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1945

~~Germany: Peace moves
(General Canaris)~~

FO 1093/288

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44 1945

GERMAN

C4321

/G

31 JUL 1945

C4321/44/9.

Germany: Canaris & Kappeler.

CSJIC/CHF/x
182

This report giving details
of conversation between
Kappeler and Canaris.

Dated 23 June
Received 31 July.

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

C4320

Some attractive story material.

References.

Ally Tremblin
1/8

- S.S. 1. Mr BRODLEY ^{1 Aug 1948} pp 5-6.
- 2. Prof Woodward

(Print.)

Is it true? It sounds true to me, on the whole.

(How disposed of.)

Professor Woodward might like to see.

C Reed
8.8.

He has seen
A

CW 19/8.

minutes on
See, C58 of 1946.

C.R.
1.2.46.

(Action completed.)

(Index.)

J.F. 29/9

WPK.

Next Paper.

C4540

L. Casvay. Does C seek these in his military way? pp 5-6 are interesting.

May we enter eg pl? - yes.

Person Delt.

Yes: M.I. 6 get a copy - see below distribution

M.I. Crossman

I think you wd like to see this interesting report before its entered. @ 26/7

St. Dept @ 24/7

91/VII C4321 Rth

31 JUL 1945
TOP SECRET
GSDIC/CMF/X 182.

3/7

67

27/7: The following are the relevant details of the PW mentioned in this report.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment.</u>
CANARIS	SS Standartenfuehrer	Deputy B.d.S. ITALIEN.
KAPPLER	SS Obersturmbannfuehrer	LO to Italian Police. Formerly OO Sipo und SD Einsatzkommando ROME.

If the information contained in this report is required for further distribution, prisoners' names should NOT be mentioned and the text so paraphrased as to give no indications of the methods by which it is obtained.

R.W. Snelling Capt

*for (W.S. VALENTINE.)
Lt-Col.
Comd, GSDIC., CMF.*

C.S.D.I.C.,
C.M.F.
23 Jun 45.

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C O N T E N T S .

KAPPLER interrogated the man responsible for the attempt on HITLER's life in the Buergerbraeu Beer Cellar in MUNICH on 8 Nov 1939. In the conversation reproduced in this report he tells of how the attack was planned and the mechanism installed; of how the perpetrator intended to escape, but was arrested on the frontier; and of how the chain of evidence against him was gradually forged. Finally KAPPLER mentions his interrogation of STEVENS, captured on the Dutch frontier on the day preceding the attempt, with which he was at first connected.

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Identified personalities mentioned in the text.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Appointment</u>
HARSTER Wilhelm	SS Gruppenfuehrer und Generalleutnant der Polizei B.d.S. ITALIEN.
HEYDRICH Reinhardt	SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Chief of the Security Police before KALTENBRUNNER. Reich Protector of BOHEMIA and MORAVIA until killed in 1942.
MUELLER Dr Heinrich	SS Gruppenfuehrer. Head of Amt IV of the RSHA.

+++++

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Appointment.</u>
KAPPLER	SS Obersturmbannfuehrer	LO to Italian Police. Formerly OC Sipo und SD Einsatzkommando ROME.
GANARIS	SS Standartenfuehrer	Deputy B.d.S. ITALIEN.

+++++

Conversation held on 17 June 45.

KAPPLER : Well, it was like this. After the explosion in the MUNICH beer cellar I was given the job of interrogating ELSER (?). He told me that he had made the attempt because he disapproved of the government: unless the present government were done away with there would be another war; and war is terrible; therefore the government had to be destroyed. ELSER had prepared the whole thing with the most astonishing thoroughness. We only realised all that later. For

six months the man spent every night in the beer cellar. He let himself be locked in there night after night. Later I saw a model of the infernal machine he'd used. Quite incredible, you simply can't imagine it. I've never seen such an ingeniously constructed infernal machine. The man was a genius. The more one thought about it, the more one had to believe that the FUEHRER really was protected by Divine Providence. There was no other way of explaining it. Just picture the hall to yourself. There are big pillars running the whole length of the hall and reaching to the roof. Half way up a gallery is built onto the pillars. At the edge of the gallery there's a sort of railing. The man first made quite certain where the FUEHRER always used to sit. Then he set about building the thing into the pillar nearest the FUEHRER's place. The pillars had a wooden casing. The first thing he did was to cut a piece out of this casing. Of course it had to be done very carefully and cleverly, otherwise it would have been noticed. He didn't even have all the tools he needed. Well, he cut a piece out of the wooden casing and fixed hinges to it, and then put the whole thing back again. Oh yes, and on the inside he had also fixed a bolt. So that when he wanted to open the little door he had to take a knife and push back the bolt. Then he made the hole for the infernal machine. And inside the hole he did all the work. It took him six months. Every night he had himself locked in, then he worked right through the night and in the morning he disappeared again. He told me afterwards that when he had finished he could hardly stand up straight. And his nerves of course were completely worn out. Sometimes he'd miss a night to give himself a rest.

CANARIS : But where did he get the explosive ?

KAPPLER : Well, he broke into a quarry and stole a little sack full of explosive. Afterwards he also got hold of some gunpowder, and he put that in as well. It was all thought out frightfully cleverly. He could set the clock precisely to the minute he wanted, and the clock would run for a hundred and forty-four hours after being wound. So he could set everything six days before the actual explosion. And he told me later that he didn't just trust to luck with the machine, but that he'd tried the whole thing beforehand on a model he'd made.

CANARIS : Did they kill the man ?

