

German 'Tourist' Office: A Front for Nazi Spying

Its Chief, Ernst Schmitz, Has 2000 Men Spotted Strategically Over U. S. A.

By HENRY PAYNTER

Hitler's diplomatic and consular officers in the U. S. A. are engaged in the same illegal spying and propaganda work which in 1917 led to war.

But they are very busy men, engaged in fomenting a revolution and stealing important military secrets, so the burden of the spying and propaganda falls heavily on Nazi agencies that pretend not to be official.

One of the chief among these is the German Railroads "Tourist" Office at 11 W 57th St.

Of course it is illegal now for an American to tour in Germany, but this same tourist office is a beehive of activity.

Herr Ernst Schmitz, the chief, is a Hitler subject, although he has been here for many years and has a naturalized stepson, Frank, just graduated from Lafayette College. Herr Schmitz has enjoyed the shelter of the U. S. A. for 20 years, during which he made many influential friends for Hitler.

Herr Schmitz, in addition to numerous employes in New York, Chicago and San Francisco "tourist" offices, has 2000 agents scattered strategically throughout the country.

\$150,000 Allowance

To keep this flourishing "tourist" business going, Herr Schmitz, according to his report to the State Department, has an admitted allowance of \$150,000 a year from Germany. His ample salary, and his office and sumptuous apartment rent, are paid directly by Germany.

From 2000 to 3000 pieces of propaganda go nightly throughout the country to persons on a mailing list of about 100,000, including some of the best known names in the U. S. A.

While Herr Schmitz himself frequently orally attacks the Jews, the German propaganda he sends out is more subtle. Some of it is comical:

A German named America. Columbus found the new world with a German's book.

"Sold out notices by tourist hotels, health and recreation resorts throughout the Reich are the index for the state of the travel and vacation season in Germany this summer."

"The liveliness of the tourist season as well as the rapid return to normalcy in Belgium."

"Record attendance at summer music festivals is the order of the day."

"The excess of female inhabitants of the Reich has been considerably reduced."

Railroad Passes

But propagandizing in key quarters by no means completes Herr Schmitz' duties.

Herr Schmitz enjoys railroad passes that take him anywhere. His social contacts, his impeccable manner and tailoring make him unobtrusive for the most important duties.

On his travels Herr Schmitz has a movie camera going much of the time—and if it happens to be focussed on Boulder Dam or harbor defenses, railroad junction yards, or key public utility plants, that is just a coincidence.

But in the safe in the 57th St. tourist office there have been kept thousands and thousands of feet of film that Herr Schmitz has made during his extensive U. S. travels—deposited there against some undisclosed future development.

When Julius Dornmuller, now Minister of

Transport, and Gen. Ritter von Epp, Minister for Bavaria, visited here, Herr Schmitz was able to show them what they wanted to see.

Herr Schmitz lives sumptuously above the 57th St. "tourist" office, and has a photograph of Hitler gazing at him when he is in bed.

Herr Schmitz is proud of his friendship with U. S. corporation executives.

All good Hitler leaders here are trying to get big U. S. companies to throw their weight behind a great U. S.-German "appeasement" program, when Hitler overruns England—which they hope is going to be before Sept. 15.

No one knows how much Herr Schmitz is really spending.

Spending Money

Although he and his wife, Annie, moved in upper strata here, they lived modestly until they went to Berlin on the *Europa* at the beginning of the war.

They came back almost immediately, and have since showed many signs of having plenty of spending money.

Herr Schmitz has spent much of his time lecturing around the country.

In New York, Herr Schmitz is friendly with E. E. Spafford, former National Commander American Legion; and Torkild Rieber, who resigned as chairman of the Texas Co., after he used company money to buy a car for Gerhardt Westrick, Hitler's departed emissary. (See picture on page 18.)

Herr Schmitz thinks the FBI is following him and tapping his wires. If you telephone him at his secret numbers—Wickersham 2-4208 and Wickersham 2-4209—he will answer with a password—"Longchamps." Try it.

