

[REDACTED]

b7c



McGILL UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL

February 21, 1940.

Dear Mr. Hoover,

I am very sorry that the letter which I wrote you last week thanking you for your letter of February 15th was mislaid. I can scarcely say how much your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

b7c

J. E. Hoover, Esq.,
Director,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
United States Department of Justice,
Washington, D. C.

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

6-5-68
[Handwritten signature]

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **CANAL ZONE**

FILE NO. **65-103**

REPORT MADE AT CANAL ZONE	DATE WHEN MADE 2-19-40	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 2-17-40	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]
TITLE DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN			CHARACTER OF CASE ESPIONAGE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject claims American citizen ship being holder of American passport #272(E242708) issued by American Consulate General at Buenos Aires, Argentina on 12-1-39 valid only for return to the U. S. before 3-1-40. Information from Department of State representatives in South American indicates Subject sailed from Antofagasta, Chile north bound on SS NIGHTINGALE as a messman on 2-8-40. Ship transited the Panama Canal on 2-14-40 destination, New York. Subject listed as Austrian age 42. Subject arrived Antofagasta from Valparaiso on Japanese Steamer HEIYO MARU and requested assistance of American Consul in getting assigned on American vessel returning to the United States. Vacancy on NIGHTINGALE filled by Subject. Captain of ship, LAURENCE B. PARKER, very suspicious of Subject's activities enroute, he being very active with camera, taking photographs and being met at various ports by German organizations and treated as very important personage. Subject attempted to obtain discharge in Canal Zone claiming no clothing to face rigors of New York winter. Discharge not allowed. Subject according to own statement has two sons in German Army and was in Germany prior to Munich; was in German organization in medical corps and reached South America on German ship, probably the USUKAMA. Then received orders to board the German ship TACOMA which was engaged in the GRAF SPEE affair and finally being separated from the German organization and return to Germany independently. Subject is on British list of suspected German agents.

J.M.
W.H.
AGENCY *cc - State - Visa*
REC'D *4-30-58*
REP'T YORK *5-21-58*
BY *W.H.*

IN 20 FEB 1940
RECEIVED - HYB

COPY DESTROYED
197 JUL 29 1970

cc - NS
65-10-57
W.H.

APPROVED AND FORWARDED BY <i>[Signature]</i> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES		
ENCL. 9 CARDS IN SEARCH 16 2 - Bureau 2 - Washington Field 2 - New York AMSD 2 - Canal Zone	RECEIVED - HYB	65-1682	29
	MAR 5 1940	<i>W.H.</i>	

DETAILS;

AT BALBOA, CANAL ZONE

This report is predicated upon various reports received in this Division from the American Embassy in Panama and from the Civil Intelligence Unit, The Panama Canal covering the activities of the Subject. u

The Subject is alleged to be an American citizen as evidenced by his American passport No. 272(E242708) issued to him by the American Consulate General, Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 1, 1939 which is invalid if Subject has not returned to the United States before March 1, 1940. Subject on arrival was holder of passport No. 248504 dated December 7, 1935 and which was renewed to December 7, 1939. This particular passport was indorsed to render it invalid for travel in Spain and in China. u

There is quoted herein a despatch from the American Consulate, Antofagasta, Chile dated February 10, 1940 and sets out in detail the activities of the Subject in this case.

American Consulate
Antofagasta, Chile
February 10, 1940

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to this Consulate's despatch No. 52 of January 26, 1940 entitled, "Erben, Dr. Hermann Frederick" and to report further to the Department regarding the person who is the subject of this despatch.

On January 26 ultimo the American SS NIGHTINGALE called at this port and the master reported that he needed a messman for the crew and requested this Consulate to provide one if any was available. Dr. Erben was then in this port as a passenger from Valparaiso to Callao on the Japanese MS HEIYO MARU, and, since he had requested this Consulate's assistance in signing on an American vessel, stating that he would do anything, for the purpose of returning to the United States, he was told about the vacancy in the NIGHTINGALE's crew and he promptly requested to be signed on the vessel to fill the vacancy. The master of the vessel, Captain LAURENCE B. PARKER was agreeable to this so Dr. Erben became a member of the vessel's crew, and sailed southbound on the above date.

The NIGHTINGALE called at this port northbound on February 7th and Dr. Erben called at this Consulate to ask the under

signed to persuade Captain Parker to discharge him from the vessel when it reached the Panama Canal, stating that when he left the German vessel USAKAMA at Buenos Aires, in which he claimed to have been serving as a ship's surgeon, he had been permitted only to bring the khaki uniform he was wearing and that with only this clothing he could not brave the rigor of winter in New York. He thought if he could be discharged from the NIGHTINGALE at Panama he would be able to support himself with the wages he had earned (some \$25.00) until he could catch a vessel bound for California where the climate would be milder, and where he had friends who would help him. When asked who the friends were he mentioned the names of Errol Flynn, the actor, and Ernest Hemingway, the author with whom he had gone to Spain to fight in the recent civil war, in that country. Dr. Erben was informed that the Consulate had no authority to induce Captain Parker or the Canal Zone authorities to let him sign off there. He returned to the vessel and sailed north in it when it departed from this port on February 8th.

Captain Parker also called at the Consulate on February 8th to report that he had become very suspicious of the man (Dr. Erben) which he had signed on here while southbound. He reported that upon reaching Valparaiso Dr. Erben was met by a large delegation from the members of the crew of the German sailing ship PRIEWALD which is taking refuge there, and that the impression he gained was that Dr. Erben was a man of considerable importance to them judging by the deference they showed him and the number of Nazi salutes given to him. While in Valparaiso Dr. Erben, when not doing his job on the NIGHTINGALE, spent all of his time aboard the German vessel or photographing anything he could train his camera on. Captain Parker said he obtained a boat and went around the Chilean battleship LATORRE photographing it from stem to stern. When the NIGHTINGALE called at Coquimbo northbound Dr. Erben was again met by a large delegation of Germans, and Captain Parker gained the impression that he was well known and appeared to be a man of importance to most members of the delegation. At this port Dr. Erben busily photographed everything in sight including the American vessel in which he was serving. Captain Parker's suspicion of Dr. Erben increased and, since he knew he was coming to Antofagasta to ship a cargo of 4,800 tons of copper which will probably eventually find its way to the allies in the European war, he gave orders to the ship's officers to keep a sharp watch over Dr. Erben and not permit him access to certain parts of the ship. Afterward, the Chief Engineer reported that Erben attempted to gain access with his camera to the engine room. This was not permitted because the NIGHTINGALE is one of the new Maritime Commission freighters said to have some new developments in the engine room. Strict orders were imparted to keep Erben out of the engine room.

Captain Parker said that Erben had taken up with him the question of his discharge at the Canal Zone, and had been told

that since the vessel would not make formal entry there but only stop to bunker, the appropriate officials would not be on hand to effect his discharge and that it could not be done.

However, Captain Parker stated to the undersigned that the discharge could be effected while his vessel was bunkering provided it should be agreeable to the authorities, and requested this Consulate to communicate with the authorities of the Canal Zone and request them to inform him upon his arrival there if the man may be discharged. Captain Parker feels sure that Erben is a German agent, despite his status as a naturalized American, and he wishes to proceed accordingly. Therefore, he wishes advance notice from the Canal Zone authorities so if they refuse to allow Erben's discharge there he can take action which would not tend to arouse Erben's suspicion that he is suspect of being the agent of a foreign power, attempting to gain access to the Canal. No communication has been sent to any authorities of the Canal, but a copy of this despatch has been sent to our Embassy at Panama for any action deemed by it to be appropriate.