KAPPLER : No, not at the time. I hope he's still alive. The FUEHRER reserved the right to make the final decision. He attacked me strongly at the time because I didn't discover who was behind the whole thing. But I know definitely that this chap did it all by himself and that no-one knew anything about it. Otherwise he could never have succeeded. One morning, just as I was interrogating ELSER, the Reichsfuehrer walked in and took over the interrogation himself. With me the man always used to talk. After the Reichsfuehrer had been in it took me two whole hours till I could get him to open his mouth again. He was just too frightened to talk. He was completely cowed and asked me whether it was true that the Reichsfuehrer wanted to have him roasted alive. Then one day when I really had him completely softened up again, I went down to MUELLER and asked him what I was to put in front of the chap for signature, and what it was to say. I said: "The man's as soft as wax now, he'll sign anything I give him. I can guarantee that". MUELLER jumped up and shouted at me: "That's absolutely out of the question, we want to know the truth. No-one can believe what the man's saying now". I said: "If you don't believe that I've got the truth out of the man, you'd better dismiss me and hand the investigation over

to someone else". But no, he hadn't meant it like that, I was just to carry on as before. By then I already had a whole cupboard full of files just on this one interrogation. ELSER had told me his complete life history - that was two whole files by itself.

CANARIS : Were very many people killed in the explosion ?

KAPPLER : Yes, eight were killed ... Well, I carried on with my interrogation. We even made a sound film of the most important part of the interrogation, where he discussed the whole business with his mother. That was in room 249. I was there the whole time, I'm in the film too. HEYDRICH came and listened to the proceedings too, one day. He too put a few questions to ELSER - he shouted at him and talked very quickly, and succeeded in intimidating the man thoroughly; but he didn't get anything out of him. ELSER was a very simple fellow, he didn't understand what HEYDRICH was talking about at all. I pointed that out to HEYDRICH, so then he shouted at me, asking why I didn't explain it to the fellow.

Well, the fact that the FUEHRER got away with his life was nothing less than a miracle. On that particular occasion the FUEHRER happened to make a much shorter speech than had originally been intended because he had to go to BERLIN on urgent business. So the whole meeting was over half an hour earlier than had been scheduled. And that was what saved his life. When the thing did explode, the whole gallery collapsed completely. The pillar and even a bit of the roof caved in. If the FUEHRER had been sitting in his usual place at the time of the explosion he would definitely not have got away alive. Nor would any of the others who were always in his entourage. Whenever the FUEHRER spoke in the beer cellar he sat in the gallery and all his closest collaborators sat in a circle around him. When the FUEHRER left, they left too, and those that remained behind left the gallery and went down into the hall to mix with the other people. So when the explosion occurred there was no-one in the gallery. The stupendous luck that the man had ! One just had to look on it as an act of Divine Providence ! ELSER had set the thing precisely, and it went off on the exact second. ELSER had wanted to go to SWITZERLAND after he'd finished the job. The fact that we caught him was also a pure coincidence too. Nine months earlier ELSER had been in CONSTANCE and had carefully worked out his escape route. Not a soul besides him knew about it. That's why he achieved as much as he did, otherwise it would never have worked.

Well, when ELSER had finished everything in the cellar and had set the clocks, he drove from MUNICH to STUTTGART. He had a sister living there, and he went straight to her house and spent the night there. He'd intended to leave his tools there, too. Well, during the night he dreamt that the clocks in the infernal machine had stopped, and the dream was so vivid and realistic that when he woke up the next morning he really thought it was true and was quite convinced that the clocks had stopped. So instead of going straight to Lake CONSTANCE he went back to MUNICH, and in the evening he again had himself locked in the beer cellar. He wanted to work through the night and disappear again in the normal way the following morning. He satisfied himself that the clocks were still running. But he couldn't do that from the outside, of course, he first had to open the pillar up again, because he had fixed a sound-proof layer between the clocks and the outer covering. It was all done very neatly and cleanly, not just shoved in and stuck down with carpenter's glue, but there was another little door and another lock - almost as if he might want to open the whole thing up again after the explosion. Quite incredible.

CANARIS : And the tools, did he take those in with him every night and then out again the following morning ?

KAPPLER : No, as soon as the hole was big enough, he left all his tools in there. You can imagine what irksome and delicate work it was. The chisel he used had to be covered in cloth all over, the bottom as well as the top; he couldn't risk making any noise. He had to make the whole cavity with this chisel and with his fingers. Well, he made certain that the clocks were still running and compared them both with his own watch, then he lay down and had an hour's sleep. The following day, in the morning, he got out again. Well, he was now more than half a day late already, and thought that since he was there he might as well spend another day in MUNICH: it couldn't make much difference. He then went to see a few friends of his, and after he'd done that he took a train to Lake CONSTANCE. But when he got there it was very misty and the ferry arrived at FRIEDRICHSHAFEN one and a half hours behind time. And when he tried to cross the frontier he was arrested by customs officials, because in the meantime the explosion had gone off in MUNICH. And on this occasion SCHMIDT had really done his job well. As soon as the thing exploded he realised what had happened; he ran out into the street and gave the alarm to the Gestapo. They ordered increased frontier control along the whole of the frontier, and seventeen seconds after the big bang this order had been carried out.

CANARIS : Seventeen seconds, that's impossible. You mean seventeen minutes.

