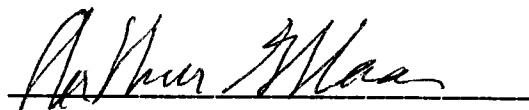


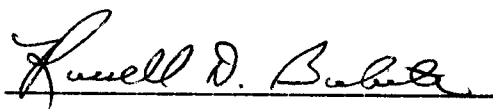
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Major Professor

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Opponent or Opportunist?
The Resistance Role of Hans-Bernd Gisevius

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
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Paul G. Hammer

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Abstract

The Prussian civil servant, Hans Bernd Gisevius is one of the most controversial members of the anti-Nazi German resistance. Like many other Germans, he saw the Nazis as a means to achieve personal success and national revival. As a junior civil servant he joined the Hitler government's newly formed secret police. For Gisevius, alienation and disillusionment began almost immediately and as he witnessed the events of the 1930's, he developed into a bitter and dangerous secret opponent of the regime. How, why, and when this change came about is a major issue when judging the veracity of his account and his role in the resistance. His decision to remain in government to obstruct the dictatorship's actions and his serious disagreements with other anti-Nazis harmed his reputation. His futile efforts to induce the military as an independent institution and the single remaining bulwark of traditional conservative values to restrain the Hitler regime's police eventually led to his participation in numerous plots to overthrow the government including contacts with foreign powers and their secret services. Such developments warrant a new look since Gisevius's motives have frequently been labeled opportunistic and his assertions that the resistance began as early as 1938 have often been discounted in histories about the anti-Nazi Germans.

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Introduction

The Gisevius Problem

The problem of resistance in a totalitarian society has become one of the tragic dilemmas of our century - a century beset with evil regimes. To what extent an individual is compelled to follow moral imperatives and to assert traditional values against a tyranny bent on destroying them - all the while risking life or livelihood - is a question which is troublesome even for those who can discuss such things freely and openly. Opposition, resistance, collaboration, conspiracy and even self-sacrifice all involve the aim of survival - if not of self, at least of family or nation and of cherished principles and hopes. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Nazi Germany and nowhere was the relationship of individual responsibility to collective guilt more debated.

The story of the German Resistance by now has produced its own special historiography and a *dramatis personae* list of remarkable dimension. In 1943 Allen Dulles, serving as chief of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Switzerland, told his assistant, Mary Bancroft, about an anti-Nazi German named Hans Gisevius, commenting that

"I have seen many men in my lifetime, but this one is extraordinary. I've never quite met anyone else like him. He's a member of the Canaris organization - the intelligence service of the German army known as the *Abwehr*. He's brought me a fantastic story. My office is piled high with denunciations of him as a double agent. That doesn't bother me." ¹

¹ Mary Bancroft, Autobiography of a Spy (New York, 1983), 161; Joseph Persico, Piercing the Reich: The Penetration of Nazi Germany by

In the extensive literature concerning the German anti-Nazi resistance the name of Hans Bernd Gisevius often appears scattered here and there in accounts which give little indication of his significance. The mass of references to him certify that he was an important figure. Yet, no account devoted primarily to Gisevius exists, although he gave three days of testimony at the Nuremberg Trials and his extensive knowledge of the resistance would indicate that he played a more notable role than has been acknowledged. The many fleeting references to Gisevius scarcely leave the reader with any notion of his personality or of his contribution. Gisevius's activities are relegated to the background since he was always in a supporting role, and he was never a leader. Naturally, research concentrates on more visible figures in the resistance. Gisevius's participation raises some obvious questions: just what did he do, and how much did his ideas influence the resistance and how much was he influenced by it?

To answer such questions, it would be necessary to evaluate and clarify Gisevius's role in the resistance and to illustrate how a relatively obscure person close to great events came to be judged in history. To examine his role as a political opponent to dictatorship one needs to enter the political landscape of Germany prior to 1933 and to deal with the often complex (and later accountable) decisions that individuals sometimes have to make in totalitarian systems. In Gisevius's case, the interweaving of

American Secret Agents during World War II (New York, 1979), 66, adds "That doesn't bother me."

personality and politics not only affected his activities but also those who knew him or wrote about him.

Historical controversy about Gisevius began immediately after he published his memoirs, To the Bitter End, in 1946. Rudolf Pechel, another member of the resistance, published a rejoinder, Deutscher Widerstand, in 1947, which attacked Gisevius's account, particularly his rendering of the events surrounding Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg's role in the resistance, and in 1948 Pechel followed with an article attacking Gisevius's general reliability.²

The controversy has not discouraged historians of the German resistance from using citations out of Gisevius's memoirs in their accounts of major events of the period. Indeed, for some events, Gisevius is the only source. Fraenkel's and Manvell's The Canaris Conspiracy and Pierre Galante's Operation Valkyrie rely extensively upon Gisevius's memoirs. Michael Balfour in Withstanding Hitler in Germany 1933-1945 also accepts much of Gisevius's account at face value. So, at least to some, Gisevius is deemed usable enough.³

² Rudolf Pechel, editor of Deutsche Rundschau, was arrested in April 1942 and spent the rest of the war in Sachsenhausen concentration camp for his resistance activities. His article, "Der 'Historiker' Gisevius" appeared in Kurier on 20 August 1948.

³ Heinrich Fraenkel and Roger Manvell, The Canaris Conspiracy: The Secret Resistance to Hitler in the German Army (New York, 1969) and Der 20. Juli (The July Plot) (Frankfurt, 1964); Pierre Galante, Operation Valkyrie (New York, 1981); Michael Balfour, Withstanding Hitler in Germany 1933-1945 (London, 1988).

Other writers and historians see Gisevius as an opportunist and argue that his lack of influence caused him to desert the conservatives for the Nazis in 1933 and then to desert the Nazis for the resistance. John Wheeler-Bennett in The Nemesis of Power describes the German resistance as virtually non-existent and disputes Gisevius's account of details. Constantine Fitzgibbon asserts that Gisevius is an unreliable source about events of the Nazi era and that his memoirs are full of fabrications. Wilhelm Hoettl, a former German intelligence officer, in his 1954 book, The Secret Front, denies the existence of a German resistance and discounts Gisevius.⁴ The American historian, Harold C. Deutsch's evaluation of Gisevius is more balanced. He notes discrepancies and often successfully resolves contradictions between Gisevius and other participants in major events. Peter Hoffmann uses Gisevius memoirs as a source while noting some discrepancies and Herman Graml views inaccuracies in Gisevius's memoirs as misjudgments about events rather than as attempts to deceive.⁵

The portrayal of Gisevius as an opportunist intriguer who drifted into resistance activity because of disappointment over his failure to attain office under the Nazis one encounters frequently. Edward Crankshaw, for example, pictures Gisevius as a young man

⁴ Wilhelm Hoettl, The Secret Front: The Story of Nazi Political Espionage (New York, 1954), 25, 61, 74, 115; Constantine Fitzgibbon, The Shirt of Nessus (London, 1956); John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918-1945 (London, 1964).

⁵ Peter Hoffmann, History of the German Resistance 1933-1945 (Cambridge, 1977). Hereafter History; Hermann Graml, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Joachim Reichardt and Ernst Wolf, The German Resistance to Hitler (Berkeley, 1970).

'on the make' who joined the resistance at least partly out of revenge for being excluded from the Gestapo and who was merely a less skilled intriguer than the 'successful' Nazis. Rudolf Diels, the first chief of the Gestapo, published his account, Lucifer ante Portas, in 1950, attacking Gisevius's story of Diels's activities in the Gestapo and portraying Gisevius as another ambitious official trying to unseat him. Heinz Höhne treats Gisevius as a continuous agitator motivated by a mixture of personal ambition and political discontent. However, he credits Gisevius with providing very useful information to the resistance about police activities before the war and valuable service during the war.⁶

Accounts of Allied contacts, other surviving resisters and some diaries give a mixed evaluation of Gisevius. Hjalmar Schacht, a former finance minister in the Hitler government, a defendant at the Nuremberg Trials, and an ambiguous resistance figure relatively close to Gisevius, described his own conflicts with the Nazis in his Confessions of 'The Old Wizard', the only support for Gisevius's account of certain obscure resistance episodes. Ulrich von Hassell, a member of the resistance in the Foreign Ministry, wrote in his diary on 14 August 1939, that "He [Gisevius] is no doubt intelligent, informed and active. But I don't quite make him out" yet von Hassell seemed to have had little difficulty in working with him.⁷ Of particular interest is Allen Dulles's

⁶ Edward Crankshaw, Gestapo: Instrument of Tyranny (New York, 1956); Rudolf Diels, Lucifer Ante Portas (Stuttgart, 1950); Heinz Höhne, Canaris (Garden City, 1979).

⁷ Ulrich von Hassell, The von Hassell Diaries (London, 1948), 59.

Germany's Underground which supports much of Gisevius's account and views him as a trustworthy resistance figure.

Several factors beyond Gisevius's control, apart from reservations by surviving resistance members, may have contributed to the doubts about him and his account. Such skepticism, especially among non-German historians, was partly the product of a tendency to assume that all Germans were Nazi sympathizers. In this view, German resistance was simply an effort by a few to emerge from the coming disaster with a clean record. Gisevius and his friends countered the view that German resistance commenced only after the war began, or worse, when German defeat appeared probable. There was also the understandable assumption that connections between Nazis and conservatives were closer than they actually were to account for some of the historical treatment of Gisevius as happened to the anti-Nazi diplomats, Adam von Trott zu Solz and Ulrich von Hassell.⁸ A good example of this tendency was the British Foreign Office's refusal to recognize any real difference between resistance leader, Carl Goerdeler's Germany and that of Hitler. Other nations and their historians may also have feared the non-Nazi Germany envisioned by the conservatives around Gisevius since they retained memories of conflicts with Wilhelmine Germany.

Since an understanding of Gisevius's political roots is essential for defining his relationship to the resistance, a study of

⁸ See Christopher Sykes, Troubled Loyalty: A Biography of Adam von Trott zu Solz (London, 1969) and Gregor Schöllgen, A Conservative Against Hitler: Ulrich von Hassell: Diplomat in Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic, and the Third Reich 1881-1944 (London, 1991).

his background and early career cannot be overlooked. Yet this is probably the least documented period of his activities and one of the most ambiguous periods in his employment. Gisevius's entry into the Gestapo in 1933, his participation in various power struggles, his growing disillusionment, his virtually continuous conflicts with Nazi officials, and his contacts with like-minded bureaucrats occurred from 1933-1938. His early Gestapo associations left a lasting stigma and troubling questions. Did his opposition result from genuine revulsion against Nazi police methods or it was simply the result of his failure to attain office? Like many of his conservative leaders, was he deceived by Nazi propaganda designed to temporarily preserve the early 1933 Nazi-conservative alliance?

This political 'biography' of Gisevius focusing on the Nazi era rather than on his life before and after, relies on published memoirs and standard histories of the German resistance which contain references to Gisevius. Nevertheless, a brief examination of his ideas prior to 1933 is indispensable. Reconstructing the ideas of the young Gisevius involves inquiry into his early political associations as well as a brief description of the intellectual background from which he came. Since there is little documentation about Gisevius's early political views, an investigator must focus on the political programs of his party and the intellectual climate of the time, both of which were hostile to parliamentary democracy. This is important because it gives some indication of how serious Gisevius was in his opposition to the Nazis later and how soon he began his resistance. It also may

explain some of the political divisions within the resistance that contributed to later historical controversy about him. The intellectual influences of the *Lebensphilosophie*, as exemplified by Othmar Spann and Oswald Spengler, shifted politics in Germany away from Western liberalism and rationalism. This meant espousing universalism over individualism, hierarchy over equality, the 'organic' state, run by an elite, rather than 'mechanical' elections, and vague ideas concerning 'blood' and 'soil' and a 'leader-savior'. An alert reader can find traces of these influences in Gisevius's book To the Bitter End.⁹ Gisevius was part of a generation cut adrift from the ideas of nineteenth century liberalism as well as from the monarchism of the Second Empire. Gisevius's conservatism viewed a modified 'Bismarckian' Germany as the ideal state.

Since Gisevius's memoirs reflect his thinking after the Nazi era was over, when democracy was victorious in the West and Communism dominated the East, it is often impossible to discern his real feelings during the Weimar and early Nazi periods. On certain subjects Gisevius maintains a discreet silence. He barely mentions his pre-1933 political activities. Nor does he have more than a sentence or two about his attitude toward Jews and the Western countries during the Weimar period. He also says little about his routine in the Gestapo and later in the *Abwehr*. His narrative gives the impression that he spent most of his time in

⁹ Hans Bernd Gisevius, To the Bitter End (Boston, 1947), vii, xiii, 310. There are several editions of this book. Unless noted, all citations will be from this edition.

resistance activities, yet he would have had to do enough of his official duties to avoid drawing attention to himself. In spite of some probable self-serving on his part, analysis of his book can outline his political thinking on many key issues and illustrate the continuity of his conservative outlook. Naturally, the basic ideas which influenced him in the Weimar period had changed somewhat by the end of World War II, especially his attitude toward democracy. To assess his attitudes at various times one must rely upon his associations and the memoirs of other resistance figures. Determining Gisevius's role is more verifiable in some periods than in others. It is virtually impossible to determine the degree of influence Gisevius may have had in the resistance for no source explicitly credits him with initiating or changing a resistance plan or policy. Moreover, Gisevius's relationship with his post-war critic, Pechel, is unclear, yet Pechel seems to have considerable knowledge about Gisevius and his activities in Switzerland.

The nature of the available source material sets practical limitations on this investigation. Of course, to analyze his political thought and his motives, it draws mostly upon Gisevius's work, To the Bitter End, as well as upon Mary Bancroft's memoirs, Autobiography of a Spy. The published memoirs of other anti-Nazis, such as Ulrich von Hassell and Helmuth Groscurth give scattered and fragmentary diary entries which provide all too brief episodes of clear insight into Gisevius's behavior and motives. The Gestapo records, Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung, annotated by Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, contain references to

Gisevius's resistance activities.¹⁰ However, since the resisters were in the hands of the Gestapo, their evidence must be used cautiously. Nazi investigators were astounded by the extent and longevity of the anti-Nazi conspiracy in which Gisevius participated since 1938.

Since the terms *opposition*, *resistance*, *military-conservative opposition*, *conspiracy*, *coup*, *putsch*, 'Hitler myth' and 'traditional values' appear frequently in the text, a brief explanation of them is necessary.

'Opposition' refers to disagreements with Nazi policies and selective obstruction. It excludes attempts to overthrow the regime and implies no deep ideological differences with the Nazis. This started early and manifested itself as attempts to modify the worst features of the police or to restore the conservatives to a more equal position in the government. Gisevius and other conservatives unsuccessfully sought to have police power restricted during the 1930's. Only later are the terms 'opposition' and 'resistance' used interchangeably.

The term 'resistance' implies basic ideological differences from Nazism. It includes everything from efforts to sabotage or circumvent Nazi orders to plans for overthrowing the government and making contacts with foreign governments which divulged

¹⁰ Two editions of these records exist. Karl Heinrich Peter, ed., Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung: Die Kaltenbrunner-Berichte an Bormann und Hitler über das Attentat vom 20. Juli 1944. Geheime Dokumente aus dem ehemaligen Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Stuttgart, 1961) and Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung: Die Opposition gegen Hitler und der Staatsreich vom 20. Juli 1944 in der SD-Berichterstattung 2 vols., (Stuttgart, 1984). Hereafter Spiegelbild.

Nazi plans. Gisevius, as a member of the resistance group around Oster, participated in all these activities before and during the war.

'Conspiracy,' 'coup,' and 'putsch', often used interchangeably, imply the attempt to replace the Nazi elite. Closely related to the different concepts of 'opposition' and 'resistance', a *coup* or *putsch* involved only a forced change of power relationships within the existing government or a replacement of the current leadership. Since a totalitarian system outlaws open dissent, any plans for change must occur secretly and must involve conspiracy. Gisevius often referred to the '*fronde*' he and his friends hoped to achieve.

¹¹ At first the goal was to restrain the abuses of the dictatorship, particularly the police. Later the plan was to replace the Nazi leadership. By 1938 Gisevius and his friends encouraged a complete purge of Nazism including an assassination of Hitler. Their insight into the insidious perversions creeping into German society from Nazism led them to demand a thorough purge of Nazism rather than a mere restraint or replacement of the Nazi leaders.

'Military-conservative opposition' refers to the opposition and resistance activities of the civilians and military officers around Beck, Goerdeler, Canaris, General Franz Halder, and Hans Oster in plotting against the Nazis. A part of the group wanted to preserve Germany even at the price of leaving Hitler in power. Gisevius as a part of Oster's 'radical' circle sought the assassination

¹¹ Gisevius, 480.

and overthrow of Hitler. Gisevius remained a member of this group from about 1938 until it collapsed after 20 July 1944.

The 'Hitler myth' refers to the propaganda image of Hitler as responsible for German successes but not responsible for the crimes of his party.¹² Some of the military officers privy to the conspiracy to overthrow Hitler or restrict his power blamed the myth for their failure to act. Gisevius always believed that he could dispel the myth and gain popular support for a *coup* by clearly linking Hitler to the crimes of his party. Gisevius and other resisters lament their difficulties in persuading superiors to act against Nazi crimes. Ian Kershaw and other historians present many examples of the propaganda successes of the Nazis and the importance of the leader's image in the extremist parties of the period. Was Gisevius immune to the myth as he insists? He presents himself as the catalyst for turning others against the regime. The view of some military officers was that they were pure technicians not responsible for politics. Military desires often coincided with those of the regime. The military conspired with the regime to eliminate the SA and to rearm. There was also the association of opposition with treason. Early conservative-Nazi alliances in 1932-33 delayed realization, among conservatives, of what Hitler represented and probably contributed to reluctance to act after the Nazis came to power. There was also a degree of Nazi success in appropriating some conservative *völkisch* or nationality and patriotic ideas which contributed to the myth.

¹² Ian Kershaw, The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich (Oxford, 1987).

These considerations make evaluating the Hitler myth's effects more difficult. Gisevius certainly seems to have thought that the Hitler image was a key to his difficulties.

When considering how strongly activities of one equivocal resistance figure illustrate the conflict between 'traditional values' and totalitarianism one must examine the meaning of 'traditional' and determine when resistance began. Here, 'traditional' refers to belief in a Germany rooted in Christianity and European humanist values, which for some include social responses from Marx to Bernstein. The totalitarian claim on the individual as an extension of the state with no separate existence or allegiance was in direct opposition to the religious feelings of most Germans. The relationship of Gisevius's conservatism and religious values is visible in his memoirs and those of other resisters. Late in the Nazi period, Gisevius stated his determination to preserve those values in the face of totalitarianism. Many historians who address this motivation for resistance, for example Mary Alice Gallin and Hans Rothfels, only briefly mention Gisevius. Nevertheless, for Gisevius and many civil servants like him, preserving values coincided with opposition to *Gleichschaltung*, the 'coordination' or absorbing of the civil service (the 'civil service mentality') by the Nazis and to being maneuvered out of office. Nazi success in manipulating some aspects of traditional values, such as nationalism and patriotism, delayed the conflicts between conservatives and Nazis and prevented opposition *en bloc*. Gisevius claims that he recognized early that Nazism meant the overturning of all previous traditions and was convinced that the

population would join in ridding itself of that regime once the truth about it became apparent. Yet he was perceptive enough to know that in the end only the military could accomplish this goal of preserving all that was decent. With such views, Gisevius may well be a representative case of the durability of tradition in the face of totalitarian perversion.

From all this and by comparing Gisevius's memoirs with other evidence, it follows that this investigation will attempt to deal with several basic questions.

- (1) Did Gisevius's activities arise from a real conflict between traditional and totalitarian values?
- (2) Did his resistance to the totalitarian state demonstrate the moral dilemma of continuing to serve evil at the risk of integrity and reputation?
- (3) Did his unsuccessful efforts to persuade his superiors to act against the regime show the effect of the 'Hitler myth'?
- (4) Did his political activities during the Nazi era and the ensuing postwar historical controversy concerning them demonstrate the political and personal divisions within the resistance?
- (5) Was his role significant and is he unjustly underrated?
- (6) When considering these questions, do parallels between Gisevius and other leading resistance figures become increasingly apparent and would this enhance Gisevius's stature?

The question of whether Gisevius provides another example of one who survived in a totalitarian system by appearing to loyally serve it while secretly working for its overthrow may be another example of the moral dilemma that confronts those who

oppose such a system and whose reputation suffers as a result. Perhaps the literature about Gisevius can show the extent to which individuals assume the regime's guilt. Gisevius is representative of every individual in a totalitarian state who must continually make choices about how far to serve the regime. A heroic gesture of defiance may not only result in physical elimination but in the regime's finding someone else who will faithfully carry out a criminal task out of genuine belief in the system or out of opportunism. Gisevius and others describe the dilemma that eventually confronted all of the resisters about whether to stay 'in' or resign their positions in protest over some action of the regime. The central issue was whether they would be more effective as secret opponents in positions to sabotage or diminish state actions or 'out' as open opponents, easily neutralized and unable to exercise even tenuous influence on events. Historians Hans Rothfels and Mary Alice Gallin discuss the dilemma but only briefly describe that which confronted Gisevius. Secret resisters, such as Gisevius, illustrate the limits of totalitarian power and the ability of opponents to survive undetected for some time. Survivor skills in a totalitarian society included the ability to judge when to be outspoken and when to be silent, how to play off factions and gain patronage. Gisevius may have been more willing to do this than military officers. His very effectiveness may have contributed to his sometimes unfavorable reputation.

The extent to which Gisevius's political activities during the Nazi period and the ensuing historical controversy concerning

them reflect the political and personal divisions occurring within the German opposition may be the most difficult question to examine for much of it is bound up with personality clashes and differences over methods required to remove Nazism. The German resistance experienced acute divisions even though there were extensive cross-connections between resistance groups of very different views. This division continued pre-1933 politics, though in subdued forms. Gisevius's relationships with other resistance figures mirrored political differences from the Weimar period. This is noticeable in his fears about those who came from non-conservative backgrounds or who might be willing to contact the Communist opposition. Early post-war historians frequently assumed that the real reason for conservative opposition to the Nazis was that the Nazis maneuvered them out of office and this may have played a role in their evaluations of Gisevius. The literature provides only enough descriptive narrative and substantive analysis to piece together a story of Gisevius for certain limited periods. Since there is little that deals with Gisevius as the major subject, construction of a narrative is an indispensable first step. This includes a brief description of the power struggles that Gisevius became involved in from the start.

Wise as Serpents **From Intrigue to Resistance 1933-1939**

In August 1933 a new civil servant-assessor in the Prussian state government named Hans Bernd Gisevius reported to a former dance and art school in Berlin in the *Prinz Albrechtstrasse*.¹ Now it was the headquarters for the recently created secret state political police, the *Geheime Staatspolizei*, commonly called the Gestapo. This new organization was the creation of Hermann Göring, recently installed Prussian Interior Minister and confidant of Adolf Hitler, the new Reich Chancellor and the *Führer* of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei* (NSDAP), or Nazi Party.

What kind of person was Gisevius and how did he find himself in the Nazi government? His background and beliefs are important factors in the drama that would unfold over the next twelve years.

The family into which Gisevius was born on 14 June 1904 in Arnsberg had traditionally provided civil servants to the Prussian state government. As a youth, Gisevius witnessed the German defeat in World War I with its ensuing turmoil and the creation of the Weimar Republic, which was only grudgingly accepted by many segments of society. Beset by extremists from the left and right, treated as a pariah by the other European nations, and

¹ The Prussian Interior Ministry assigned Gisevius, who had passed his assessor's examination the month before, to the state political police. An assessor was a high grade civil servant-lawyer in the Prussian State Government.

shackled by the harsh Treaty of Versailles, which imposed humiliating reparations and limited the size of the army, the ineffectual republic struggled from crisis to crisis.

All the political and intellectual pressures from previous years, combined with the economic depression of 1929-33, contributed to the demise of the Weimar regime. While successive governments proved unable to resolve economic or foreign policy issues, unemployment and misery swelled the ranks of the extremist parties determined to destroy the republic. By the time Gisevius was in his late twenties, Adolf Hitler's Nazi movement exploded from a minor fringe party with twelve seats in the legislature, the *Reichstag*, in 1928, into a major party with over 230 seats by the July 1932 elections. Gradually the old line politicians realized that they must deal with the Nazis. Fearing a Communist revolution, and hoping to exclude the leftist parties, conservatives, such as Franz von Papen and Alfred Hugenberg, brought the Nazis into a conservative-nationalist coalition which they hoped to control. President Paul von Hindenburg's advisors, through various backstage intrigues and despite his considerable reluctance, persuaded him as a last resort to appoint Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933. Since there were only three Nazis (Hitler, Wilhelm Frick, and Hermann Göring) in the twelve man cabinet, the conservative coalition thought it had little to fear. ² However, Hitler and his party, far from being

² Franz von Papen, the Vice-Chancellor, was also Reich Commissioner, or head of state for Prussia, the largest state in Germany. He accepted Göring as Minister of Interior for the state of Prussia, a position that gave him control of the largest police force in Germany. Göring was also President of the *Reichstag*. The Defense Minister, Field Marshal Werner

outmaneuvered, soon ruthlessly elbowed aside their conservative allies, although conservatives as such remained entrenched in the bureaucracy. Göring, in his additional capacity as Interior Minister in the state of Prussia, began the process of converting the Prussian police forces into an instrument of Nazi control. First he placed a Berlin Nazi leader, Kurt Dalwege, in charge of the Prussian police force. He also placed Rudolf Diels, an official inherited from the older force, in charge of Berlin Police Bureau 1A, the state political police, which became the Gestapo. In this role, Diels would soon be Gisevius's adversary. In February, Göring deputized the Nazi Party para-military organizations, the *Sturmabteilungen*, or SA, led by Ernst Röhm, and its smaller elite force, the *Schutzstaffeln*, or SS, under Heinrich Himmler, into the existing police forces. Then, proclaiming the mysterious *Reichstag* fire of 27 February a Communist plot to seize the state, Hitler and Göring unleashed the SA and SS on their political rivals. The Nazis used the *Reichstag* fire to frighten the country into supporting emergency powers for the new chancellor with the Enabling Act of 23 March 1933, which suspended political and personal rights. They also moved swiftly against other political parties and began gaining control of every aspect of national life in a process called *Gleichschaltung* or 'coordination.' As the year progressed, the Nazis abolished the other political parties one by one and incorporated their apparatus into that of the Nazi Party or the

von Blomberg and the army commander, General Walter von Reichenau were Nazi sympathizers.

state. By the time Gisevius joined the Government, the Party had become indistinguishable from the state.

