹ OSS Report, Phil Land and Toni Reuss (aliases), Course Control Sheet, personnel folders, Hammer files, RG 226, NA.

interviewing cooperative POWs and began to craft a cover out of what they told him. One of his interviewees was a 19-year-old parachutist who described at length his training, experiences at the front, and capture. Another prisoner told Lindner about conditions in the town he was supposed to be from, and a third filled him in on the state of manufacturing in Germany and the operation of factories. From this, Lindner cobbled his own story (different from the one he employed when he infiltrated Germany) to get him through life in the camp. No one from OSS assisted him in creating this cover, other than giving him a name, hometown, and military unit; they wanted him to think for himself and come up with ideas based on his personal experiences, the people he met, and what they told him. According to Lindner's report after he left the POW camp, he believed that receiving no advice from OSS on his cover was "good for our training; we were forced to develop our own ideas and to take the risk of our own mistakes. Inventing the story, living up to it, and controlling it in all details, was the main result of this." The ultimate aim, of course, was to develop in the agents the ability to adapt their Bach-created covers to life as they found it when they entered Germany on their missions.¹⁹²

The idea of training an agent within the confines of a prisoner of war camp is exciting because it provides an opportunity to include a small but very interesting factual part of history. Even though it was an uncommon method of training, I would feel comfortable using such an idea in a work of fiction based on fact. It presents me with all sorts of possibilities for my characters, one of whom will train in such a camp. Lindner's

¹⁹² Paul Lindner, "Report about one week's life and experience in a P.W. camp," late January, 1945, Hammer files, RG 226, NA. What also strikes this historical novelist as interesting is Lindner's reference to "inventing" his own cover story. In a way, the historical novelist is also engaged in the business of invention. She uses her knowledge about the past to create her characters and their cover stories, just as Lindner used his knowledge from German POWs and others to create a character of his own. This similarity gives the historical novelist both encouragement about fictionalizing the past and inspiration for how to do it.

report after he left the camp also included a list of slang that German soldiers were commonly using, which is a vital source for me, as I will be constantly attempting to get nuances of day-to-day life correct. Simply put, studying the unusual events that occurred within missions allows the historical novelist to supplement the common elements of OSS work with real events that add color and vibrancy to the past. Since the events actually happened, they have a place within the historian's attempt at a novel. In this instance, it is such a rich opportunity for having one of my characters practice his cover and learning what he can expect to encounter inside Germany that it would be foolish to leave it out.

The fact that Lindner and Ruh entered Berlin was also unusual. They were the first team from London to enter the capital, and did so after parachuting from an A-26 airplane, another OSS first. Details like these, specific to each mission, confront the novelist with the issue of choosing which real events to use. Should I set my story in Berlin or elsewhere? Of course, the other missions that went into Germany were scattered in different cities and regions, so I do not feel beholden to choosing the area most often infiltrated. Because there is no "representative" or typical area that OSS agents penetrated, I have the liberty to pick the place about which I feel most comfortable writing. In this case, I will stick with Berlin. It is the area that I have the most familiarity with, especially in spring of 1945, and thus it will be easier for me to impress upon the reader the sights, smells, and sounds of Berlin at that time. There is no need for me to invent what I already know to be true, thus the Nazi capital is where my characters will land.

Similarly, every team's entry into Germany was different; no two parachute landings were the same, and some agents were infiltrated on foot or bicycle. In my novel, though, elements from a few different missions will be combined to give a reader a sense of what a parachute landing was like. I can glean from mission reports what the mood was on the planes that carried the agents, and also what happened once agents left the plane, then use this information to create a fictional landing based on actual missions.

When Lindner and Ruh parachuted into the outskirts of Berlin after midnight on March 2, 1945, they buried their parachutes and communications equipment and took a train to downtown Berlin. They were supposed to meet a member of the underground resistance, but the darkness caused by the blackout and late hour made it too risky to confirm the address. Fortunately, they had a backup plan and went to Lindner's parents' home. He had not seen his family since 1935 and their reunion was joyous. Lindner and Ruh spent the next few days acclimatizing themselves to war torn Berlin, its controls, and how they would get around the city.

Their primary mission in Berlin was to gather intelligence of the type relayed in the transcribed message that appears earlier in this chapter. Troop and train locations, the status of any resistance activities, information about home front morale: all of these topics were things that Lindner and Ruh paid close attention to and reported on during their two successful contacts with OSS planes. They also made contact with resistance groups whose contact information had been provided by the Free Germany Committee in France. Lindner's brother-in-law, whom he had never met before, also joined them in their intelligence-gathering pursuits. These groups and individuals all provided Lindner

and Ruh with intelligence on Berlin's defenses, which was then passed on to the OSS in their transmission on April 8, 1945.