KAPPLER : Yes, of course, seventeen minutes, I beg your pardon. Well, the extra guards had just taken up their positions when ELSER arrived. In normal circumstances there wouldn't have been a sentry at that place at all, but as they'd received the signal from the Gestapo, they had naturally posted men everywhere. The sentry was standing in the shade of a tree and just as ELSER wanted to cross the frontier, he was arrested. Naturally, they didn't find anything on him, and he was only one of hundreds of people who were arrested that evening. But everybody who was arrested was immediately sent to MUNICH. I must say that on our side some really first-rate detective work was done.

Later, when a thorough examination of the rubble in the beer cellar was made, one of the little clock wheels was found. Then everybody who could possibly be involved was questioned, and from this questioning descriptions were naturally obtained. Of course not all the descriptions tallied, but they could all be reduced to a common denominator. One could deduce from the descriptions that they all referred to one person. The bakers' delivery boys were interrogated, everybody was interrogated. From the little wheel that had been found they determined what make it was, and then two specially appointed officials were sent to the factory where it had been produced. They eventually found out what sort of a clock it had been and to whom clocks of this type had been sold. That was another link in the chain of evidence. Then a small piece of sound-proof slab was found among the rubble, still showing the name of the firm which had produced it. So two officials were sent to that factory as well. They found out whether this particular kind of peat slab (Torfplatte) had been sold lately, and to whom. Then further enquiries were made with the firm in MUNICH which had bought the slabs from the factory and resold them. We got further descriptions from them. After all, a peat slab is not the sort of thing that's bought every day. That was another link in the chain. Then all the people who had been arrested on the frontiers that evening were interrogated. After all their statements had been examined and collated, the Commissar gave his attention to them himself. And after he had given them all a thorough examination he came to the conclusion that it must have been ELSER. He then had ELSER sent for

and asked him "Why did you do it?" ELSER said "I'll tell you exactly why and how I did it". So then he was taken out and identified by all the various people from whom he had bought parts for his infernal machine. And when that was over, the interrogation started.

CANARIS : What did the Reichsfuehrer have to say about it all ?

KAPPLER : I don't know. I always treated ELSER decently. I never shouted at him. I worked with him day and night. He told me the whole story of his life. That by itself was a hundred and ten typed pages. And that was the smallest part of the report. Several of our branch offices (Aussenkommandos) were working on the case too. They tried to get all sorts of supplementary information. And whenever they'd found something, I made use of it in my interrogation. To give you an example: the Aussenkommandos found some school-teacher of his at HEIDELBERG. So the teacher had to be interrogated. He was asked whether he still remembered his former pupil ELSER, and how often he had caned him. And all sorts of little side lines like that which might have been of importance later on.

Well, when I'd finished with the whole interrogation there were about four hundred typed pages, or something like that. Absolutely terrific. You can imagine how much one can do in five weeks, like that - working more than sixteen hours a day. I never told anyone about the interrogation I was doing. I don't quite know why, but I just didn't feel like talking about it. But one day I met HARSTER in the street and he said to me: "Well, I know what you're doing; you're interrogating ELSER". He also told me that the FUEHRER had sent copies of my report on the interrogation to all the Gauleiters with the request that they should read it and let him know their opinion of the case - not from the legal point of view, but what they thought of it as Nazis. HARSTER was on very good terms with his Gauleiter, and he had read it to him. He told me, too, that he knew that quite a lot of the Gauleiters had criticised me for the way in which I conducted the interrogation, and, without knowing me, had expressed derogatory opinions. But he, HARSTER, had read my report and come to the conclusion that my estimate of the case was quite correct, that there could not be any other solution. I can tell you that I was pretty pleased to be told a thing like that by a criminal expert like HARSTER. One of the best people we had. A man who understood something about his job. MUELLER had also come to the interrogation again and had put several questions to ELSER. He also came to the conclusion that the facts were as the man had told them to me.

CANARIS : But then there was a report in the papers that it was in connection with the attempt that those two Englishmen had been arrested.

KAPPLER : You mean STEVENS and BEST. Yes, they were arrested on the 7th and as the attempt was on the 8th, they were held in connection with that...

I interrogated STEVENS, too. At the end of every session I had with him I always gave him my hand. I was never really rough with him. Except once; and even then I only shouted at him. I had two statements of his. One had been made on the day I was interrogating him, and the other had been made two days previously. These two statements were thoroughly contradictory. I told him that I would read him both of them, and then give him five minutes to decide which was right. I

didn't like the idea of saying to him: "STEVENS, you're lying". Because he was an older man than I was. He thought over the two statements for about three minutes only, then he got up and said that surely I must understand that he, as an English officer, couldn't just admit that they'd committed acts of sabotage in GERMANY even before the war. I then said that that was all for today, and that I'd see him again in the morning; and I shook hands with him as usual. Then he said that he'd like to tell me something in private. I accordingly sent out the two guards who were always present at the interrogation. As soon as they'd gone he said: "You've always been so decent and kind to me, you've always treated me very correctly, so now I'm going to do you a favour. I hate all traitors, so I advise you to go to Delegationsrat So-and-So - unfortunately I've already forgotten the name - this very night and arrest him". That was a very decent thing on STEVENS' part. That shows what an impression I had made on him as interrogator. I said: "Thank you very much, that's very nice of you", and went straight to MUELLER and told him about it. MUELLER shouted at me: "Shut up for God's sake, the man escaped two days ago". But STEVENS couldn't possibly have known that. It hadn't even been reported in the papers. STEVENS told me that this Delegationsrat was working hand in glove with ENGLAND. He was working in RIBBENTROP's office and had RIBBENTROP's complete confidence. He was his right hand man. He was also the chief secretary to the Embassy at the time. And this man had betrayed us to ENGLAND. He went off on a mission and when he hadn't returned after two days the Foreign Office reported that he had made his escape.