Before 1933 Gisevius belonged to the German National People's Party (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) (DNVP). A party of the further right, with monarchist, anti-Semitic, reactionary and chauvinist elements, it demanded protection of the German 'soul' against those forces intent upon destroying Christianity, nationality, and morality. It drew its support from the East Elbian gentry and landowners (Junkers), aristocracy, some industrial leaders, high ranking civil servants, army officers, and Protestants in the middle class.³ In the late 1920's, the party splintered, with Gisevius joining its youthful, anti-monarchist wing as a 'Young Conservative' and supporting Alfred Hugenberg, his party leader, in agitation against the Weimar republic.⁴

Although too young to be a veteran of the First World War, Gisevius became a leader in the conservative para-military organization, the *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmet), originally a group of veterans from the war. Many members of this organization transferred their allegiance to the Nazis by 1933. Though Gisevius claims never to have joined any of the Nazi organizations, there is evidence that he deserted the nationalists.⁵ The new regime

³ Fritz Stern, The Path to Dictatorship 1918-1933 (Garden City, NY, 1966), 204.

⁴ Hugenberg served as Minister for Industry, Food, and Agriculture in Hitler's cabinet from January to June 1933 and presided over the end of his DNVP party as the Nazis absorbed it.

⁵ Gisevius, 192. The evidence that he switched parties is an enrollment declaration published in the Nazi Party paper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, of 11 June 1933, in an article entitled *Deutschnationale Führer befehlen sich*

offered the potential for employment and rapid advancement to many young men of Gisevius' generation who could jettison their former associations and many conservatives clung to the illusion that they could redirect the Nazi revolution to a more traditional direction after allowing them to suppress the leftist parties.

Gisevius reported to Under Secretary Ludwig Grauert, Göring's closest collaborator in the Prussian Interior Ministry, who apparently thought highly of the young man because of his political activities in Düsseldorf in 1929.⁶ Grauert sought to assist Gisevius's career by assigning him to the Gestapo with a personal recommendation. However, the Gestapo chief, Rudolf Diels, opposed his entry because he feared that Gisevius was sent to spy on him and was a threat. After overcoming opposition from Diels,

zum Nationalsozialismus Professor Martin Spahn, Dr. Gisevius und Kampfringführer Flum treten aus der Deutschnationalen Front aus. Freiherr H. v. Gaertringen, "Das Ende der Deutschnationalen Volkspartei im Frühjahr 1933," Gotthard Jasper, ed. Vom Weimar zu Hitler 1930-1933 (Köln, 1968), 259, refers to the exit of leading figures, including Gisevius, from the DNVP. See Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal; Nuremberg 14 November 1945-1 October 1946, Vol. XII, Secretariat of the Tribunal, Nuremberg 1947-1949, (Hereafter IMT, XII), 237, for Gisevius testimony about the end of the party. Gottfried R. Treviranus, Das Ende von Weimar: Heinrich Brüning und Seine Zeit. (Düsseldorf, 1968), 397.

⁶ Gisevius, 38, states that he owed his appointment to the fact that Grauert remembered his 1929 banishment from Düsseldorf because of his political activities. Grauert, a former business manager of the Rhenish-Westphalian Employers' Association, joined with the industrialist and financier, Fritz Thyssen, to divert a half million marks from the Association's strike-breaking fund to the empty coffers of Hitler's NSDAP in 1932. Göring brokered the deal and rewarded Grauert by appointing him as Under-Secretary. This association Gisevius used to further his own career; this probably averted Nazi suspicion of his later activities. Kurt Klotzbach, Gegen den Nationalsozialismus; Widerstand und Verfolgung in Dortmund 1930-1945 (Hannover, 1969), 108, gives a brief account of Gisevius's political agitation in Dortmund in 1931.

Gisevius discerned an attempt to isolate him within the faction ridden organization. Diels assigned him to work with an experienced criminologist and long-time Nazi civil servant, Arthur Nebe, after poisoning the man's attitude toward him.⁷ Rampant factionalism within the Gestapo created such dangerous conditions that Gisevius urgently sought a protector in Nebe and wrote "... I stuck so close to him that he simply could not get rid of me."⁸ Nebe soon began advising the newcomer on the methods required for self preservation in their hazardous surroundings and the two forged an alliance against Diels that brought Gisevius into the midst of brewing Nazi power struggles for police power.

Nebe, who saw Diels as an obstacle to his own advancement, was a leader of an SS faction in the Gestapo, and concocted the bizarre theory that Diels was a secret Communist sent to disrupt the Nazi movement by permitting various illegalities. Gisevius, who had his own reasons for disliking Diels, carefully stoked Nebe's suspicions. Gisevius alleges that he and Nebe sought Diels's removal because of a series of Gestapo crimes, such as suppressing evidence through the murder of a former SA man, Hans Rall, whose testimony linked the Berlin SA leader, Karl Ernst, to the *Reichstag* fire.⁹

⁷ Gisevius, 45; *INT*, XII, 172. George C. Browder, The Foundations of the Nazi Police State (Lexington, 1990), 85, 87, 275; Diels, having opened the Gestapo to SS recruiting, now regretted the rampant factionalism that became prevalent there. He felt that the conservatives sent Gisevius to spy on him.

⁸ Gisevius, 48.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 62, 65, 72; *INT*, XII, 252-253; Gisevius charged Diels with the murder of a habitual criminal and former SA man, Hans Rall, who accused

Gisevius asserts that within days of his first meeting with Nebe, he detected some signs of Nebe's disillusionment with the Nazi regime.¹⁰ In his version of events, the partners acted from idealistic motives to prevent the conversion of the police into a terror apparatus, but it is also likely that they hoped to profit from the Nazi rivalries. While Himmler and Reich Interior Minister, Wilhelm Frick, joined to force police centralization throughout Germany during 1933, Göring resisted the efforts to incorporate Prussian police forces into those of the rest of Germany.¹¹ Meanwhile, tensions grew between Göring and the SA as Göring used Diels to assert his control over Prussian police by breaking up the SA's unofficial concentration camps and bunkers that had formed since March.¹² In alliance with Nebe against Diels, Gisevius participated in the assault on Göring's position in Prussia.

the Berlin SA leader, Karl Ernst, of leading an SA squad that burned the *Reichstag* at Göring's order. In this way, Gisevius says, he and Nebe learned that the Nazi Propaganda Minister, Josef Goebbels, and Göring had plotted to use the fire as a pretext for eliminating the political opposition.

¹⁰ IMT, XII, 169-170. Gisevius testified at Nuremberg that in August 1933 Göring ordered Nebe to murder Gregor Strasser, a Nazi Party rival to Hitler, by staging an accident and that Nebe turned against the Gestapo over the issue of preapproved murder warrants.

¹¹ Höhne, The Order of the Deaths Head (New York, 1969), 103-104; Browder, 76.

¹² Diels, 249-250, 253-262; Göring gave Diels a free hand in rooting out the SA bunkers as SA influence was undermining his authority in Prussia. See Höhne, The Order of the Deaths Head, 97-99. Diels's campaign against SA bunkers was part of an effort to preserve Göring's power in Prussia. He saw Nebe's and Gisevius's activities as attempts to aid the SS in hopes of winning promotions denied them in Göring's Prussian police. See Christoph Graf, Politische Polizei zwischen Demokratie und Diktatur (Berlin, 1983), 114-115.

Gisevius and Nebe undermined Daluege's and Grauert's trust in Diels by accusing him of being a crypto Communist. Daluege persuaded Göring to replace Diels with Daluege's protégé, the Nazi 'old fighter' Paul Hinkler. Diels's sudden dismissal, transfer, panic, and subsequent flight to Czechoslovakia in mid-November was more the result of Nebe's and Daluege's accusations which aroused Göring's mistrust of Diels than to any complaint about Gestapo crimes.¹³

Their 'success' was short-lived. Disappointed with Hinkler and learning that some charges against Diels were fabrications, Göring recalled Diels in late November. To enhance his own power and to insulate Diels from rivals, he removed the Gestapo from the Interior Ministry and placed it under himself as the Minister-President of Prussia.¹⁴ While Nebe's status as an 'old fighter' protected him, Gisevius had much to fear from Diels's expected reprisals and hid in a hotel the night of Diels's return. The next morning, with Nebe's help, he slipped into the Interior Ministry to appeal to ministerial director Kurt Daluege, Diels' superior and nominal chief of the entire police force. While this conference in Daluege's office proceeded, a Gestapo agent arrived to arrest

¹³ Diels, 198. Diels's account of the episode indicates that Gisevius played a minor role. Höhne, 101; IMT, XII, 171; Browder, 88-89, 276; Graf, 140-142.

¹⁴ On 30 November 1933 Göring removed the Gestapo administratively from the Prussian Interior Ministry, over which he presided, to subordinate it directly to himself in his capacity as Prussian Minister-President, a post he had held since replacing von Papen in April. Browder, 89, sees this as an effort to frustrate Frick's plans to centralize the police through the Interior Ministry. It kept the Gestapo out of Frick's conservative hands and strengthened Diels who could move against Gisevius. See Graf, 139.

Gisevius. Daluge allowed him to leave through an emergency exit to Grauert's office on the next lower floor where he refused to leave until Grauert telephoned Göring in his presence. Göring pretended outrage and promised an investigation which never occurred.¹⁵ With the pressure off, Gisevius returned to Gestapo headquarters three days later to a cordial reception from Diels who pretended that recent events had resulted from a 'misunderstanding.' Diels assigned Gisevius as an observer or court reporter to the Reichstag fire trial in Leipzig (already in progress for over a month) ostensibly to learn more about his duties but actually to keep him away from events in Berlin.¹⁶

While Gisevius was on Christmas leave, Diels had him transferred out of the Gestapo to a provincial office in East Prussia and his appeal to Grauert to reverse the decision failed in spite of his argument that the dismissal was also a blow directed at other conservative civil servants.

In January 1934 Grauert transferred Gisevius back to the Prussian Interior Ministry in Berlin and placed him in charge of all the accumulated and misdirected correspondence left as a result of the separation of the Gestapo from the Prussian Interior Ministry in late-November. From the conservative-run Interior Ministry Gisevius continued his campaign against the Gestapo and the SA in spite of Diels's and Göring's protests and Grauert's

¹⁵ Gisevius, 53; INT, XII, 171-172.

¹⁶ INT, XII, 172.

injunctions to refrain from confrontation.¹⁷ Gisevius soon participated in a loose coalition against Diels consisting of SS around Daluege and Nebe and conservatives allied with Frick and Grauert. Together, Nebe and Gisevius furnished Himmler and Heydrich with incriminating evidence against the Gestapo.¹⁸ Their dislike of Diels blinded them to the danger that Himmler and Heydrich would merely increase and streamline police terror. Daluege, an ally against Diels but fearful of Heydrich, warned Nebe and Gisevius that the campaign to unseat Diels could backfire, for "You will end by using Beelzebub to drive out the Devil."¹⁹

¹⁷ Gisevius, 134-5, states

"Grauert after all could forbid me to take any action with regard to the documents that came into my hands, but with the best will in the world he could not prevent my reading all these denunciations, complaints, or petitions before I passed them on to the Gestapo. Nor was there any way for the Gestapists to check up if I left the originals untouched and made a few copies for my own use."

See also INT, XII, 172, and Browder, 121.

¹⁸ Gisevius, 140-141. According to Gisevius, in mid-February he and Nebe received an invitation, in SS Group Leader Reinhard Heydrich's name, to *Lichterfelde*, the barracks of the *Leibstandarte*, or bodyguard brigade of the SS, to report on the excesses of the Gestapo and the SA. Gisevius recalls:

"We could scarcely believe our ears when [Sepp] Dietrich[a high ranking SS leader], ... congratulated us in the names of Reich Leader Himmler and Group Leader Heydrich for so stoutly leading the fight against corruption in the state and the Party. As we all knew, he said, Himmler detested the excesses of the SA. Above all, he could no longer put up with the rampant sins of the Gestapo. Would we please set forth in writing, here in this SS barracks, all our grievances. Naturally everything would be held in strictest confidence. Himmler wanted to use this material as the basis for a personal appeal to Hitler. ... Not only did we record any number of instances of extortion, torture, and killing, but we actually hinted cautiously what we knew about the *Reichstag* fire."

This may be a 'sanitized' version of Gisevius's cooperation with the Himmler-Heydrich wing of the Nazi Party. Kurt Gossweiler, Die Röhm-Affäre: Hintergründe-Zusammenhänge-Auswirkungen (Köln, 1983), 433.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 139; Browder, 122.

Meanwhile, a growing SA threat led to an alliance between Frick, Himmler, and Göring in early 1934. In April Göring bowed out of the contest for police power by giving Himmler control over the Gestapo, by replacing Diels with Heydrich, and by giving Frick the Prussian Interior Ministry.²⁰ In spite of Frick's opposition, Himmler gradually extended his power over the next two years. Gisevius, equally disturbed by this development, supported Frick's efforts to restrict that power by drafting a series of decrees which Frick unsuccessfully tried to impose on the Gestapo and SS. Their joint efforts to restrict Himmler's power drew them together for nearly a year. Since Gisevius earned the enmity of Himmler and Heydrich, Frick assigned him to Daluge's police department for protection.²¹ Through Frick's ministry Gisevius gained entry into other ministries where he encountered some like-minded bureaucrats.

Defense Minister Blomberg's habit of discussing police matters only with Frick provided the opportunity for contacts between subordinate officials of the War Ministry and the Ministry of Interior. Sometime during this period he met the *Reichwehr* (army) officer Major (later General) Hans Oster who worked in the military counterintelligence organization, known as the *Abwehr*, under command of naval Captain Conrad Patzig. Gisevius told Oster about his struggles against Gestapo and SA

²⁰ Browder, 126-127; Peter Padfield, Himmler: Reichsführer-SS (London, 1990), 142.

²¹ Gisevius, 138. IMT, XII, 185; Gisevius testified that Frick arranged for a special telephone link between his home and police headquarters.

crimes and presented enough evidence from his secret files to turn the officer against the regime.²² Oster introduced Gisevius to Patzig sometime between January-April 1934 but his detailed accounts of Gestapo and SA misdeeds failed to convince Patzig that the *Abwehr* should intervene.²³

That spring as a coalition of forces aligned itself against Röhm and the SA the country was rife with rumors of a planned SA *putsch*. Gisevius is vague about his activities but gives the impression of being involved in a conspiracy to thwart whatever action Himmler and Göring planned. As tensions mounted throughout June 1934, Gisevius quietly cultivated his sources within the civil service, Grauert, Dalwege, Frick, and Nebe, to provide information to his new friend Oster. He claims that a few days before 30 June 1934 as Hitler prepared to address an SA conference at Wiessee, he and Oster rowed out into the middle of Lake Schlachten to "exchange opinions and a few documents."²⁴ When Gisevius learned of rumors that Victor Lutze, another SA

²² Heinz Höhne, *Canaris* (New York, 1979), 261. Gisevius, 142-3, provides no details concerning his first meeting with Oster except that it occurred during his 'troubles with Diels.' The most likely period would have been during his time in the Interior Ministry from December 1933 and before Diels's dismissal from the Gestapo in late-March 1934. Oster became one of Gisevius's few confidants. Gisevius and his friends placed extraordinary trust in the *Abwehr*'s powers, since it could legally operate secretly and as a military organization, it was relatively free from Gestapo interference. *IMT*, XII, 170. Rudolf Lill and Heinrich Oberreuter, eds., *20 Juli: Portraits des Widerstands* (Düsseldorf, 1984), 228.

²³ Höhne, *Canaris*, 261, citing Recollections of Admiral (Ret.) Conrad Patzig, Recorded 18-19 June 1966 *Militärgeschichtliche Forschungsanstalt*, 3.

²⁴ Gisevius, 145.

leader, would replace Röhm as head of the SA and told both under-secretary Grauert and Daluege, they refused to believe him and accused him of rumor mongering. Trying to dispel rumors of an SA *putsch*, the Berlin SA leader, Karl Ernst, called Daluege to assure him that no such plans existed and Daluege asked Gisevius to inform Frick.²⁵

Gisevius's dramatic account of the events of 30 June 1934, though told elsewhere in brief sketches and in other contexts, bears retelling from Gisevius's perspective to reconstruct his activities. On the evening of 29 June when the national police alert was allowed to stand and Nebe failed to make his promised telephone call to inform him of police activity, Gisevius realized that something was afoot. Gisevius went to work early on 30 June hoping to meet Nebe to find out what had detained him. He suspected that Nebe had stayed at Göring's residence or had been sent to a special meeting. Upon arriving at the Interior Ministry, Daluege asked to see him and then inquired if he had any information about what was happening - an astonishing request from the chief of the Prussian police and head of the police division of the federal Ministry of the Interior. Daluege, the Nazi 'old fighter' was upset with Göring for taking action over his head until Göring ordered him to report to his villa and there informed him of a planned SA revolt which Hitler ordered Göring to put down. When Daluege returned, he and Grauert went to see Frick with Gisevius in tow. Both of these 'regular' police bureaucrats

²⁵ Ibid., 146; IMT, XII, 174.

found that their power had been transferred to Göring for the duration of the 'emergency.' After Gisevius learned that former Chancellor, General Kurt von Schleicher and his wife had been murdered, and received inquiries from the Potsdam magistrate about the disposition of the bodies with information that the Gestapo had forbidden any investigation, he knew that pre-planned killings had begun. ²⁶ Gisevius suggested to Daluege that a visit to Göring's home could clarify what was happening. There, he met Nebe who had been Göring's bodyguard and who informed him of Vice-Chancellor von Papen's house arrest and the murder of his assistant, Herbert von Bose. Nebe also knew of other purge victims including Röhm and his staff. Gisevius, Daluege, and Nebe could see Göring, Himmler and Heydrich conferring over lists of purge victims in another room of the house. At one point, Göring seemed enraged that Paul Schulz, a close associate of Gregor Strasser, a one-time Hitler rival in the Nazi Party, had escaped. Although he was a stranger to Schulz, Gisevius had warned him just two weeks before. ²⁷ Later, Gisevius and Daluege attended a press conference at the Propaganda Ministry where Göring justified the day's events as a cleansing of the SA. They were also on hand at Tempelhof Airport to await Hitler's return from Munich. There, Nebe informed them of Gregor Strasser's 'suicide.'

²⁶ Ibid., 149; IMT, XII, 174. Gisevius admitted, IMT, XII, 254, that he could not state under oath that Göring ordered Schleicher's murder. Gossweiler, 15, mentions the importance of Gisevius's testimony in linking Himmler and Göring with the murders and with the military leaders who wanted the SA eliminated.

²⁷ Ibid., 153. Gisevius saw Schulz again ten years later in Swiss exile.

While waiting, they witnessed Karl Ernst's arrival, under guard, from Bremen. Unaware of the fate that awaited him, Ernst was in good humor as the SS whisked him off to *Lichterfelde*. Finally Hitler's plane arrived from Munich and Gisevius describes the reception.

" ... Göring, Himmler, Frick, Daluge, and some twenty police officers went up to the plane. ... On the way to the fleet of cars, which stood several hundred yards away, Hitler stopped to converse with Göring and Himmler. ... He listened attentively as the two made their report ... From one of his pockets, Himmler took a long, tattered list. Hitler read it through, while Göring and Himmler whispered incessantly into his ear. ... " 28

Gisevius observed that the cold blooded way in which Hitler, Göring, and Himmler discussed the killings of Party comrades further disillusioned "the former Nazi" Nebe who, he records, "was on the verge of tears." 29 Late that evening Gisevius met Oster to exchange information but found

" ... to my astonishment that the officials of the war ministry had no idea of the extent of the executions. Oster did not know what his chiefs intended to do about the murder of General Schleicher and his innocent wife. But he suspected that Blomberg and Reichenau were so happy to be rid of Röhm that they were willing to pay a certain price for their relief." 30

An angry Oster became a fanatical opponent of the regime and was contemptuous of compromisers among his fellow officers. Feeling insecure after observing the events of the day, Gisevius

28 Ibid., 160-161.

29 Ibid., 161.

30 Ibid., 162. The 30 June 1934 murder of Major-General Ferdinand von Bredow who commanded the *Abwehr* before 1932 alienated Oster and Patzig from the regime and contributed to the ensuing tensions between the *Abwehr* and the Gestapo which Oster and Gisevius exacerbated. Browder, 176; Gossweiler, 458.

and Daluege prudently decided to stay in the Interior Ministry overnight.

The next day, 1 July 1934, Gisevius discussed the murders with Frick, who was especially agitated over Strasser's murder and to his loss of power to allies who maneuvered behind his back. Both of them considered that Göring and Himmler had staged the 'SA *Putsch*' to eliminate rivals. Frick's shock led to sharp attacks on Himmler's power and a Göring-Himmler front which lowered Frick's stock in Hitler's eyes. Gisevius encouraged Frick's aggressiveness as the bureaucracy aroused itself after 30 June.

Gisevius accompanied Daluege to a Chancellery reception on 1 July where Daluege hoped to meet Himmler. Gisevius waited outside in the inner court and tried to remain inconspicuous as the killings continued throughout Germany.

Gisevius asserts that as he settled into his office the following Monday morning, the official in charge of the police radio system presented him with a misdirected message from Göring and the chief of the Gestapo ordering all documents concerning the 'action' of the previous two days to be burned. He hastily took the sheaf of documents from the official and promised to burn them. Instead, he locked them in his office safe.³¹

In the aftermath of the 30 June purge, Gisevius encountered indifference and learned more details of military collaboration with the Nazis. Gisevius views the army's compromises with Nazi

³¹ Ibid., 171; *IMT*, XII, 173; Höhne, *Mordsache Röhm* (Hamburg, 1984), 23, disputes Gisevius's account of how he obtained the messages.

power as the source of its eventual downfall. He tried to enlist the military to aid his and Frick's campaign to limit Gestapo power after 30 June by placing incriminating material into the generals' hands through Oster. ³² Gisevius writes

"When the collision occurred, they began to fear their own courage. Blomberg was naive, Reichenau was crafty, and both conceived themselves as miniature Machiavellis. A year afterward Reichenau, with folded arms and a significant raising of the eyebrows, told me confidentially that it had really not been a simple matter to 'work' things out on 30 June so that the affair presented the surface appearance of a 'pure Party matter.'" ³³

Whether or not this conversation occurred, other evidence supports the charge that the army leadership colluded with the Göring-Himmler Party faction to eliminate the Röhm-Strasser wing of the Nazi Party. ³⁴ An effort to get the military to deal solely with Frick in police matters backfired when Himmler persuaded the army chiefs to ignore Frick and deal directly with him. ³⁵

Of course Gisevius's continued campaign against the Gestapo from his positions in the Prussian Interior Ministry under Grauert and the Reich Interior Ministry under Frick had only limited

³² IMT, XII, 180-181. Browder, 173.

³³ Gisevius, 173, says he had visited Reichenau to warn him of the increasing danger that Himmler and his Gestapo represented. IMT, XII, 180-181.

³⁴ See Telford Taylor, Sword and Swastika: Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich (New York, 1952), Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918-1945 (London, 1964), and Kurt Gossweiler, Die Röhm-Affäre: Hintergründe-Zusammenhänge-Auswirkungen (Köln, 1983).

³⁵ Gisevius, 186. Browder, 176.

success because of his superior's designs. Daluege simply hoped to replace Himmler and Frick approved Gestapo actions provided they were codified into law.³⁶ Thus, Gisevius sought allies in Constantin von Neurath's Foreign Ministry, in Franz Gürtner's Justice Ministry, and in Hjalmar Schacht's Ministry of Economics. In each case nothing could be done, since all of them awaited some kind of military action.

However, efforts to restrict Himmler were blocked by Blomberg's refusal to 'politicize' the army or involve it in domestic affairs, as well as by a desire in the Party and the military to reduce tensions. Bureaucratic and ideological competition between the SS Security Service, the *Sicherheitsdienst*, or SD, and the *Abwehr* created tensions only partly dampened by Himmler's and Blomberg's efforts to get along. Blomberg learned of unauthorized *Abwehr* over-flights of French and Polish territory and dismissed Patzig, whom the Nazis distrusted, and replaced him with naval Captain (later Admiral) Wilhelm Canaris, who was thought to be more favorably disposed to the regime.³⁷

Gisevius visited the new *Abwehr* chief to try to steer Canaris away from cooperating with Himmler and encourage him to work with Frick concerning police matters; he also told Canaris about Gestapo crimes. Unfortunately, one of the officers present, Major Rudolf Bamler, informed Heydrich. Gisevius says Heydrich called

³⁶ Ibid., 185; Browder, 151-152.

³⁷ Höhne, *Canaris*, 163-165. Browder, 177. Patzig nominated Canaris as his successor before transferring to a ship's command on 31 December 1934 and Canaris became the new *Abwehr* chief on 1 January 1935.

him the next day and accused him of trying to succeed him.³⁸ For self-protection, Gisevius at once informed Frick and Daluege of the conversation.

Meanwhile, soon after Hjalmar Schacht became Hitler's Economics Minister in the Fall of 1934, Gisevius met him through Schacht's assistant, Herbert Göring, Hermann Göring's anti-Nazi cousin. Schacht needed an expert to remove Gestapo-installed microphones from his home.³⁹ Gisevius credits Schacht with introducing him to other opposition figures such as the former mayor of Leipzig, Carl Goerdeler, in 1936⁴⁰ and General Georg Thomas, the army's economics expert. Subsequently, Schacht employed Gisevius as an intermediary through Oster in efforts to recruit the military leadership into opposition against 'extremism,' the arbitrary actions of the police.⁴¹

³⁸ Gisevius, 191-192, states
" ... I was amazed when Heydrich ironically declared that he had observed with the greatest interest my 'expedition to the war ministry.' ... I replied composedly that it was a pity that he had not been present, since reports of such conversations were liable to be grave distortions of what was actually said. ... 'I know perfectly well what you're up to and what you're aiming at,' he said. 'You want to be my successor.' 'But my dear Herr Group Leader, you overestimate me. You know quite well that I am not even a member of the Party or the SS.'"
IMT, XII, 186; Browder, 180.

³⁹ Gisevius, 194-195; IMT, XII, 187.

⁴⁰ IMT, XII, 202, 247; Gisevius testified that Schacht introduced him to Goerdeler in 1936. Gerhard Ritter, The German Resistance (New York, 1968), 83, states that Gisevius met Goerdeler during the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis in January-February 1938. Wilhelm Ritter von Schramm, Beck und Goerdeler: Gemeinschaftsdokumente für den Frieden, 1941-1944 (München, 1965), 28; Michael Balfour, Withstanding Hitler in Germany 1933-1945 (London, 1988), 168.

⁴¹ IMT, XII, 192-193.