However, the Soviets reached Berlin first and encircled the city. On April 24, after helping the Soviet Army prevent a group of Germans from blowing up a bridge into the city, they turned themselves over to a Russian captain, identifying themselves as OSS agents. Unfortunately for Lindner and Ruh, the officer did not believe them and had them arrested. They were subjected to harsh interrogations, held for nearly two months, and finally released to the U. S. Army near Leipzig on June 16, 1945. From there they were flown to Paris, and finally back to their families in London.¹⁹³

Lindner and Ruh's actual accomplishments inside the Reich varied little from other missions. They gathered intelligence, made some limited contacts with resistance groups, passed the information they had on to the OSS on two occasions, and then were overrun. While they had a few unusual moments in Berlin, including bartering cigarettes and coffee for a sheep that they butchered and had for dinner, the Hammer mission was straightforward.¹⁹⁴ In my mind, however, what they did once they were in Berlin is less significant than the fact that they volunteered for the mission, made it to Berlin, and survived. That is my reason for researching their story and for using it as a basis for my novel. The bravery inherent in turning traitor against their home country, leaving their families (they were both married and each had young children), embarking on a perilous journey just to parachute into Berlin, and adjusting to living in a city on the brink of total devastation is the best part of their story. Their journey through the OSS, and the Labor

¹⁹³ Details of the events in these paragraphs can be found in the following: Lt. Joseph Gould, Memorandum, "Hammer Mission," March 12, 1945. Lt. H.C. Sutton, Memorandum, "Hammer Team: Interrogation on Operational Experiences," June 27, 1945, *OSS/London War Diary*, 436-456.

¹⁹⁴ Jonathan Gould, "Strange Bedfellows," 22.

Branch's unyielding insistence that they could do what everyone else thought was impossible, is the story I will use as inspiration for my novel. While a major portion of the book will be set in Berlin, and while my characters will make discoveries about the infrastructure of the city and report on them using the proper communication equipment, I feel that creating characters who think, feel, and describe what they are going through before they get to Berlin will be more effective than detailing their day-to-day existence while on their mission. Sometimes, the journey is more important than the destination.

Clearly, a significant portion of my novel will be based on the events of the Hammer mission. However, the historical novelist should not forget to peruse multiple missions into Germany for other inspirational events. In the Martini mission, one of the agents' Bach-provided papers betrayed him; he was caught and nearly executed.¹⁹⁵ While this was an anomalous occurrence in that less than 5 percent of OSS operatives in Germany were captured or killed, the events surrounding the agent's capture might be used to gather details on how the Gestapo checked papers, conducted interrogation, and treated prisoners. On the opposite end of the spectrum regarding the Gestapo, the Painter mission managed to infiltrate and begin working at a Gestapo garage. Through a deal with a pair of Nazis who had been tracking them since their landing, the agents obtained the payroll of the entire Gestapo organization in and around Munich. The list provided the real and cover names for all officers, undercover agents, and informants, as well as their addresses. In return, the Painter agents "promised" that when the Americans arrived, they would arrange for the informants to be shipped to South America and provided with money to live comfortably. Not surprisingly, the OSS agents did not hold up their end of

¹⁹⁵ See chapter two, 25.

the bargain; instead they turned in the two Gestapo agents as war criminals.¹⁹⁶ This mission might be used as the basis for placing one of my OSS characters, though not necessarily a main character, within a Nazi organization, without completely inventing how it was done.

While the two missions mentioned briefly above have not been discussed as closely as the Hammer mission, they and others still retain value to the historical novelist looking to use a range of OSS missions as a basis for her work. When a case study like the one provided for the Hammer mission is done in conjunction with careful research on the OSS, the Labor Branch, the Bach Section, a historian can make judgments about other missions and how they can be utilized in a work of historical fiction. The historical novelist who takes the time to get to know the context of the topic can more quickly and accurately look at other mission files and understand what was typical, what was unusual, what aspects can be used in laying the foundation for the novel, and what needs to be handled cautiously to avoid giving the impression that an anomalous aspect of a mission was normal. For example, nearly any OSS mission to Germany could be used as the basis for the types of cover stories the agents went in with. While each story had a bit of a twist to it, careful research in chapter two demonstrates that most were reliably similar. On the other hand, the novelist could not place her character within a Gestapo garage without making note that this was unusual or an intelligence coup.