CANARIS : Was STEVENS killed ?

KAPPLER : No, I think he's still alive today. And the other one, BEST, has just been liberated.

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23 1945

GERMAN

C1815 /G

30 APR 1945

C1815 /31/9

Events leading up to Putsch of 20 July 1944

F.O. Hill

Precis of paper written by Dr H. B. Gisevius for O.S.S. summarising events leading up to the "Putsch" of 20 July 1944

Dated

Received 30 April

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

C1807

Wynne Williams
1/v.

References.

S.H. Dept have asked to see

The published story is identical with that recently sent us by "C" of which he enclosed paper in a précis. It comes from the same source - i.e. Dr. Gisevius.

Wynne Williams
19/5.

(Print.)

See within

1. Extract: Sunday Observer
13 May.

(How disposed of.)

Delivered to Sir C. Dawson
from Mr Cavendish Bick
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+ R28/v.

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(Index.)

D.F.B. /5

W.F.H.

Next Paper.

2874
TOP SECRET.

C 1815
30 APR 1945

Summary of events leading up to the "Putsch" of 20th July, 1944, written by Dr. H.B. Gisevius for O.S.S. (This is a précis of the actual paper).

The generals, who were always kept in the dark by the Party about even the most important affairs had an influential contact in the inner Party circle, who passed on the word to the friendly generals. He was Hans Oster, chief of the Organisationsabteilung of the Abwehr. To him and to his close friend, Dr. H.B. Gisevius, was entrusted the technical carrying through of the conspiracy.

Gisevius, as a young official, had been placed unwittingly in the Gestapo but he was soon removed. He was on friendly terms with the chief of the Reichskriminalamt - Arthur Nebe, who also played a double rôle all through the years.

Count Helldorf, Chief of Police in Berlin was not altogether trusted by the conspirators, but since, in his official capacity, he could render valuable service he was drawn in.

Oster utilised his position with the Abwehr to cover all his meetings and preparations for the "putsch". But none of this could have taken place had not Admiral Canaris, chief of the Abwehr been sympathetic towards the conspirators' activities. Although he never participated actively, Canaris was kept constantly informed of the plans. In his intimate circle, Canaris never concealed his disgust of Nazism and its methods and many times he turned suspicion aside from his denounced subordinates. This finally cost him his position, and probably, his life.

When Oster was removed from office in 1943, Colonel Hansen took his place in the centre of the conspiracy. Hansen was regarded by the Nazis as being above suspicion. At the same time, in 1943, Dr. Gisevius who had been incorporated into the Abwehr and who had been living in Zurich, had to stop his trips into Germany as Himmler was threatening to have him arrested. Count von Stauffenberg, therefore, took his place in the conspiracy. Dr. Strunk and his wife acted as couriers and their home in the Nurembergerstrasse in Berlin was used as a meeting place.

Nothing was undertaken by the conspirators without the approval of General Beck.

Schacht was very active during the year before the outbreak of war and in the decisive moments of the 1939 crisis. Later he became discouraged by failure and by the fact that he was regarded with suspicion in foreign countries. From then on, Dr. Goerdeler played the rôle of eventual candidate for Chancellor of the Reich in a new government.

Two other men who were close to the conspirators were the Prussian Minister of Finance, Popitz and Undersecretary Planck, (also the German Ambassador in Rome Ulrich von Hassell). After the beginning of the Russian campaign, Count von Schulenburg, former Ambassador in Moscow joined the conspiratorial ranks.

The/

The working-class representatives were Leuschener and Leuthäuser. Max Habermann represented the employees' associations. They realised that revolutionary action on the part of the workers was impossible and that a "putsch" of the generals was the only chance in a closely policed Reich.

There were also opposition groups in the provinces and also in the churches. Several church dignitaries were aware of the plot but their participation was not sought lest they be endangered.

Pre-war plans

Halder, Chief of the General Staff before Beck was anxious to be rid of Hitler in 1938 but realised that an opportunity for an overthrow would only appear when Hitler had lost some of his prestige through a reversal in foreign policy.

Halder hoped to arrange a "putsch" in August, 1938 when the Czech crisis was approaching its climax. He arranged troop movements to fit in with his plans. Oster also established contact with the Kommandant of the Berlin military district, General von Witzleben, who agreed to participate and arranged for Gisevius to work in his staff headquarters. Nebe provided a map of all the secret bases of the Gestapo in Berlin. The time was considered to be favourable. During the critical days of September, 1938 the people realised that Hitler was a war monger. Hitler himself was having severe attacks of nerves and hysterics. Confusion was great in Germany but when Chamberlain flew to Munich great bitterness was caused in the circle of the conspiracy. Their confidence that the Western powers would stand firm was shaken. Then Hitler was allowed to march into Prague. From March, 1939 onwards it was clear that Germany was preparing for war - Schacht was very active and sent serious warnings to his friends in foreign countries.

In late autumn there was another crisis, Hitler wanted to begin his offensive in November and his campaign plans were built on the violation of Belgian and Dutch neutrality. This infuriated the conservative generals who also opposed the idea on the grounds that the weather conditions were unfavourable. The conspiracy^{ists} considered this a good moment for action but in the midst of their preparations came the bomb explosion in the Munich Bürgerbräukeller on 8th November. This was found to be the work of a Communist operating entirely independently of the conspirators. In view of conflicting secret negotiations and dangerous indiscretions it was decided that no one was to undertake any measures without first consulting Beck and receiving his approval.