In his own battle with 'extremist' Nazis, Gisevius renewed his efforts to restrict the Gestapo's power to arrest without legal restraints by drafting a new law that decreed the right of prisoners in 'protective custody' to submit complaints to the courts and which placed local Gestapo branches under district governors. ⁴² In March and April 1935 Frick, through Gisevius, made his last efforts to restrict Himmler's power. The case of a lawyer arrested for trying to prove the murder of his client's husband, Dr. Erich Klausener, a leader of Catholic Action, at SS and Gestapo hands on 30 June 1934 brought matters between Frick and Himmler to a head. Gisevius drafted a report from Frick to Hitler about the affair which concluded that more stringent controls over arrests were necessary, but Hitler refused to support the proposal. Frick turned to Göring, hoping to obtain for Prussia a model decree, based on the report's conclusions. Göring referred the proposal to Prussia's Ministerial Council and withdrew from the ensuing Frick-Himmler confrontation. Himmler gained enough Party support to rebuke Frick and demand Gisevius's ouster from the Reich Interior Ministry as the instigator of the troublesome proposal. Frick, after complaining of the troubles Gisevius caused, dismissed him in May 1935. ⁴³

Thereupon, Nebe arranged with the Berlin chief of police, Admiral von Lovetzow, to transfer Gisevius to the Prussian Criminal Office - a part of the Berlin police department. Just after

⁴² IMT, XII, 181, 289; Browder, 194.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 181-184, 192-196; IMT, XII, 181; Browder, 193-194.

the transfer was completed, Count Wolf-Heinrich von Helldorf, a veteran National Socialist and SA *Obergruppenführer* [General] replaced von Levetzow. The Berlin *Gauleitung* (Nazi Party leadership) then pressed Helldorf to dismiss Gisevius, but Daluege interceded on his behalf. Helldorf agreed, partly out of antipathy for Himmler's and Heydrich's SS, to keep Gisevius in Berlin as a temporarily detached member of the Interior Ministry who had an office in the police department with the task of planning a future federal criminal office. ⁴⁴ The Interior Ministry disowned him by insisting that Helldorf was his superior while Helldorf considered him an official of the Interior Ministry. Helldorf apparently wanted him to be chief of an independent squad of the Berlin police for security of the Olympic games, but Heydrich blocked the appointment. ⁴⁵

On the same day that Himmler became chief of all police forces in Germany, 17 June 1936, Gisevius received a notice from the Interior Ministry dismissing him from the police department. After some delay, probably due to bureaucratic struggle, the ministry transferred him to Münster in Westphalia to the regional price control office. ⁴⁶

While assigned to the Münster office, Gisevius contacted other anti-Nazi civil servants. Among these was the former chairman of the Westphalian chamber of agriculture and

⁴⁴ Ibid., 197; Browder, 194.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 198; *INT*, XII, 189.

⁴⁶ *INT*, VII, 190.

Administrative President of Westphalia, Ferdinand Freiherr von Lüninck and Carl Christian Schmid, governor of the district. With their help, in February 1937 Gisevius arranged a meeting between Schacht and the area military commander, General Günther von Kluge, for 1 February at a small hotel near the town of Hamm. However, Schacht never arrived due to a series of mishaps.⁴⁷ In Berlin, all the military officers except the Chief of Staff, General Ludwig Beck, refused Schacht's overtures as too compromising and formed a barrier around the Commander-in-Chief of the army, General Werner von Fritsch.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Kluge appeared and Gisevius regaled him with stories of his Gestapo past and his observation of abuses, which, he noted, Kluge doubted.⁴⁹

Soon after, Schacht used his influence to get Gisevius returned to Berlin. Finding all government offices in Berlin closed to Gisevius, Schacht prevailed upon a Bremen businessman, Franz Stapelfeld, to 'employ' Gisevius as his Berlin representative. The Interior Ministry granted Gisevius a one year leave for 'economic

⁴⁷ Gisevius, 199; Wheeler-Bennett, 390; INT, XII, 190. Gisevius testified that

"One of the reasons why I went to Münster was that the president of the province, Freiherr von Luening [sic], was a man of the old school - clean, correct, a professional civil servant, and politically a man who upheld law and order. ...

⁴⁸ Ibid., 205; INT, XII, 194. Gisevius stated, INT, XII, 191, that he, Oster, and Schacht sought to win over the War Minister, Blomberg, to the side of the 'middle class' ministers.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 208; INT, XII, 194.

studies.’⁵⁰ Later, in early January 1939, the government finally transferred Gisevius to Berlin.⁵¹

Meanwhile, in January 1938 Schacht asked Gisevius to visit Count Helldorf’s police headquarters on the *Alexanderplatz* to learn the truth about rumors concerning Blomberg’s recent marriage to Erna Grün, a lady with a dubious past. While there he also saw Nebe who supplied him with information that Erna Grün had a police record as a prostitute. Suspecting a plot against Blomberg, Gisevius notified Oster and Canaris.⁵² The Admiral had been noticeably cool toward Gisevius for over a year, but this time was eager to see him as he gave Canaris a detailed account of Erna Grün’s file.⁵³ When Canaris informed Gisevius that “There’s supposed to be something wrong with Fritsch too,” Oster and Gisevius decided to launch their own investigation of what became known as the Blomberg and Fritsch Affair.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 210; Gisevius, *IMT*, XII, 194-195, testified that in mid-1937 Schacht, with help from Oster and Canaris, began efforts to get him back to Berlin from Münster. Canaris was less eager than Gisevius says. See below, note 53.

⁵¹ Ibid., 456. Gisevius is probably referring to this when he writes: “In the Autumn of 1938, my furlough to private industry was rescinded. After considerable trouble I succeeded in obtaining a transfer to the Potsdam administration ... within reach of my friends in Berlin.”

⁵² Ibid., 233; *IMT*, XII, 196-197.

⁵³ Heinz Höhne, *Canaris* (New York, 1979), 263, notes how Canaris distrusted Gisevius. “He could not endure Gisevius, the very sight of whom made him fidget.” Gisevius, 234, comments on the episode that “This [the Admiral’s eagerness to see him] was quite remarkable in itself; for at least a year the Admiral had consistently avoided meeting me.” Gisevius asserts that his open attacks on Nazism and his early stint in the Gestapo convinced everyone that he was an agent provocateur sent to ferret out anti-Nazis.

Hitler and Göring pretended to be outraged that the Defense Minister had married a former prostitute, but circumstances surrounding Blomberg's marriage suggested that they were not all that ignorant about Erna Grün's past. Blomberg had received permission to marry his 'lady with a past' and obtained Göring's help in putting a rival to flight in the months before the wedding.

⁵⁴ Oster and Gisevius wanted to determine if the Nazis were trying to remove the Field Marshal, who refused to support Hitler's plans to wage aggressive war that could lead to Germany's ruin. ⁵⁵ Gisevius asserts that the small circle consisting of Schacht, Goerdeler, Nebe, Helldorf, and himself among the civilians and Beck, Canaris and Oster among the military had seen for years that the SS would attempt some kind of action to undermine or discredit the military leadership. They also knew that any successful Nazi action against the existing leaders would eventually lead to war. ⁵⁶

Oster arranged for Gisevius to interview one of Blomberg's aides to discover how the general met Erna Grün. The result was inconclusive but pointed to Göring's involvement. There was the possibility that Göring was attempting to ensnare Blomberg, because of the haste in which the marriage occurred and the

⁵⁴ Gisevius, 245; INT, XII, 197, 199.

⁵⁵ Hitler's 5 November 1937 meeting, which Blomberg attended, outlined expansionist schemes which the officers greeted without enthusiasm. The regime then began efforts to remove those who would not support aggressive war. INT, XII, 198.

⁵⁶ Gisevius, 238-239.

waiving of the normal requirements for a political and racial background check.⁵⁷ Eventually the army leadership pressured Hitler to request Blomberg's resignation.

The Fritsch case stemmed from the testimony of a habitual criminal in police custody, Otto Schmidt, who claimed to have blackmailed many homosexuals. Among those was a 'General Fritsch' whom he allegedly observed in a homosexual act near the Wannsee train station in Berlin in November 1933. 'Fritsch' had accompanied Schmidt to Berlin-*Lichterfelde* and entered his flat, 21 *Ferdinandstrasse*, to get money to pay the blackmailer. An earlier secret investigation of the charges failed to convince Hitler of their veracity but when the Blomberg scandal began in January 1938, Göring expressed interest in the old Fritsch dossier, which Heydrich duly provided.

Hitler confronted Fritsch with Schmidt and requested Fritsch's resignation on 24 January. Fritsch, who proved to be naive and inept in his attempts to clear himself, apparently believed that Hitler and Göring were victims of misinformation and could not conceive of a cynical plot on their part to remove

⁵⁷ Ibid., 237; Walter Görlitz, ed. The Memoirs of Field Marshal Keitel (New York, 1966), 46, 51. Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel wrote in 1945 before his execution in Nuremberg that

"Göring was telling me that he had known of Blomberg's wedding plans for some time in advance; the lady had wanted to marry some other man, but at Blomberg's request he had been able to persuade the man in question to turn her down by bribing him with a well-paid job abroad; the whole thing had gone off perfectly and the rival was already overseas. In the meantime, Göring had ascertained all the details of the lady's earlier character and he told me everything, but I intend to keep these details to myself even now, even though Mr. Gisevius wagged his tongue about them in the witness box at Nuremberg; no doubt Count von Helldorff was his oracle. "

him. Gisevius claims that his friends had previously warned Fritsch that the Nazis were plotting some trap for him.⁵⁸

Nebe informed Gisevius that the Gestapo knew that the Fritsch case resulted from confused identities and Gisevius contacted Oster who notified Canaris who in turn told Chief of the General Staff, Colonel-General Ludwig Beck, and General Wilhelm Keitel.⁵⁹ At the War Ministry, to protect his friends' police sources while they gained time to conduct their own investigation, Gisevius dictated a memorandum addressing the common occurrence of confused identities and emphasizing the obligation of the police to conduct a careful investigation of charges of homosexuality. Canaris passed Gisevius's memorandum to some of the generals in Berlin. This memorandum was Gisevius's contribution to the stiffening of the military leadership's determination to try Fritsch in a military tribunal instead of having him resign as Hitler wished him to do. In working to clear Fritsch, Gisevius met the lawyers Karl Sack and Dr. Gürtner's personal advisor, Johannes (Hans) von Dohnanyi; it was Dohnanyi's legal report on the Fritsch case that left Hitler no choice but to agree to convening a court martial to try Fritsch.⁶⁰ However,

⁵⁸ Gisevius, 248, says that Nebe had notified him that Gestapo agents spied on Fritsch when he went to Cairo in December 1937.

⁵⁹ IMT, XII, 201-202; Höhne, Canaris, 267-268, 270; Höhne, The Order of the Deaths Head, 280-282, Nebe told Gisevius on 30 January 1938 of the case of mistaken identification and Gisevius then told Oster on 31 January Wheeler-Bennett, 374-377.

⁶⁰ Höhne, Canaris, 266; IMT, XII, 200-201; Hermann Bösch, Heeresrichter Dr. Karl Sack im Widerstand (München, 1967), 19-54, gives an account of Sack's role in the affair.

Hitler could not wait for the trial: on 4 February he declared Blomberg's resignation as War Minister, and that General Walter von Brauchitsch would replace von Fritsch as Commander-in-Chief of the army due to the latter's 'ill health.' Hitler also announced cabinet changes and a government shake-up that replaced scores of military and civilian officials. When the Nazi 'old fighter,' Walter Funk, replaced Schacht at the Ministry of Economics, Gisevius commented: "What cynicism to dismiss Fritsch for homosexual misdemeanors that were entirely unproved on the same day that he appointed a notorious homosexual, Funk, to the office of a cabinet minister!"⁶¹ Gisevius soon met one of the dismissed civilians, the diplomat Ulrich von Hassell, who joined the opposition during the middle of the Fritsch affair and who would play an important role in future resistance activities.

Hitler desired the Gestapo to lead the investigation into the allegations against Fritsch, but the *Abwehr*, with support from the military judiciary, launched its own investigation. The independent investigators soon established that the Gestapo knew the charges against Fritsch were false when they found an invalid former Captain Achim von Frisch whose bank statements, which the Gestapo confiscated, showed withdrawals corresponding to Schmidt's story. While Oster and Gisevius were already considering using the military to overthrow the regime and

⁶¹ Gisevius, 242; Bösch, 45, 46, 48; Schramm, 28. See Hjalmar Schacht, My First Seventy-Six Years: The Autobiography of Hjalmar Schacht (London, 1955), 392, 395. Thanks to Göring's influence, Hitler replaced Schacht as Economics Minister in Nov. 1937 and appointed Funk as his successor in Feb. 1938. Schacht remained President of the Reichsbank until Jan. 1939.

employing the military legal machinery against the Gestapo and SS, Canaris still accepted Hitler's regime; he only wanted to expose the smear against Fritsch and bring the Gestapo under tighter control.⁶² Gisevius discovered just how little the rest of the army knew about the affair when "Goerdeler and I tried some of the commanding generals in the provinces, but we found to our dismay that they had not even heard of the events in Berlin."⁶³ Gisevius and his friends soon realized that the information they received from Nebe and Helldorf would not be used by the army leadership to restrict the Gestapo and SS, but Göring and Himmler failed in their effort to obstruct the convening of the military tribunal. The court, although interrupted by the occupation of Austria in March 1938, cleared Fritsch, but the Nazis gained greater control over the military as Hitler was now also War Minister and the characterless Field Marshal Walther von Brauchitsch was army Commander in Chief. Hitler appointed Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel as Chief of the newly created Overall Armed Forces Command, *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW).

During the June 1938 commander's conference at Jüterbog, Hitler barely mentioned Fritsch's acquittal but expounded on his plans for aggression against Czechoslovakia to the dismay of his

⁶² Höhne, *Canaris*, 276. Canaris's reference to Oster and Gisevius as 'perpetual rebels' shows the divergent opinions within their circle. Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Armee und Drittes Reich 1933-1939* (Paderborn, 1987), 94.

⁶³ Gisevius, 239; *IMT*, XII, 203; Ritter, 83; Klaus-Jürgen Müller, "The Structure and Nature of the National-Conservative Opposition in Germany up to 1940." H. W. Koch, ed., *Aspects of the Third Reich* (London, 1985), 155.

listeners. One of them, Chief of the General Staff Ludwig Beck, in a strongly worded memorandum, at once pressed Brauchitsch to oppose this fresh aggression. When Brauchitsch and Hitler ignored him, he resigned and soon sought to lead a general defection of military and civilian officials from Hitler's regime.⁶⁴ On the civilian side, he thought that if Schacht and others joined him the Nazis would be isolated and exposed. Gisevius and Oster arranged for conversations between Beck and Schacht to hammer out the 'problem' of resignations. In doing so, the issue of service to the regime became an important and divisive topic of discussion. Gisevius wanted Schacht, who was already a mere figurehead, and who had been superseded by Göring in the Ministry of Economics, to resign from his position as President of the Reichsbank and Beck to stay. He also knew the civilians looked to the military for leadership in opposition. Oster wanted Schacht to stay because of his perceived influence on the military and he wanted Beck to resign because it would alarm the generals.⁶⁵ Beck assured his friends that his successor, Franz Halder, would be able to plan any necessary military counter action and Goerdeler backed him. Beck diluted the potential effect of his resignation by agreeing to keep

⁶⁴ IMT, XII, 207-208.

⁶⁵ IMT, XII, 209; Gisevius, 281-282, says:
"This was essentially the same old problem of whether or not to 'stay in,' a problem which occupied us throughout the years of Nazism. Once we had discovered somewhere a trustworthy and courageous man and had cautiously established relations with him, it was discouraging to see him step out of the picture, no matter how admirable were the reasons for his resignation. Every key position that was left open was immediately occupied by an adherent of the Nazi system. How could we ever hope to bring about a change in regime if every important position was voluntarily abandoned to the Nazis?"

it secret while the Sudeten crisis continued, a mistake Gisevius says he later acknowledged. ⁶⁶

Oster soon briefed Halder about the Fritsch case while, at Oster's request, Gisevius arranged a meeting between Schacht and Halder. At this meeting in late July 1938, Halder asked if Schacht would assume some role in a government that replaced Hitler. When Halder asked about police matters, Schacht and Oster recommended Gisevius as a police expert. ⁶⁷ Gisevius immediately tried to win Halder over to his idea of using the military to seize Gestapo and SS headquarters. ⁶⁸ He believed the Gestapo and SS were more vulnerable and less omnipotent than they appeared to be partly because the old line civil servants still in government had little love for the Nazis. ⁶⁹ Action against the Gestapo-SS would, 'without moving against Hitler,' seize the instruments of power from Nazi grasp.

Schacht decided to meet Halder again to prod him into action, since the general wanted to wait for a definite order for war, proof to the public that Hitler was pursuing a reckless policy, before acting. The pro-Hitler attitude of the population and of the

⁶⁶ IMT, XII, 209, 211; K. J. Müller, "Structure and Nature of National-Conservative Opposition" Aspects of the Third Reich, 150-152.

⁶⁷ IMT, XII, 211-212; Gisevius, 287; Ritter, 103, establishes that Halder distrusted Gisevius from the moment he appeared.

⁶⁸ IMT, XII, 212; Ritter, 102; Höhne, Canaris, 305, citing Halder communication of 14 July 1955, states that Halder rejected the idea of any further meetings with Gisevius but agreed to let him work in Witzleben's headquarters to plan coordination of military and police action during a possible *coup*.

⁶⁹ Gisevius, 289.

junior officers induced Halder to believe that only a foreign policy setback would permit the army to overthrow Hitler. He wanted to wait for Hitler to commit some blunder that would cost him popular support and make him vulnerable to a *coup*.⁷⁰ Gisevius and Schacht opposed this course of action because it meant that Germany would drift into a potentially disastrous war.

They also disagreed over Göring's role. Gisevius could not understand Halder's belief that he could seek some sort of accommodation with Göring. Furthermore, Halder wanted 'proofs' of Gestapo and SS crimes before acting, a demand that irritated Gisevius who believed they could get all the evidence needed after a successful revolt.

Disappointed with Halder, Gisevius and Schacht urged Oster to put them in contact with the commander of the Berlin district, General Erwin von Witzleben, whom Oster had worked for before. Oster gave the general his first detailed account of the Fritsch affair and then introduced him to Gisevius who discussed police matters with him and arranged for him to meet Schacht.⁷¹ Witzleben and the commander of his Potsdam division, General von Brockdorff, visited Schacht's home outside Berlin, which became a meeting place for a conspiracy to overthrow Hitler. Witzleben affirmed his willingness to act even without Halder or

⁷⁰ IMT, XII, 213. Gisevius claims that, during this period, Halder suggested that Hitler be assassinated the day after outbreak of war in an 'accident.' Wheeler-Bennett, 420.

⁷¹ Gisevius, 304; IMT, XII, 214; Hohne, Canaris, 306; Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 248.

orders from above and planning began. Witzleben provided a secure office in his headquarters for Gisevius to plan police measures needed for a *coup*.⁷² To deal with Hitler's image as peacemaker, the plotters would claim that Göring and Himmler were trying to force Hitler into war and the army revolt would appear to be an effort to protect the supreme commander against an SS plot.

As tensions built up during the Sudeten Crisis, Gisevius knew of the conservative opposition's warnings to the British about Hitler's determination, embodied in an operational plan, code-named *Fall Grün* (Case Green), to seize all of Czechoslovakia, .⁷³ However, Gisevius' role seems to have been confined to police matters and he now recruited Count Helldorf into the opposition

⁷² Ibid., 306, 317; Ritter, 102-103; Lill and Oberreuter, 356; Detlef Graf von Schwerin, Dann sind's die besten Köpfe die Man Henkt: Die junge Generation in deutschen Widerstand (München, 1991), 159; INT, XII, 214, 215; Gisevius testified:

"He issued me false papers and gave me a position at his district headquarters so that there, under his personal protection, I could make all the necessary police preparations. He delegated General von Brockdorff, and he and I visited all the points in Berlin which Brockdorff was to occupy with his Potsdam division. ... was at the wheel and traveling ostensibly as tourists we settled exactly what had to be done. ... We [Brockdorff, Gisevius, Oster, Schacht, and Witzleben] met in the evening in the residence of von Witzleben and I showed everything that I had worked out in writing that day."

Only Gisevius, Schacht, and the driver survived the war. As seen above in note 68 Halder appears to have approved this arrangement. Gisevius may have exaggerated the independence of Witzleben's initiative to enhance his own importance and because of his and Halder's mutual hostility. Klemens von Klemperer, Germans Against Hitler: The Search for Allies Abroad 1938-1945 (Oxford, 1992), 105; Eberhard Zeller, The Flame of Freedom (Coral Gables, 1967), 29.

⁷³ INT, XII, 218.

"after years of feeling out." ⁷⁴ Helldorf's recruitment into the conspiracy was easier because of his disillusionment not only over the murders of 30 June 1934 but over the Blomberg-Fritsch affair. Gisevius saw that Helldorf's participation would lend credibility to the claim that a Himmler led SS *Putsch* was imminent. On 28 September, according to Gisevius, Oster obtained the text of an exchange of letters between Chamberlain and Hitler on the 26th and 27th that seemed to indicate that Hitler wanted war. ⁷⁵ Oster passed them on to Witzleben who carried them to Halder; both believed they now had the proof they needed to move against Hitler. Even Brauchitsch seemed ready for revolt. A mixed party of soldiers, workers, and civil servants under Witzleben's control prepared to storm the Chancellery at a signal from Halder. ⁷⁶ While Brauchitsch went to the Chancellery to confront Hitler, all of these preparations for a *putsch* ended on 28 September 1938 with

⁷⁴ Gisevius, 319. In November 1939 Gisevius felt obliged to defend his recruitment to Hassell. Hassell Diaries, 87. Telford Taylor, Munich: The Price of Peace (New York, 1979), 718. Hereafter Munich.

⁷⁵ Gisevius, 325, asserts that Hitler sent an 'insulting' reply to Chamberlain which led the conspirators to believe that war was near. However, no evidence of this has come to light. See Taylor's Munich, which gives a full account of the crisis and shows (p. 895) that Hitler's reply was not belligerent. Wheeler-Bennett, 421-422.

⁷⁶ Gisevius, 295, is highly critical of Halder's 'hesitation' to launch a *coup*. He asserts that Halder commanded troops and had access to Hitler. Gisevius, 288-289, comments on Halder's intense hatred for Hitler and, 295, on his thoughts on a method of assassination that would prevent the army from being accused of treason. Ritter, 110; INT, XII, 219; Wheeler-Bennett, 420-422; Taylor, Munich 866-867, considers Gisevius wrong in his criticisms of Halder, who as a staff officer had no troops to command and who never had regular access to Hitler. He also regards the evidence to indicate that *coup* planning was inadequate. Müller, Armee und Drittes Reich, 115; Balfour, 86.

Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's offer to mediate and with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's trip to Munich, which eventually granted Hitler the Sudetenland.⁷⁷ After Hitler's occupation of the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Gisevius, Goerdeler, and Schacht gave further warnings of Hitler's aggressive plans at Ouchy, Switzerland, to an 'influential person' connected with the French and British leaders.⁷⁸ Goerdeler and Schacht differed over the message to send and Gisevius asserts that Goerdeler's more optimistic scenario of Germany's economic ruin through the furious pace of rearmament was the message the representative delivered to French Premier Daladier. However, the evidence indicates that Gisevius erred in his assumptions and that

⁷⁷ Gisevius, 326, maintains that Chamberlain's concessions killed *coup* plans and paralyzed the German opposition for months. Klemperer, 109

⁷⁸ Gisevius, 344-345; Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, The Canaris Conspiracy (New York, 1969), 52; Wheeler-Bennett, 436-437; Ritter, 126; IMT, XII, 221-222; Carolsue Holland, The Foreign Contacts Made by the German Opposition to Hitler (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1967), 54. On 14 March 1939 Gisevius, Schacht, and Goerdeler met with Dr. Reinhold Schairer, a friend of Goerdeler. Schairer urged Goerdeler and Schacht to emigrate and join in an open propaganda campaign against the regime from Britain. Schacht's recent dismissal as President of the Reichsbank removed the illusion that he could influence the government's course. Schacht and Goerdeler differed as to whether Germany's economy could support military adventures. Schacht warned of Germany's increasing military strength. In his view the Nazis had such a strong hold on the German financial structure that they could wage war without risk of economic collapse. Goerdeler argued that a firm stand from the Western powers would start economic difficulty because of the underlying financial weaknesses. They no longer promised a military revolt but urged Schairer to warn the British that conflict with Poland over Danzig would begin that Autumn. Gisevius asserts that Goerdeler's version was the one passed to French Premier Daladier. However, Schairer assured Ritter, 127, that he never saw Daladier and that he doubted Goerdeler's optimistic picture of Hitler's weakness. He reported the conversations to the British.

the warning found its way to the British.⁷⁹ Gisevius urged Schacht to use a trip to Basel in early May 1939 to tell the British banker, Montagu Norman, the details of Gestapo crimes and to warn of a danger of war. Norman passed the results on to Chamberlain who responded that he could deal only with Hitler, since Schacht was out of office and without influence.⁸⁰

As Nazi Germany began preparations to attack Poland in the summer of 1939, the military-conservative circles attempted to stop war on several levels. While General Georg Thomas, head of the economic staff of the army, tried, through memoranda, to persuade Brauchitsch and Hitler that Germany's attack on Poland would precipitate a long war with Britain and France, and eventually the United States, which Germany could not win,⁸¹ the others conceived a desperate plan to force Halder to join them in a plot to seize Hitler.⁸² Gisevius and Oster argued for Hitler's

⁷⁹ IMT, XII, 222; Gisevius, 348, states that this material, as part of Daladier's files, later fell into the hands of the *Abwehr* after the fall of France in June 1940 but Oster retrieved it before the Nazis discovered it. Ritter, 127, states that the documents concerning the Ouchy talks came from the Dutch.

⁸⁰ Gisevius, 350; IMT, XII, 222; Schacht, Seventy-Six Years, 389; Klemperer, 117.

⁸¹ Gisevius, 357, claims to have conferred with the other oppositionists in the wording of Thomas's memoranda. IMT, XII, 224. Ritter, 137, says Thomas used the memorandum in a final effort to diminish Keitel's confidence in Hitler.

⁸² Gisevius, 360, asserts that Witzleben asked Oster to have him travel to Witzleben's headquarters in Frankfurt on 20 August. There Gisevius informed him of a planned conversation between Beck and Halder and promised to return on 24 August to let him know if Beck, Canaris, and Oster needed him in Berlin to apply pressure to Halder. Witzleben later telephoned Oster to inform Gisevius that he would not have to return to Frankfurt. This may have been the result of the cancellation of the attack orders on 25 August. See below.

immediate execution during the *coup* rather than waiting for a trial to expose his war plans and role in the terror. ⁸³

Meanwhile, thanks to Nebe and Oster, Gisevius remained abreast of military preparations for war with Poland. When Nebe informed Gisevius that the SS planned to stage border incidents and needed Polish uniforms, Gisevius notified Goerdeler, Oster, and Schacht. ⁸⁴ During a visit to the former diplomat, Ulrich von Hassell, he disclosed preparations for fake border incidents with Poland to justify an attack and predicted the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union. ⁸⁵

⁸³ Ibid., 311.

⁸⁴ Höhne, Canaris, 338-340, 345; Canaris received a request for Polish uniforms at this time and protested to Brauchitsch and Keitel. The SS had to stage these particular incidents with limited *Abwehr* help. Gisevius, 390, asserts that

“... I had first heard from Nebe how the expected Polish ‘attack’ on German troops was arranged. ... the Gestapo requested the *Abwehr* to supply some Polish uniforms for ‘purposes of study.’ I had passed Nebe’s information on to Canaris, and the Admiral protested to Brauchitsch. ... instead of ‘attacking’ German troops, the disguised Gestapo criminals merely made a raid on the radio station at Gleiwitz.”