In addition to Captain Parker's report that Erben photographed everything around the port works at Antofagasta including the copper loading operations on the NIGHTINGALE, the undersigned observed certain activity on his part which was interesting. During the afternoon of February 7th at about 3:00 o'clock, Dr. Erben was seen entering the German bank together with the leader of the German Nazi party here, who is a German national. Had Dr. Erben wished to obtain exchange of money it seems likely that he would have effected the transaction in the street where a more favorable rate could be had. In any case it does not seem necessary that he should have been accompanied by the Nazi leader in order to effect a simple exchange operation. The deduction drawn is that he was either receiving money from the bank or using it as a means of transmitting and receiving messages.

During the conversations had with Dr. Erben certain interesting information was received, but it must be taken into account that it was all the result of his own statements. His mother, Johana Erben resides in Vienna at III Aronbergring 19, and has two sons in the German army now on active duty after serving in the Polish campaign. Just before the Munich crisis he was visiting his mother, and he was instructed to report to army headquarters. He did and he was given a rank in the medical corps, outfitted with a uniform and accoutrements, and told if war should break out he was to report at a certain hospital bringing 5-day's rations. He said that he protested on the ground that he was an American citizen, but he was told "you were born a German, you are of German race, you are German, and you always will be a German." Dr. Erben admitted participation in the Spanish civil war and the present conflict in China. He reported that the only way he could get out of Germany

was to place himself under the orders of the German Admiralty and ship as surgeon on a German ship. He stated that when he reached Buenos Aires on a German ship, presumably the USUKAMA, after the outbreak of war, and learned that it had become unlawful for American citizens to serve in belligerent vessels he left the vessel voluntarily. However, he was considered by German officials at Buenos Aires to be on active duty and was told to prepare to be returned to Germany for further service. He then received orders to report to the German TACOMA but he never did this because the vessel became embroiled in the GRAF SPEE affair and was interned in Uruguay. He reported that he then asked the German officials at Buenos Aires (not stating whether of the German Embassy or others) for permission to return to Germany by his own means. His petition was granted so he said because "I am on active duty with the German Admiralty" and it realized that I would have a better chance of returning to Germany and resuming service that way that if I went to sea from Buenos Aires on a German vessel which would almost certainly be sunk." He said that he adopted this procedure to get away from the Germans and reach the United States. His subsequent conduct along the west coast of South America does not bear out his desire to liberate himself from contact with Germans, but he claims that he must continue "to put on an act to obviate reprisals against those I love who are residing in Germany." When he reached Valparaiso, Dr. Erben reports that he received orders to report to a German vessel in Talcahuano and put to sea when it did. He claimed that he disregarded these orders and embarked as a passenger on the Japanese HEIYO MARU in an attempt to return to the United States. If he fears reprisals against relatives in Germany it appears that disregarding orders will be an excellent way to bring them about. Dr. Erben is not, of course, telling his whole story. The fact that Dr. Erben is on the British list of suspect German agents, as reported by the British Consul here, is also significant.

It was observed, however, that he managed to save a very good camera.

Respectfully yours,

George H. Adams

American Vice Consul.

The SS NIGHTINGALE transited the Panama Canal on February 14, 1940 bound for New York. The subject was aboard the ship when it left this district. His name appears on the crew list as messman and he is listed as an Austrian, age 42. No other description of the Subject is available. u

Appropriate index cards on Dr. Erben are being forwarded to the Bureau with copies of this report. u

68-103

ENCLOSURE: TO THE BUREAU index cards on DR. HERMAN FREDERICK ERBEN.

UNDEVELOPED LEADS:

THE NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

AT NEW YORK CITY will make an effort to determine what the activities of Dr. Erben are after he arrives in New York City in view of his suspicious actions en route and his background which indicated he is presently an active German espionage agent.

THE WASHINGTON FIELD DIVISION

AT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE will obtain a complete background of Subject as obtained in their files.

PENDING

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LL:MMW

To: COMMUNICATIONS SECTION.

MARCH 6, 1940

Transmit the following message to: NEW YORK CITY

DE HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN WITH ALIASES ESPIONAGE

BUREAU OF MARINE INSPECTION AND NAVIGATION DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ADVISED
SUBJECT PRESENTLY AT GERMAN SEAMANS MISSION SIXTYFOUR HUDSON STREET BROOKLYN
WAITING FOR REPLY CONCERNING DUPLICATES OF HIS SEAMANS PAPERS TO ENABLE HIM
TO SIGN AS A SHIP SURGEON ON STEAMSHIP CASTILLA OF UNITED FRUIT COMPANY
SAILING FROM NEW YORK MARCH ELEVEN. ERBEN BEING ADVISED BY MARINE INSPECTION
HERE TO REPORT TO US SHIPPING COMMISSIONER FORTYFIVE BROADWAY FRIDAY MORNING
THE EIGHTH TO EXECUTE REQUIRED AFFIDAVIT RE LOST SEAMANS PAPERS IN THAT
DUPLICATES MIGHT BE ISSUED HIM. SUGGEST INSTITUTE APPROPRIATE INVESTIGATION
REGARDING HIS ACTIVITIES.

HOTTEL

cc Bureau
65-21

cc Los Angeles (Air Mail)
cc San Francisco (Air Mail)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COPY DESTROYED

197 JUL 29 1970

RECORDED
65-68-30
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
3 MAR 7 1940
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

SENT VIA

LIB VTM
65-682

March 5, 1940

Special Agent in Charge
Washington, D. C.

RE: DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERSEN,
with aliases - ESPIONAGE

Dear Sir:

I have been advised by the State Department that Mrs. Wilkison, 484 Commerce Building, Marine Inspection and Navigation Bureau, Washington, D. C., is in possession of information regarding the present whereabouts of this subject.

You are instructed to have an Agent immediately call upon her to obtain the desired information, and advise the Bureau and Los Angeles Office, which is the office of origin, so that the appropriate investigation may be instituted regarding his activities. U

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

- Mr. Tolson _____
- Mr. Nathan _____
- Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
- Mr. Clegg _____
- Mr. Glavin _____
- Mr. Ladd _____
- Mr. Coffey _____
- Mr. Egan _____
- Mr. Gurnea _____
- Mr. Harbo _____
- Mr. Lester _____
- Mr. Hendon _____
- Mr. Malone _____
- Mr. Nichols _____
- Mr. Rosen _____
- Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
- Mr. Tracy _____
- Miss Gandy _____

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
cc-San Francisco A I L E
New York
Los Angeles A 7 - R 1940

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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65-682-31
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
MAR 8 1940
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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RECEIVED-DIRECTOR
F. B. I.
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
MAR 5 12 01 PM '40

607 U. S. Court House
Foley Square
New York, New York

March 11, 1940

LINER
65-1719

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Colonel F. K. Ross
General Staff Corps
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2
Headquarters Second Corps Area
Governors Island, New York

Re: DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, with aliases
ESPIONAGE

My dear Colonel Ross:

Thank you for your letter of February 29, 1940, enclosing information concerning Dr. HERMANN F. ERBEN. u

This office has conducted considerable investigation concerning Dr. ERBEN, and a report summarizing information obtained is now in the course of typing. A copy of this report is being designated for your office and should be forwarded in the near future. u

Dr. ERBEN first came to the attention of the Bureau in connection with an alleged mutiny on the high seas occurring in February of 1937 on the S. S. West Bahwah of the Moore-Cormack Lines, Dr. ERBEN at that time being under an investigation as the inciter of various seamen to mutiny and for intimidating other members of the crew and passengers. He was also charged with being engaged in Communistic activities aboard the ship. No prosecution was ever instituted in connection with this charge. More recently Dr. ERBEN has again come to the attention of the Bureau as a reported German agent, and in connection therewith investigation has been conducted.