In February, 1940, Hitler confided to his generals his plans for an attack on Norway. The generals opposed this plan on the grounds that so vast an undertaking could not be concealed from the British Secret Service. Brauchitsch refused to work out his plans, so Hitler formed his own General Staff. Once more conditions were ripe for a "putsch" and plans were prepared to take effect as soon as bad news was received from Norway. But the Norwegian campaign turned out to be a triumph and it was at this point that

Brauchitsch/

Brauchitsch, Halder and Reichenau turned aside from the conspirators. They were convinced that Hitler would always prove to be right.

At Gisevius' suggestion a warning was sent to the Dutch regarding the direction and aim of the coming offensive but the Dutch dismissed the warning as idle chatter, and so began Hitler's victorious march through Western Europe, and the conspirators were again made to look foolish.

The Russian campaign

Ignoring all advice Hitler launched his attack against the Soviet Union. When winter set in and the German armies bogged down in the snow the generals would have recommended withdrawing from the whole campaign but Hitler would listen to no warnings. 1942 was filled with attempts by the conspirators to persuade a few of the leading generals to overthrow the regime. Contact was established with von Manstein and he was not averse to joining their ranks but wanted first to see Sebastopol captured.

The conspirators were trying to find a way by which the officers and troops of the Wehrmacht could turn against the Party in spite of the oaths they had taken to Hitler. It was decided to wait until miserable failure should overtake Hitler and so provide an excuse for disobedience.

During 1942, Oster had succeeded in winning over General Olbricht, Commander of the Ersatzheer. The conspirators worked out a plan that several army groups on the Eastern front should announce that because of the difficult situation they could obey no more military commands from Hitler. Witzleben in the West was then to announce that he would no longer recognise Hitler as Commander-in-Chief, whilst in Berlin, Beck, with the help of Olbricht would have the Ersatzheer. Gestapo and Party leaders would be placed "in security". Everything depended on whether von Paulus in Stalingrad would also refuse to obey Hitler's orders. Von Seydlitz and von Daniels tried to persuade von Paulus to do this but von Paulus flew to Hitler's Headquarters and was persuaded to continue the hopeless battle. This was a blow to the conspirators. Then came another. The commanders of the two army groups, von Manstein and von Kluge were to have quarrelled with the Fuhrer but they submitted docilely to Hitler and so the chance was again lost.

Once again plans were made - the invasion and fall of Sicily was to be the signal for Badoglio's coup and that in turn would have been a good basis for a coup in Germany. But the attack on Sicily was only made when the fortifications had improved and there was a real defensive battle.

Yet a further plan was made - Hitler was to be killed and the problem of the oath to him would then be solved. Beck agreed to this and Oster had the Abwehr procure explosives. These were to be taken to the Eastern front and General von Treskow and the landowner, von Schlaberndorff were to carry out the attentat. Warning was always given of a visit to the front by Hitler so that plans could be made. But Hitler came and only remained for two hours on the front, instead
of/

of his usual three days. There was very little time but Schlaberndorff smuggled a brief case containing the bomb into Hitler's plane. But the mechanism failed to work and Schlaberndorff managed to have the brief case returned to him unopened.

Himmler.

Himmler was anxious to attack the Canaris group and take over the Abwehr for himself. He tried to stage a case against Canaris and Oster. There was a whole series of arrests among Oster's personal friends and Gisevius was questioned. Oster was removed from office and forbidden to travel. Gisevius was just able to return to Zurich but could no longer return to Germany. Canaris was not actually touched, but a few weeks later, he was removed upon Hitler's insistence. So the conspirators' range of activity was narrowed. Fortunately, Colonel Hansen was smuggled into the reorganised Abwehr and he sent Rechtsanwalt Wätjen to Zurich to keep in touch with circles in Germany which Gisevius could no longer contact.

Six months later Count von Stauffenberg forced his way into the inner circle of conspirators and became a very active figure. During the war years, he had been gathering around him a circle of men, mostly young nobles who toyed with the idea of a revolution. They hoped that Russia would support a militarily strongly ruled communist Germany, organised commercially along Russian lines. Von Schulenberg played a leading role in this circle, and other members were:- the Yorck brothers, the Haeften brothers, von Treskow, Schlaberndorff and von Trott zu Solz. They all looked towards the East, whereas the Beck group looked to the Western Powers.

Stauffenberg was prepared to attempt the coup himself and so demanded a leading rôle. He was under Beck's orders but intrigued against Goerdeler because he considered him too reactionary. He favoured the Social Democrat Leber as future Chancellor but Leber was arrested a week before the 20th July - a shock for Stauffenberg which resulted in lack of steadiness on his part when the 20th came.

But Stauffenberg's circle had destroyed the old mutual confidence amongst the conspirators. Each group worked for the realisation of its own plans.

The 20th July.

The generals were determined to give Hitler a last chance in 1944 because he was so convinced that he could defeat any invading Allied armies. But the invasion succeeded. Von Kluge replaced Runstedt and Rommel as Commander-in-Chief in the West. This pleased the conspirators because Runstedt could never bring himself to act against Hitler. About the 10th July, von Kluge sent word to the conspirators that the Normandy front would still hold 14 days. The time was ripe to act.

Kluge and also Rommel (who had recently joined the conspiracy) agreed to participate on condition that Himmler and Göring be done away with at the same time. It was difficult to find a time when not only Hitler, Göring and Himmler would all be together in conference but when Stauffenberg could also be there.