⁸⁵ Hassell Diaries, 61. On 15 August 1939, Gisevius, whose sources were probably Canaris and Oster, notified Hassell of Hitler’s 14 August meeting with the army commanders at which he announced plans to invade Poland under the assumption that the Western Powers would not intervene in spite of their guarantees to her. He would change his plans if they did. Gisevius thought this was an attempt to soothe the soldier’s fears. Gisevius and Hassell favored delaying pressure on the leading generals for fear of premature exposure of the opposition in contrast to Goerdeler’s insistence on applying immediate pressure to Brauchitsch to stop war preparations. Gisevius also informed Hassell of the arrangements for a pact with Soviet Russia. Hassell writes:

“Gisevius thought the days before August 27 would be the decisive ones, perhaps from August 22 on. The most sensational news brought by Gisevius was that a thoroughly dependable person, who had himself read the telegram, reported Hitler had instructed [German Ambassador to Moscow Count Friedrich Werner von der] Schulenberg once more to attempt to reach an agreement with [Soviet Foreign Minister] Molotov;

The signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-aggression Pact on 23 August 1939 freed Hitler from fear of a two front war.⁸⁶ When Hitler gave orders on 25 August for the attack on Poland, code-named *Fall Weiss* (Case White), to begin on 26 August Schacht, Gisevius, Thomas, and Oster decided to confront Halder and Brauchitsch and demand that they stop the attack, as it violated the long ignored constitution, or arrest them and be prepared to take the consequences of their exposing their earlier joint involvement in plans to overthrow the regime. Just as Gisevius, Schacht and Thomas reached *Abwehr* headquarters to see Canaris and ask him to arrange an interview with Halder, they encountered Oster who informed them that Hitler had just

he was to inform him that Hitler was ready to go to Russia to see Stalin! This left me agape. Gisevius thought Stalin would certainly invite him!" Hassell's diary, p. 59, also gives some indication of Gisevius's reputation in the opposition at this time. Hassell comments on 14 August, 1939:

"Goerdeler appeared again at the Hotel Aldon with his companion in arms, Dr. Gisevius, whom I had already met once at Herbert Göring's. Gisevius was formerly with the Gestapo, then became active in industry, and has now reentered the civil service. Goerdeler and others praise him to the skies. He is no doubt intelligent, informed, and active. But I don't quite make him out."

A few days later, Hassell entered in his diary, p. 62 :

"It is significant that Upper Silesia is played up [in the German press] as the scene of Polish terror, just as Gisevius had predicted."

On 27 August(p. 62) just after the conclusion of the pact with Soviet Russia he entered:

"... Gisevius had the facts straight, although he perhaps mistook Hitler for Ribbentrop [who had flown to Moscow to sign the treaty with Soviet Russia that would divide Poland]. ..."

⁸⁶ Gisevius, 352, charges Sir Robert Vansittart, of the British Foreign Office, with ignoring repeated warnings from German oppositionists about the pact while deceiving them. The readiness of foreign officials to view German conservatives as another version of Nazism is a major theme in Gisevius's memoirs. Hoffmann, *History*, 107-109, summarizes the final contacts the opposition made with the British before the war.

canceled the attack orders.⁸⁷ At the last moment Hitler called off the attack because the Allies planned to honor their guarantees to Poland and Mussolini urged restraint. The conspirators called off their revolt believing that Hitler had been stopped for good, but on 31 August Hitler ordered the attack anew. That day when Gisevius met Canaris in the OKW, Canaris told him "This means the end of Germany."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Gisevius, 352; Ritter, 137; IMT, XII, 224-225; Klaus-Jürgen Müller, Das Heer und Hitler: Armee und nationalsozialistisches Regime 1933-1940 (Stuttgart, 1969), 413-414, 420; Höhne, Canaris, 3-9; Karl Abshagen, Canaris: Patriot und Weltbürger (Stuttgart, 1954), 205.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 375; Wheeler-Bennett, 455.

***Abwehr* Agent**
1 September 1939 - 20 July 1944

As German armies attacked Poland on 1 September 1939 Oster inducted Gisevius into the *Abwehr* with a forged mobilization order to avoid complying with regulations that required a Gestapo vetting of all intelligence officers. Both of them knew that Gisevius's earlier activities made him unreliable in Nazi eyes.¹ The *Abwehr* chief, Admiral Canaris, deeply disturbed about the campaign in Poland and the threat of expanding an unwinnable war with an attack on the Western powers, allowed his chief of staff, Hans Oster, to establish his group without hindrance.² The *Abwehr* became a center for opposition activity from the start of the war by extending its protection to many anti-Nazis, by establishing secret links to the enemy and neutral powers, and by attempting to influence the army leadership to overthrow the regime when it engaged in reckless adventures.

¹ Gisevius, 457, asserts that " ... this forged document did not offer a permanent solution, but we were counting on the regime's being overthrown within the next few months, and there was no other way to have me on the spot in Berlin." See INT, XII, 226.

² Ibid., 380. Hitler, in a *Reichstag* address, presented peace overtures to the British and French on 6 October. However, on 9-10 October he secretly directed that the western offensive, an operation code-named *Fall Gelb* (Case Yellow) would begin later that autumn. Höhne, Canaris, 378; Müller, Das Heer und Hitler, 477. Gisevius, 443, says of Canaris

"He passionately hated not only Hitler and Himmler, but the entire Nazi system as a political phenomenon Canaris tolerated the seditious activities of the Oster circle by deliberately refusing to take cognizance of them. ... He was particularly emphatic in his disapproval of any contact or collaboration with the enemy in the war."

Heinz Höhne, Canaris, 132-134, 168, and Peter Padfield, Himmler, do not accept this view; they argue that Canaris was initially sympathetic to the Nazis. This is also contradictory with what is known about his toleration for Oster's and Gisevius's activities in the war.

Gisevius participated in all of these activities as one of Oster's closest allies. Gisevius probably exaggerates Oster's influence as a factor in most opposition policy decisions, but there is little doubt that he retained a clearer vision of necessary actions than his superiors, Canaris and Halder, especially in the early part of the war. According to Gisevius, Oster's influence resulted in the choice of General Beck as overall chief of the opposition.³ Through Oster's influence, the *Abwehr's* protection became a cover for many activities unknown even to Canaris.

Abwehr protection enabled Gisevius to extend his collection of friends, many of whom owed their positions 'on the inside' to Oster's influence. Gisevius actively assisted Oster in expanding his network and in getting sympathizers into influential positions. For example, Gisevius introduced Elizabeth and Theodor Strünk to Oster in late 1937 and they became a part of his circle. Oster found a place for him in the *Abwehr* after the war started. Their Berlin residence became a 'safe house' in which opposition members could meet and their apartment at *Nürnbergstrasse* 31 was virtually Goerdeler's headquarters whenever he stayed in Berlin.⁴

Gisevius had known Ministerial Director Karl Sack, the chief Provost Marshal of the army since the Fritsch affair and he saw

³ Ibid., 435; IMT, XII, 226. For Gisevius, Oster and Goerdeler, Beck stood above the often divisive politics of the opposition, and there was no dissent, Gisevius says, when at Oster's urging, all agreed that Beck would be head of the opposition after its year-long search to find a suitable general to lead them.

⁴ Ibid., 428. This also became a hideout for Gisevius in July 1944. See note 98 below.

him as a connecting link between the military and civilian oppositionists. At the same time he recognized the lawyer, Doctor Hans von Dohnanyi, as Oster's closest associate from the start of the war.⁵ Dohnanyi, with Oster's approval, recruited his brother in law, the Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhöffer, into the *Abwehr*. Through Gisevius the Social Democrat, Wilhelm Leuschner, and a leader of the former Christian Union, Jakob Kaiser, established contacts with the *Abwehr* oppositionist circle around Oster in November 1939.⁶

Through Colonel Helmut Groscurth, who worked as general staff liaison with the *Abwehr*, the Oster circle had a valuable ally inside Halder's staff at Zossen. Gisevius also met the *Abwehr* officer, Erwin Lahousen, an Austrian, a Canaris associate and a participant in future plots against Hitler. To establish links with British diplomats through the Vatican in Rome, Oster recruited the Munich lawyer, Dr. Josef Müller, and Dietrich Bonhöffer in the Munich *Abwehr* office provided Müller with cover to make these contacts.⁷

While Müller contacted the Vatican, Gisevius smuggled a letter from Schacht to Leon Frazer, an American banker and former president of the Bank for International Settlements, in Switzerland. According to Gisevius, who helped draft it, Schacht

⁵ Ibid., 426; Höhne, Canaris, 383-384.

⁶ Ibid., 419; IMT, XII, 226.

⁷ Ibid., 427. See Harold C. Deutsch, The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War (Minneapolis, 1967), 120-135, for a more complete account.

intended the letter for Roosevelt and Oster arranged for him to smuggle it into Switzerland from where he could mail it without fear of surveillance on 16 October.⁸ However, the first attempt to bring in the good offices of the U. S government came to nothing.

Meanwhile, Müller's efforts in Rome appeared more fruitful when the Vatican expressed interest in serving as intermediary to the British and the British notified him that they would negotiate only with a non-Nazi government.⁹ While this bolstered the opposition's case that Hitler's overthrow would save Germany from further war, Hitler continued with his plans to expand the war with an attack on the west, an operational plan codenamed *Fall Gelb* (Case Yellow), to the consternation of the military leaders. Discussions between Beck, Goerdeler, Schacht, Oster, and Gisevius convinced them that this presented an opportunity to enlist Canaris, Halder, and Brauchitsch in their plans for revolt. Armed with hopeful signals from Müller's Vatican contacts and aware of the military leaders' fears of expanded war, the Oster

⁸ Ibid., 380-381; *IMT*, XII, 227-228; Holland, 86-87. Schacht had served on the board of directors of the bank when he held the office of President of the German Reichsbank. The letter urged Fraser to pressure Roosevelt to begin negotiations for a just and lasting European peace. Schacht suggested that he could come to America using a lecture tour as a cover for peace discussions. Fraser passed the letter over to the U. S. Department of State, but Secretary of State Cordell Hull notified the American Charge' d' Affairs in Berlin, Alexander Kirk, that Schacht would not be officially received. See Cordell Hull, *Memoirs* (New York, 1948), 712; Ritter, 143, and Wheeler-Bennett, 486.

⁹ Josef Müller, *Bis zur letzten Konsequenz* (München, 1975), 80-86, 108-116, 141-144. Wheeler-Bennett, 490-493. Deutsch, 120, citing Groscurth diary entry of 20 October, (Helmuth Groscurth, *Tagebücher einer Abwehroffiziers 1933-1940; mit weiteren Dokumenten zur Militäropposition gegen Hitler*, (Stuttgart, 1970), 220, 224), Hereafter *Tagebücher*; Ritter, 147; K. J. Müller, *Das Heer und Hitler*, 536; Höhne, *Canaris*, 389-391.

group, through the *Abwehr*, made two attempts to influence Halder and the high command to launch a *coup* in October-November 1939. ¹⁰

Having learned that Hitler insisted, against military advice, on launching *Fall Gelb* in the West on 12 November, Schacht and Oster recalled Gisevius from Zurich in late October 1939. ¹¹ Though Gisevius and his military and civilian friends had little faith that the army's top leaders would revolt but they continued their efforts to induce it, nonetheless. ¹² At Oster's request,

¹⁰ The first attempt was a Canaris and Oster visit to Halder at Zossen on 25 October to urge him to prevent an attack; this soured relations between the *Abwehr* and the Chief of Staff as Halder refused to cooperate. Hoffmann, *History*, 136; Deutsch, 220-221; Höhne, *Canaris*, 387, citing Groscurth diary entry of 25 Oct. 1939 (*Tagebücher*, 220-221). Oster offended Halder when he referred to Beck as leader of the opposition. Halder resented attempts to pressure him and refused to see Oster in the future.

¹¹ Gisevius, 382-383. Ritter, 143, Hitler notified his generals on 27 October that he wanted to attack west on 12 November. Franz Halder, *Halder Diaries: The Private War Journal of Colonel General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Supreme Command of the German Army (OKH) 14 August 1939 to 24 September 1942*, vol. i, 114, 27 October. Hereafter *Halder Diaries*. Halder planned his own *coup* and invited *Abwehr* participation on 31 October. *Halder Diaries*, i, 116, 30 October has the following entry "Camouflage preparations so that the program [*coup*?] can start running as of 5 November." See Hoffmann, *History*, 136, Höhne, *Canaris*, 387. On 31 October Halder sent Chief Quartermaster General Carl Heinrich von Stülpnagel to the Western front to determine how many army commanders would back a *coup* in the event of an attack on the West.

¹² *Hassell Diaries*, 87, entry for 2 November 1939 contains a reference to Gisevius's recent mission to Switzerland as well as a lack of faith in the military leadership. This passage also shows that Gisevius actively expanded opposition contacts. Hassel writes

"A visit from Gisevius. He is considerably more pessimistic than Goerdeler about the prospects of action by the generals. He thinks the invasion of Belgium is sure to come and that we cannot hope to act before that. Afterward there might be a better chance. All of us who are without government posts lack power of leverage and are without influence. For that reason he argued that a journey to America should be arranged for Schacht as a semi-official representative of German industry. With such a mission he could work for peace. I then made a remark about his elaborate dinner [on 31 October] at Horcher's

Gisevius and von Dohnanyi on 31 October and 1 November composed a memorandum urging that Halder stop the attack and overthrow the regime. General Thomas in a 31 October meeting with Oster, Dohnanyi, and Gisevius agreed to deliver it to the Chief of Staff. ¹³

Gisevius says he urged Thomas to impress upon Halder the need for a *coup d' e'tat* and to inform him that the violations of Dutch and Belgian neutrality envisioned by the offensive plans would discredit the generals in their efforts to gain the Western goodwill necessary for the army to overthrow Hitler. The memorandum incorporated Joseph Müller's first reports from the Vatican, which indicated that the Allies would consider peace with a non-Nazi government. ¹⁴

When Thomas visited Halder at Zossen on 4 November he found the Chief-of Staff ready for a revolt as soon as Hitler gave his final order to attack in the West. ¹⁵ The final decision for a

[restaurant] with the police president of Berlin [Helldorf], to which he replied he had known Helldorf since the days of his own police service, and was certain that he was of the same mind as we are. Afterward, at his suggestion, I called on Otto Bismarck at the Foreign Office. He did not wear his Party emblem, and talked in a highly critical and subversive manner. "

¹³ Gisevius, 383-384, and Deutsch, 220-221. Ritter, 147; K. J. Müller, Das Heer und Hitler, 496.

¹⁴ Ibid., 385. Gisevius felt sure that Halder would favor assassination over revolt as a way around the issue of the personal oaths of loyalty to Hitler. Deutsch, 221, says Gisevius is the sole source of the claim.

¹⁵ Not 2 November as Gisevius, 385, says. Hoffmann, History, 135-136, states that Halder was on an inspection tour of the Western front with Brauchitsch on 1-3 November and that Thomas presented the memorandum on 4 November. Halder Diaries, i, 119, entry for 4 November. On 2 November Halder's deputy, General Stülpnagel, had Groscurth to alert Oster to update his 1938 *coup* plan, *Studie Oster*. On 3 November Groscurth

coup was to be made on 5 November when Brauchitsch was to report to Hitler and advise him not to attack. Gisevius spent most of 5 November shuttling between the Army High Command, the OKW, police headquarters, the Interior Ministry, Beck, Goerdeler, Schacht, Helldorf, Nebe, and other members of the conspiracy.¹⁶ All awaited the results of Brauchitsch's meeting with Hitler, anticipating the go-ahead for a *coup*, since now Halder and Brauchitsch seemed ready. Gisevius sat up with Goerdeler late that night waiting for the results of Brauchitsch's meeting with Hitler. After a few hours delay, Oster's 'intelligence service' learned that Hitler gave Brauchitsch a severe dressing down for suggesting that morale among the soldiers was too low for an offensive and complained about a defeatist 'spirit of Zossen,' giving the impression that he knew of opposition plans.

Whatever *coup* plans existed collapsed as Halder rushed back to his office and hastily ordered Stülpnagel and Groscurth to destroy all evidence of their conspiracy and a panicked Zossen headquarters began burning compromising documents.¹⁷ Oster's friends then discovered that the entire headquarters would transfer to the West in stages for the attack on the west. Brauchitsch now told Halder that he would not interfere if action

informed Oster that Halder wanted him to have Beck and Goerdeler stand by for a revolt from 5 November. Höhne, *Canaris*, 387-388; Oster conferred with Halder's deputy, General Stülpnagel, who gave him considerable detail about plans to seize Berlin. Deutsch, 220; Ritter, 146-148.

¹⁶ Gisevius, 386; Ritter, 149.

¹⁷ Ibid., 387-8; Deutsch, 232; *Halder Diaries*, i, 120.

were taken to stop the attack.¹⁸ However, to the Oster circle's exasperation, the issue of the military oath to Hitler and the Hitler image of infallibility deterred them from further action.

Later Halder, perhaps realizing that earlier panic was unwarranted, sent Groscurth to ask Canaris to assassinate Hitler as a precondition for a revolt, but the Admiral indignantly refused to consider it until they exhausted all other avenues including mutiny.¹⁹ Later that day, 6 November, after a conference with Hitler, a depressed Canaris recounted to Gisevius and Oster how the dictator ordered him to prepare special *Abwehr* teams wearing Dutch and Belgian uniforms to seize key points for follow-on forces during the coming attack.

Seeing their chief's helplessness and the chance for a revolt evaporating, Oster and Gisevius visited Zossen on the evening of 6 November where they proposed depicting a *coup* as an effort to crush an SS uprising against Hitler that would require military intervention to 'save' their Commander-in-Chief.²⁰ Gisevius asserts that "The allegation of an SS uprising was far more congenial to the military mentality than the proposal that Hitler be declared insane", a reference to an alternate plan being studied

¹⁸ Ibid., 389; Deutsch, 233.

¹⁹ Ibid., 388-389; Hoffmann, History, 138; Höhne, 392-393; Ritter, 150. Groscurth diary entry of 5 November, (Tagebücher, 225).

²⁰ Ibid., 390; Höhne, Canaris, 393; Deutsch, 236; Ritter, 148, 151; Groscurth Diary entry of 6 November, (Tagebücher, 225).

at the time.²¹ According to Gisevius, his and Oster's proposal won enthusiastic support from their friends at Zossen.

With the oath problem 'solved', Groscurth who overheard Halder's remark that he was powerless to launch a *coup* without Witzleben and his Army Group C, persuaded Oster and Gisevius to visit Witzleben to get him to join them in pressing Halder for a revolt. Since Canaris refused to release Oster for any of Halder's projects, Groscurth called Witzleben and persuaded him to request a 'service visit' from Oster.²²

The next day, 7 November, a suspicious Canaris authorized Oster and Gisevius to visit Witzleben's headquarters. Before leaving, Oster warned his friend, Major Gijsbertus Jacobus Sas, the Dutch military attache, of an impending attack. Thereupon, he and Gisevius visited Thomas who also believed that securing Witzleben's help was a requirement; then they discussed the events of 5 November with Beck. Late that day, when Oster and Gisevius departed Berlin,²³ Oster carried draft proclamations and lists of leaders of the projected revolt, a risky action that would alarm all who came in contact with him. By now, Gisevius's skepticism about the willingness of the generals to act against the

²¹ Ibid., 391. This indicates that Gisevius was aware of an alternate plan to have Hitler declared insane after a *coup*. Gisevius, 433, was also aware that Oster was preparing to employ the diplomat Erich Kordt as an assassin. Ritter, 148, 150; Höhne, Canaris, 396-397; Deutsch, 237; Balfour, 86.

²² Gisevius, 391; Deutsch, 237; Höhne, Canaris, 393; Groscurth Diary entry of 6 November, (Tagebücher, 225).

²³ Deutsch, 237-238; Hoffmann, History, 138; Höhne, Canaris, 393; Karl Balzer, Der 20. Juli und der Landesverrat: Eine Dokumentation über Verratshandlungen in deutschen Widerstand (Göttingen, 1967), 152.

regime, combined with the knowledge he possessed of the nearness of full-scale war, caused him to quietly decide to get out of Germany. Gisevius writes

“ Because of the blackout we did not get further than Frankfurt-am-Main. I did not tell Oster until after we had started that I had packed my bags. If Witzleben did not give an absolutely affirmative answer, I intended to stay in Germany just long enough to visit Kluge in Cologne. Then I was going to Zurich. “ ²⁴

Arriving at Kreuznach on 8 November, they found Witzleben in poor health and doubtful about the possibility of influencing Brauchitsch and Halder. While they conferred, Witzleben received notification that the attack had been delayed by seventy-two hours, giving them more time. ²⁵ Witzleben agreed to visit Halder, but, due to the possibility of the startup of fighting at any time, he would do so only if his Group Commander, General Ritter von Leeb, agreed. After an unsuccessful attempt to see von Leeb, they left, Gisevius intending to go to Switzerland, and Oster to return to Berlin. ²⁶ Witzleben reprimanded Oster for carrying lists of those participating in anti-Nazi plots and sent a loyal staff officer, Colonel Vincenz Müller, who was traveling to Berlin, to warn

²⁴ Gisevius, 391.

²⁵ Ibid., 392; Hoffmann, History, 138-139; Deutsch, 238-240; Balfour, 162.

²⁶ George Meyer, Generalfeldmarschal Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen und Lagebeurteilungen aus Zwei Weltkriegen (Stuttgart, 1976), 52, mentions the attempt to see von Leeb. Halder Diaries, i, 127, entry of 14 November shows that Witzleben requested a meeting with Halder.

Halder to hide all incriminating evidence and to guard against Oster's carelessness.²⁷

During the return journey they learned of an unsuccessful assassination attempt at the Munich *Hofbräuhaus* or *Löwenbräu* by Georg Elser, an individual with no connection to the major conspirators. A bomb exploded just after Hitler abruptly cut short a speech and departed. Gisevius changed his mind about going to Switzerland and accompanied Oster back to Berlin on the evening of 9 November.²⁸ The next day, Helldorf asked an incredulous Gisevius if he had any idea who the would-be assassins were.²⁹ Since Gisevius could not contact Nebe, he guessed that he had been called to Munich to investigate.³⁰ The arrest of Georg Elser, a simple Munich carpenter, convinced many that a conspiracy was

²⁷ Oster was guilty of another indiscretion at a Frankfurt Officers' mess where he delivered a furious tirade against the Nazis. Gisevius, 393, omits any mention of this saying only "We parted late at night." See Höhne, 394; K. J. Müller, Das Heer und Hitler, 532 and 534, and Deutsch, 239-242.

²⁸ Gisevius, 393; Hoffmann, History, 141; Deutsch, 241-242; Höhne, Canaris, 394, Oster's indiscreet behavior during the journey alarmed Halder and Canaris. Halder barred Oster from access to the General Staff. Immediately after Oster and Gisevius returned to Berlin, Canaris sent for Oster and ordered him to stop his conspiracy against the regime. He also warned Dohnanyi, Groscurth, and Oster to avoid 'that eternal rebel' Gisevius. See Ritter, 151, K. J. Müller, Das Heer und Hitler, 536, and Groscurth Diary, 10-11 November 1939 (Tagebücher, 228-229); Gisevius, 397, glosses over Oster's behavior and depicts Halder as weak willed.

²⁹ Ibid., 394. On the same evening that he exploded the bomb, 8 November, Georg Elser, with much incriminating material on him, was arrested in Constance as he was trying to escape into Switzerland. Eventually, Nebe was assigned to investigate the bombing and concluded that Elser had acted alone.

³⁰ Ibid., 405. Nebe told Gisevius that he feared the assassin could be one of their friends.

afoot to eliminate Hitler, a theme played up in the German press. The Munich assassination attempt of 8 November and the kidnapping of two British secret service agents at the Dutch frontier town of Venlo on 9 November further discouraged Canaris and Halder from participating in conspiracies for fear that the Nazis were about to discover them.³¹ However, their repeated cautioning to Oster had little real effect and Gisevius saw the assassination attempt as another opportunity to induce a *putsch*.

To Helldorf and Oster, Gisevius advocated the immediate arrest of Himmler and Göring as the real suspects in the Munich bombing. In a letter to Halder, Gisevius argued that the Gestapo had a role in planting the bomb, that Hitler had advance knowledge of the 'plot', and that the army should seize the opportunity to 'protect' the chief of state from further plots since the Gestapo and SS had proven their incompetence.³² On the evening of 10 November Canaris permitted Gisevius to use an *Abwehr* courier to send his letter to Halder at Zossen.³³ When Groscurth handed Gisevius's letter to Halder on 11 November, the general asked him if he knew Gisevius well, then said he intended

³¹ In November 1939 Heydrich's Security Office *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) under Walter Schellenberg launched an operation to entrap a pair of British secret service agents. Posing as a representative of an anti-Nazi German underground, Schellenberg and an SD team kidnapped the British agents S. Payne Best and R. H. Stevens at Venlo. This set back Josef Müller's efforts in Rome as the British now distrusted overtures from all who claimed to be anti-Nazi Germans.

³² Gisevius, 394-395; Deutsch, 255-256.

³³ Ibid., 396; Groscurth diaries, entry of 11 November, (*Tagebücher*, 229).

to tear it up unread. However, Gisevius writes that on 13 November 1939,

“ ... yesterday at noon Grosskurth [sic] spied my letter - allegedly torn up at once - lying on Halder's desk. The Chief of Staff noticed his subordinate's glance resting on the manuscript. Discomfited, he apparently felt called upon to admit that he had read my exposition with interest and believed that it was correct. He had shown it to Brauchitsch, he said, and the Commander-in-Chief had also agreed.”³⁴

Nevertheless, due to tightened security around Hitler, Halder still refused to back any renewal of *coup* planning. Halder's deputy, General Stülpnagel, summoned Oster to Zossen on 14 November, only to tell him to destroy his incriminating papers.³⁵

While Halder and Canaris abandoned plotting, Oster secretly extended Müller's mission to include advance warning of German military operations.³⁶ Gisevius in his liaison role sometimes dealt with Müller and, as a skeptic about the willingness of the generals to revolt, vainly urged Müller to refrain from making over-optimistic promises in his approaches to the Allies in Rome.³⁷ Gisevius was aware as early as November 1939 that Oster established contacts with the Dutch military attache, Major Gijsbertus Jacobus Sas, and with other foreign intelligence

³⁴ Ibid., 397-398; Groscurth Diaries, entry of 12 November (Tagebücher, 229); Deutsch, 255-256.

³⁵ Gisevius, 398, describes Oster's angry reaction. Groscurth Diaries entry of 14 November mentions the summons. (Tagebücher, 230). Hoffmann, History, 576-577 note 59.

³⁶ Höhne, Canaris, 401-402, 407-413.