There is being enclosed for your use a copy of the report of Special Agent [redacted] dated February 15, 1940, at New York City. Additional investigation is presently being written up, as above indicated, and a copy of this report will be forwarded to you in the near future. u

Sincerely yours,

RECORDED

&

INDEXED

P. E. FOXWORTH
Special Agent in Charge

Enclosure

cc Bureau ✓

65-687-32

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
MAR 12 1940
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ONE KN

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

Bawmer

AR:AI

March 1, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. E. A. TAMM

[Handwritten initials]

Re: DR. HERMANN F. ERBEN
ESPIONAGE

+
[Redacted] called and advised that Dr. Hermann F. Erben had definitely arrived in this country; that [Redacted] Branch 484, Commerce Building, of the Marine Inspection and Navigation Bureau, knows where he is.

*b7c
1*

Respectfully,

A. Rosen

A. Rosen

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INDEXED

65 682-33

MAR 15 1940

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

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- Deleted under exemption(s) _____ with no segregable material available for release to you.
- Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
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March 29, 1940

RECORDED

LIB:CS
65-682-34

Honorable Adolf A. Berle, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Berle:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 14, 1940, your reference number A-S 862,8591/792, with enclosures, copies of dispatches from the United States Legation at Tehran, Iran, dated July 9, 1935, and from the American Embassy at Valencia, Spain, dated April 1, 1937, relative to Dr. Hermann F. Erben.

I sincerely appreciate your kindness in making this information available to me and you may be assured that the State Department will be furnished copies of reports covering our inquiry regarding the activities of this individual while in the United States.

Sincerely yours,

CC - Mr. E. A. Tamm

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. Nathan
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Harbo
- Mr. Lester
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Quinn
- Mr. Tracy
- Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
 MAILED
 ★ MAR 29 1940 ★
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
 U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

March 19, 1940

EAT:LCJ

2:28 PM

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR *File*

Mr. Fletcher Warren of the State Department called and advised that Doctor Herman F. Erben is in the City today and was at the Passport Office at the time of this call. He said that Erben evidently plans to return to New York tonight, and that he is stopping at 64 Hudson Street, Seamen's Mission, Hoboken.

Mr. Warren suggested that it might be possible to locate Doctor Erben this afternoon.

Respectfully,

EAT
E. A. TAMM

no purpose in interviewing him

RECORDED

65 100-2

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION	
2	MAR 20 1940
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	
FILES	ONE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT SAN FRANCISCO

FILE NO. 65-26

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REPORT MADE AT	DATE WHEN MADE	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE	REPORT MADE BY
WASHINGTON, D.C.	3-20-40	3-6, 11-40	[REDACTED] LL:MC

b7c

TITLE:

DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, with aliases

CHARACTER:

ESPIONAGE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject born in Vienna, 1897, immigrated to the United States in 1924, naturalized in San Francisco in 1930. Last passport issued him by American Consulate General, Buenos Aires December 1939 for immediate return to United States; passport taken up February 20, 1940, upon his landing in New York. Subject presently care of German Seamen's Mission, 64 Hudson Street, Hoboken, New Jersey, waiting for duplicate seaman's papers to sail as a ship surgeon on March 11. u

- R U C -

b7c

REFERENCE:

Report of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated at Canal Zone, February 19, 1940; Bureau letter dated March 5, 1940. u

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16.37
cc

AGENCY photo. Stat. - use
REQ. REC'D 4-30-58
REP'T FORK. 5-21-58
BY P. 19 - [initials]

MAR 23 1940

APPROVED AND FORWARDED

SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

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- 2-New Orleans
- 2-New York
- 2-Newark
- 2-Wash. Field

Deferred
ONLY
L. E. B.
4-3-40

MAR 22 A.M.

ONE HARBO

100-11111-11111-11111

DETAILS:

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

In compliance with the request set out in the reference report to obtain from the files of the State Department a complete background of this subject, Agent inspected the State Department voluminous files on DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, which file MR. FLETCHER WARREN, of the State Department, made available to Agent for inspection.

MR. WARREN informed Agent that DR. ERBEN has been the subject of much correspondence and that his activities have been quite troublesome to the Department and to the Consular Service; that all information transmitted to the State Department by its various Consul representatives has been submitted to the Federal Bureau of Investigation from time to time so that the Federal Bureau of Investigation file on this subject should contain practically all of the information reflected in the file of the State Department.

In addition, the file of the State Department reflects that passport number 272 was issued to HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN on December 1, 1939 by the American Consulate General at Buenos Aires. In his application for passport, subject declared that he was born in Vienna, December 15, 1897, immigrated to the United States on February 10, 1924, and was naturalized on November 10, 1930 in the United States District Court at San Francisco, California, certificate of naturalization being 3,446,093. His passport number 272 was taken up by the Immigration Authorities on February 20, 1940, upon his landing in the port of New York on the S.S. NIGHTINGALE, the same being validated for his return to the United States before March 1, 1940. Attached to the application for passport was an Affidavit To Overcome Presumption Of Non-Citizenship, executed by subject on February 1, 1939, at Buenos Aires, wherein he declared that since naturalization he resided in the following countries:

From December 1930 to April 1931, Ship Surgeon on McCormick Line, S. S. WEST NOTUS; from September 1931 to January 1933, Ship Surgeon on Dollar Line, SS. PRESIDENT GARFIELD; from February 1933 to October 1933, traveling in Far East doing research

work in tropical diseases; from December 1933 to April 1935, post graduate study in medicine at Vienna, Austria; from April 1935 to September 1935, traveling in India as surgeon with the Austro-American-Trans-Asiatic Expedition; from September 1936 to September 1937, ship surgeon on McCormick Line, S. S. WEST MAHWAH; from March 1937 to November 1937, war surgery work with British Red Cross in Spain; from December 1937 to March 1938, war surgery work with Chinese Red Cross in China; from October 1938 to April 1939, visiting sons at Germany and attempting to get them out of that country; from May 1939 to July 1939, visiting fiancée in Belgium and traveling in Germany; from July 1939 to November 1939, ship surgeon on German vessel "USSUKUMA" traveling to South Africa and, upon outbreak of war, to Bahia Blanca, Argentine.

The file reflects that after subject's discharge from the German Steamship "USSUKUMA", he arrived in January, 1940, in Valparaiso where he presented himself to the American Consulate General, seeking relief and transportation back to the United States as a destitute American seaman. The State Department took his request up with the Controller General of the United States, who ruled that subject was not entitled to relief and transportation as a destitute American seaman, in view of the fact that he has not served on an American vessel since 1937.

The file also reflects an inter-office memorandum dated February 9, 1940, to the effect that the naturalization of DR. ERBEN has been under investigation for some time by the Immigration Authorities and that a recommendation was made to the Attorney General that ERBEN's naturalization be canceled as having been illegally and fraudulently procured and that he canceled his absence from the United States during the five-year period preceding his naturalization, during which period he served as a member of the crews of foreign vessels. In this connection it is noted that the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, Department of Labor, received a telegram dated March 6, 1940, from Assistant District Director ARMSTRONG, San Francisco, advising

the date for trial of the suit to cancel subject's certificate of naturalization was set for May 7, 1940, before United States Judge LOUDERBECK at San Francisco, California.