The/

attentat

The plan was that immediately after the Stauffenberg's accomplices were to seize the telegraph, telephone and radio offices and to give the signal to Olbricht in the Bendlerstrasse that the attempt had been successful. Then they were to blow up the offices so that no contact could be made with the outside world. Then Olbricht was to announce a state of siege and call upon the Heimateer to take action against the Party and the Gestapo.

Power was to be vested in a committee of five until members of the new Government could reach Berlin. The five were to be Beck, Goerdeler, Leuthäuser, Leuschner and Gisevius. After three days, the following cabinet was to be formed:

Staatschef:	Beck
Reichskanzler:	Goerdeler (National Liberal)
Vizekanzler:	Leuschner (Social Democrat)
Inneres:	Leber (" ")
Staatssekret des Innern:	von Schulenberg (National Socialist)
Wirtschaft:	Lejeune-Jung (Conservative)
Justiz:	Würmer (Zentrum)
Kultusmin:	Bolz (")
Finanzen:	Löser (National Liberal)
Aussenminister:	von Schulenberg
Staatssekretär:	von Hassell
Kriegsmin:	Oster and Olbricht
Staatssekret in Kriegsm:	von Stauffenberg
Oberbefehlshaben der Wehrmacht:	Witzleben
Reichminister beim Staatschef und Reichskom zur Wiederherstellung der öff. Ordnung	Gisevius

After three days the new government was to have offered an armistice in ~~their~~^{its} declaration of policy. The troops were then to have been withdrawn to the Siegfried and Vistula lines.

The sentencing of Party and SS leaders ^{was self-evident} but Beck and Goerdeler wanted to preserve a form of trial.

The attentat was first planned for the 12th July but Himmler and Göring were not present, as expected. Gisevius had returned secretly from Zürich. The second day selected was the 16th. But once again the bomb did not go off. Stauffenberg excused himself on the grounds that neither Himmler nor Göring were there. All the conspirators were very depressed.

On the 17th July the Gestapo issued an order for Goerdeler's arrest. Then came the 20th. But the conference was held in East Prussia, in barracks which stood alone and not in an underground bunker as had been hoped. So that the whole building could not collapse. Stauffenberg left the building a few minutes before the end of the meeting, leaving behind him the brief case containing the bomb. He went quickly to the airport. When he heard the detonation and saw how the light wooden building was tossed in the air he judged that the attentat had been completely successful and flew off to Berlin.

He/

He landed two hours later and telephoned to Olbricht. He was amazed to find that Olbricht had not, as arranged received the news from the radio and telegraph office of the Fuehrerhauptquartier. Actually Stauffenberg's accomplice who was to have blown them up had lost his nerve and Hitler had already made contact with the outside world.

But of all this the conspirators knew nothing. Nebe tried to inform them of the failure but was unable to do so. Olbricht therefore assumed that Hitler was dead and set things going. The generals in the provinces received their marching orders.

At 5 p.m. Beck, Hoepfner, Gisevius and Helldorf met in the Bendlerstrass. The Polizeipresident was told that the police should turn over their power to the Wehrmacht.

But the generals in the provinces telephoned that Hitler had talked to them and was still alive. Hours of nerve-wracking waiting began. Meanwhile it had been learnt at the Fuehrerhauptquartier that this was no individual attempt but a large-scale "putsch". So the propaganda machine made the whole thing public.

Fromm was furious because he had not first been consulted and arrested his subordinate, Olbricht. But Olbricht arrested Fromm instead and had him locked up in a room in the Ministry of War. Hoepfner took over Fromm's duties. Witzleben, who realised that all was not going well came to Berlin and went to his apartment to await developments.

Even now a determined action could have saved the situation to a certain extent. Kluge might have broadcast that he was going to withdraw the army to the Siegfried line. But Kluge turned tail when he heard that Hitler was still alive.

Gisevius proposed an attack on the Ministry of Propaganda and the Gestapo Headquarters. But Stauffenberg had such confidence in the troops of the Ersatzheer, who were on their way, that he opposed any kind of special action.

About 7 p.m., Helldorf telephoned from Police Headquarters to Gisevius and told him to come at once. He wanted to tell his fellow-conspirators what steps Hitler was taking against the "putsch". Through Goebbels, Hitler had ordered Major Remer of the Wachregiment in Berlin to seize the Putsch Headquarters at once. Gisevius who hadn't been told all this on the telephone met the first company of the Wachregiment but thought they were on the side of the "Putsch". Helldorf had long warned them against Remer but it was by then too late. Remer freed Fromm who improvised a military court on the spot before the Gestapo arrived and any incriminating evidence leaked out. The tribunal sentenced Olbricht, von Quinheim, Haeflten and von Stauffenberg to be shot immediately. Beck had already tried to shoot himself and received the final shot from Fromm. Before the accused were shot Fromm allowed them to burn all incriminating documents. Fromm was arrested later in spite of his attempts to cover his tracks.

Next/

Next morning a wave of arrests began. The Gestapo had found a notebook in Stauffenberg's pocket which made their task easier. No one who had a close or distant connexion with the conspirators was spared. Witzleben, Canaris, Oster, Schacht, Popitz, Planck, Hassell and von Schulenberg were among the first arrested. Families were also arrested, though not executed.

Four days later Helldorf and Hansen were arrested. Nebe had disappeared. A public warrant was issued against him. Gisevius hid in Berlin until January, 1945. Himmler thought he had fled to Switzerland so no public warrant was issued against him.

W. W. W.

13 MAY 1945

Cutting dated 194

Civilians Led Plot To Kill Hitler

Rebel Generals Lost Their Nerve

The full story of the plot to assassinate Hitler on July 20 last year is told below for the first time.