³⁷ Deutsch, 127, 331; J. Müller, 91.

services.³⁸ Oster's warnings to the Dutch and Belgians in late 1939 and early 1940 about the impending attack on them fell on deaf ears and soon alerted the regime that there were leaks from within the Armed Forces supreme command, *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW).³⁹

Hitler's constant postponement of the attack on the west wore out the plotters and discredited the warnings passed on to foreign governments. A thoroughly disgusted Gisevius, convinced that Hitler would not attack until Spring 1940 and that the generals would not revolt, finally departed for Switzerland to escape the tension of the last few weeks.⁴⁰

With the arrival of Spring 1940 Gisevius and his friends had no doubt that Hitler would attack in the West and, therefore, a renewed sense of urgency permeated their efforts to prove to the generals that an honorable peace was possible only if they would overthrow Hitler. Beck, Canaris and Oster decided to continue the conversations that Müller conducted in the Vatican in the Fall of

³⁸ Gisevius, 453-455; Deutsch, 120, 326, 327; Höhne, *Canaris*, 401; Hoffmann, *History*, 589; Gisevius, *Bis zum bittern Ende*, 482; Balzer, 152, gives further evidence that Gisevius was aware of Oster's relationship with Sas and Sas confirmed this after the war. See Hermann Graml, "Der Fall Oster," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Vfz) (1966): 38-39.

³⁹ Gisevius, 454-455, omits Oster's name when describing efforts to warn the Dutch and Belgians, though he names Sas. Also see Höhne, *Canaris*, 415, and Balzer, 185. Walter Schellenberg, *Memoirs* (London, 1956), 347, mentions the futile search for the traitor and Heydrich's growing suspicions of Canaris and his organization. Heydrich began collecting information about the *Abwehr's* Vatican contacts in a file called *Schwarz Kapelle* (Black Chapel).

⁴⁰ Gisevius, 401, gives 18 November as the date, though he is frequently off by as much as a month in his account.

1939. Vatican intervention would reduce British suspicions and give credibility to the opposition in its efforts to persuade Brauchitsch and Halder to act. At Beck's urging the group prepared a detailed final report of Müller's negotiations and Thomas delivered it to Halder at the end of March 1940. Now that war was on, Halder refused to act alone, but "made his decision contingent on Brauchitsch's approval" which was not forthcoming. Instead, Brauchitsch threatened to have Oster and Thomas arrested.⁴¹ This, says Gisevius, doomed the last effort to stop the extension of the war.

Hitler's attack on Norway in April 1940 caused the opposition to consider transmitting more than just warnings to foreign nations. Gisevius describes the discussions within opposition circles.

"For the first time during the war, the question arose in our circle of friends of transmitting military information. ... Others pointed out that British intervention based on our information would cost the lives of thousands of German sailors and soldiers. A minority in our circle took precisely the opposite view. Did we have the right to consider only the German casualties deriving from such an invasion? No such agreement was reached. In any event the actual number of persons who were in a position to transmit warnings to the British was extremely small; and some of these did resolve to obey the commands of conscience and 'betray' their fatherland."⁴²

⁴¹ Ibid., 447; IMT, XII, 231; Deutsch, 233; Höhne, Canaris, 406; This was the 'X-Document' purporting to be a summary of Josef Müller's (Agent X) discussions with the British through the Vatican. Apparently, Gisevius had no role in preparing it.

⁴² Gisevius, 451; This may be a veiled reference to Oster's decision to warn the Danes and Norwegians through Sas in Berlin and through Müller in Rome. See Höhne, Canaris, 407.

Interestingly, Gisevius refrains from clearly defining his own position on this issue at this time, although some questions about his opinion would emerge in 1943.⁴³

After the defeat of France in June 1940, Canaris appointed Gisevius to a position in the consulate-general at Zurich, which was at the disposal of his counterintelligence service.⁴⁴

Considerable time elapsed before the Gestapo learned what had happened and Gisevius asserts that his situation remained precarious.

"I had refused to take any constructive part in the internal work of the *Abwehr* ... it constantly cost us a tremendous amount of trouble to find new and urgent missions for me, investigations and approaches to persons of importance, and each of these missions had to be patently so delicate and complicated that my information could not be committed to paper, but had to be reported to the Admiral or to Oster in person. Only

⁴³ See below, note 80.

⁴⁴ *IMT*, XII, 286; Gisevius arrived in Switzerland on 1 October 1940. According to his testimony Canaris could assign him there because of the *Abwehr's* enhanced prestige after the successes on the Western front. Hans Rudolf Fuhrer, Spionage gegen die Schweiz: Die geheimen deutschen Nachrichtendienste gegen die Schweiz im Zweiten Weltkrieg 1939-1945, (Frauenfeld, 1982), 33, shows that Swiss counterintelligence was aware of his arrival and role. Höhne, *Canaris*, 422, asserts that the posting was the result of Canaris's getting cold feet and seeking to break up Oster's network which was endangering his own position. Another possible explanation would be a desire to move a troublesome and little trusted member of the opposition away from Berlin. J. Müller, 110; Klemperer, 193 and 299 note 16. Josef Garlinski, The Swiss Corridor: Espionage Networks in Switzerland during World War II (London, 1981), 94-97, states, based on interviews in London on 14 June 1979, 28 August 1979, and 13 February 1980 with Halina Wisniowska (Szymanska), the wife of the former Polish Military Attache' to Germany, that Canaris employed Gisevius to contact the West through her. Gisevius first contacted her in Switzerland in early February 1940. In visits to her in April-May 1940 he warned that Germany would attack Denmark and Norway and the West. In mid-June 1941 he brought news of Hitler's plans to attack the Soviet Union. Höhne, *Canaris*, 362-363, asserts that in September 1939 Canaris had rescued Madam Czimanska [sic] (Szymanska), wife of Lieutenant Colonel Antoni Czamanski, former Polish Military Attache', and procured papers for her to settle in Berne.

by such pretense could my frequent trips back and forth between Berlin and Zurich be justified." ⁴⁵

Gisevius experienced considerable difficulty with distrustful superiors in Zurich and suspicious supervisors had to be replaced three times. ⁴⁶ Gisevius, in his Swiss backwater, remained remarkably well informed about events in the opposition and at the various fronts, thanks to his biweekly trips to Berlin to confer with Oster and his friends. In 1941 Gisevius participated with Schacht in a stillborn attempt to induce America to help start negotiations between the belligerents before the attack on the Soviet Union. Using a wedding in Switzerland as a pretext, Schacht went to Switzerland in May 1941. Gisevius arranged a dinner meeting in Basel for him with an American banker, T. H. McKittrick, during which Schacht informed him that Hitler intended to attack the Soviet Union. Schacht urged the convening of a peace conference to avert a war with Russia. ⁴⁷ After the attack began with great initial successes in the summer of 1941, ominous changes occurred in the Russian campaign. Nebe, now an SS General, returning from the front in October 1941, predicted that a great defeat would engulf the German army in Russia. ⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Gisevius, 457.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 458.

⁴⁷ INT, XII, 232; Holland, 135, citing OSS Report File RG 226, 25903-C, 14 Dec. 1942, National Archives, Army-Navy-Airforce Section, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁸ Gisevius, 461.

Meanwhile, besides serving as courier and shielding other members of the underground from discovery by the Gestapo and SD agents operating in Switzerland, Gisevius aided in missions of the German Evangelical and Confessing Churches. In 1942 he participated in the drafting of a letter for the Confessional Church's leader, the Reverend Hans Asmussen, that became a basis of the 'confession of guilt' by the German Evangelical Church in Stuttgart in late 1945.⁴⁹

In December 1942 Oster called Gisevius to Berlin. By then the British had defeated Rommel at El Alamein and Americans and British had landed in French North Africa, trapping the German and Italian forces in a slowly closing vise that would destroy them in Tunis in May 1943. Meanwhile, the German Sixth Army faced disaster at Stalingrad as the Russians steadily increased their pressure. Gisevius says "Beck arranged that as soon as the fate of the Sixth Army was sealed, I should return to Berlin again - and for good, we assumed."⁵⁰

In spring 1942 Oster had won over General Friedrich Olbricht, the man who "from now on directed the technical headquarters of our conspiracy." He was chief of the *Allgemeines Heeresamt* (AHA) or General Army Office, a permanent deputy of the Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army, General Friedrich Fromm. Olbricht could also arrange the transfer of reservists to

⁴⁹ Hoffmann, *History*, 235. Gisevius incorporated parts of this only in the German edition of his *Bis zum bittern Ende* in the final chapter. See Klemperer, 73 note 142.

⁵⁰ Gisevius, 464; *IMT*, XII, 233, 242.

the front in such a way that they could be used in a *putsch* but he needed an expert who could unobtrusively plan the necessary coordination with the police. When Oster informed Olbricht that he had such an expert, Gisevius writes "Olbricht informed Oster and Beck that he was willing to provide a refuge for me in his office; I would enter under an assumed name, of course."⁵¹ Gisevius would work on drafting 'the necessary preliminary measures' of instructions during a military state of emergency. Gisevius returned to Berlin on 12 January 1943 as the Stalingrad debacle neared its conclusion.⁵²

According to Gisevius, a plan existed to turn a Stalingrad catastrophe into a mutiny of the eastern front commanders, which would serve as a signal for Witzleben in the West to break with Hitler. Beck, using Olbricht's Home Army, would take over during the ensuing confusion. This 'legal' *putsch* would replace Hitler for military incompetence and calm the fears of those who needed orders before they would act.⁵³ Gisevius says "Our *putsch* was based on evading as far as possible the problem of the soldier's oath to Hitler."⁵⁴ Everything depended upon Kluge's participation and upon General Friedrich von Paulus, the commander of the

⁵¹ Ibid., 465; Hoffmann, History, 281. Under cover of making contingency plans to put down a possible revolt by the foreign workers in Germany, the anti-Hitler conspirators prepared a plan to seize power. This was the beginning of 'Case *Valkyrie*'. See note 112 below.

⁵² Peter Hoffmann, Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg und seine Brüder (Stuttgart, 1992), 260. Hereafter Stauffenberg. Balfour, 163.

⁵³ Gisevius, 466; IMT, XII, 242.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 466.

doomed Sixth Army at Stalingrad, making a proclamation to the army and the people about how Hitler's leadership caused the defeat. However, Paulus and Kluge disappointed the opposition by failing to carry out the plan.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, a meeting of the military-conservative Beck-Goerdeler group, which Gisevius supported, and Helmuth von Moltke's *Kreisau* Circle in January 1943 failed to resolve political differences within the opposition. In the end they could unite only in their determination to rid Germany of Nazism.⁵⁶ Gisevius, who shuttled between Berlin and Zurich could not have remained unaware of the meeting and its results.⁵⁷

In February 1943 Beck gave his consent to assassination, which he and Goerdeler had opposed up to then for political and religious reasons.⁵⁸ Gisevius asserts that he, Lahousen, and Canaris discussed assassinating Hitler but it seems more likely that he learned of such discussions through Oster. Canaris's discretion would probably preclude sharing such a secret with

⁵⁵ Ibid., 466-467; INT, XII, 242.

⁵⁶ Hoffmann, History, 360-362, summarizes the debate between the two groups. See Ger Van Roon, German Resistance to Hitler: Count von Moltke and the Kreisau Circle (London, 1971), or Neuordnung im Widerstand: Der Kreisauer Kreis innerhalb der deutschen Widerstandsbewegung (München, 1967), 158-162, for an account of the relationship between Goerdeler's and von Moltke's groups. Hassell Diaries, 283, entry for 22 Jan. 1943.

⁵⁷ See below. Gisevius filtered information to his foreign contacts in Switzerland to favor his own group.

⁵⁸ Gisevius, 468. Determination to avoid a new stab-in-the-back charge, a legacy from World War I, also stayed the opposition leaders from such a course until the public could see the disasters the regime was causing.

Gisevius who was a mere courier and not a leader. Gisevius returned to Switzerland with the mission to inform the Allies of the plans to assassinate Hitler.

However, from 1940 to 1942 Gisevius never succeeded in establishing a fruitful contact with the British in Switzerland. Gisevius only briefly alludes to his contacts with British intelligence, condemning them for their insistence on using the opposition for pure espionage while remaining blind to the possibility of establishing politically fruitful relationships.⁵⁹ The British operation in Switzerland, directed from London by Colonel Claud Dansey, had as its local chief a Count of the long defunct Holy Roman Empire, Vanden Huyvel. Gisevius flew into a rage whenever Vanden Huyvel asked him to steal documents from the German consulate and from then on the British labeled him as unreliable.⁶⁰ Indeed, Gisevius was only one of several anti-Nazi Germans and Austrians that the British managed to turn away.

The arrival of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) agent Allen Dulles in Switzerland in November 1942 marked the dawn of a new era for the anti-Nazi Germans. The November 1942 Allied landings in North Africa had resulted in the German occupation of the rest of France left unoccupied since the armistice of June 1940 and Dulles had to escape from there into

⁵⁹ Ibid., 481; Jürgen Heideking, "'Die Schweizer Straßen' des Europäische Widerstands" Gerhard Schulz, ed. Geheimdienste und Widerstandsbewegungen in Zweiten Weltkrieg (Göttingen, 1982), 149.

⁶⁰ Leonard Mosley, Dulles: A Biography of Eleonor, Allen, and John Foster Dulles and their Family Network (New York, 1978), 150, 156.

Switzerland. He established himself in the old section of Bern at *Herrengasse* 23 and began recruiting his own espionage organization in some rivalry with the British. Vanden Huyvel warned Dulles against all overtures from anti-Nazi Germans and suggested that a genuine peace movement in Germany willing to overthrow Hitler was fiction.⁶¹ Undeterred, Dulles met Gisevius through Gero von Schulz-Gaevernitz, a naturalized German-American, whose father, now in Swiss exile, had served in the *Reichstag*.

At their first meeting in January 1943, Gisevius told of the anti-Hitler conspiracy which sought a separate peace with the Western Allies after the overthrow of the Nazis. Gisevius informed Dulles:

"I will not demean myself by being a common thief, stealing trivia from filing cabinets, but I will give you a list of every general in Germany who wishes to see Hitler dead, and I will help you communicate with them. In the meantime, I will tell you when my friends are planning to assassinate the *Führer*."

He notified Dulles that on 13 March 1943 the conspirators would place a bomb on Hitler's plane when he flew from Berlin to his forward headquarters in Poland. Gisevius wanted American support for the rebels in the ensuing *Putsch*. Dulles promised to pass the gist of their conversations to Washington and waited for 13 March. However, the attempt to assassinate Hitler failed when a bomb planted in the plane failed to explode.⁶² In February

⁶¹ Mosley, 152.

⁶² Gisevius, 469. For details of the March 1943 plot, see Hoffmann, *History*, 281-283. The quoted text is from Mosley, 156. Persico, 62, 65, states that the first Dulles-Gisevius meeting occurred in February 1943. Gaevernitz avoided Gisevius until Eduard Weatjen, another anti-Nazi contact

Gisevius informed Dulles that he feared to continue their contacts since German cipher experts had broken an American diplomatic code.⁶³ Dulles reassured Gisevius that he protected his own agents' identities. They arranged to meet each time Gisevius returned from a mission in Berlin and Gisevius became the primary link between the German conspirators and the United States.⁶⁴

in the *Abwehr*, advised him that Gisevius was also anti-Nazi. See note 84 below.

⁶³ Allen Dulles, Germany's Underground (New York, 1948), 128-131; US War Department. Strategic Services Unit. History Project. War Report of the OSS: The Overseas Targets vol. 2. (New York, 1976), 279-280. Hereafter War Report of the OSS. Mosley, 157; Balzer, 224. Gisevius read extracts from several cables sent from the Bern OSS office to London and Washington in the previous weeks. This series of texts contained Dulles's prediction that Count Ciano, Mussolini's foreign minister and son-in-law, would join in a revolt to overthrow Italian Fascism and bring Italy over to the Allies later in the year. Gisevius revealed that this particular message had been shown to Hitler, who ordered a copy forwarded to Mussolini. This convinced Dulles that Gisevius was a genuine opponent of Nazism, though he neglected to tell Gisevius that the broken code was not his operational one. From then on he used it for sending messages which he wanted the Germans to read. To suddenly stop using it would reveal that the Americans suspected that it was compromised. Dulles, 131, states

"The incident of the broken code actually brought Gisevius and me [sic] closer together. ... it was strong evidence of his sincerity."

On p. 129 he asserts

"... I met a few other Germans who had the same general outlook as Gisevius. These men felt that a victory of Nazism and the extinction of liberty in Europe ... was a far greater disaster than the defeat of Germany."

This is a far more generous assessment of Gisevius's motives than many historians would later grant. See Balzer, 134, 223-224, and Klemperer, 399 note 37.

⁶⁴ Dulles, Germany's Underground, 130; Dulles, The Craft of Intelligence (New York, 1963), 203; Mosley, 158; Bancroft, 189. In an incident that became part of espionage legend, Gisevius was nearly exposed when Dulles's housekeeper, returning after work for a mislaid scarf, noticed the initials H. B. G. inside the hat of her employer's German visitor and reported it to the German legation. The legation staff in Bern confronted Gisevius about it when he called there a few days later but he brazenly declared that Dulles was *his* agent in an operation known only to

To enhance contacts with Gisevius, Dulles employed the expatriate American free-lance journalist, Mary Bancroft, who analyzed the German press for him. During one of her visits to Bern, Dulles told her that she would get a call from a 'Doctor Bernhard'.⁶⁵ Dulles found that the key to keeping Gisevius as a valuable source lay in a book Gisevius was writing as a political testament and that he showed no interest in money. Bancroft was to translate the manuscript and to draw out and report everything Gisevius said. In June 'Doctor Bernhard' called at her Zurich apartment, bringing over fourteen hundred pages of his manuscript, to begin translation.⁶⁶ During their long association they argued, debated and probed.⁶⁷ To her question about what he did in the Gestapo, he admitted that he tried to get control of

Admiral Canaris. Gisevius informed Dulles who soon found an excuse to fire her.

⁶⁵ Bancroft, 161-162. Persico, 61.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 161-162, 163-166; Persico, 63, 66.

⁶⁷ Bancroft, 194, describes some of her revealing conversations with Gisevius in which he told her how he used his secret relationship with Canaris and Oster to avoid scrutiny. He seemed to have plenty of free time for his manuscript and claimed that he never did anything.

"... I hardly ever go to the consulate ... If I do, they all quake in their shoes. They think I'm Gestapo. [Sigismund Freiherr] von Bibera - the German minister in Bern - can't make up his mind about me. Am I just an agent provocateur? Or am I actually Gestapo? If he'd ever voiced his suspicion to Himmler and Heydrich, my goose would have been cooked long ago. My *Abwehr* boss has the rank of colonel ... I'm just a simple private in the ranks ... The last two times my boss tried to send me somewhere-first to Bordeaux, then Berlin-I refused to go. By the mere refusing, he decided I must be Gestapo, with enormous power and influence. ... I haven't done a stroke of work for more than three years. ... When I first came here, I thought it would be all over within six months. ... No sheet of paper exists in the Third Reich on which I have written anything that could be construed as of the slightest use to the Nazis."

his department but had been a fool to suppose that he could compete against Himmler and Heydrich.⁶⁸ In time she concluded that Gisevius was 'a sincere Christian' who 'could never have been a believing Nazi.' After their meetings in her Zurich apartment, she would commute to Bern to make her reports to Dulles. For nearly a year Gisevius and Bancroft worked on his manuscript for days at a time; then he would disappear for weeks before appearing with new pages. He told her that he intended to return to Germany when he received word that the attack on Hitler was about to occur, but she doubted him.⁶⁹ The conspiracy's setbacks and the fact that Gisevius was under suspicion in Germany convinced her that nothing would happen in spite of all the scheming.

For Gisevius, Dulles was the first foreigner who could appreciate the conspirators and their potential because he was interested in more than pure espionage. During the next year Gisevius continued briefing Dulles on the progress of the anti-Hitler conspiracy. His role was to gain Allied support for the

⁶⁸ Persico, 67. Bancroft, 165, states that Gisevius told her that his Gestapo past affected everything he did and shielded him from close scrutiny at the consulate. When she learned his real name from translating a passage of his manuscript but remembered that she had heard the name mentioned before, she realized that his confidence was misplaced. She wrote (p. 168) that

"Some weeks before I had been told by one of those well informed sources that were so helpful to the Allied cause that a member of the Canaris organization, stationed under the diplomatic cover of Vice-Consul at the German Consulate in Zurich, was regarded as 'unreliable.' If Hitler should decide to ... invade Switzerland, he would have this man killed. ... since the Swiss were unable to protect the lives of German citizens on Swiss soil, he would have to march in and do it for them. The name of this man had been Gisevius."

⁶⁹ Bancroft, 202; Persico, 75.

conspirators' political objectives, but he operated in the face of insurmountable obstacles. At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943 the Big Three Allied powers, the US, Britain, and the Soviet Union, announced their demands for Germany's unconditional surrender. Dulles, therefore, could make no deals with the anti-Nazi Germans. Through Gisevius, Dulles informed the German resistance that they could expect no Allied help in overthrowing Hitler; the Western Allies would also not agree to a separate peace to the exclusion of the Soviets.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, Gisevius continued as a productive intelligence source. In May-June 1943, Gisevius informed Dulles that the Germans were developing a missile, already in limited production somewhere in Pomerania and scheduled for operational use against England late that year. Soon afterward the British moderated their earlier hostility toward him.⁷¹ Gisevius also

⁷⁰ Persico, 75; Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1944, vol. 1, 505-507. Hereafter Foreign Relations. Schramm, 52.

⁷¹ Persico, 72; Anthony Cave Brown, Wild Bill Donovan: The Last Hero (New York, 1982), 288, refers to continuing British suspicions which caused OSS London to warn Dulles on 31 July 1943:

"It is believed by the British that you should stop seeing 512 [Gisevius's code number] as they think he is untrustworthy. We agree in this except that for future contingencies a contact should be maintained through a cutout who is not known to the Germans. Greatest caution should be observed when sending names, numbers, etc., which have been supplied by this source because of the possible aid to the Germans in cracking our cipher."

Less than two weeks later the British had moderated their opinion.

"About 512, our British friends now tell us that they have heard he has probably burned his bridges in Germany. His talks may, therefore, be even more interesting and they very much hope the talks will go on. Please cable me your decision and the status of the affair. Your answer anxiously awaited by ... [Dansey, now vice-chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service]."

Brown, 290. Donovan reported to President Truman on 22 June 1945 that

revealed that there was a German agent inside the British embassy in Turkey.⁷² Since Gisevius shared these secrets only with Dulles, he never gained extensive confidence among the rest of the agents operating in Switzerland who also remained suspicious of his Gestapo past.

Dulles's association with Gisevius disturbed the Swiss who considered the OSS station a sieve. Swiss counterintelligence had considerable information about Gisevius and his use of funds which they seldom shared with others.⁷³ The anti-Nazi exile and Dulles contact, Kurt Grimm, was uneasy about Dulles's involvement with Gisevius because his lifestyle was beyond that of a mere *Abwehr* operative.⁷⁴ Gisevius also supposedly had good relationships with the Swiss police as well as the Soviet spies, Lucy (alias Rudolf Loesser) and Georges Blum (alias Long)⁷⁵

"This source supplied early information on the preparation of the V-1 and V-2 bombs, which in conjunction with other sources led to the identification of Peenemünde as the Germans' proving ground for new weapons."

Ten days after Dulles transmitted Gisevius's information to Donovan (17-18 August 1943) the British bombed the facility. Ilöhne, "Canaris und die *Abwehr* zwischen Anpassung und Opposition," Jürgen Schmädke and Peter Steinberg, eds. Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus: Die deutsche Gesellschaft und der Widerstand gegen Hitler (München, 1985), 416. War Report of the OSS vol 2, 280-281.

⁷² John Ranelagh, The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA (New York, 1987), 76-77.

⁷³ Fuhrer, 161, 162-3.

⁷⁴ Persico, 122; Bancroft, 192, comments that Gisevius purchased expensive flowers for her probably using *Abwehr* funds.

⁷⁵ Mosley, 546.

Back in Germany, disaster struck the Oster network with the arrest of Dohnanyi and the dismissal of Oster in early April 1943. Oster's group operated incautiously in spite of Nebe's warnings since 1942 that the Gestapo was preparing to strike.⁷⁶ Investigators from the *Reich* Military Court found that Dohnanyi and Dietrich Bonhöffer working in the Munich *Abwehr* helped fourteen Jews to escape into Switzerland as *Abwehr* agents, an operation originally called 'V7.' The Gestapo also charged that the 'agents' smuggled foreign exchange for profit. Corruption within the *Abwehr* made its agents the objects of criminal investigation. Gisevius explains that " ... unfortunately they [the Gestapo and military police] uncovered a number of personal missteps by a leading member of the *Abwehr* - who had no connection at all with the Oster circle or the rescue of the Jews."⁷⁷ The military's chief judge, Alexander Kraell, appointed judge advocate Manfred Roeder, a loyal Nazi, to lead the investigation into the *Fall Depositenkasse* [Sub-Branch Case] named for the Swiss bank account opened by an exporter named Wilhelm Schmidhuber on behalf of Dohnanyi's 'V7' Jews.⁷⁸ Since Schmidhuber also acted as liaison during the Vatican exchanges in 1939-40, his arrest was a

⁷⁶ Gisevius, 473.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 475.

⁷⁸ Gisevius was responsible for receiving some of these Jews in Switzerland and providing for their needs. Eberhard Bethge, Dietrich Bonhöffer (New York, 1970), 653, describes Gisevius meeting one of them upon arrival in Basle in September 1942. Fuhrer, 161, mentions the rescue operation and names several Gisevius contacts. Balzer, 140; Karl Bartz, The Downfall of the German Secret Service (London, 1956), 104; Klemperer, 399 note 39.

major threat to Oster's network and to Canaris. Schmidhuber, originally arrested for smuggling, soon implicated Oster, Dohnanyi and others in treasonable contacts with foreign powers. In Gisevius's version of the episode,

"A Bavarian industrialist, a member of the *Abwehr* in Munich, had wormed his way into the confidence of Doctor von Dohnanyi and had offered his services in political work. In a mutual exchange of opinions the industrialist had learned more than was necessary. Arrested for smuggling foreign exchange, he had tried to use his knowledge to extort protection from Canaris. When Canaris indignantly refused, the man had testified to what he knew. Thus, the Gestapo, among other things, found out about Joseph Müller's and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's negotiations. The report sounded so sensational that at first the Gestapo chiefs, Kaltenbrunner and [Heinrich] Müller - Gestapo Müller, as he was called - refused to believe it." ⁷⁹

The Gestapo and SS-SD now had the key to displacing Canaris's *Abwehr* as the Reich's intelligence service and the unraveling of Oster's secret network began with Roeder's arrest of von Dohnanyi and Oster's relief on 5 April 1943. During the investigation, Schmidhuber identified Gisevius as part of an *Abwehr* network that contacted foreign powers. According to Roeder's postwar version of Schmidhuber's statement,

"Vice-consul Gisevius had, at their most recent meeting in Switzerland only a few days earlier, poured out his heart to him, Schmidhuber, about the irresolute conduct of Admiral Canaris, who was now making trouble for him, Gisevius, although he should be looking out for himself. He had betrayed the [German] Voronezh offensive to the Russians. Oster, too, had informed the Dutch military attache' about the attack in the West, inclusive of Holland, prior to the said attack. Gisevius had been extremely angry at the time." ⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Gisevius, 474; See Höhne, *Canaris*, 498-508, for a more complete account. The 'industrialist' Gisevius refers to is Schmidhuber who was actually a Bavarian wine importer.