It is the historical novelist's responsibility not to mislead her readers about what in the book is based on fact and what is fiction, what was usual and what was not. In my novel I will inform readers, via unobtrusive endnotes, when I have described an event as it happened or as it is told in the historical record, when I have combined elements from a

¹⁹⁶ Persico, *Piercing the Reich*, 305.

number of missions, and when I have taken liberties with past events. There may also be times where I invent portions of a story to fill in gaps, or to keep the reader's interest. Regardless of the situation, a responsible author will make note of what she is doing. The inclusion of endnotes, listed chronologically by chapter using the beginning of a sentence, makes it more likely that the reader will actually be educated by a work of historical fiction. Such notes help ensure that readers cannot take scenes from the book for granted. Instead, a reader can turn to the notes and read about where the author got the information being described and its significance within OSS history. Thus, both the author and reader have a responsibility in historical fiction: the author to present historical material that is based on quality research, and the reader to take the initiative to consult the author's notes and analyze and understand the historical content that is being presented.

Every mission that the OSS launched into Germany had quirks that made it unusual or anomalous. Such is the nature of secret intelligence. Despite peculiarities individual to each mission, all of the infiltration missions into Germany contain something of use to the historical novelist. Whether that inspiration is simply the form of a character, an example of false identity papers, the agent's experience parachuting into Germany, or a team's narrow brush with the Gestapo, all are relevant because they actually happened. The use of the Hammer mission as a case study, then, is primarily intended to prevent the novelist from randomly picking and choosing "juicy" details from a variety of missions and placing them haphazardly out of context. Every mission both fits and conflicts somewhere within the framework established by the hierarchy of the OSS, from the Bach Section, to the Labor Branch, to Secret Intelligence, to the top of

OSS itself. As a result, the historian and historical novelist in particular needs to take the individual missions for what they were: specific exercises in a larger-scale plan and within a conflicted organization. Hammer, for example, did not exist in a vacuum. It was part of the Faust plan, which was an operation particular to London's SI branch, which again was subordinate to OSS Washington. By analyzing a specific mission within the greater OSS history, the novelist learns to keep all other missions in context, and also is forced to examine in more detail the history of the OSS. In doing so, the novelist becomes more familiar with the history of the OSS, and thereby better prepared to write a respectable historical fiction about it.

Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis has been two-fold: to underscore the necessity of historical fiction to incorporate scholarly research, and to contribute to the historiography of the OSS by closely studying the contributions and the impact of its Labor Branch. Bringing these two elements together has proven challenging and rewarding. While I have not yet completed a first draft of my novel about the OSS using the practices that I suggest in this work, I do have full confidence that I can incorporate what I have uncovered about the Labor Branch and its Hammer mission into a novel.

It is unfortunate that history and fiction have so much in common and yet remain in the minds of many people far apart in purpose, style, and methods. There will never be consensus on how much of history is really fiction, and how much readers of historical fiction can truly learn about the past. However, taking the time and effort to bring academic-quality history into the more public sphere of fiction can only improve both. Doing so will encourage historians to think of a wider audience and to share their wealth of knowledge, and their talents, with people other than their highly specialized colleagues. A reader of good historical fiction will be eager to learn more about the history of a topic, and perhaps pick up a historical monograph to learn more details and to discover for himself where history and fiction meet.

The responsibility for all of this falls on the author of historical fiction. It is a tedious task, and a time-consuming one, to thoroughly research a historical topic. But in doing so, an author will be armed with a wealth of ideas, with a means of organizing a plot and creating characters, and with the confidence that comes with knowledge. She will have the ability to choose what to include, and to be so familiar with the details as to

weave them into the narrative seamlessly, without hitting the reader over the head with historical facts and jargon. Indeed, there are few better prepared to write historical fiction than the historian herself.

As regards the OSS Labor Branch, the research I have conducted in the creation of this thesis has built upon the historiography that is traced in the introduction. As those who have come before me have leaned upon OSS documents, reports, and memos, I have also found these sources by far to be the most insightful and provocative. To read correspondence detailing missions that went terribly wrong to a report from an officer written just hours after sending two of his agents into Berlin, the thousands of pages of text available at the National Archives hold the captivating truth about America's first central intelligence agency.