Herr Schmitz recently paid a visit to Crazy Mountain, Mont., home of Congressman Jacob Thorkelson, who has put into the *Congressional Record* speeches which have paralleled Hitler propaganda.

Herr Schmitz until recently has been quite confident, even arrogant in his attitude.

When Henry Hoke, publisher of *The Reporter of Direct Mail Advertising*, editorially appealed to the Post Office for a fraud order against the German "tourist" office for the "deceptive" propaganda it was sending out, Herr Schmitz wrote back:

"You are hereby invited to retract your false and libelous statements with proper apologetic regrets, and in such language as decency and common courtesy prescribe. . . . You are further invited to submit your retraction to the same newspapers which were furnished information on your original libelous charges and to secure from those papers which published your slander the publication of your retraction."

This made Mr. Hoke so mad he wrote a special issue of his *Reporter of Direct Mail Advertising* about it.

Pressure on Press

It is difficult to determine how far Herr Schmitz' influence for German propaganda extends. George Britt, in *The Fifth Column Is Here*, says:

"Controlling as he (Schmitz) has done for years the placement of German travel advertising, Herr Schmitz is able to subsidize Nazi publications (in the U. S. A.) and to exert his weight on needy American papers and maga-



Here is the German government "tourist" agency whose Jew-baiting head, Herr Ernst Schmitz, collects strategic pictures, spreads propaganda. (Notice lookout, circled.)
PM Photo by William Brunk

zines. When the huge publicity expenditures of 1933 and 1934 were brought to light, Herr Schmitz was found to have OK'd them."

Interesting as it would be to know what Americans get what part of Herr Schmitz' regular \$150,000 a year (of which \$130,000 has been disbursed right here in New York), it is not the least interesting of Herr Schmitz' activities.

Far more absorbing even than the propaganda-subsidy service and the movie-making are German "tourist" agents' activities right here in New York.

It seems a matter of vital importance to the building up of tourism in joy-loving Germany to send agents to the docks in New York, whenever a ship is outbound for Europe.

Building up the tourist trade apparently requires that agents keep precise account of the name of the ship, its destination and the nature of its cargo.

20 'Tourist' Agents

Reliable observers estimate not less than 20 "tourist" agents are engaged in this activity.

Employment in Herr Schmitz' agency has risen in inverse ratio to the decrease of German tourist business.

Herr Schmitz maintains close contact with John Schroeder, managing director of the Nazi steamship lines.

Herr Schroeder enjoys courtesies of the port comparable to those given diplomats. Often he carries thick brief cases through Customs unmolested. (No German ships clear the Port of New York now.)

On the Nazi ships, when they were operating freely in New York, Nazi leaders on each boat took secret messages to and from Germany.

Herr Schmitz, in addition to his duties promoting tourist traffic, has a great love of the sea, and of a certain kind of fishing, especially

at points which would be strategically important to the Nazis.

Thus he and other Germans frequently visit Montauk, a great, strategically located unfortified harbor, and charter small boats. Thus Herr Schmitz did a great deal of fishing around Key West, another undeveloped port of great strategic possibility in the Panama Canal defense.

In addition to the Germans, the Japanese have shown great interest recently in Montauk. No less than 11 of them were recently busy surf fishing and photographing along the harbor, dutifully watched by Naval Intelligence officers.

Former Representative Fred Britten, once chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, last week end showed German officials around Montauk, including Vice Admiral Robert Witthoef-Emden, senior naval attache of the German Embassy.

Friend of Aviators

Herr Schmitz is a friend of the German aviators who flew over U. S. air lanes; of Emil Kropps, Nazi Standard Oil flier, who flew over the U. S. A. to demonstrate a new near-helicopter type plane; of Lieut. Peter Riedel, assistant air attache of the German Embassy, who seems to be everywhere around the U. S. A. where there are new types of planes; of Capt. Rudolph Yahn, of Lufthansa, who also got around, and of many other mobile German agents here.

Herr Schmitz has at least one deep satisfaction. He thoroughly understands America, he is always glad to tell cocktail party acquaintances. A favorite phrase is:

"Stupid Americans. They do not follow Hitler's advice."

(This is the seventh of a series.)