⁸⁰ Höhne, *Canaris*, 514, citing deposition by Manfred Roeder, 9 May 1947, *Akten der Staatsanwaltschaft am Landgericht Lüneburg* (LSTA), *Criminal Proceedings Against Dr. Manfred Roeder*, 15 vols., vol II, 201. See

This implies that Gisevius opposed giving warnings to foreign governments in the West in 1939-1940 as well as the Soviets about German plans and raises the prospect that Canaris could have sent him to Switzerland as a nuisance or Canaris may have thought Gisevius was too indiscreet to remain in Germany. Roeder's statement could also be part of a postwar smear against the 'traitor' Gisevius and seems inconsistent with Gisevius's later activities.

Gisevius refused to confirm Schmidhuber's allegations at Roeder's interview with him in mid-May 1943, claiming instead that he had merely disagreed with Canaris over 'jurisdiction.' Gisevius refused to sign the interrogation transcript the next day on the advice of his friend and fellow *Abwehr* conspirator, Franz-Eccard von Bentivegni. Gisevius denied all previous acknowledgment of disagreements with Canaris. Sack and Bentivegni induced him to lodge an official complaint against Roeder to diminish the effect of anything he may have divulged. Gisevius thus joined a chorus of *Abwehr* voices seeking Roeder's

also Karl Balzer, 20. Juli, 185. If Höhne, *Canaris*, 503-504, is correct, the conversation between Gisevius and Schmidhuber that Roeder refers to would have occurred sometime in the summer of 1942, since Schmidhuber had been in hiding in Italy in October and in custody since November 1942. Schmidhuber learned of the Vatican contacts through Josef Müller who asked him to help with them in 1939-40. Roeder's statement is vague about whether Gisevius was angry about Oster's warnings in 1939-40, which Gisevius had known about at the time and may have participated in (See note 46 above.), or whether Gisevius disapproved of passing German offensive plans to the Russians, (no conclusive evidence of this has come to light), or whether he was angry over something else such as an attempt to discipline him for abusing his position in Switzerland. Gisevius, in a fit of anger, may have revealed too much to Schmidhuber. His position would permit currency smuggling with Schmidhuber and others. Fuhrer, 160-162, depicts a partial reconstruction of Gisevius's financial activities by Swiss counterintelligence.

removal from the case. ⁸¹ According to Gisevius this resulted in Roeder's promotion, dismissal from the case, and transfer to Salonika. Gisevius's version of the episode may be an attempt to hide a serious indiscretion, but not a betrayal of his friends and there is evidence that Gisevius's behavior disrupted the investigation, although the cloud of suspicion over the *Abwehr* never lifted. ⁸²

⁸¹ Höhne, Canaris, 525-526; Bartz, 112; Gisevius, 478, states

"... Those two days when I was interrogated by Roeder under constant threats of arrest, still seem to me the most exciting. It was with great hesitation that I obeyed his summons to testify, but my remaining away would have badly incriminated Oster. ... For a full day I listened, a doubting Thomas, to the questions and recriminations that Roeder put to me with the spiteful smile of one who knew more than he cared to say. On the afternoon of the second day, when I was called upon to take the oath, I suddenly refused to testify. To the utter amazement of Roeder, I asserted that Field Marshal Keitel had just forbidden me to testify on such 'political' matters which concerned only 'internal conditions of the service.' The interrogation had to be broken off for an hour while they checked up on this assertion of mine, and that was the last I ever saw of Roeder."

Using the hour delay to get Chief Magistrate Sack's intervention to gain a twenty-four hour reprieve from arrest,

"In great haste I dictated a detailed complaint in which I demonstrated that the questions Roeder had put to me were directed against neither Dohnanyi, Oster, nor Canaris, but in reality against Field Marshal Keitel in his capacity as supreme chief of the *Abwehr*."

Gisevius implies that making the investigation appear to be a threat to the army leadership was his initiative alone. This could have been a ploy to protect his friends or an effort to conceal his own slips.

Elizabeth Chowaniec, Der 'Fall Dohnanyi' 1943-45: Widerstand, Militärjustiz, SS-Willkür (München, 1991), 39, 65. Bancroft, 194-195, recalls that Gisevius told her, probably in early 1944, that

"I've had some very narrow escapes. ... Last March, for instance. They had me up before a court then. They had in my dossier a verbatim description of a row I'd had with Canaris as a result of which Canaris did not speak to me for three months. Everything in my dossier was true, but for some reason they didn't believe it."

⁸² Hassell Diaries, 317, entry of 2 August 1943, indicates that Hassell stayed abreast of developments concerning the ongoing Dohnanyi case and received a verbal report of investigator complaints to Canaris against Gisevius.

Gisevius took advantage of the turmoil resulting from bureaucratic wrangling and Roeder's removal to slip back into Switzerland where he remained in spite of receiving several 'official or friendly' invitations to return to Germany.⁸³ After May 1943 he could no longer serve as courier between the anti-Nazis in Berlin and Zurich.

When Hitler removed Canaris as *Abwehr* chief on 11 February 1944 and placed the agency under Himmler's control, the SS leader inherited its personnel including those who secretly opposed the regime. Gisevius makes a vigorous attempt to distance himself from any responsibility for Canaris's fall by blaming Gestapo-SS plotting and the 'industrialist' Schmidhuber's behavior. Gisevius's evasiveness about the affair could conceal probable involvement in financial irregularities which drew the attention of military judicial authorities and caused a falling out with Canaris over his activities. The available evidence is inconclusive.

Colonel Georg Hansen, a Canaris confidant and fellow conspirator, became chief of the weakened *Abwehr* after Canaris's dismissal. Hansen appointed another *Abwehr* anti-Nazi, Eduard Waetjen consul in the Zurich consulate-general so that the Beck-Goerdeler group in Berlin could maintain contact with Gisevius.⁸⁴ Gisevius and Hansen used the scandals created by

⁸³ Gisevius, 478, adds that "When I did not respond to those overtures I was asked to come to France." This may be the refusal to travel to Bordeaux he referred to in his conversations with Bancroft, 194-195. See Balzer, 225 and note 67 above.

⁸⁴ Gisevius, 479-480; Klemperer, 75 note 177; Klemperer, 320, notes that it was Waetjen who had persuaded a reluctant Gaevernitz to meet with

defecting German diplomats to their mutual advantage in stalling the efforts to get him to return to Germany.⁸⁵ When Waetjen fell under suspicion in early 1944, Hansen used Strünk as the main contact with Gisevius in Switzerland.

Strünk visited Gisevius on 15 February, 4 May, 6 June, and 8 July 1944.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, as a result of their meetings with Dulles, Gisevius and Waetjen became more aware than their friends in Berlin of Western determination to adhere to the unconditional surrender formula for Germany. In April and May 1944 Gisevius and Waetjen passed on to Dulles the renewed desire of the Beck-Goerdeler group to negotiate exclusively with the West after overthrowing Hitler while continuing to hold the eastern front. This approach, similar to all previous ones, received no encouragement.⁸⁷ On 9 June Strünk carried Gisevius's messages

Gisevius in late 1942. Gaevernitz then introduced Gisevius to Dulles. See note 62 above.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 479. Gisevius states that "For almost a year Hansen succeeded in convincing his new superiors that he was making the most strenuous efforts to get me back into Germany without a scandal." The defection of German diplomats in Turkey created embarrassment for the Nazis in 1944.

⁸⁶ Hoffmann, History, 237, citing Gisevius interview of 8 September 1972, Gisevius pocket diary of 1944: Spiegelbild, 503-504.

⁸⁷ Gisevius, 480, 482-483, and Foreign Relations, 510-513. Gisevius and Waetjen passed on to Dulles a proposal to ease Allied passage into Western Europe. This plan envisioned an amphibious landing on the German North Sea coast and an airborne assault on Berlin to help the anti-Nazi military units to eliminate the Nazi government. Meanwhile, German army units loyal to the conspirators would secure Bavaria and dispose of the Nazis there. See Balfour, 148; Balzer, 229-230; Ritter, 273-274; Hoffmann, History, 747-748 and Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 364-365; Klemperer, 378 and 422 note 422. Gisevius and Waetjen may have exceeded their instructions when they presented the plan to Dulles as though Beck had approved it. Beck had refused to do so in March. In April Adam Trout zu Solz urged Waetjen and Gisevius to break off talks with Dulles about Beck's and Goerdeler's wish to be informed whether the Allies would be interested in

to Beck and Hansen that the opportunity for negotiations with the Allies 'no longer existed and ... there was no longer any sense in preliminary discussions; it was now time to act.' ⁸⁸

According to Gisevius, Strünk warned him on 9 July that Himmler had ordered that he be returned to Germany by any means. Hansen " ... had skillfully covered up my refusal to return, but if I did not obey an induction order, Colonel Hansen would undoubtedly be held responsible." Gisevius says that Hansen suggested that he find a physician to certify that he was undergoing an operation or had an accident. Gisevius, however, pressed Strünk about the preparations for a strike against Hitler. He wanted to be on hand but had been ordered to stay in Switzerland. ⁸⁹

Deciding on 10 July to go to Berlin after all, Gisevius visited the consulate-general where " ... my appearance aroused considerable surprise" and "The consul was even more surprised when I explained to him the purpose of my visit." After nearly a year of resisting a recall to Germany he now wanted a return visa. He left behind with Waetjen a lengthy memorandum for Dulles to be given to him after his departure describing the European and German situation to which he and his friends looked forward if the *putsch* succeeded. ⁹⁰ In Bern he visited the chief of the Swiss

having Germans open the Western front to ease passage for the American and British forces into Germany.

⁸⁸ Gisevius, 491.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 491-492.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 493; According to Bancroft, 202, Gisevius phoned to tell her that he "would be going away for a few days" and that 'Homer' [Waetjen]

police department, Doctor Heinrich Rothmund, who, as Gisevius noted,

“ ... for months had handled ... Strünk's requests for visitor visas. He was understanding and helpful this time, too, when I asked him to make out a return visa for me without going through the formality of inquiry at the German Embassy.” ⁹¹

Because of Strünk's courier visa and Gisevius's diplomatic visa, it never occurred to German border officials to check their lists of wanted men as Gisevius slipped back into Germany on 11 July. At the border town of Weil his unexpected appearance startled and frightened Frau Strünk who had come from Berlin to meet her husband. ⁹² Gisevius hid on the train as it moved north and east toward Berlin. He left the Strünks and the train at Potsdam to board a commuter train and at Zehlendorf, got off and walked to Helldorf's home.⁹³ Aware that Gisevius always planned his return to coincide with the *putsch*, on 12 July Dulles reported to OSS London that “Dramatic developments may be pending up north.” ⁹⁴ As Gisevius returned to Germany after more than a year's absence he encountered a changed political landscape within the resistance.

would give her some more of his manuscript. Since Gisevius was supposed to remain in Switzerland, the memorandum must have been his own initiative. Bancroft says it contained little new. Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 608.

⁹¹ Ibid., 493; Fuhrer, 161.

⁹² Ibid., 494.

⁹³ Gisevius, 506, identifies the Hotel Excelsior as Helldorf's residence.

⁹⁴ Foreign Relations, 510-513; Hoffmann, History, 745-749, 751-752; Persico, 76.

The oppositionists, under Helmut von Moltke's and Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg's guidance, began planning in 1943-44 a supra-party movement which would include Communists for the first time, a development that Gisevius found disturbing. Gisevius asserts that Oster's fall resulted in an ideological power struggle within the resistance of which most remained unaware.⁹⁵ Confirmed Socialists, such as Julius Leber and Adolf Reichwein, came to the fore and the older conservative resistance around Goerdeler and his friends, finding itself superseded, disapproved of developments. The *Kreisau* Circle around Count Helmut James von Moltke and other groups of younger resisters viewed Goerdeler and his political allies as reactionaries. Furthermore, the entire conspiracy was in a precarious position when Gisevius returned due to the arrest of several members of the *Kreisau* Circle in January-February and the more recent arrests of two of its Socialist members shortly after a meeting with the Communists in late-June.⁹⁶ This set the stage for a clash between Stauffenberg and Gisevius that reverberated long after the war.

During his 12 July visit to Helldorf, Gisevius learned that an assassination planned for the previous day, 11 July, had been called off because Göring and Himmler had not appeared with Hitler and the assassin, Colonel Stauffenberg, wanted to get them together. Helldorf updated him on what he knew of the plan to

⁹⁵ Gisevius, 487; Zeller, 160. For a summary of political developments, see Hoffmann, *History*, 360-371. *Hassell Diaries*, 283, and *Vom andern Deutschland*, 295, contain references to the political relations between the Goerdeler supporters and those of von Moltke.

⁹⁶ Balzer, 250-251.

overthrow the regime. After the assassination, General Olbricht would order Helldorf to place the Berlin police under *Wehrmacht* control. Helldorf would paralyze the police during the crucial hours between the assassination and the time the military could surround all important buildings. Nebe made similar preparations for the Criminal Police.

Helldorf complained that Stauffenberg kept him away from Beck and avoided meeting with him. Under Stauffenberg's influence, Count Fritz von der Schulenburg, long Helldorf's assistant police chief, began hiding some *coup* plans from him and Helldorf doubted Schulenburg's assurances that all *coup* planning was adequate.⁹⁷

Afterward, Helldorf took Gisevius to the Strunks' basement apartment at *Nürnbergstrasse* 31 where he hid until 20 July.⁹⁸ Hansen would visit him that evening (12-13 July) but Nebe would not be free to see him until the next day since Helldorf had arranged with Olbricht for Nebe to visit the War Ministry to brief him on plans for the police during the *coup*.⁹⁹ To head off any possible confrontation with Hansen over his disobedience in coming to Berlin, Gisevius visited Beck. He suggests that Beck had

⁹⁷ Gisevius, 497-498; Hoffmann, *History*, 381 and *Stauffenberg*, 409; Ritter, 285; Albert Krebs, *Fritz-Dietlof Graf von der Schulenburg: zwischen Staatsraison und Hochverrat* (Hamburg, 1964), 157.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 498.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 506.

eagerly anticipated his arrival and then urged him to contact Stauffenberg.¹⁰⁰ Gisevius writes that

“Beck asked me to get in touch with Stauffenberg as quickly as possible. ... He had borne the entire burden of practical preparations. After the elimination of Oster, his had been the only whole-hearted work to be carried on in the OKW.”¹⁰¹

Later, Gisevius contacted his old friend Goerdeler and heard more complaints about Stauffenberg. According to Gisevius, Goerdeler charged that Stauffenberg violated the agreed division of labor between civilian and military conspirators, in which military plotters would confine themselves to purely technical preparations for execution of the revolt, by intruding into the political plans.¹⁰² Goerdeler told him that Stauffenberg tried to set Leuschner and Jakob Kaiser against him as chancellor in a post-Hitler government and that Stauffenberg’s preferred candidate, Julius Leber, influenced the young colonel to seek allies on the Left, including Communists.¹⁰³ Stauffenberg insisted that Leber was to be Interior Minister and Olbricht was to be War

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 500. Introducing himself to the housekeeper as Doctor Lange, Gisevius describes Beck as looking up from his desk in surprise and then exclaiming “Well, at last!” and having expected him for days. Gisevius writes that “Stauffenberg had frequently assured him that I would be on time.” Gert Buchheit, Ludwig Beck: Ein preußischer General (München, 1964), 323.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 501.

¹⁰² Ibid., 502-503. Zeller, 296-297, and others consider this inaccurate based on evidence from other conspirators. Hoffmann, History, 365-366, 646, describes the cleavage between Goerdeler and Stauffenberg that affected Gisevius’s attitude. See also Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 410; Balfour, 170-171; Ritter, 270-271.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 504; Balzer, 250-251; Ritter, 271. Gisevius and other conservatives objected to inclusion of the trade unions. Gisevius was shocked to find Stauffenberg now the central figure of the resistance.

Minister. Gisevius asserts that Goerdeler wanted him to be his assistant secretary in the chancellery and to temporarily administer the police forces in the new government. ¹⁰⁴

In his meeting with Hansen, Olbricht, and Stauffenberg at the Strunks' on 12-13 July, Gisevius depicts leading members of the resistance as having expected and desired him to disobey orders to remain in Switzerland. ¹⁰⁵ Gisevius argued that they could no longer evade the unconditional surrender formula which would result in total occupation and sought a 'western solution' - that is occupation by the Western Powers. ¹⁰⁶ Gisevius's depiction of Stauffenberg as a dictatorial, anti-Western, pro-Soviet military leader resulted from Stauffenberg's determination to exclude him from the inner circle of plotters. Stauffenberg's distrust of the intelligence and police officials long involved in plotting spawned resentment in Gisevius. ¹⁰⁷

Nebe, in a visit to Gisevius's hideout, expressed his skepticism about the chances of the plot's success when he described his visit to the War Ministry to see Olbricht for coordination of police action with the planned military revolt.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 506. Gisevius writes "Since that office had been intended for me since 1938, I asked him [Goerdeler] to settle this question with Beck, who had requested me for his chief assistant." Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 409.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 507-508. Gisevius describes Hansen as overjoyed at his decision to disobey orders to stay in Switzerland, asserting that Hansen cordially greeted him at his 12-13 July meeting with "I knew you would come."

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 509; Buchheit, 329.

¹⁰⁷ Rudolf Pechel, Deutscher Widerstand (Erlenbach, 1947), 181; Hoffmann, History, 605-607.

Olbricht showed him Berlin maps which he saw were those used in earlier plotting since they had notes Nebe himself made on them and had not been updated to reflect the changes caused by the bombing such as damaged and evacuated buildings. ¹⁰⁸

Gisevius claims to have received advance warnings from Helldorf on 17 July about the unreliability of Major Ernst Otto Remer, commander of the *Grossdeutschland* guards battalion, which Stauffenberg was counting on to help the revolt until more *Wehrmacht* troops could be moved into position. Helldorf reported that the acting *Gauleiter* of Berlin, in a visit, expressed confidence in Major Remer's political reliability. An agitated Helldorf asked Gisevius to arrange a meeting with Beck to complain. ¹⁰⁹

Gisevius portrays himself as the person all the survivors of Oster's circle looked to for correcting the deficiencies in Stauffenberg's plans. Through alleged conversations with Hansen, Goerdeler, Helldorf, and Nebe, he depicts a general lack of confidence in Stauffenberg. ¹¹⁰ He leaves himself an 'out' by saying that this was in contrast to an earlier period. ¹¹¹

Gisevius again visited Beck who briefed him on *coup* plans which required coordination of *Wehrmacht* and police activities

¹⁰⁸ Gisevius, 514.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 515; Hoffmann, *History*, 390-391. Gisevius spells the name as 'Roemer.'

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 512-513; Hoffmann, *History*, 661 note 135.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 515.

under Beck's direction. Gisevius writes " ... to facilitate this coordination, he would insist that I remain as his immediate assistant with the title of 'Reich Minister to the Chief of State.'" The plotters, under Stauffenberg's guidance, had devised a plan (codenamed *Valkrie* or *Valküre*) to activate the army forces within Germany, under the conspirators' control, in the guise of putting down internal disorders in the wake of Hitler's death. The reaction of General Fromm (whose signature would be required to approve the orders to activate the plan) and other commanders who knew little or nothing of the plot was critical. Beck did not share Gisevius's misgivings about Stauffenberg, although he agreed to examine Helldorf's warning about Major Remer.¹¹² Beck conferred with Stauffenberg who, Gisevius insists, refused to heed the warning.¹¹³

During a visit to Gisevius and the Strunks Nebe insisted that Himmler knew nothing of the plot and that any plan to accuse Himmler as the instigator of the *putsch* be dropped, "For by now anyone who undertook to kill Hitler would be so popular that we should merely be contributing to Himmler's prestige."¹¹⁴

Another attempt to assassinate Hitler failed on 15 July when Stauffenberg called to the other plotters at the War Ministry to

¹¹² Ibid., 517-521; See above, note 51. See Hoffmann, *History*, 301-311, for details about 'Valkyrie' plans. See *Spiegelbild*, 360, for reference to statements attributed to Goerdeler about Gisevius's position as Beck's or Goerdeler's assistant in the new government.

¹¹³ Ibid., 523.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 521-522. Padfield, 498-499, interprets this as evidence that Nebe was Himmler's agent.

see if he should go ahead and arm the bomb he had carried with him into Hitler's headquarters, although Himmler and Göring had not been present with Hitler, and they planned to eliminate all of them. However, due to a series of accidents Stauffenberg never set the bomb.¹¹⁵ Goerdeler and Gisevius awaited developments at Beck's home but departed late in the day when the expected assassination had not occurred.¹¹⁶

Gisevius depicts himself as the originator of the 'western solution' which called for the plotters to induce Field Marshals Kluge and Erwin Rommel to unilaterally surrender their forces so that Western armies could occupy Germany before the Russians arrived. Strünk assured them that they could reach Kluge through the pretext of an urgent visit using Hansen's plane, which, Strünk told Gisevius, Hansen had arranged to spirit him out of Berlin.¹¹⁷ To force Kluge to act, they would blackmail him with the threat to expose his past flirtations with the plotters. Gisevius asserts that Goerdeler, Hansen and Helldorf supported this solution when on 16 July he proposed 'his' scheme to Beck who expected to receive Stauffenberg that night.¹¹⁸ Also on 16-17 July Nebe informed

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 526. Ritter, 283-284. Helldorf told Gisevius of the day's events at the War Ministry.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 523-524. The conspirators had activated and then deactivated their alert plan, treating it as an 'exercise' on 15 July. They decided to avoid a possible premature activation of the plan for 20 July.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 526; Ritter, 285.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 527, 528, 530; Ritter, 285.

Gisevius that the Gestapo had ordered Goerdeler's arrest, but still had no inkling of Beck and the other plotters. ¹¹⁹

Gisevius reported this to Beck and then learned from him the details of Stauffenberg's report in which he attributed the failure of the 15 July assassination to General Helmut Stieff's intervention. ¹²⁰ Again Beck decided to support Stauffenberg's assassination plan rather than Gisevius's and Hansen's proposed 'Western solution.' ¹²¹ Beck assured him that he would try the 'Western solution' if Stauffenberg's plan failed again. On 18 July Gisevius vainly urged Beck to take over military control of the plot. ¹²² However, Beck still felt he owed loyal support to Stauffenberg. ¹²³ Beck informed him that the next assassination attempt was to be on 20 July and on 19 July Beck suggested that Gisevius should stay with Helldorf while waiting for the signal that the operation was starting and then accompany Helldorf to the War Ministry to see General Olbricht. That evening Nebe and

¹¹⁹ Gisevius, 530, says he learned of the arrest order on 16 July. Ritter, 286, 288; Balfour, 171; Klemperer, 384; Buchheit, 331; Hoffmann, 661, note 133; Nebe admitted to the Nazi Peoples' Court that on 17 or 18 July he had warned Gisevius of the proposed arrest. See Spiegelbild, 287 and 363.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 527, 531. According to Gisevius, before leaving for Leipzig to visit his family, Goerdeler urged him to plead with Beck for their 'Western solution.'

¹²¹ Ibid., 532.

¹²² Ibid., 533; Schramm, 50, 274.

¹²³ Ibid., 534. Gisevius states that Beck said "You must know what a bundle of nerves Stauffenberg is. He has already threatened twice not to set off the bomb"

Helldorf visited Gisevius to discuss police measures for the next day.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Ibid., 535.

The Reckoning 20 July 1944 and the Aftermath

On 20 July Gisevius left his hideout in the Strünk's cellar for Helldorf's office arriving at around 1100 where a fellow conspirator, Count Gottfried von Bismarck-Schönhausen, administrator of Potsdam, joined them. Shortly after noon Major Egbert von Hayessen, Olbricht's liaison officer, arrived with the same maps that had so disturbed Nebe a few days before to inquire about what help could be expected from the police. Helldorf replied that the agreed plan was that the police would be completely restrained for the first few hours until the military could occupy all important buildings. Gisevius asked Helldorf if the police could not do what was apparently expected of them even though it changed the plan but Helldorf stuck to his position. The officer left with Helldorf's promise to abide by the original plan.¹ Around 1300 Helldorf, anxious for news of developments, began pressing Gisevius to telephone Nebe for information but Gisevius, having already arranged for Nebe to call if he had news, delayed until about 1355. When Gisevius asked to see him, Nebe replied that he was too busy because he was giving instructions to two detectives who were to fly with *SS-Obergruppenführer* Ernst

¹ Gisevius, 537; Hayessen met Helldorf to discuss the details of providing Criminal Police officers for the raiding parties which were to arrest the Reich ministers and Helldorf had summoned Gisevius to participate in this conversation. Helldorf was to keep the police alerted but in their barracks. The police were to cooperate with the army and set up barriers and controls in key areas. When sufficient troops were available they would form into raiding parties to seize individual agencies of the Reich and to arrest the most important officials. Nebe would provide Criminal Police officers as guides.

Kaltenbrunner to Hitler's headquarters in Rastenburg, East Prussia to conduct an initial investigation of 'something strange.'² Yielding to Gisevius's pleas, Nebe agreed to see him but the necessity to use coded phrases over the telephone caused a misunderstanding that sent Nebe to the wrong place and prevented their meeting as Nebe had to return to his office to avoid arousing suspicion. During the next two hours Helldorf apparently attended his conferences and went through the motions of conducting police business while Gisevius and Bismarck anxiously waited for some news.

Gisevius writes "At four o'clock Helldorf at last rushed excitedly into our room. 'It's starting!' he exclaimed." General Olbricht had just telephoned him to stand by for an important message within the next hour. Then around 1630 Olbricht ordered Helldorf to the War Ministry to receive instructions in the name of Colonel-General Friedrich Fromm, the Replacement (or Home) Army commander, placing the police forces under military control. Gisevius and Bismarck accompanied Helldorf to the War Ministry.³ In Olbricht's office they met Stauffenberg, his aide, Lieutenant Werner von Haeften, and Beck who had all just arrived.⁴ Olbricht gave Helldorf the official order placing the

² Ibid., 538. Stauffenberg's bomb exploded between 1240 and 1250. Fitzgibbon, 20 July, 186, considers it possible that Nebe informed Himmler about the plot. Padfield, Himmler, 505, maintains that Nebe was Himmler's agent. Gestapo records, Spiegelbild, and Nazi Peoples Court records indicate that Nebe was a conspirator. Hoffmann, History, 661.

³ Ibid., 540; Balzer, 37; Hoffmann, History, 424, puts their arrival time at about 1700. Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 430.