From DR. ROBERT BAUM-JUNGK

Observer Correspondent

BERNE, May 12

General Dietmar, former German High Command radio commentator, after surrendering himself to the Allied Armies, said: "July 20 [1944] was the German generals' protest against such Nazi horrors as the Buchenwald concentration camp. Alas, it failed." His assertion was completely false.

The July 20 *putsch*, which, if successful, might have ended the war nearly ten months earlier and saved many towns and millions of lives, had been prepared mostly by civilians. It failed, as many others prepared by the same circles had failed, because the generals once more weakened when really vigorous action was most needed.

These and other facts which throw an entirely new light on the history of Germany, were told to me by Dr. Hans Bernhard Gisevius, for long one of the foremost leaders of the anti-Hitler conspiracy.

Gisevius, who is now in Switzerland, and his friend, Arthur Nebe, who escaped to Sweden, are probably the only active conspirators who survived the July *putsch*. When I met Gisevius last January, he had just crossed into Switzerland, after hiding for months in Berlin.

He then asked me not to publish his story, as many of his friends, such as Pastor Niemoller, might be endangered by the revelations of his clandestine activity against the Nazis between 1934 and 1944.

During these years, a centre of conspiracy was formed which, sooner or later, drew towards it all dissatisfied members of the Wehrmacht and the Administration. Later on, prominent leaders of illegal Socialist groups, such as Leuschner, former Hessian Minister, and Leuthaeuser, Christian Socialist trade unionist, joined it.

Army Disaffection

The inner circle of the conspiracy, to which the technical details of the revolt were entrusted, was headed by the chief of the "Personalstab" and the "Organisationsabteilung" of the Intelligence Service of the Wehrmacht, usually called the Obwehr. This man was Hans Oster. He was removed from office only in 1943.

During 1942 Oster won over to the conspirators a man in a decisive key position—General Olbricht, commander of the Ersatzheer. The plan was then as follows:—Several army groups on the Eastern Front were to announce that, because of the difficult situation, they would discontinue obeying Hitler's military com-

mands. Witzleben, then commanding in the west, would no longer recognise Hitler as Commander-in-Chief.

At the same time General Beck, former Chief of Staff, retired after the Blomberg crisis, and the real head of the conspiracy since the beginning of the war was to take over the Ersatzheer, for which reliable troops had been held back, and occupy all important buildings in Berlin. Gestapo officials and party leaders would be arrested.

All that happened while the German Sixth Army fought its desperate fight at Stalingrad. If Paulus, in command of the Stalingrad garrison, had declared that he would accept no more orders from Hitler, the *putsch* would have started and spread, as planned. But Paulus let himself be persuaded by Hitler to continue the hopeless battle.

These experiences brought a change in tactics by the conspirators. Vainly they had planned to overthrow Hitler by revolt of his generals alone. Now, they decided to take up the long-rejected idea of an attempt to kill Hitler.

Some months later Count Stauffenberg, regarded as one of the most promising younger Wehrmacht officers, was made Chief of Staff to Olbricht and consequently came into closest contact with the conspirators.

This happened just at the time when Oster and Gisevius had become suspects to Himmler and were no longer able to function as the technical centre of the conspiracy. So Stauffenberg and his circle, including von Schulenburg, von Wartenberg, Trott zu Solz, of the Foreign Office, and two nephews of Brauchitsch, the brothers Haeften, became the most active figures in the conspiracy.

Stauffenberg wanted to be the "killer." His first serious attempt failed when, after waiting for weeks, during which all the conspirators were held in a state of preparedness, Hitler suddenly cabled that a meeting scheduled for December 26, 1943, which was to be the date of the killing, was postponed. It may be remembered that rumours about a German peace move were then rife in London.

Minutes.

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A new plan took shape after von Kluge, who had for years been in contact with the conspirators, replaced Rommel and Rundstedt as C.-in-C. in the West after D-Day.

Von Kluge and Rommel, who joined the conspiracy after his defeat in the West, agreed to participate on condition that Himmler and Göring be killed at the same time. The chief difficulty was to find a time when Hitler, Göring, and Himmler would all be together in a conference to which Stauffenberg had access.

The general plan was this: Immediately after the attempt, Stauffenberg's accomplices were to seize the telegraph, telephone, and radio offices at the headquarters and give a signal to Olbricht in the War Ministry in Berlin that the plot had been successful. Then they were to blow up the office so that no one else would be able to contact the world. Then, on the ground that Hitler was dead, Olbricht was to announce a state of siege and call the Ersatzheer to take action against the party and the Gestapo in order to preserve public order.

Beck to Head State

Power was to be vested in the hands of a committee of five until various members of the new Government could reach Berlin from the provinces. This committee was to be composed of Beck, Goerdeler, Leuthaeuser, Leuschner, and Gisevius.

After three days a Cabinet was to be formed with Beck as Chief of State, Goerdeler as Reich Chancellor, the Socialist Leuschner as Vice-Chancellor, Leber, a Left Socialist and representative of the Communist Resistance Group, at the Home Office; Lejeune Jung, Conservative, as Minister of Economics; Würmer, Catholic Party, as Minister of Justice; Loeser, National Liberal, as Finance Minister; von Schulenburg, former Ambassador in Moscow, as Foreign Secretary, and Oster and Olbricht at the War Ministry.

Their State Secretary was to be Stauffenberg, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Wehrmacht, Witzleben.

After three days the Government was to ask for an armistice. The troops were then to be withdrawn to the Siegfried and Vistula lines.