In compliance with Bureau letter dated March 5, 1940, Agent interviewed MRS. LILLIE J. WILKINSON, Central Records Section, Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, Department of Commerce, who informed that HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, permanent residence 353 Geary Street, San Francisco, California, held the following seaman certificates:

Seaman Protection Certificate number 5,290, issued him at the port of San Francisco, on July 5, 1934.

Continuous discharge book 06,863 and certificate of service as surgeon number E 25,771, issued him at the port of New Orleans on February 10, 1937.

MRS. WILKINSON informed Agent that subject requested her Bureau by letter of February 28, 1940 and March 4, 1940, that duplicate certificates be issued him in lieu of his original certificates which he claimed had been taken up at the time he applied for passports in 1939 and 1935; that he had a position offered him as a ship surgeon on the S. S. CASTILLA of the United States Fruit Company, sailing from the port of New York on March 11, and that in order to be able to sign on, he must produce originals or duplicates of his seaman's papers. MRS. WILKINSON informed Agent that subject who gave his address care of German Seaman's Mission, 64 Hudson Street, Hoboken, New Jersey, had been advised by the Chief of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation to report to the United States Shipping Commissioner, at 45 Broadway, New York City, on March 8, 1940, and there execute the necessary affidavit in order that duplicates of his seaman's certificates might be issued him. This information was, on March 6, 1940, relayed by teletype to the New York Office, with the suggestion that appropriate investigation be instituted with the above-mentioned addresses on hand, regarding subject's activities.

In connection with this case, the attentions of

the San Francisco and New York Offices are directed to investigate reports rendered by the San Francisco, New Orleans, and Washington Field Offices in 1937 in the case entitled, "HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, M.D., aliases: Dr. Herman S. Erben, Herman Frederick Erben; LLOYD USINGER (S. S. West Mahwah). Character - ESPIONAGE - MUTINY ON THE HIGH SEAS". u

Referred Upon Completion to the Office of Origin. u

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

March 18, 1940

AR:LCJ

2:55 P.M.

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. E. A. TAMM

Mr. Fletcher Warren of the State Department called with reference to our letter of March 16, in which was enclosed a report dated 2/15/40 concerning Dr. Herman Frederick Erben and L. A. Langille.

Mr. Warren expressed his appreciation for that report, and said that there is one point in the report which might possibly be of importance and might bear further checking. He said that in checking on Dr. Rudolph Scharf, 850 Park Avenue, whom Erben had given as reference, it was found that Dr. Scharf was born in Austria. He said that Erben is from Vienna, and that Dr. Scharf's wife was also born in Vienna, and that it occurred to him that perhaps Mrs. Scharf is Erben's sister.

Respectfully,

A. Rosen
A. ROSEN

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

10-6-2-39
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
MAR 19 1940
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT SAN FRANCISCO

NY FILE NO. 65-1715

MER

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK	DATE MADE 3/18/40	PERIOD 2/24, 29/40; 3/1, 4, 5, 6/40	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]
TITLE DR. HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, with aliases			CHARACTER ESPIONAGE b7c

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject arrived New York City 2/20/40 as mess man on the S. S. Nightingale from Antofagasta, Chile, and is presently residing at 64 Hudson Street, Hoboken, New Jersey. Background of subject obtained. On 3/5/40 subject voluntarily called at the New York Division furnishing his account of activities, claiming that he is presently motivated by a desire to maintain his good standing in the eyes of the German government in order that the safety and freedom of his mother and two sons who now reside in Germany may be protected. Denies any espionage activity and explains friendship with various German agencies due to his advertised loyalty to Germany. Claims to be loyal American citizen and presently desirous of obtaining employment as a ship's doctor. u

- P -

REFERENCE: Report of Special Agent [REDACTED] New York City, 2/15/40.
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED] Canal Zone, 2/19/40.
Telegram to New York Office from Washington Field Office, 3/6/40. u

DETAILS:

AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK

At the Boarding Division, Bureau of Immigration, South Ferry, agent examined a copy of the arrival manifest of the S. S. Nightingale of the Grace Line which arrived at New York City on February 20, 1940. According to the record there appears the supplementary u

COPIES OF THIS REPORT:

- (5) Bureau
- 2 San Francisco
- 2 Los Angeles
- 2 Washington Field
- 2 Newark (Information)

- 5 New York
- (1 Col. F. K. Ross, G-2, Governors Is., N.Y.)
- (1 Commander D. B. Downer, O.N.I., 3rd Naval District NYC)

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MAR 21 1940

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ONE HARBO

MAR 25 1940

See Berle 4/2/40
See Commissioner Ward 4/1/40

65-1715

name of HERMAN F. ERBEN as a member of the crew engaged on January 26, 1940, at Antofagasta, Chile, as a mess man. There was no record in the manifest indicating ERBEN's New York address. u

At the personnel office of the Grace Line, Pier 57, [redacted] clerk, stated that the line had no record of ERBEN except as a member of the crew. She stated that his salary rate was \$55 per month as a mess man but that she had no record of his present address and inasmuch as he had neglected to furnish a Social Security number at the time of his engagement her records were very incomplete concerning him. u

Inasmuch as ERBEN had given an address in care of Doctor RUDOLPH SCHARF, 850 Park Avenue, at the time he was interviewed by the American consul at Buenos Aires, inquiry was made at Post Office [redacted] Office [redacted] u

A telephone call under pretext to Doctor SCHARF's office (Telephone: Butterfield 8-3930) developed the information that Doctor SCHARF had no association or connection with Doctor ERBEN but that Doctor ERBEN moved around a great deal and accordingly gave Doctor SCHARF's address in order that he might have a permanent mailing address. Doctor SCHARF, who furnished the above information, also stated that Doctor ERBEN was admitted to practice in the states of New York, Louisiana, and Washington, and was now living somewhere in Hoboken, New Jersey. u

An examination of the 1938 Directory of the American Medical Association revealed the fact that Doctor ERBEN is listed therein, but his present address is stated to be unknown. It appears that Doctor ERBEN was born in 1897, attended the medical school of the University of Vienna, graduating in 1925, and was licensed to practice medicine in New York City in 1926. His last known address was given as 507 West Street, New York City. u

At the office of the New York State Medical Grievance Committee, 80 Centre Street, [redacted] advised that there was no record of Doctor ERBEN having paid his registration fee from 1938 to the present time, nor was there any record of a complaint filed against him. [redacted] explained that a doctor once licensed could still practice medicine in New York without paying a registration fee but that his name would not be listed unless he did pay a registration fee of \$2.00 annually. u

At the New York Times Morgue a file was located on Doctor HERMANN F. ERBEN which consisted of several clippings. The first clipping was dated January 18, 1931, from the New York Times of that date and carried an article under the date line of Montevideo, January 17, 1931, reporting the arrival of Doctor HERMANN F. ERBEN of San Francisco to study diseases characteristic of South American countries. It was stated that Doctor ERBEN was commissioned by the Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine, the George William Hooper Foundation for Medical Research, and the University of California. u

The next clipping is from the New York Times under the date line of Calcutta, India, September 12, 1935, and reports that one Doctor H. F. ERBEN, a naturalized American of Austrian birth, was tried before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on September 11 on a charge of possession of a revolver and cartridges without a license. Doctor ERBEN was fined 300 rupees on this charge and, having refused to pay his fine, was sentenced to three months rigorous imprisonment. The article further stated that Doctor ERBEN claimed that he had motored to India from Vienna with two companions via Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Khyber Pass; that he had no knowledge that it was illegal to have an unlicensed revolver and upon ascertaining that such was the fact he had deposited his revolver at the office of the American consul. u