The Labor Branch documents in particular grabbed my attention. While previous monographs certainly mentioned the Labor Branch, no one had yet investigated the extent of the Branch's contribution to the overall success of the German infiltration. My analysis of the Labor Branch in London, how it fit within Secret Intelligence, and its persistence in the belief that the penetration of Germany was possible revealed that the way the Branch organized itself ensured success. The staff of the Labor Branch worked as a team and did not seem to experience the amount of in-fighting that plagued other branches of the OSS. The leadership of the Branch coordinated with the lower-ranking men and women to ensure that each person worked where they were most capable, whether in translation of documents, creation of cover stories, or research. The Labor Branch had such success in this regard that the OSS reorganized a major section of itself on the Labor Branch model.

I also took a close look at the Labor Branch's Bach Section, and discovered that without it, no infiltration of Germany would have been possible. I synthesized and evaluated a wealth of primary materials on Bach and as a result created a comprehensive analysis of how Bach functioned, why it was so successful, and how crucial it became to the rest of the OSS in Europe. This material, contained in chapter two, will supplement the primary sources available and allow for other scholars and those simply interested in the OSS to understand the background behind the infiltration of Germany.

The Hammer mission is also comprehensively detailed. While I avoided giving a blow-by-blow account of the entire mission, I aimed more to analyze it in the context of the Labor Branch and the greater OSS. I explored how the mission both met and failed to meet a "typical" Labor Branch standard, if there is such a thing. I also attempted to get to know the two men of the Hammer mission, Paul Lindner and Anton Ruh, in hopes of using their experiences as inspiration for characters in my novel. Many details of their mission were utilized in the same way, giving historians a new perspective on how to approach research on the OSS and indeed on any historical topic. In its own way, this is an addition to the historiography, for I have used a different methodology to examine a well-known mission, and drawn some new information from it.

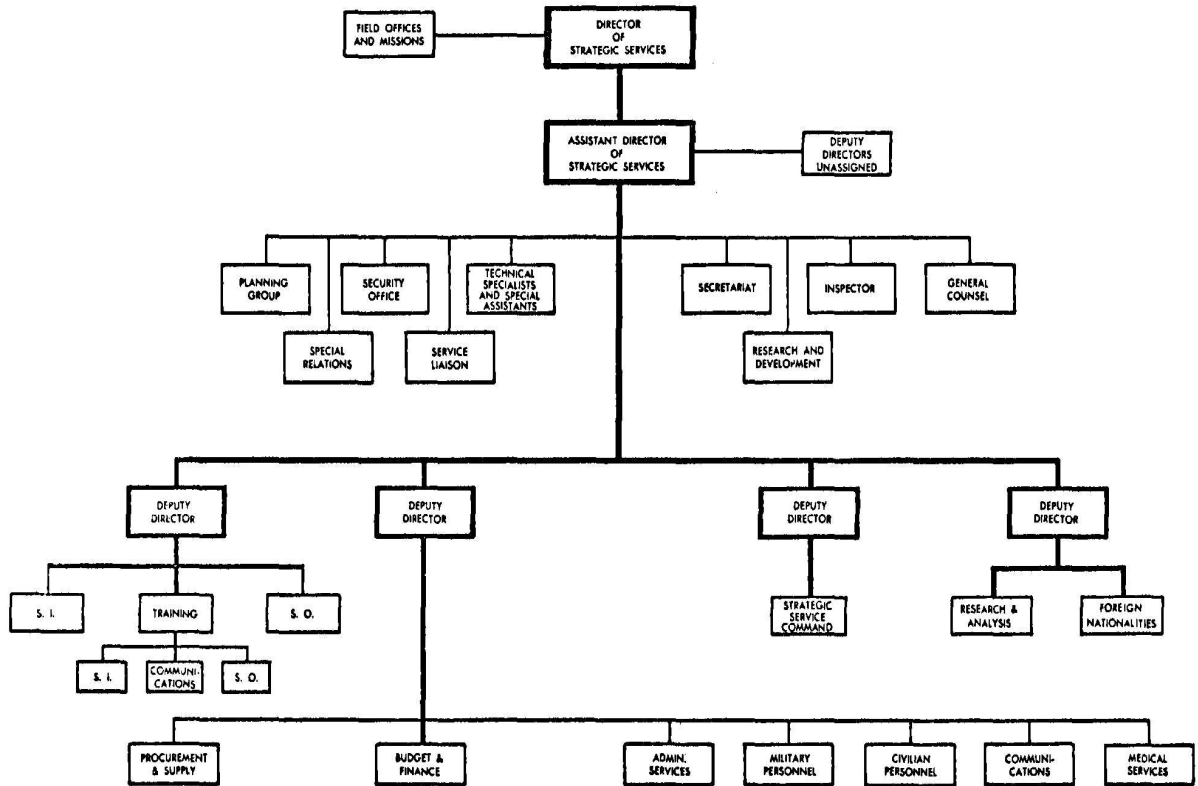
The Office of Strategic Services was an organization full of characters, mystery, and intrigue. For these reasons, it is ideally suited to be a topic of historical fiction. The historical research I have completed on the OSS positions me well to write such a work. I certainly have the historical tools at my disposal; the challenge now is to combine them with the skills required of the novelist. I certainly will try.