First Failure

The *attentat* was first planned for July 12. But once more the bomb was not exploded, because Hitler and Goering were not present at the Führer's headquarters.

The second day selected was July 16. The conspirators had now risked more than ever before, and had warned the troops which were to occupy Berlin so that they would be ready to march in without any delay.

But once again the bomb did not go off, as General Stieff, who had to hand the fatal brief-case to Stauffenberg, lost his nerve.

This second false alarm was not without effect on the nerves of the conspirators. Beck remarked that a horse which had refused to jump twice would balk next time or go over badly.

Then came the 20th. This time the Führer's headquarters were in East Prussia. The conference—this was the first divergence between plans and reality—was not held in a bunker as supposed, but in a wooden barracks. The bomb, therefore, could not make the whole building collapse because the pressure would not be thrown back from the roof of the bunker.

The force of the explosion actually blew off the light roof. This

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Minutes.

was the reason that not all those present were killed, and that Hitler escaped with his life.

Stauffenberg left the barracks a few minutes before the end of the meeting, leaving behind the briefcase containing the bomb.

He went quickly to the nearest airport when he heard the detonation and saw the light wooden headquarters tossed in the air, he thought the attempt had been completely successful. He then flew off to Berlin.

When he landed two hours later he telephoned Olbricht, in the Bendlerstrasse. Stauffenberg was astonished to learn that Olbricht had not received any news of the successful attempt from the telegraph office at the Führer's headquarters as had been arranged. Something must have gone wrong.

Actually General Fellgiebel, Stauffenberg's accomplice, whose job was to blow up the telegraph office, had lost his nerve on hearing that Hitler had not been killed.

So the telegraph office had remained intact, and Hitler had already got in touch with the outer world.

Of all this the conspirators as yet knew nothing.

Therefore, Olbricht started the *putsch* and set things going as soon as he heard on the telephone from Stauffenberg that Hitler was dead.

Now, as had been planned, the generals in the provinces received their marching orders after being informed of Hitler's death.

But very soon the first telephone calls came to the conspirators' headquarters from generals in the provinces, who reported that Hitler had talked to them personally over the telephone and was still alive. What should be done?

Beck said: "For us, the man is dead, anyhow."

The answer, as given to the generals, was that a leader in whose close proximity such an attack could take place was morally dead.

Precious Hours Lost

Hours of nerve-wracking waiting began. It proved now to be fatal that the troops had not been previously warned to be in readiness—this was to avoid Himmler's suspicions. It took a very long time before they could reach Berlin, and precious hours were lost. This was of even greater consequence, as the whole action had been already delayed two hours because of Fellgiebel's failure to send a code message from the Führer's headquarters immediately after the attempt.

In the meantime it had been learned in Hitler's headquarters, through calls to the provincial generals, that the attack was the beginning of a large-scale *putsch*. Hitler therefore decided that the attempt could no longer be kept secret as was originally planned, but must be immediately made public by the propaganda machine.

The news that Hitler was still alive caused General Fromm to turn on the conspirators. He was a commander of the Ersatzheer in an even higher rank than Olbricht and knew well enough about the whole plot. He had asked one of the conspirators some days before not to forget to kill Keitel, who was Fromm's greatest enemy.

Now, Fromm, trying to save his face, suddenly acted and began by trying to arrest Olbricht. Olbricht just laughed because the conspirators were then in the majority. He arrested Fromm and had him locked in one of the War Ministry's rooms. General Hoepner, who had been kept in readiness for just such an emergency, took over Fromm's duties.

About seven o'clock news came that the Berlin Regiment was on its way to the War Ministry. So blind were the conspirators they thought these troops were coming to support the *putsch*.

Therefore, no resistance was offered when the regiment, commanded by Major Remer, a convinced Nazi, started to occupy the *putsch* headquarters. But soon the conspirators found that Remer was on Hitler's side and that they were lost.

Shot by Fromm

Fromm was now released from his improvised prison by Remer and told the story of the conspiracy. He set up a military court on the spot. The tribunal sentenced Olbricht, Maerz von Quirnheim, Haefen Stauffenberg's adjutant, and Stauffenberg himself to be shot at once. General Beck had attempted suicide before the tribunal sat and received the final mercy shot from Fromm himself.

Before Fromm had the accused men shot, he allowed them to burn all the documents connected with the *putsch*. He did this to destroy any evidence which might have been used by the Nazis against himself.

The next morning a wave of arrests began. The Gestapo had found a notebook in Stauffenberg's jacket.

It was full of names and addresses of sympathisers. This book became now in Himmler's hands a real prescription list.

All the men who had long been suspected by Himmler and had, in fact, been in close contact with the conspirators like Witzleben, Admiral Canaris, Oster, Schacht, von Schulenburg, General Hansen, Helldorf, were arrested. A thousand leaders of the old parties and the Church were put in gaol.

So the most potent German anti-Hitler resistance group was completely destroyed some months before Germany's final doom.

Gisevius is one of the few who have survived to tell the world the truth.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

TOP SECRET.

19th May, 1945.

M/G/63.

You may remember that some weeks ago you sent me a summary of events leading up to the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20th last, written by Dr. H.B. Gisevius for C.S.S. In case you are not a regular reader of the Sunday Observer, I would draw your attention to the fact that Dr. Gisevius's story was published in that paper for May 13th in a telegram from its correspondent at Berne, Dr. Robert Baum-Jungk.

(Signed) V. CAVENDISH-BENTINCK.

Lt. Colonel Sir Claude Dansey, K.C.M.G.