The next clipping was from the New York Herald Tribune of November 23, 1935, and recorded the arrival in New York City of Doctor HERMANN F. ERBEN, an itinerant research specialist of tropical diseases, with 1,000 monkeys, aboard the American pioneer freighter City of Rayville on November 22. The article stated that Doctor ERBEN had been away from America for two years on an Austro-American trans-Asian expedition and had traveled in Persia, French Indo-China, Arabia, and India, but was reticent about his experiences declining to divulge any of his research findings in connection with tropical diseases such as black-water fever and malaria, and stated that he wished to consult first with research specialists before making any statements for publication. The article further quotes Doctor ERBEN as stating that he frequently made journeys to sea as a ship's surgeon for a year at a time to save sufficient funds to continue his research work. The article also describes Doctor ERBEN's trip aboard the freighter from Assam, India, with 1200 monkeys, recounting his difficulties with them since approximately 100 died during the trip, Doctor ERBEN performing autopsies and finally having some 30 skulls, which he claimed had research value, over which he had difficulties in the New York Customs Office. Doctor ERBEN is quoted as stating that the monkeys were destined for research use in New York hospitals. Doctor ERBEN was also quoted as indicating that he would like to volunteer for medical service in Ethiopia. u

The next clipping was from the New York Herald Tribune of March 5, 1936, and reported the death of Doctor ERBEN under a date line of March 2, 1936, at Calcutta, it being stated that Doctor ERBEN was found unconscious in a railway train near Calcutta. u

The next clipping is also from the New York Herald Tribune, this time dated May 13, 1936, and contains an interview with Doctor ERBEN in which he denies the foregoing report of his death. Doctor ERBEN stated that he had been in Vienna at the time and had not been in India for more than six months. In the interview Doctor ERBEN stated that he had been planning to go to Ethiopia in the Swedish Red Cross Unit but had been detained due to difficulties over renewal of his passport, which according to the article was No. 248504. He was quoted as stating that he was presently living at 550 West 20th Street, New York City, having arrived on Saturday preceding May 13, 1936. He had arrived at Baltimore from Hamburg on the day preceding and had come to New York City from Baltimore. Doctor ERBEN is described as being a strongly built, affable sort of fellow, with horn-rimmed glasses, who was born in Vienna, November 15, 1897. He is quoted as stating that he had been in the Austrian army from 1913 to 1919, during which his family at home was informed that he had died in battle, an erroneous report which he later cleared up. After the war he graduated from the School of Medicine at the University of Vienna and won a fellowship to study metabolic research at Morristown, New Jersey. He moved to New York City in 1923; where he studied general pathology work at Ward's Island Hospital, and then became associated with the Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine. He traveled for this institute in this country, South America, Australia, and islands of the South Seas, and in 1930 was connected with St. Joseph's Hospital in San Francisco. For several years he was a ship's doctor, and then went to Asia. After returning to Vienna to do postgraduate work, Doctor ERBEN led in 1934 a 20,000 mile overland expedition from Vienna to Calcutta, going through the interior of Arabia and Afghanistan, finally returning to New York City in October of 1935 with 1000 monkeys. A copy of this latter clipping was later obtained from a different source and is being placed in the New York Division file. u

It was ascertained that the address at 507 West Street is the Seaman's House Annex of the New York Y. M. C. A. [redacted] b7c, d
[redacted] on interview stated that HERMANN F. ERBEN, who is known as Doctor ERBEN, first stayed at the Annex in May, June, and August of 1936; that he subsequently returned April 22, 1938, and remained until April 27, at which time he went to the West Coast. The last registration card shows ERBEN as age 41 and his last ship as Tristram Barber Line, and his occupation as ship's surgeon. His nearest relative is stated to be Doctor RUDOLPH SCHARF, 80 Park Avenue, New York City. u

b7c, d

[redacted] stated that he distinctly recalled Doctor ERBEN because he had seen numerous newspaper clippings concerning him, one having to do with his being supposedly dead in India, and that he subsequently had passport trouble because the government refused to issue a passport to a man who was reported dead.

[redacted] stated that he recalled that Doctor ERBEN had also served on a Norwegian boat at one time, although he could not recall the name, and that after the last time that Doctor ERBEN stayed at the Annex he was employed for a while at Bernarr Macfadden's Health Farm in New York City.

[redacted] recalled that Doctor ERBEN used to carry a camera a good deal and had a large quantity of pictures which he had taken in various parts of the world on his globe-trotting expeditions.

[redacted] stated that he had seen a few of these pictures and was under the impression that they were mostly concerned with boats and subjects of interest to seamen generally. He stated that Doctor ERBEN was very pro-German in his attitude, but never discussed politics, and, in [redacted] judgment, was more of an international than a man of one nationality and could not be classed as a Nazi. He also recalled that Doctor ERBEN received a few telephone calls from the German consul's office, the significance of which was not known to [redacted].

He also recalled that within the last two or three days someone has telephoned the Annex and inquired whether Doctor ERBEN was in.

This party sounded like a man who had no appreciable accent and had not stated his identity. For the information of the file, [redacted]

[redacted] is also very well acquainted with Doctor ERBEN. The above information which was secured from [redacted]

[redacted] was confirmed by [redacted]

The address at 550 West 20th Street, New York City, is the Seamen's House, Y. N. C. A., a rather high-grade building devoted to seamen. [redacted] advised that according to his records Doctor ERBEN last registered at the Seamen's House December 7, 1935, at which time he stated that he had been discharged on November 30, 1935, from the President Garfield.

[redacted] had in his possession clippings reporting Doctor ERBEN's death and his interview denying the report of his death, as described above.

[redacted] stated that he distinctly recalled Doctor ERBEN as one who was very fussy and somewhat of a nuisance. He recalled that Doctor ERBEN made a trip to Washington December 7, 1935, and returned about three days later; that at the time he left he left his bags in his room, as a result of which the house charged him \$1.20 which Doctor ERBEN considered to be unjustified and which he refused to pay.

[redacted] stated that Doctor ERBEN was very "tight" and had seized upon this excuse to avoid paying his bill.

[redacted] recalled that Doctor ERBEN had an expensive camera but had never seen any photographs, although he understood that Doctor ERBEN had a large number of them. u

On March 5, 1940, Doctor ERBEN called at the New York Division and stated that there had been several people contacting him through Doctor SCHARF, that he assumed that he was under investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and desired to furnish any and all information in his possession. He was informed that the Bureau had no connection with his suspicions regarding investigation but that if he desired to furnish any information it would be received. He stated that he is presently living at 64 Hurston Street, Hoboken, New Jersey, which is the German Lutheran Seaman's Home. He stated that he arrived at New York City on February 20, 1940, on the S. S. Nightingale as a dishwasher and following his arrival had been under investigation by the Office of Naval Intelligence for having taken photographs of the Graf Spee, as a result of which he had turned these over to Commander DOWNER and Commander DOWNER in turn had furnished him with a complete set of the photographs which he then had in his possession. u

Relative to himself, Dr. ERBEN stated that he was born in Vienna, Austria, November 15, 1897, and during the war enlisted in the Austrian Army forces, serving first in the Marine Corps and being wounded three times in action. He stated that he had been decorated twice by the German authorities and four times by the Austrians. Following his discharge from the Army after the war, he returned to Vienna and began to study at the University of Vienna. u