⁴ Hoffmann, History, 422, states that Stauffenberg and Haeften arrived about 1630; they had flown from East Prussia after exploding the bomb at Hitler's headquarters.

police under OKW control, but as Helldorf was about to leave Beck intervened to say that some reports, including a phone conversation with Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel at Hitler's headquarters, indicated that Hitler was not dead. Beck wanted everyone fully informed of possible setbacks to the plot.⁵ Stauffenberg described the scene at Hitler's headquarters immediately after the blast with bodies carried out of the conference room where he had set the bomb and Olbricht declared Keitel a liar. Beck urged all of them to continue as though Hitler was dead and Helldorf left to carry out his instructions. Gisevius, who observed all of this, suggested to Bismarck that as administrative president of Potsdam that he should leave to execute his part of the plan.⁶ Olbricht and Stauffenberg left the room for Colonel-General Fromm's office to confront him with the choice of backing the plotters or of being replaced by Colonel-General Erich Hoepner, another officer in the conspiracy, leaving Beck and Gisevius alone.⁷ Confronting Fromm with the demand

⁵ Gisevius, 542 and 544, states that Olbricht first approached Fromm " ... shortly after two o'clock." However, Gisevius's times appear to be off when considering other evidence. Hoffmann, History, 416, 418, 422, accepts Gisevius's assertion that Olbricht was tardy in executing the plans for the revolt. At around 1600 when Olbricht first pressed Fromm to issue the orders to activate the reserves under plan *Valkure*, Fromm called Hitler's headquarters and heard from Keitel that Hitler was alive. A confused Olbricht left and waited for Stauffenberg who arrived at a Berlin airfield, probably the Rangsdorf Airport, about 1600 to find nothing done. Olbricht made the decision to await Stauffenberg's arrival from East Prussia to avoid a premature activation of the '*Valkure*' alert.

⁶ Gisevius, 543.

⁷ Hoffmann, History, 413-419, presents the most comprehensive account of the day's events, frequently relying upon interviews with

that he issue the pre-planned code word '*Valkure*' to reserve forces under pretext of suppressing internal disorders, Olbricht urged him to approve the issuance of orders, many already sent, to activate the reserves. Olbricht and Stauffenberg informed General Fromm that Hitler was dead, and when he refused to cooperate, locked him in a nearby room, and returned to the office in which Beck and Gisevius waited.⁸ Meanwhile, Beck expressed concern about Witzleben's whereabouts; he was to assume overall military command of the forces designated to overthrow the regime.

While he was alone with Beck, Gisevius says, he asked how Stauffenberg was back from East Prussia so soon, but Beck urged calm as there was nothing to do but hope that all would be well. Gisevius states,

"He still assumed that something had gone wrong at headquarters, so that word of the assassination had not come through in time and Stauffenberg had brought it when he returned. It is sad that in the few hours of life that were left to him he was not spared the tragic knowledge that they [Stauffenberg and Olbricht] had deliberately deceived him."⁹

The Rastenburg communications center near Hitler's eastern headquarters had not been blown up as planned leaving the headquarters free to communicate with the outside world and capable of disrupting the conspirators' plans.¹⁰ Gisevius,

Gisevius as well as his memoirs. Hoffmann finds that the evidence of other survivors broadly confirms Gisevius's account of the events of 20 July.

⁸ Gisevius, 546-547.

⁹ Ibid., 543.

¹⁰ Ibid., 544-545.

probably expressing resentment at being excluded and unable to restrain his anxiety that the plot would miscarry, writes "Beck and I remained alone - the only civilians among all these uniformed men. It was rather depressing to sit and feel wholly deserted, while all around us history was being made."¹¹ According to Gisevius, Beck asked Olbricht about security for the building, received vague replies, and then reminded Olbricht that the soldiers would have 'died for Fritsch.' Still, Beck resisted Gisevius's urgings to take more control of what appeared to be a failing revolt.

Later, when Fromm asked to be released, giving his word of honor that he would take no action against the plot, and when Olbricht and Beck seemed ready to grant the request, Gisevius angrily responded that Fromm deserved to be shot. To Olbricht's comment that Fromm would keep his word of honor, Gisevius asserts that he responded:

"What does a word of honor mean? ... I reminded them that Stauffenberg himself had broken his word of honor; a few months ago he had given Fromm his word of honor not to take action against Hitler. Consequently, Fromm in his turn would not feel obliged to keep his. In fact, having not decided for us, he must necessarily act against us. I had not the slightest intention of insulting Stauffenberg, but he took my parallel as a personal affront."¹²

This improbable exchange is another indicator of Gisevius's displeasure at Stauffenberg's decision to exclude him from the

¹¹ Ibid., 547.

¹² Ibid., 549. This is inaccurate since Gisevius had been in Switzerland for over a year and could not have known Stauffenberg before their first meeting on 12-13 July 1944. This is one of many contradictions in Gisevius's memoirs.

inner circle of plotting. After further discussion, Beck ordered that Fromm be held.

Gisevius then brought up the need for further instructions for the police since at least an hour had passed since Helldorf left. Gisevius asserts that in his request for some details of the revolt's execution, he irritated Stauffenberg so much that Beck, to speak alone with Stauffenberg, ordered everyone out of the room. ¹³

While Beck conferred with Stauffenberg, Gisevius went to Olbricht's waiting room where he briefly spoke to fellow conspirators Count Fritz Schulenburg, Police Vice-President of Berlin, and Count Peter Yorck and then saw Stauffenberg passing by the door. Gisevius wanted to see Beck again but Olbricht rushed in to report that Keitel was telephoning and he wanted Beck's decision on whether to accept the call. Beck thought not but Gisevius urged them not to forego a chance to get information about Hitler. Olbricht decided to take the call but Keitel gave up before the switchboard operators could complete connections. ¹⁴

Shortly afterward, SS *Oberführer* (Colonel) Humbert Achamer-Pfiffrather came to question Stauffenberg about his sudden departure from Hitler's headquarters but the conspirators confined him in a room of the Ministry. Since the SS man entered the War Ministry without a large escort, it seemed that the Berlin

¹³ Ibid., 549.

¹⁴ Ibid., 550. This event is absent from historical accounts, such as Hoffmann, History.

authorities remained unaware of the *coup*. In vain Gisevius pleaded with Stauffenberg to shoot the SS man.¹⁵

Between 1800 and 1900, General Hoepner requested Olbricht's help in dealing with a recalcitrant General Joachim von Kortzfleisch, commander of the Berlin District, who answered a summons to the War Ministry and who insisted that he had come to see Fromm. When he refused to listen to Olbricht's and Beck's appeals to join the revolt and their arguments that the oath to Hitler was invalid, the plotters confined Kortzfleisch in another room in the War Ministry.

Fearing the collapse of the revolt, Gisevius claims that he proposed to Stauffenberg the forming of an officer's detachment to attack Gestapo headquarters in *Prinz Albrechtstrasse* and other key locations to eliminate Heinrich [Gestapo] Müller and Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels. Stauffenberg had already considered such an action and promised to talk to Colonel Fritz Jäger, commandant of an Armored Troops School, and fellow conspirator.¹⁶ It is more likely that Jäger was already tasked to assault Gestapo headquarters and the Propaganda Ministry and that Gisevius's interference went unappreciated.¹⁷

Gisevius received a telephone call from Helldorf's adjutant whom the guards refused to admit into the building. Helldorf had sent the man to ask about the progress of the action but Gisevius

¹⁵ Ibid., 551; Hoffmann, *History*, 494-495, believes this was after 1700.

¹⁶ Ibid., 552; Hoffmann, *History*, 494-495; Balzer, 59.

¹⁷ Hoffmann, *History*, 495.

had little information. Feeling this to be inadequate, the adjutant requested that Gisevius return with him to Helldorf's office. Since he had little to do at the War Ministry, Gisevius notified Olbricht's adjutant and departed for Helldorf's office where he also encountered Nebe.¹⁸ Both officials confronted him with the disturbing news that although the police apparatus had been frozen for two hours, nothing seemed to be happening and there were no further instructions; they were still waiting for Lieutenant General Paul von Hase, the plotters' designated commander of troops in Berlin, to ask for the police officers earmarked for the operation and further delays were dangerous. The tardiness of coordination between police and army and the probable defection of Major Otto Remer's guards battalion was creating problems as Helldorf expected. Nebe reassured them that up to 1730 the Berlin Gestapo seemed unaware of the revolt.¹⁹ However, Helldorf learned a few minutes before from Heinrich [Gestapo] Müller, who still had no suspicion of Helldorf, that he knew of a revolt in progress but Hitler was about to broadcast to the nation and SS reinforcements were on the way to Berlin.²⁰

When Gisevius returned to the War Ministry a few minutes later, he reported his conversation with Helldorf to Beck, Stauffenberg, and Schulenburg. Stauffenberg wanted Hase to

¹⁸ Gisevius, 552, puts his arrival time at 1800. Hoffmann, History, 495, places Gisevius's arrival time at around 1900.

¹⁹ Ibid., 553.

²⁰ Ibid., 553; Hoffmann, History, 495. The Propaganda Ministry at 1830 announced that Hitler would broadcast to the nation later.

contact Helldorf.²¹ Beck saw the need to tell the nation of the opposition's goals before Hitler could preempt them but General Fritz Lindemann, director of artillery in replacement army headquarters and the planned speaker, was unavailable.²² Beck asked Gisevius to make a radio statement for the opposition but Gisevius demurred, thinking that Goerdeler or Beck would be better. However, Beck insisted that since he was not free to do so and Goerdeler was not present, Gisevius would have to do it. As Gisevius prepared a draft, he was subject to continuous interruption and questioning about the attitude of the police. He could hear the activities in the next room as Stauffenberg answered the telephones that now rung incessantly while he, Beck, Olbricht and others pleaded with and cajoled outlying military commands and their staffs to obey their instructions rather than the ones now issuing from Hitler's headquarters.²³ Beck's attempt to induce Kluge to lead a revolt of generals on the collapsing western front failed as Kluge claimed that he needed to consult with his staff before taking such a drastic step.²⁴

²¹ Hoffmann, History, 496. It was too late for by this time Major Remer had his telephone conversation with Hitler (in which Hitler had given the Major the authority to arrest the plotters) between 1935 and 2000 and troops no longer took orders from Hase.

²² Hoffmann, History, 496, states that Lindemann was on his way from Zossen to Berlin, but Gisevius, 555, implies that he deserted the plotters. Balzer, 60; Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 440.

²³ Hoffmann, History, 496-497.

²⁴ Gisevius, 557-558; Balzer, 81.

Gisevius made another offer to Stauffenberg around 1930 to accompany, as a police expert, any team of officers to attack the Gestapo headquarters and other Nazi organizations to kill Goebbels and Müller.²⁵ With his knowledge of the Gestapo came fear and a realization that the situation required more drastic measures than those underway. "We've got to have some corpses now!" he stated.²⁶ After years of disappointments he saw the chances for overthrowing the regime ebbing away.

At last Witzleben arrived from Zossen to greet Stauffenberg with "A fine mess this is!" and then to confer with Beck in a heated conversation that took several minutes.²⁷ Stauffenberg joined them. During the officer's conversation, Colonel Merz von Quirnheim, Olbricht's Chief of Staff, informed Gisevius that Helldorf was summoning him again. However, Gisevius was disinclined to listen to Helldorf's complaints and wanted to stay to observe the results of Beck's and Witzleben's conversation. Olbricht and Hoepner urged him to go and Schulenburg joined in. This made Gisevius even more determined to stay. He opened the sliding door between the rooms wide enough for Beck to see him but Beck, preoccupied with Witzleben, waved him away. After this, Olbricht insisted that Gisevius should leave.

²⁵ Ibid., 556; Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 439.

²⁶ Ibid., 545, 549-550; Balzer, 59; Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 439.

²⁷ Hoffmann, History, 497, states that Witzleben arrived at 2000. Balzer, 60.

As Stauffenberg left Beck and Witzleben to get something from his desk, Olbricht stopped him in the corridor to complain about Gisevius's refusal to see Helldorf.²⁸ To Stauffenberg's assertion that he would not be needed during the next half-hour, Gisevius replied that he had trouble entering the building before and could not expect passage through street cordons. Stauffenberg got a pass from his desk and gave it to Gisevius. They provided a lieutenant to drive him to *Alexanderplatz*. Just then, Olbricht gave him the glad news that the guards regiment was coming to provide protection and asked him to inform Helldorf.²⁹

At *Alexanderplatz* Gisevius got out of the car some distance from Helldorf's entrance to slip into the building from the rear, but there was no sign of Gestapo vigilance. Helldorf was not there but was in his air raid shelter office on *Karlsplatz*.³⁰ Gisevius called there but since he refused to give his name for fear of compromising Helldorf, none of the switchboards would connect him. Finally he persuaded Helldorf's adjutant, who recognized his voice, to pick him up. Gisevius returned to the lieutenant whom he asked to keep his pad containing the notes for his proposed radio address until he could return to the War Ministry. The lieutenant drove off, leaving Gisevius alone at the *Alexanderplatz*.

The adjutant arrived and delivered him to Helldorf's shelter where he also unexpectedly encountered Nebe. There Gisevius

²⁸ Gisevius, 560.

²⁹ Ibid., 561.

³⁰ Ibid., 561.

learned that the plot had failed. Nebe and Helldorf reported that Major Remer and his guards battalion were on the way to arrest the plotters in the War Ministry and that Himmler was flying to Berlin. A depressed Helldorf felt vindicated in his warnings about Remer.³¹ Gisevius suggested intercepting Himmler and shooting him with a party of police officers but Helldorf and Nebe argued that if the army failed that the police had no chance in such an undertaking. Since Nebe and Helldorf could assume that their parts in the plot remained unknown but that Gisevius would never be able to explain his presence in Berlin, both urged him to disappear and Helldorf agreed to temporarily provide him a car.

Gisevius asserts that, uncertain about what action to take, he asked Helldorf if he should return to the War Ministry and Beck to which the Count replied in foul language that after years of misleading them with useless plotting the generals deserved no such loyalty.³² Despite this, Gisevius remained determined to return to the War Ministry.

Gisevius found a police car and ordered its driver to take him to the War Ministry. Repeatedly blocked by the cordons erected at various streets leading to the Ministry, he decided that he would be committing suicide. He ordered the driver to deliver him to the radio station in Charlottenburg where he intended to give his radio address. Just as they turned on to the street where the

³¹ Ibid., 563; Balzer, 60.

³² Ibid., 566.

unguarded radio station was situated, the driver refused to go further.

Gisevius was fortuitously near the *Reichkanzlerplatz* which was close to the Strunks' cellar apartment. He tore up and threw away Stauffenberg's pass and returned to the cellar. The Strunks had already heard the radio report that an assassination attempt on Hitler had failed.³³ Gisevius gave them the details of the failure. He claims to have thought that Beck and Witzleben would have escaped to Zossen to gather other officers for a final fight and that he would join them there. Beck was the only one Gisevius regretted leaving for the others had dithered and argued too much for his taste. This is unlikely as he must have been preoccupied with his own survival.

With the failure of the plot, Gisevius and his friends became fugitives. On 21 July Gisevius left the Strunks before 0700 to board a commuter train. He says "My goal was Berlin West, where I knew someone whom I had more than once had occasion to help." However, this friend could not take him in because he already had too many guests. Everyone who had a house was also sheltering others who had been bombed out and strangers were noticeable. This friend recommended that Gisevius "see a neutral diplomat who lived nearby."³⁴ His friend promised to send another foreign diplomat there whom Gisevius did not know personally "but not long before I had the opportunity to assist him

³³ Ibid., 568; This would have been about 0100 on 21 July.

³⁴ Ibid., 576.

in a situation that was highly embarrassing for him personally and for his country.”³⁵ Gisevius’s diplomatic host allowed him to stay in his home until the late afternoon of 21 July. He brought the diplomat whom Gisevius had helped earlier. However, this ‘diplomat’ now could not help Gisevius. Gisevius gave both diplomats a detailed account of the previous day’s events. He wanted to counter the Nazi claims that only ‘half a dozen’ generals and officers had participated in the revolt. According to Gisevius, the diplomat was on his way to a golf course. Gisevius accepted the diplomat’s offer to take him part of the way to a friend’s home in his car. This friend was Hans Koch who served as go-between for Gisevius and the Strünks. Gisevius got out of the car at an underpass and since he “was in the neighborhood of my former home” where he could accidentally encounter someone who could identify him, hurriedly departed the area enroute to the Kochs’.

There, he learned that the Strünks had not yet been arrested. Gisevius and Koch agreed that if questioned they would insist that Koch was simply providing shelter to a stranger who, upon arrival from Zurich, discovered that he had been bombed out of his home.

36

Using a public phone on the morning of 22 July Frau Koch called the Strünks and Gisevius later met them at a crowded suburban station. Frau Strünk, in a discussion with Nebe, learned that the Gestapo was still caught unawares and did not yet suspect

³⁵ Ibid., 577. This alleged incident is one instance of Gisevius's tendency for self-elevation.

³⁶ Ibid., 578.

Helldorf's and Nebe's roles in the plot.³⁷ Nebe warned Gisevius not to travel anywhere by railroad, but he had not yet heard Gisevius's name mentioned by the Gestapo. Gisevius was mystified about his few days reprieve. He says "I had to wait for almost ten months before I solved this mystery."³⁸ As the Gestapo entered the War Ministry to make their arrests, they found the 'one civilian' seen entering and leaving the building all day. This was another anti-Nazi, Eugen Gerstenmaier, who had arrived in Berlin on the morning of 20 July after a month-long absence. After hearing a radio report of an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Hitler, he had gone to the Ministry just a few minutes after Gisevius had left the building for good. This case of mistaken identity gave Gisevius a three day respite although it nearly cost Gerstenmaier his life.³⁹

On the morning of 23 July Gisevius went to the nearest police station on the theory that this would be the least likely place the Gestapo would look for him and, using the pretext of discussing the next air raid drill, called Helldorf over the internal police telephone system. Helldorf asked him to come to his home at 1600. During their discussion, both realized how little they knew about the status of the investigations into the assassination attempt.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 579.

³⁹ Ibid., 579-580.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 581.

The next day near the Grunewald Station, Gisevius met Strünk who now felt endangered. He wanted to flee but flight would incriminate Colonel Hansen. ⁴¹ As Strünk left, Gisevius saw former ambassador Ulrich von Hassell. In Gisevius's account Hassell was highly agitated and fearful; however, there is evidence that Gisevius expressed his bitter depression about the failure of the plot and his friends' exclusion from final planning. ⁴²

Remarkably, Gisevius continued contacts with the underground and renewed his campaign to surrender Germany to the British and Americans. A few days after the failure of the plot Gisevius managed to send a message to Dulles through a courier to Switzerland. The message read:

"... von Kluge holds the key to the situation ... (He) would be ready to cooperate with the western Allies in order to facilitate a more rapid occupation [by the Anglo-American armies] if a suitable officer ... were sent him as an intermediary. ... The Army is deeply outraged and shocked by the events which have occurred since 20th July ... it is only necessary now for the Allies to strike hard and the entire German structure will collapse." ⁴³

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Hans Royce, Germans Against Hitler (Wiesbaden, 1969), 55. Hassell's son, Wolf Ulrich von Hassell states:

"On July 24 he [Ulrich von Hassell] met Gisevius by chance in the Grunewald. Gisevius was waiting for a chance to flee. He told me later about this strange meeting. Gisevius was filled with bitterness, and deeply depressed by the failure of the last attempt at the overthrow. He complained that he and his particular friends had been excluded in the final phase of preparations, and in the planning for the future. My father saw, above anything else, the deed that had at least revealed to the world, even in the last hour, the fight being waged by the other Germany. It depressed him that now internal reproaches among the plotters were already threatening to come to the foreground."

⁴³ Anthony C. Brown, Bodyguard of Lies (New York, 1976), 763, citing Document L42251, 17 August 1944, OSS German Section, Modern Military Records, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Dulles received the message only on 17 August when it was already out of date and Gisevius's fate was unknown. ⁴⁴

With Hansen's and Helldorf's arrests on 24 July the noose closed tighter on Nebe, Gisevius, and the Strünks. Although the Gestapo thought they had the 'one civilian' who had been at the War Ministry on 20 July, they began finding evidence of Nebe's relationship with Helldorf. Nebe decided to flee on 24-25 July when he thought the Gestapo was beginning to connect him with the conspiracy. Strünk collected Gisevius and hurried him to Nebe's car. Gisevius turned to the church leaders he had known over the years for help. He writes,

"I recalled that Hans Asmussen, one of the leaders of the Confessional Church, had spoken to me years ago about a pastor in the provinces who would be able to hide me with his peasants if need be. While Nebe and Strünk drove off to pick up Frau Strünk, I looked up another pastor I knew and obtained the address and a note of introduction." ⁴⁵

Late that night (24 July) they left bombed and blacked out Berlin for "a village sixty miles beyond Potsdam." Driving under blackout conditions with rationed gasoline put severe limitations on the distance they could travel. Police patrols and militia units stopped them many times but Nebe's SS uniform made it possible to move easily through checkpoints. The uniform would become a liability once the authorities published wanted posters. ⁴⁶

They arrived in Fehrbellin, northwest of Berlin early on 25 July. Turned away from one parsonage, the party continued on to

⁴⁴ Persico, 78-79.

⁴⁵ Gisevius, 583.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 584.

a remote village (Menz) on the same day where the pastor, Reverend Reinicke, agreed to hide them. Hiding the car in dense forest underbrush they returned to the parsonage. Nebe showed Gisevius how to conceal the trail from bloodhounds; when the authorities found the car two days later and organized a search, police dogs passed by the parsonage without pausing. Nebe left behind valuables and suicide notes to confuse pursuers.⁴⁷ They burned Nebe's uniform and stayed in the area another day before hunger and closed doors convinced them that they should return to Berlin. Gisevius reasoned that the Gestapo would be less likely to search for them there, since the authorities knew they had fled to the country. The party retraced its route to Berlin and finally reached the center of Berlin after changing trains five times. Gisevius and Nebe separated from the Strunks a few hours after arriving in Berlin on 26 July.

Sometime later and by chance, Gisevius and Nebe suddenly encountered Doctor Sack, who assuming that they had come to meet with him, warned them off with the news that the Gestapo was watching him. ⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter, Gisevius and Nebe separated for the last time. The Gestapo net gathered in the anti-Nazis and their families in the weeks and months ahead and those in Gestapo hands soon implicated more of the plotters. Hansen

⁴⁷ Ibid., 585, and "Das Spiel ist aus - Arthur Nebe" Der Spiegel 14 (6 April 1950), 20-25.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 586.

allegedly testified to Gisevius's treason.⁴⁹ The Gestapo arrested Strünk on 30 August and his wife "twenty days later." Gisevius then hid with help from the anti-Nazi lawyer, Hans Koch, in August-September 1944.

The Gestapo discovery of a safe containing what amounted to the archives of the opposition, also called the 'Zossen documents', on 22 September 1944 removed the last hope that the conspirators had of hiding their plans from the regime.⁵⁰ These papers and diaries surprised the authorities by exposing the duration of a conspiracy to overthrow the government going back to 1938. Gisevius's name appeared on several of them and from these documents the government learned that Gisevius had long been considered for a post in a new government.⁵¹ The regime redoubled its efforts to find him during September and October. Sometime in August-September, Hans Koch arranged for Gisevius to hide in an apartment. There he found enforced inactivity and lack of information difficult to bear. He writes

"In mid-October I sent word to Hans Koch from my hiding place that I thought the coast was clear and could reasonably ask him to pay me a visit. Koch found out that for weeks after Strünk's arrest the Gestapo had posted five men in Strünk's house and garden in case I should turn up there."⁵²

⁴⁹ Balzer, 157; Bartz, 148. Hansen, in custody, alleged close contact between Canaris and Gisevius. Canaris, he supposedly said, also contacted the Soviets.

⁵⁰ Höhne, Canaris, 580-581.

⁵¹ Spiegelbild, 503; Bartz, 160, 164.

⁵² Gisevius, 590.

Hans Koch also told him that in mid-August the Gestapo had located Gisevius's sister 'in the country' and that she had since vanished, but Gisevius previously succeeded in getting his mother into Switzerland. The Gestapo sent a special plane to arrest a cousin who was fighting on the Baltic front.

Meanwhile, Allen Dulles used his influence to launch an operation to save Gisevius. Through a courier, Gisevius informed OSS Bern of his whereabouts and, to buy time and divert Gestapo attention away from Berlin, they circulated the rumor that he had escaped into Switzerland where Gestapo agents were soon looking for him.⁵³ After a September 1944 visit to General Donovan in newly liberated France, Dulles went to England to confer with David Bruce, chief of the OSS office in London, to urge him to devise a plan for getting Gisevius out of Germany. The plan adopted was to deliver to Gisevius in Berlin a set of documents that would allow him to pass himself off as a Gestapo official, a role which he had actually had before which would suit him. The fake documents were to be made for a 'Doctor Hoffmann' who was ordered to Switzerland on official business. The documents even included a letter with Himmler's forged signature requesting that authorities assist Doctor Hoffmann in carrying out his duties. Part of the cover was a silver warrant identity disk, a serially numbered gray medallion, which gave a Gestapo officer the power

⁵³War Report of the OSS, 280. Mosley, 183, asserts that, thanks to an OSS tipoff, the Swiss arrested a Gestapo squad sent to murder Gisevius. Bartz, 168, attributes the 'reliable report' that Gisevius had already escaped to Schellenberg's 'department.' As a result no special search was made for him.

to make arrests. For this the OSS turned to the British for help.⁵⁴ Locating a suitable photograph proved difficult. Gisevius's friends in Switzerland acquired a group photo which had to be enlarged so that a passport-size picture could be cut from it and some stolen Gestapo stationary. Gisevius's friends in the German embassy in Bern supplied von Gaevernitz with 'several models of passports.'⁵⁵

The OSS rushed this material from Switzerland to London. Upon examining the documents returned from London, Dulles's agent, Gerhard van Arkel, found that the passport lacked a critical stamp. The operation lost vital days while the documents went back to London then returned to van Arkel in Switzerland.⁵⁶

Gisevius, then in hiding at Hans Koch's, became aware of the operation to rescue him as early as October. He writes,

"Around the time of Koch's visit some good news came from Switzerland for me personally. Help was on the way. I had friends there - and friends helped. A 'book' given to intermediaries was to serve as confirmation to me that I could trust the messenger. A week passed - two, three, four. Then at last it came. I read every page over twice, three times, to see whether the text contained some hidden message ... but I learned nothing beyond what the accompanying note ... a further message would be coming 'shortly'." ⁵⁷

Gisevius heard nothing more for nearly four months. Since the Germans changed the format of their documents annually, time was running out by the time the OSS in Bern received the

⁵⁴ Persico, 191.

⁵⁵ Gisevius, 597.

⁵⁶ Persico, 193.