Appendices

Figure 1

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

ORGANIZATION CHART

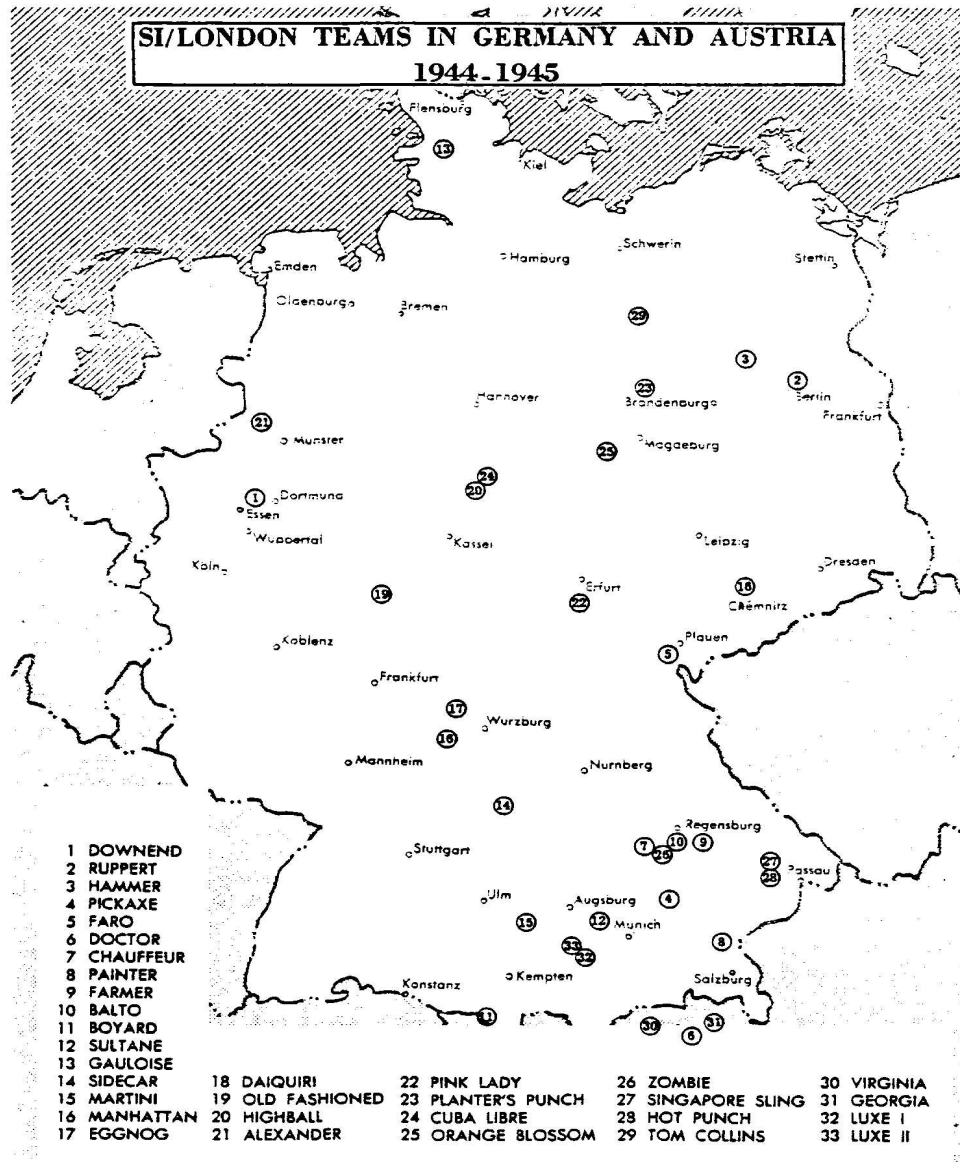


OSS Organization Chart

An example of an OSS Hierarchy/Organizational Chart. In this case the Labor Branch would have been located along the left-hand side of the chart, beneath the main S.I. box. This particular chart dates to October 17, 1942

From *The War Report of the OSS*, p. 12.