ERBEN was married to one CLAIRES GOTTSCHALK from whom he claims to have been divorced in 1934 and who is presently living in Berlin, Germany. As a result of this marriage two sons were born: KURT ERBEN, born in 1920, and SANTOS ERBEN, born in 1922. Doctor ERBEN stated that he had recently received advice to the effect that both of these boys had enlisted in the German Army and that SANTOS had enlisted for 14 years in the German air forces. ERBEN stated that his mother, JENNIE ERBEN, presently resides in Vienna, her address being Vienna III, Arenberggiring 19. u

Returning to his story of his career, Doctor ERBEN stated that while he was attending school in Vienna after the war he ran out of money and went to South America, spending some time in Brazil and the Argentine. He knocked about in various places, sailing under Italian papers and Brazilian papers for some years and finally coming to the United States February 10, 1924. At that time he went to Morristown, New Jersey, where he obtained a connection with the Rockefeller Foundation and did work in hypertension in diabetes. He stated that it was while he was so engaged that he first became acquainted with Doctor RUDOLPH SCHARF who presently maintains his office at 850 Park Avenue and whose name Doctor ERBEN has given for many years as his permanent mailing address. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that in 1925 he returned to Vienna and in 1926 graduated from the Medical School of the University of

Vienna. That same year he returned to the United States and obtained a position as a doctor at Ward's Island, New York City, under Superintendent C. FLOYD HAVILAND, who is now dead. This position was under Civil Service and lasted until 1927 when he obtained a position as Senior Assistant Physician in the Eastern State Hospital at Jackson, Louisiana. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that he went to Louisiana, took up his duties at the Hospital, and took and passed the Louisiana State examination and was licensed to practice in that state. Doctor ERBEN also stated that by reason of a romantic episode involving the daughter of the Superintendent of the hospital he was discharged after two months. u

Also in 1927 he obtained another position as Senior Assistant Physician, this time at the Eastern State Hospital at Medical Lake near Spokane, Washington. On his arrival at the hospital he took and passed the Washington State examination and was licensed to practice medicine in the state of Washington. He held this position until in 1928 when he was discharged over another romantic episode, this time with a nurse. u

In 1928, following his above discharge, he again obtained a connection with the Rockefeller Foundation, as a result of which he went to Australia, and there, through the Foundation of the University of Sydney, led an expedition to northern Australia for the study of all tropical diseases in that vicinity. That same year, his work being interrupted by the rainy season, he returned to Europe via India. In 1929 he returned to the United States as a ship's surgeon on the S. S. Margaret Johnson of the Johnson Line (Swedish). In the fall of 1929 he returned to Australia and continued his work with the expedition in northern Australia until 1930. u

In 1930 he returned to San Francisco and two days after his arrival he took and passed the California State medical examination and was licensed to practice. He took considerable pride in relating this accomplishment inasmuch as he stated that he had had no opportunity for study and the California medical examination is reputed to be very difficult. Following his license to practice in California, he obtained a position as house surgeon for St. Joseph's Hospital in San Francisco, where he remained for approximately six months, during which time he became a naturalized American citizen, the proceedings being had in the United States District Court at San Francisco. u

Following his naturalization, he left the hospital and obtained a position as representative of the University of California at Berkeley, California, on a good-will tour in South America,

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visiting various towns in Paraguay, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Buenos Aires in the Argentine, and various other places in South America, his work at this time consisting of lectures on various tropical diseases. u

In 1931 he returned to the United States and became a surgeon on the S. S. President Garfield of the Dollar Line. He stated that this was the position in which he took the most pride inasmuch as he held it for a year and a half to December 23, 1932, at which time he was discharged. In explanation of his discharge, he stated that he had become acquainted with one HELEN HASKIN SOUTH, a newspaper woman, who regarded herself as engaged to him and who became very much enraged when he became engaged to someone else as a result of which she informed the Bureau of Narcotics that he was a dope smuggler, and in the resulting investigation, which lasted from 1932 to 1936, he was continually under a cloud of suspicion. u

In the early part of 1933, following his discharge from the President Garfield, Doctor ERBEN stated that he enlisted as a war surgeon in the Chinese Red Cross under promises as to compensation which to him seemed very attractive. He proceeded to Shanghai, China, but on his arrival found that the promises would not be kept and he accordingly ceased his connection with the Chinese Red Cross. u

Hearing of the development of new gold fields in New Guinea, he thought that they offered some possibility to him, and he accordingly proceeded to New Guinea, and there met a man attired in one torn shirt and one torn pair of pants who is the individual who is now known as ERROL FLYNN, the movie actor. He stated that he and ERROL FLYNN bummed around together, traveling finally from New Guinea to India, to Abyssinia, and then to Vienna, Austria, arriving in the spring of 1934. In Vienna he spent the next year in postgraduate work at the University of Vienna and at the same time obtained his divorce. u

In 1935, following his completion of postgraduate work, he was appointed surgeon for the Austro-American trans-Asiatic expedition which was backed by the University of Vienna and an automobile association in Vienna, the object of which was to map a route from Burma up through China, and the route so mapped by this expedition ERBEN claimed to be the one presently used by Chiang Kai Shek, Chinese generalissimo, in obtaining his supplies from French Indo-China. u

In 1935, returning from this expedition to India, Doctor ERBEN stated that he was arrested on a revolver charge and fined 100 rupees, which he paid. He explained that the revolver charge was merely a trumped-up matter and that the real difficulty arose out of the narcotic investigation instituted two years before; that

on his arrival in India he had visited the American consul in the vicinity of Khyber Pass, who had received a document in German which the consul was unable to interpret, not being conversant with the German language. He accordingly requested Doctor ERBEN to translate this document and to their mutual embarrassment Doctor ERBEN learned that the document contained instructions to the effect that a Doctor ERBEN was about to come through that locality and that he was suspected of being a narcotic smuggler and accordingly his passport and papers were to be seized at the earliest opportunity. Doctor ERBEN stated that following this episode he came into very bad odor with the British authorities in India chiefly through the personal fears of the Chief Presidency Magistrate who thought that Doctor ERBEN intended to assassinate him, as a result of which he was deported. He stated in connection with this deportation that just previous to his departure he learned that the boat, S. S. City of Rayville, which he intended to take, was going through the Suez Canal and that a certain individual proposed to ship 1200 monkeys on this boat; that he thereupon went to this individual and advised him that he understood the ship was going by way of the Cape of Good Hope, which information would virtually halt such a shipment in view of the increased charges due to the change in route; that he subsequently contacted a second individual who had sufficient funds and that the second individual arranged to purchase the monkeys from the first person who now thought he had no market for the animals, as a result of which Doctor ERBEN brought the monkeys to New York City, attaining great notoriety on his arrival and indicating that he was interviewed by numerous persons, including KERMIT ROOSEVELT. He stated that the monkeys were not destined to any one party but were peddled in New York City, and that out of the profits made in the transaction he participated. u

Doctor ERBEN continued by stating that Christmas of 1935 he returned to Vienna and in 1936 learned that he had been reported dead in India. In June, 1936, his money from the sale of the monkeys having given out, he returned to the United States, contradicted his reported death, and obtained the only job which he declared he was ashamed of - that of Physical Culture physician with Bernarr Macfadden at Dansville, New York, where he claimed that he was fired after three months after recommending to the patients that they receive medical treatment instead of using some faddist notion of diet. He stated that about this time he became acquainted with one Mrs. JEAN EDWARDS MALONEY, who later became Mrs. JOHN RAVEL, wife of the orchestra leader, from whom she is now divorced. u

