

# Germany's Espionage Purge

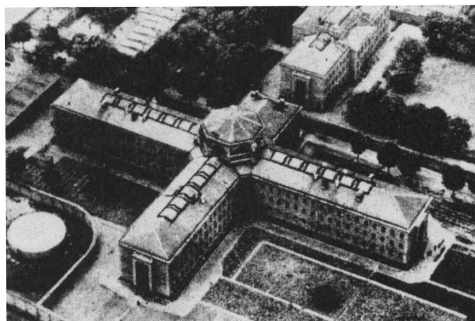
*Ensnared in Polish Captain's Spy-Net, Two Berlin Women Are Led to Executioner's Block, Where Others May Lose Lives*

Adolf Hitler, Chancellor-Fuehrer of the Third German Reich, executed, on June 30, 1934, seventy-seven so-called revolutionists for conspiracy against his régime. Prominent among the alleged conspirators who suffered the penalty of death were Gen. Kurt von Schleicher, Chancellor before Hitler gained power, and Ernst Roehm, Storm Troop Chief of Staff who had been known as Hitler's intimate friend.

Not since that time has Germany come into such hostile notice from the outside world until February 18, when two young and handsome women, who had been employed in the German Defense Ministry, went to the executioner's block in Plötzensee Prison, after they had been convicted of connection with a spy-plot. The women were Baroness Benita von Berg and Frau Renate von Natzmer.

The golden-haired Baroness was poor, so she opened a hat shop. In this occupation she met a Polish cavalry captain, Baron Georges von Sosnowski, who has been described as the villain of the plot. He had been sent to Germany by his Government, as the story went, admittedly to obtain military information.

He paid particular attention to underpaid girls of good family employed as stenographers in the Defense Ministry. They were invited to unconventional parties in the apartment of the Baroness and afterward



Air-plane view of Plötzensee Prison where executions took place

were supposedly bribed or blackmailed into passing out information.

In addition to the beheading of the two convicted women, sentences for life imprisonment on a similar charge were imposed on Fräulein Irene von Jena, and the Polish Baron.

Quickly following the execution of 'the two German women convicted of espionage came the news that two more convicted spies held in Plötzensee Prison also might feel the executioner's ax. One was said to be a former naval technician, but the identities of both were sealed by official secrecy.

In London, *The News Chronicle*, Liberal Party organ, declared that the beheading of the two women was "disgusting savagery," and was not the first evidence of "a strain of sheer barbarism in the Nazi creed." Espionage is the most dangerous offense in Germany, which lives in "an atmosphere of international war and class war," said *The Manchester Guardian*.

sian press feel any easier. Among other European problems to be solved at Russia's expense, wrote Mr. Duranty in the *New York Times*, was that Poland, with the aid of German bayonets, would take the Ukraine and restore Silesia to Germany.

The Ukraine once was a great Power in Europe, and has been called "the cradle of the Slav race." Tho the Ukrainians have been persecuted, and parceled out among enemies, once said a Russian correspondent of *The Daily Express* of London, they have retained their culture, tongue, and nationalism.

LITERARY DIGEST

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