Figure 2



Map of Infiltration Sites in Germany

This map shows both drop and general operation locations of the Secret Intelligence Teams directed from London that infiltrated Germany and Austria. Note Downend's location just west of Dortmund. Also notice the naming of some missions after alcoholic beverages. This was not designed to correspond with OSS's reputation of being, "Oh, so social!" but referred instead to any mission whose primary goal was to gather military intelligence (see Mauch, *The Shadow War Against Hitler*, 181).

Map taken from *The Overseas Target*, p. 316.

Figure 3



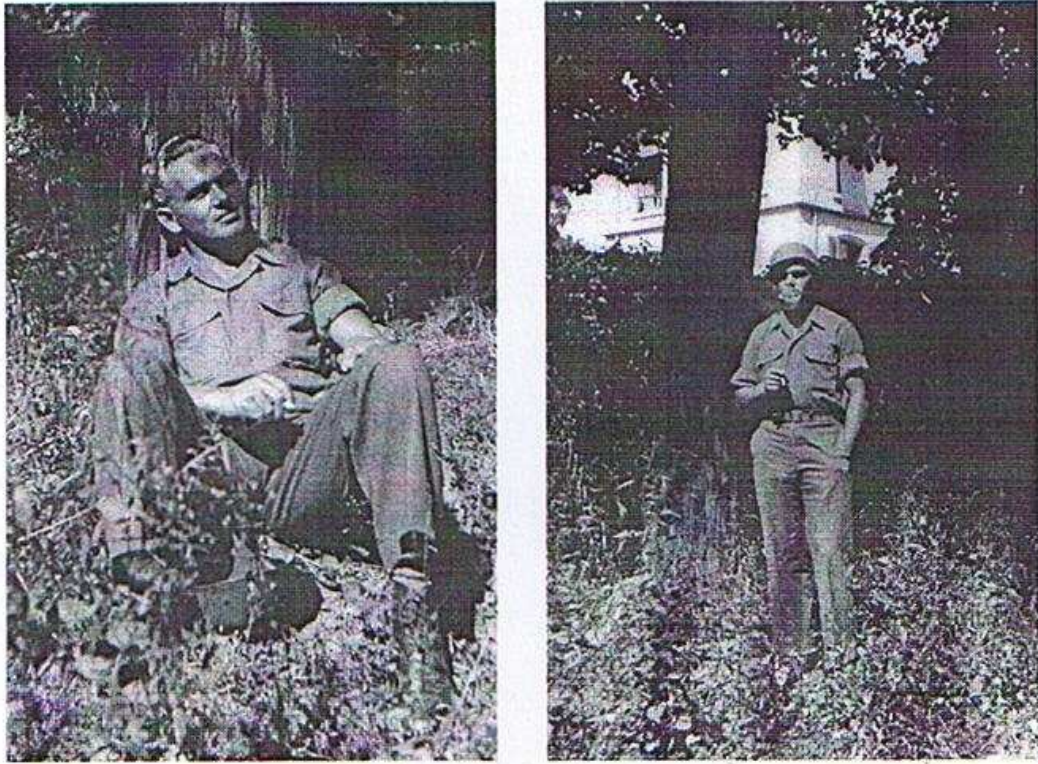
Paul and Marjorie Lindner on their wedding day in England, 1942.



Paul and Marjorie Lindner with their young son, Paul, Jr. after the war in Berlin, 1946.

Photographs of Paul Lindner

Figure 4



Anton "Toni" Ruh, in Paris 1945 after release from custody of the Soviet Army.

Photographs of Anton Ruh

Photographs of Lindner and Ruh courtesy of Jonathan Gould

Note on Sources

Some of the primary source materials used in this thesis were obtained with the help and generosity of Dr. Christof Mauch, director of the German Historical Institute in Washington, D.C. Through a connection at Kalamazoo College, Dr. Mauch opened his personal collection of OSS documents to me, saving me much time and energy in gathering documents from the National Archives and other repositories. His kindness is much appreciated. Jonathan Gould, son of a Labor Branch recruitment officer, also provided valuable sources, his father's unpublished biography, and insight into the life and personality of one OSS officer. I thank him for his generosity.

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