Accompanied by Mrs. MALONEY he went to San Francisco where on September 26, 1936, he signed on the S. S. West Mahwah. He stated concerning this trip with Mrs. MALONEY that she paid all the expenses and had requested him to go with her. u

Aboard the S. S. West Bahwah, Doctor ERBEN stated, his troubles began in connection with a call which the ship made at Puerto Rico as a result of which four Puerto Ricans were discovered as stowaways. He stated that the captain of the ship, instead of putting back to port to have the stowaways removed, ordered them tossed overboard to swim ashore, and when it turned out that one of the stowaways had important connections there were violent repercussions in Puerto Rico inasmuch as an election was brewing about that time. As a result of the friction which developed he stated that the captain of the ship made various charges against him and on January 6, 1937, he was discharged from the ship at Rio de Janeiro, returning to the United States via New Orleans where he was met by various narcotic and naval intelligence agents and questioned, finally being released. He stated that also in New Orleans he met Mrs. MALONEY, who was then using the name of Mrs. EDWARDS, she having come to New Orleans for the racing season and the two of them living at the Hotel Jung in New Orleans for several days. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that he evidently had been under observation inasmuch as Mrs. EDWARDS' room was searched immediately after his departure, she being suspected of having in her possession narcotics which he had given her. u

After remaining only a few days in New Orleans, Doctor ERBEN next went to Los Angeles, where he stayed for a few days with ERROL FLYNN. He and FLYNN, becoming bored with lack of activity, then decided to go to Spain and participate in the Spanish Civil War. They first intended to join the forces of General FRANCO, but on reaching England found that they could not make proper connections, whereupon Doctor ERBEN endeavored to make arrangements through Germany, still being unsuccessful, and still desiring to participate in the activities, they thereupon went to Paris and joined the Loyalist forces. Doctor ERBEN stated that this changeover indicated that they had no definite Fascist or Communist leanings in connection with the matter but were merely anxious to participate in the conflict in some capacity. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that he personally did war surgery at an anarchist hospital, explaining that there were two classes of hospitals - anarchist and Communist - in the Loyalist forces. After about four months ERROL FLYNN was subject to falling plaster caused by shell fire, and from the resulting publicity determined to return to the United States, which he did. Doctor ERBEN stated that although FLYNN was not actually injured he did get a bump on the head, and first reports had it that he was killed. u

Doctor ERBEN continued in Spain for about eight months, during which time he became acquainted with such persons as ERNEST HEMINGWAY, ANNA LOUISE STRONG (the Communist writer), DOS PASSOS,

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and SIDNEY FRANKLIN, the American bullfighter. In the fall of 1937 Doctor ERBEN left Spain and went to Paris where he stayed with one BRADISH JOHNSON, a former New Yorker, who is now dead. He remained there for about six weeks after which he again made connections with the Chinese government of Chiang Kai Shek as a result of which it was agreed that Doctor ERBEN would have charge of a 5,000 bed hospital and was to have a free hand in the choice of his assistants. u

Following the negotiations he proceeded to Vienna where he assembled a group of 10 surgeons and on December 4, 1937, sailed from Trieste, Italy, on the Conte Verde to Canton, China. On arriving in Canton, however, he found that again the Chinese government had promised more than it was able to fulfill in the way of remuneration, as a result of which he gave up his connection and from Canton went to Shanghai. u

At Shanghai he endeavored to make arrangements with the Japanese forces but found that the civilian population needing the medical attention was largely native in character, concerning whom the Japanese government did not feel the necessity of spending a great deal of money on medical attention, and therefore Doctor ERBEN was unable to make any connection. u

In May of 1938 Doctor ERBEN returned to the United States as ship's surgeon on the S. S. Triton of the Barber Wilhelmsen Line, which is an African Line. Following his arrival in the United States he again joined the S. S. Margaret Johnson of the Johnson Line as ship surgeon, traveling on the boat to Goteborg, Sweden, and returning to Portland, Oregon, in September, 1938, where he was served with a summons in a proceedings brought at San Francisco to cancel his naturalization as a United States citizen on the ground that on one occasion he had gone from Texas into Mexico for a few hours and had returned without securing a reentry permit. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that following this he returned to Goteborg, Sweden, and there left the Margaret Johnson. He stated that he visited friends in Stockholm for about six weeks and then went to Vienna, where he realized that war appeared to be imminent and accordingly it would be to his best advantage to get his sons out of Germany. He endeavored to procure passports for them and although applications were filed, passports themselves were not granted. u

Following this futile attempt, he stated that he realized that in order to safeguard his sons and his mother who then resided in Vienna it would be necessary for him to establish himself in the good graces of the German Reich, whereupon he made arrangements to sail as a ship's surgeon on the S. S. Wangonie of the German African

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Line. On this boat he sailed around Africa and on the return trip met one JOAN SCOTT SMITH, who he states is now his fiancée and with whom he traveled following the return of the Wangonie to Hamburg, Berlin, and Vienna. u

In May of 1939 he shipped on the S. S. Westernland and returned to the United States, following which he returned to Antwerp, arriving there on June 2, 1939. He stated that he originally shipped on the Westernland because of a quarrel he had with Miss SMITH and that on his return a reconciliation was effected, as a result of which they went from Antwerp to Vienna where they remained about a month. u

On July 12, 1939, he signed on the S. S. Ussukuma, a freighter of the German African Line. Prior to the time that he shipped on this vessel he again tried to get his two sons out of Germany but again failed. While aboard the Ussukuma and while the vessel was calling at Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa, war was declared, and the entire crew of the vessel were advised that by a message received from the German admiralty they were no longer in the merchant marine service but were in the service of the German military forces; that ADOLPH HITLER was now their commander and that the penalty for disobedience was death. u

Following this the vessel put to sea and although no subsequent contacts were made with other vessels it was Doctor ERBEN's impression that the boat was trying to contact possibly German warships. However, after 42 days at sea the ship finally came into the port at Bahiabalanca, Argentine, on October 11, 1939. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that at this port he realized that he was in a precarious position and that it would be necessary for him to take some spectacular action in order that the safety of his family might be assured. It appeared likely at that time that the ship would be interned for the duration of the war at Bahiabalanca and accordingly he went to one Captain NIEBUHR, a naval attaché of the German government, and applied for permission to work his own way back to Germany. Doctor ERBEN explained that at that time there were naturally no ships sailing for Germany on which he could book passage and the German government had no funds available with which to repatriate persons desiring to return. Accordingly arrangements were made with Captain NIEBUHR, as a result of which he obtained permission to leave the Ussukuma and to get back to Germany as best he could. Doctor ERBEN stated that this action on his part made him somewhat of a hero in the eyes of the German inhabitants inasmuch as the crew generally was satisfied to await internment. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that while at Bahiabalanca he contacted the United States vice consul at Bahiabalanca and with his help, on November 15, 1939, went to Buenos Aires, Argentina, by train. Doctor ERBEN stated that he subsequently learned that the Ussukuma had departed from Bahiabalanca and had been scuttled off the South American coast shortly afterwards. u

On his arrival at Buenos Aires, he stated that he reported to the Nazi party headquarters and to the German official representatives who arranged for his stay at the German sailors' home in Buenos Aires where he remained until December 22, 1939. He stated that when the pocket battleship, Admiral Graf Spee, took refuge at Montevideo, Uruguay, following its fight with the ships of the British navy, all of the German citizens at Buenos Aires were contacted by the German officials and instructed to stand by for further orders, it being explained that there was no immediate information available as to the extent of damage to the Graf Spee and whether it would be necessary to send further men to her assistance. He stated that following this request he proceeded to Montevideo and while there made a trip around the Graf Spee in the barge occupied by a number of other German citizens who had also come from Buenos Aires to see what the situation was, and having his camera with him he took numerous pictures of the Graf Spee. He also took numerous pictures of the funeral ceremonies for the Graf Spee sailors who were killed in the battle as well as numerous other photographs. In this connection it should be noted that Doctor ERBEN stated that he possesses three cameras, one being a Contax with a built-in exposure meter, which is equipped with three lenses, one of the lenses being an F15 lens, one a wide angle lens, and the third a telephoto lens. u

The second camera is a movie camera, and the third is a Graflex. He stated that he used the Contax during his trip to Montevideo. u

He stated that following the scuttling of the Graf Spee he returned to Buenos Aires and on his return realized that if he continued to remain in one place for any length of time the German authorities would undoubtedly find some excuse or some method of travel where by he would be forced to return to Germany, and, although he wanted to give the impression of every possible effort to return to Germany still he did not desire to return, accordingly on December 22, 1939, left Buenos Aires for Valparaiso, Chile. u

Relative to his stay in Buenos Aires, Doctor ERBEN stated that on his return from Montevideo he was placed in jail for three days while an inquiry was made by the Argentine authorities as to how he had entered Argentina in the first place. Doctor ERBEN also

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stated that at one time the German citizens who were standing by in Montevideo were instructed to join the Tacoma, supply ship for the Graf Spee, which was slated to accompany the Graf Spee when it left Montevideo. However, orders to this effect were canceled when the Tacoma was interned by the Uruguayan authorities. u

Relative to his trip to Valparaiso, he stated that he traveled chiefly by train but did not pay any fare, indicating that loyal German subjects, considering him in the light of a hero inasmuch as he had advertised his intentions to return to Germany on his own resources, paid for his transportation. He stated that he remained in Valparaiso from December 25, 1939, to January 20, 1940, during which time he visited the German authorities, reporting to them his status, and also called on the American consul for assistance in returning to the United States; that the American consul at Valparaiso cabled Washington concerning his status and was advised that there were no funds available for ERBEN's transportation back to the United States. u

Learning this situation ERBEN stated that he purchased a ticket to Callao, Peru, on the Heijo Maru, a Japanese boat, and after his shipment on board he discovered that by reason of the fact that the boat carried as passengers 23 German seamen who had formerly been employed by the Standard Oil Company and who were en route to Germany, that there was a strong possibility the boat would be stopped by British patrols and searched and the German seamen removed. In fact Doctor ERBEN stated that he learned that the situation was deliberately created in order that the British government might be placed in an embarrassing position inasmuch as they would "lose face" if they failed to remove the men and if they did remove the men would provoke a diplomatic incident between Britain and Japan. u

ERBEN stated that when the ship called at Antofagasta he called on Mr. ADAMS, the American vice consul, and advised him of the situation. At that time Doctor ERBEN was advised by Mr. ADAMS that Doctor ERBEN's name was No. 1 on the list of persons whom the British suspected as intelligence agents, whereupon Doctor ERBEN realized that in the event the Heijo Maru were stopped by British patrols he himself would undoubtedly be one of the first men to be removed and placed in some concentration camp. He stated that his situation was further complicated by the fact that at the time he was in Buenos Aires he received from the German authorities a German pass port which was issued by the German consulate at Buenos Aires, a German sailor's identification book, a card evidencing his membership in the Nazi party, and a card evidencing his membership in the Colonial Club, the German name of which is the National Sozialistischer Kolonial Bund, and also a membership card in the

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Sudamer Deutscher Schulverein, which is an organization formed to support German schools in Poland and Czechoslovakia and which is no longer of great importance. Doctor ERBEN stated that he realized that possession of these papers by him would place him in a serious predicament in the event he were searched by a British boarding party, and he accordingly made arrangements with German authorities at Antofagasta to forward them by registered mail to Doctor SCHWRF, 850 Park Avenue, New York City. Doctor ERBEN stated that although the documents had supposedly been mailed they had never arrived, and this was a source of considerable anxiety to him. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that he determined that it would be unwise for him to proceed further on the Heijo Maru and accordingly remained at Antofagasta, eventually obtaining a dishwashing job on the S. S. Nightingale through the courtesy of the United States vice consul at Antofagasta. He stated that his real desire was to work his way up on the western coast of the United States and that accordingly he desired to make arrangements to transship at the Panama Canal from the S. S. Nightingale, and although he was advised then that this could be done he later was refused permission so to do and arrived at New York City February 20, 1940. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that since his arrival he has been the subject of considerable investigation by naval intelligence officers, and there have been numerous mysterious telephone calls to Doctor SCHWRF, as a result of which he deduced that his activities were the source of some interest to some investigative agency, and inasmuch as Doctor SCHWRF had obtained the impression that the Secret Service was interested in him Doctor ERBEN called at the New York Division under the impression that this was the secret service concerned. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that he had been offered a job as ship's surgeon by the United Fruit Lines on a boat which would leave New York City on March 11, that his passport had been taken upon his arrival in New York City, and that he had made application for his seaman's papers but that he had heard nothing concerning them as yet. He stated that he desired to do everything within his power to prevent any hitch in obtaining his papers and that he also desired to co-operate in any way possible in order that his naturalization as a United States citizen might not be revoked. He exhibited to Agent copies of the photographs which he had obtained and stated that for many years it had been his practice to photograph wherever he went; that he estimated that he had taken 75,000 photographs during the course of his globe-trotting career and that he had never in any way acted as an espionage agent. u

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Doctor ERBEN stated that he had no party affiliations, did not consider himself as a Fascist, Nazi, Communist, or any other similar radical, and stated that in his judgment the war in Europe was progressing to the point where within a few months a showdown was inevitable; that in his judgment the German forces would overcome the British unless the United States went to the aid of Great Britain. He stated that in the event the United States became involved in was the German officials would no longer be in the United States and in the event Germany were successful it would no longer be necessary for him to co-operate with the German authorities. Accordingly he felt that if he could stall off a return to Germany for an appreciable period, meanwhile sailing on every possible ship to keep from remaining too long in one place, he would be able to maintain himself in safety as well as his family. He also stated that in the event that the United States became involved in a war he would unhesitatingly enlist in the United States armed forces inasmuch as his experience as a surgeon would be of real value to the American nation. He stated that as evidence of his patriotism ever since 1931 he has endeavored to obtain a commission in the naval reserve but had been rejected on account of his physical condition and age. He stated that during his recent interrogation by the naval intelligence he had renewed his application for a commission in the naval reserve in order to demonstrate clearly that his interests were on the side of the United States and not in favor of any foreign government. u

It was observed during the interview with Doctor ERBEN that he repeatedly referred to the English as "lineys", usually in a patronizing way, and from remarks made by him concerning the Graf Spee situation it was observed that his sympathies are definitely anti-British and pro-German as between the two nations. It was also observed that in the photographs obtained by him, which included many ships and views in South America, that each view of a British ship showed the stern, and the gun which was mounted thereon by the British authorities. Also among the photographs in Doctor ERBEN's possession were noted numerous photos of the S. S. Nightingale. However, these appeared to be chiefly of interest to a photographer and to have no technical significance. u

Doctor ERBEN stated that his official mail was being forwarded to him at the German consulate in New York City and that his personal mail was being received in care of Doctor SCHARF. He claimed that he does not have a bank account. He consented that his finger prints and photograph be taken. The fingerprints obtained are being forwarded to the Bureau for search in the Bureau's Identification Division. His photograph is being placed in the New York file in connection with this case. u