⁵⁷ Gisevius, 591.

corrected version of them in December 1944. From Bern the OSS had to verify that the courier connection with Berlin still existed during this period of intensive manhunts and turbulence in Germany. After two attempts, the Hamburg publisher, Henry Goverts, finally met the messenger who would smuggle the forged passport from Switzerland to hand-off to him in Constance. Originally intending to return to Hamburg and then travel to Berlin to deliver the forged passport, Goverts changed his mind when, upon re-entering his hotel, he encountered Walter Schellenberg, the new head of the *Abwehr*, in the hotel lobby. Schellenberg, knowing that Goverts was an *Abwehr* liaison, was curious about what he was doing in Constance. Deciding to quickly dispose of the incriminating documents, Goverts took the fastest train to Berlin.⁵⁸

In mid-January 1945 Gisevius developed a severe case of flu (grippe). Time was running out for him, since after 21 January, there would be no more trains for civilian passengers and all travelers would have to obtain police permits. On 20 January when Koch failed to visit as agreed Gisevius located a public telephone and called him. When a stranger answered, Gisevius thought this could be one of Koch's guests. Thinking that Koch may be on his way, Gisevius rushed back to his hide out. There, when he answered his doorbell, the woman who brought him the 'book'

⁵⁸ Ibid., 598. Another version in Mosley, 183, is that Gisevius hid in a safehouse near the Swiss border provided by Fritz Kolbe and that Kolbe brought the papers to him.

four months before asked him if “everything was all right.” When he answered ‘yes’, she vanished.

A few minutes later when he answered the doorbell again, he heard a blacked out car driving away. Someone had left a large envelope in his mailbox. When Gisevius examined the contents two things tempered his elation. His efforts to ensure that no pictures of him existed in any of the places he worked forced the Gestapo to work with an old 1932 passport picture. A Gestapo agent posing as a ‘good friend’ visited Gisevius’s mother in Zurich to secure a more recent photograph. “Only a few weeks before, they had at last found a photograph - not a passport photo, but an almost full-length portrait, and this very portrait now looked at me out of the passport.” Its one major flaw was that the Gestapo passport office generally made photographs showing only the head and shoulders. There was also no railroad ticket. His calls to Koch finally convinced him that the Kochs had been arrested and that he would have to risk purchasing the ticket himself.⁵⁹ He also feared returning to his hideout since the Gestapo would use every means to extract its location from Koch. Gisevius left his hideout before dawn and boarded a train for Stuttgart.⁶⁰ A jostling crowd made finding space difficult but Gisevius used his cover to bully his way on board. At Stuttgart he changed trains; his final destination was Saint Margraethen, but the train was rerouted to Constance. From Constance he walked to the border

⁵⁹ Ibid., 593-594.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 594.

crossing at Kreuzlingen.⁶¹ He entered the waiting room of the customs post early on 23 January 1945. Two groggy officials, a customs officer and a Gestapo man, were all that stood between Gisevius and Switzerland. His exhaustion and shabby appearance belied his cover as a Gestapo officer. After what seemed an eternity,

"They opened the border gate. I raised my arm limply in response to their greeting, for the two of them stood stiffly to see me out of the Gestapo's Germany."⁶²

Once across into Switzerland, Gisevius decided to avoid reporting to the Swiss police as a political refugee since he would be interned. Instead 'Doctor Hoffmann' told Swiss officials that he wanted to go to the German embassy. He immediately telephoned his friends who had already given him up for lost since he was days overdue. He reached Zurich where Waetjen, his mother, and Gero von Gaevernitz met him at the station.⁶³ That evening he dined with Allen Dulles and began a long 'debriefing' soon afterward.⁶⁴

Gisevius could return home in May 1945 after the collapse of the Third Reich and begin rebuilding his life. Most of his friends

⁶¹ Ibid., 595.

⁶² Ibid., 596.

⁶³ Ibid., 597.

⁶⁴Höhne, "Canaris und die Abwehr zwischen Anpassung und Opposition," Jürgen Schmädke and Peter Steinberg, eds. Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus (München, 1985), 416. This refers to a series of OSS 'Breakers [Dulles's code name for the anti-Nazi Germans]' cables for 4-11 February 1945 summarizing Gisevius's statements. Mosley, 183, states that Gisevius, Kolbe, and Dulles celebrated the escape.

had perished and Germany was occupied by the Allies, including the Soviet Union. His family had suffered at the hands of the Nazis, although the Americans rescued his sister. He provided statements to the Swiss counterintelligence ⁶⁵ as well as to the Allies about Nazi and anti-Nazi activities during the war.

The Allies had long announced their intention to try the Nazi leaders for their crimes. Within two months of the collapse of Nazi Germany, the head of the American prosecution team, Justice Jackson, met Gisevius at Wiesbaden. ⁶⁶ However, American prosecutors decided not to call Gisevius as a prosecution witness, since adequate documentary evidence was available and some of his testimony could embarrass the United States because of his work with the OSS. The American prosecution team also avoided calling witnesses who had been in politics or were expected to enter politics in the future. ⁶⁷

However, two defendants and former patrons, Wilhelm Frick and Hjalmar Schacht, decided to call Gisevius as a defense witness. Reluctantly, Gisevius journeyed to Nuremberg because he felt he owed Schacht loyalty. ⁶⁸ The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg opened trials for the surviving Nazi leaders in October 1945 and Gisevius testified for three days in April 1946.

⁶⁵ Fuhrer, 129, 134.

⁶⁶ IMT, XII, 246.

⁶⁷ R. G. Storey, "German Underground - To the Bitter End" Southwest Review 33 (1948), 92-93. Colonel Storey was a member of the American prosecution team at the International Military Tribunal.

⁶⁸ Bancroft, 239.

Observers then often credited Gisevius's testimony for its usefulness in separating true resisters from those who pretended to be, but later commentators found his testimony to be erroneous in some respects.

Gisevius was the sole witness in the Frick case, testifying on 24 April 1946.⁶⁹ On the stand he described his motives in 1933 and his efforts while in the Gestapo and later in Frick's Interior Ministry to restrict police power. He presented the Ministry as a bulwark of legal efforts to stem the tide of Nazi police abuses. However, under cross-examination he gave damaging testimony about Frick's willingness to legalize the murders of 30 June 1934 and to approve Nazi actions that nullified the law. At that point, the defendants' lawyers tried to damage his credibility by showing that he was a traitor to Germany, since he had worked with the Allies during the war. Gisevius proved extremely reluctant to discuss his wartime contacts with foreign governments and refuted efforts to show that he accepted money from the OSS, saying only that he served 'a decent Germany.'⁷⁰

Gisevius made a number of sensational charges against Göring. These charges were: (1) Göring and Goebbels plotted the arson of the *Reichstag* in February 1933 and then tried to suppress the evidence by murdering witnesses; (2) Göring and Himmler ordered the assassination of Schleicher on 30 June 1934; (3) Göring used Blomberg's marriage in a plot to replace him as

⁶⁹ IMT, XII, 167.

⁷⁰ IMT, XII, 217-218; Balzer, 225-226.

war minister in 1938. Göring was unusually sensitive about the issue of Blomberg's marriage and Gisevius was supposedly the object of threats. In particular, Göring threatened to reveal damaging testimony against Schacht if Gisevius testified about Göring's role in the Blomberg marriage.⁷¹ During a discussion of the threats, which were never resolved, Jackson characterized Gisevius as "the one representative of democratic forces in Germany."⁷²

His charge that Göring had ordered Schleicher's assassination failed to convince the court. Eugene Davidson in his study of the trial considers Gisevius's testimony that Göring plotted to get Blomberg's job to be mere conjecture.⁷³ Gisevius's testimony presenting Frick as a humanitarian administrator who defended German legal tradition also failed to convince the court. Gisevius told of an alleged Gestapo plot to murder Frick in 1934 which many observers also considered not believable.⁷⁴ Gisevius also portrayed Papen negatively as an opportunist readily collaborating with the regime.⁷⁵ Gisevius's testimony probably

⁷¹ INT, XII, 176, 178-180.

⁷² INT, XII, 177.

⁷³ Eugene Davidson, The Trial of the Germans (New York, 1966), 69, 70, 226.

⁷⁴ Davidson, 272-273, and INT, XII, 211.

⁷⁵ Franz von Papen, Memoirs (New York), 554, says: "He [Schacht] called as his principle witness Herr Gisevius, who had been a Gestapo official before he joined Canaris's *Abwehr*, had worked afterward for the US secret service, and represented himself as the resistance worker *par excellence*. However, in an effort to underline Schacht's resistance work, he suggested that all the other twenty defendants should be hanged."

had little influence, since so much documentary evidence existed. In the end Frick hanged, the court convicted Göring who then committed suicide, and the court acquitted Papen and Schacht.

Gisevius would spend the rest of his life defending his actions before and during the Third Reich and his memoirs against attack from journalists and historians in Germany and abroad. He briefly traveled to the United States to promote his book but his Gestapo past intruded and he received little encouragement from anyone but Dulles and Bancroft. Gisevius's assessment of German Socialism had some effect on American intelligence evaluation as the Cold War began because of Dulles's wartime association with him. He returned to Europe and settled in Switzerland, writing two more books and several articles in various German publications about his wartime experiences and in defense of his memoirs. He died in February 1974 in relative obscurity.

Pariah or Patriot: Gisevius's Controversial Place in History

In the veritable avalanche of books and articles dealing with the German anti-Nazis, Gisevius often appears as a background, enigmatic and shadowy figure. Although references to or extracts of Gisevius's memoirs appear in hundreds of works about the Nazi era and the anti-Nazi German resistance, few of these works offer more than a perfunctory analysis of Gisevius's memoirs. Mostly descriptive, derived from reports of other resisters, and discussed only in relationship to other topics and controversies, they offer little discussion of the processes that Gisevius describes or the themes of his account. In a 1946 characterization of Gisevius's To the Bitter End a former member of the American OSS, writing about the 20 July plot, stated

"Out of the dozens of chroniclers of the conspiracy ... it is possible to select several who, in spite of their perfectly apparent biases, have yet given us coherent and on the whole well-corroborated accounts. One such is Hans Bernd Gisevius ... His manuscript exhibits the qualities of opportunism and self-elevation which made its author generally unpopular with the other conspirators and which led the British Secret Service to drop him as a sub-source in 1943. ... his firsthand knowledge of at least the last two years of the Beck-Goerdeler venture is not denied even by his critics, and his story remains an important contribution." ¹

The postwar era saw a steady erosion of faith in Gisevius's account. In 1947 former resistance member Rudolf Pechel published a sharp attack on Gisevius's credibility and a German

¹ Franklin Ford, "The Twentieth of July in the History of the German Resistance," American Historical Review 51, (July, 1946), 611-612, 621, 623, 625.

historian, Paul Kluge, in a 1949 article about the emerging German resistance historiography, expressed doubts about Gisevius's reliability, contrasting him unfavorably with other resistance figures.² In The Shirt of Nessus Constantine Fitzgibbon characterized Gisevius's memoirs as:

"A somewhat disingenuous picture of the German resistance as seen by a man who was in it and is intent on justifying himself. It is not always accurate, and the author's judgments should be treated with caution."³

Often called colorful, fanciful, and imaginative,⁴ Gisevius's account

'at times degenerates into sheer polemics, although it does contain a great deal of information that would be more useful if it were balanced and ... his credibility as a source is impaired by the tendentious form of the presentation.'⁵

Nearly a half century later George Browder in his study of the formation of the police forces in the Third Reich observed, in reference to Gisevius's memoirs, that "The ultimate value of all such self-justifying literature is its insight into the self-images of the key personalities who wrote them."⁶ To dismiss Gisevius's account outright because of bias, exaggerations, inaccuracies, and self-justification as many authors have done is to overlook its

² Paul Kluge, "Der deutsche Widerstand," Historische Zeitschrift 169 (1949), 149-152.

³ Fitzgibbon, The Shirt of Nessus, 278, comments that Dulles's Germany's Underground relies too much on Gisevius.

⁴ Wolfgang Venohr, Stauffenberg: Symbol der deutschen Einheit: Eine politische Biographie (Frankfurt, 1986), 345-347.

⁵ Hoffmann, History, 646.

⁶ Browder, 321.

primary value as insight into the value system of a civil servant and his friends and the processes involved in their gradual shift from collaboration or favorable attitudes to Nazism into opposition to Nazi dictatorship.

Gisevius's contributions have been considerable when dealt with adequately and properly. Not only is Gisevius often used for constructing portraits of other resistance figures,⁷ but in defending conservatism and his own role he often contributed indirectly to a greater understanding of the moral issues confronting the resistance. Some of the labels and behaviors that Gisevius applied to others revealed his own image. Gisevius's revelations exposed a more faction-ridden Nazi Party and police as well as a more heterogeneous opposition than the victors initially expected.⁸ He was one of the earliest observers to argue that a monolithic Nazism never existed but fostered a factionalism that permitted an opposition to function through a playing off of Nazi rivals. Moreover, Gisevius is the major source for virtually

⁷For example, Rudolf Lill, 20 Juli: Portraits des Widerstands, (Düsseldorf, 1984), 209, 219. Balzer, 132, 134, 137, cites Gisevius when describing Canaris and Oster. Hermann Graml, "Der Fall Oster" Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte (1966), 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, relies on Gisevius when examining Oster's attitudes and actions during the Third Reich. There are many other instances of authors' reliance on Gisevius as a descriptive source.

⁸ See Klaus-Jürgen Müller's The Army, Politics, and Society in Germany 1933-1945: Studies in the Army's Relationship to Nazism (Manchester, 1987), for an evaluation of military involvement in Nazi politics. Müller contends that the military opposition considered overthrowing the regime only when its policies threatened to plunge an unprepared Germany into war. Opposition was elevated into 'resistance' after the war.

everything known about the opposition's police informant, Arthur Nebe. Gisevius also explained how the Hitler aura of infallibility, the 'Hitler myth,' often stalled opposition plotting against the regime. Furthermore, Gisevius claimed, there were gaps in Heydrich's informer network.⁹

Interpretations of Gisevius are often shaped by the author's viewpoint of the subject under investigation. Particularly, a good part of the historical evaluation of Gisevius occurs in the biographical literature concerning both Nazi and resistance figures. Canaris's early biographer, Karl Abshagen, uses Gisevius's memoirs to paint a positive image of Canaris.¹⁰ Halder's biographer, Heidemarie Gräfin Schall-Riacour, disputes Gisevius's allegations that Halder was too weak to lead a revolt, noting that Halder was in no position to do so and discounts his claims to have played a role in the military resistance.¹¹ Stauffenberg's biographers take opposing sides in the controversy sparked by Gisevius's charge that Stauffenberg led the resistance into a 'left orientation.'¹²

Charles Wigton's Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman, borrows heavily from Gisevius's memoirs to create a sinister

⁹ Gisevius, 310, 312.

¹⁰ Abshagen, 205, 220-221, 338.

¹¹ Heidemarie Gräfin Schall-Riacour, Aufstand und Gehorsam: Offizierstum und Generstab im Umbruch; Leben und Wirken von Generaloberst Franz Halder Generalstabchef 1938-1942 (Wiesbaden, 1972), 243-244.

¹² See below.

image of a ruthless master plotter, responsible for most Nazi maneuvers of the 1930's.¹³ Göring's biographers use Gisevius's memoirs to construct the image of a power mad scoundrel or to question his role in Nazi activities.¹⁴ Former Irish diplomat and Göring apologist, Charles Bewley is highly critical of Gisevius's charges against Göring.¹⁵ Manvell and Fraenkel in their studies of Göring and Canaris borrow extensively and uncritically from Gisevius's Nuremberg testimony as well as his memoirs.¹⁶

Early post-war accounts of the anti-Nazi German resistance served as a source of legitimization for a new democratic Germany linked with the West and portrayed resisters as unambiguous proponents of democracy. Works by Fabian von Schlabrendorff, Hans Rothfels, and Eberhard Zeller minimized the political and personal differences within the resistance and emphasized the

¹³ Charles Wigton, Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman (London, 1962), 60, 75-76, 79, 81-84, 86, 140-141, 143, 145. Edourd Callic, Reinhard Heydrich: The Chilling Story of the Man Who Masterminded the Nazi Death Camps (New York, 1985), 215, 232, 263, 264, asserts that Gisevius, quoting Nebe, supplied him with information about Heydrich's wartime intelligence activities.

¹⁴ Göring's biographers sometimes view Gisevius as a false witness against Göring. David Irving, Göring: A Biography (New York, 1989), 123, asserts that Göring's intercept service, the *Forschungsamt* ('Research Office') read the cipher of the U. S. legation in Berne 'until 1942' when 'the traitor Hans-Bernd Gisevius ... sold' the information to the Americans. This is the incident referred to in Chapter 2 in which Gisevius alerted Dulles that American messages were being read by the German secret service. Irving, 497, labels Gisevius's Nuremberg testimony against Göring as 'purposeful distortions.' See note 78 below.

¹⁵ See below.

¹⁶ Manvell and Fraenkel, The Canaris Conspiracy, 23-24, 44-45, 58-59, 71-72, 91-93, 119-120, and Manvell and Fraenkel, Goering (New York, 1962), 133, 135, 169, 379-382.

ethical roots of opposition to the regime. Strongly contrasting resisters with Nazi elites was characteristic of these resistance histories which focused on the task of establishing that a resistance existed.¹⁷ The focus on the gradual shift that many individuals made from collaboration with the Nazis to opposition became a hallmark of later work such as that of Klaus-Jürgen Müller. Whereas in such works an evolution in the treatment of Beck and Canaris is apparent, much less change is visible in the interpretations of Gisevius as ambitious, egotistical, and prone to exaggeration.¹⁸

Furthermore, since authoritarian conservatism was originally excluded from resistance canon, Gisevius's story suffered a poor reception. Gisevius symbolized conservative ambiguity - the effort to escape the consequences of earlier mistakes such as alliances with the Nazis to overthrow the Weimar republic. His public role in undermining the Weimar republic, his service in the early Gestapo, his campaigns of self-advancement, his attacks on other resisters, and his survival ensured that his claims would receive a closer scrutiny than that given other resistance figures.¹⁹

¹⁷ Fabian von Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler (New York, 1947).

¹⁸ Compare comments made in the 1940's about Gisevius in Rudolf Pechel's Deutsche Widerstand, 178, 181, 198, 251-254, with those of Höhne's The Order of the Death's Head, 100, and recent works such as Hoffmann's Stauffenberg, 274, and Klemperer, 73 note 142.

¹⁹ Heinrich Brüning, Briefe und Gespräche 1934-1945 (Stuttgart, 1974), 10, comments on Gisevius's behavior up to 1933, and, 446-447, notes Gisevius's 'refusal to work with middle class parties.'

Gisevius responded to his ambiguous position with an 'agenda' which affected the reliability of his account and set the stage for numerous historical controversies. His motives, the issue of reliability, and the ensuing controversies are intertwined.

He sought to enhance his own importance and reputation by linking himself and his opinions to recognized resistance figures such as Beck, Goerdeler, Canaris, Hassell, and Oster. Despite an exaggerated closeness, in examining their values one gains insight into those of Gisevius. Many of the plans and ideas he claims as his own probably originated with others. For example he claims most of the credit for Dohnanyi's memorandum to Halder in November 1939. He attempts to erect a 'Gisevius legend' especially after his return to Germany just before the final attempt on Hitler's life.²⁰ Comments about his ambitious and vain nature, sometimes appearing in the memoirs of those who worked with him, influenced the historical evaluation of his memoirs and became a major factor in judgments made about him after the war.²¹ For example, Constantine Fitzgibbon charges that Gisevius was only a peripheral figure in the resistance who exaggerated his role.²² However, Hassell's diaries prove that

²⁰ See below, and Chap. 2. After 11 July 1944 his memoirs create the impression that the other conspirators, Goerdeler, Helldorf, Nebe, and Hansen looked to him to correct the deficiencies of Stauffenberg's plan and that he sponsored the plan to surrender to the West while fighting on in the East, the 'Western solution.' Gisevius as the originator of the 'Western solution' is suspect.

²¹ Bancroft, 165, 199; For a negative assessment see Pechel, 198, 251-254.

Gisevius was privy to many important events and it is unlikely that he was remote from the inner circle.²³ A critical part of this self-elevation was a defense of his national-conservative friends.

Gisevius defended German conservatism by distinguishing it from Nazism and emphasizing its European roots while downplaying its collaboration with the Nazis in 1933-35. In a typical early assessment of German conservatism's relationship to Nazism, the Harvard historian, Franklin Ford, stated:

"National Socialism, viewed by many German conservatives in the 1920's as uncouth radicalism, accepted by the right as a useful ally in the early 1930's and as master during the days of the first diplomatic then military triumphs, was now abandoned by most of the traditional rightist forces which had paved its road to power - not only abandoned, but attacked. For in the last analysis, those traditional forces had a vested interest in saving what could yet be saved of Germany's physical plant and established social order."²⁴

In the forward to his book, Gisevius not only defended his conservatism and denied that the Third Reich was a logical outcome of the Nazi-conservative *entente* of 1933, but claimed that conservatism tried to prevent a Nazi revolution.²⁵ He emphasized conservatives' preeminent position in the resistance and he assumed the role of spokesman for the conservative resisters who perished. He differentiated between conservatives

²² Fitzgibbon, 20 July, 164-165; K. J. Müller, Armee und Drittes Reich 1933-1945 (Paderborn, 1987), 93, gives Gisevius considerable importance. Balzer, 223; Pechel, 253, diminishes Gisevius's role.

²³ See, for example, Hassell's references to Goerdeler's praise of Gisevius and Gisevius's predictions of the events leading to the attack on Poland in Chapter 1.

²⁴ Ford, 525-526. This assessment has changed little since 1946.

²⁵ Gisevius, viii, ix.

who remained true to their traditional values and those who deserted for ambition or because they believed the old values were beyond hope of salvaging. His complaints about accommodation with the Nazis reflected his frustration.²⁶

Gisevius also used his memoirs to explain or justify his conduct during the Third Reich. He displayed a certain reticence in describing his own role in the early Gestapo, leaving much room for conjecture. There is little more than a sentence or two about his *Stahlhelm* past or the organization's affinity for Nazism, the subject of several books in the post-war era.²⁷ By portraying himself as a committed opponent of the Nazis from the beginning and often obscuring his early role, he sought to deflect the charge that he hoped to profit from the byzantine character of the regime in its early days. Gisevius's long association with Nebe, a later participant in the pogroms in the Soviet Union, caused doubts

²⁶ See above, Chapter 2. Hassell Diaries, 2 Nov. 1939, 87. The closest Hassell came to a criticism of Gisevius is associating him with Schacht in Hassell Diaries, 3 Sept. 1941, 215, when he wrote

"... Apparently Schacht sees things very clearly, but his judgment is always affected by his boundless personal ambition and his unreliable character. I believe if Hitler knew how to handle him properly Schacht would even now put himself at his disposal, unless he has given up the ship for lost. ... [Further down the page] Gisevius ... is now closely aligned with Schacht ... [in plans for peace overtures]"

Hassell made no comment on Gisevius's character. Curiously, Gisevius never questioned Schacht's adherence to traditional values in this manner. Later, Gisevius found himself accused of deserting traditional conservatism thanks to his association with Helldorf and Nebe. This indicates that Gisevius had a 'blind spot,' that he was less loyal to traditionalism than he later claimed, or that all of them, for various reasons, grew more anti-Nazi over time. This caused many resistance figures to doubt Gisevius's sincerity. See Pechel, Deutsche Widerstand, 239, 255-256.

²⁷ Gisevius, viii; See Volker R. Berghaw, Der Stahlhelm: Bund der Frontsoldaten 1918-1935 (Düsseldorf, 1966).

treatment in his account; one can assume that he overcame Canaris's initial distrust, though he admits that he never fully understood the Admiral. His sometimes exaggerated closeness to leading resistance figures appears to be an attempt either to refute the claims that he was distrusted or to persuade the reader that he overcame the initial reluctance to trust him.

Gisevius's version of Oster's fall in April 1943 and his own interrogation a month later may hide his possible indiscretions to Wilhelm Schmidhuber and Manfred Roeder.³² Moreover, his account of his own exit from the War Ministry on 20 July 1944 is not wholly convincing. Yet these episodes have received comparatively little attention from historians who seem to lavish much more attention on Gisevius's attacks against other resisters.

Obviously, Gisevius's ambitions and resentments colored his perceptions of other resistance figures and events, often seriously distorting them. Personal antagonisms intermingled with political considerations in his charges. The most significant of these is his thesis that principally, Stauffenberg moved toward a dangerous 'eastward orientation' - an alliance of the resistance with the Soviet Union. While most historians focus mainly on personal clashes, there are additional possible reasons for Gisevius's allegations of an 'eastward orientation.' Actually, this was a vehicle on the part of the resistance for pressuring the Western

³² See above Chap. 2, notes 80 and 81. Höhne, Canaris, 525-526, discounts Gisevius's version of his interrogation as a ploy to diminish his possible disclosures to Roeder. There is the possibility that Gisevius's own conduct in Switzerland drew the unwelcome attention of SS-SD investigators to *Abwehr* operations there. Pechel, Deutscher Widerstand, 254, charges that Gisevius mishandled *Abwehr* funds in Switzerland.

Powers into dealing with the national-conservative opposition in 1943-44. The group around Goerdeler wanted to decouple the Western Allies from the Soviet Union and to evade the unconditional surrender demand made at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. This can be seen in the timing of the alleged reorientation.³³ As German patriots, the conservatives would try to evade unconditional surrender, prevent foreign occupation, and preserve Germany's borders, even retaining some of Hitler's gains. As German conservatives, Gisevius and his friends sought to preserve the German social structure from violent social changes. Like traditional Prussians, they distrusted the masses, failed to seek popular support, and relied exclusively upon the army to overthrow the regime.

After the war Gisevius held up to the Allies the folly of their wartime decision to continue the alliance with the Soviet Union while ignoring the German conservative opposition.³⁴ Gisevius

³³ Gisevius, 486, wrote

"As early as January 1943, [fellow anti-Nazi conspirator and liaison] Trott zu Solz, when visiting Geneva, had made a statement to the effect that this social-revolutionary turn toward the East on the part of the Opposition had already been completed. His remarks were intended for the ears of the British. For my part, I always feared that such commentary would simply intensify the determination of the Allies to let this German crater burn itself out thoroughly."

During Trott's last visit to Switzerland in April 1944, Gisevius expressed his misgivings about the new orientation and 'was shocked at his [Trott's] rejection of the West."

The Casablanca formula as a block to the opposition recurs in Gisevius, 449-450, 467, 505. Wheeler-Bennett, 537, mentions Gisevius's role in the effort to escape unconditional surrender. Bancroft, 187, noted how a favorable Allied treatment of Italy could influence Germany. See Chapter 2, note 87.

³⁴ Gisevius, ix. Alerting Europe to the emerging Communist danger was another objective related to salvaging conservatism by linking it to the West. Part of his argument in favor of conservatism required emphasizing its useful role in the new struggle against totalitarian Communism. Gisevius reminds his readers that the German Communists also contributed

also wanted to demonstrate to the Germans that efforts - unsuccessful to be sure - were made on their behalf to mitigate the demands of the victors. Gisevius wanted to elevate the national-conservative Beck-Goerdeler group and to diminish the roles of Goerdeler's opponents, including those around Moltke's *Kreisau* circle. As a legacy of the social turmoil of 1918-1923, Gisevius was unwilling to alter his pre-1933 political opposition to leftist parties and genuinely feared Communism and violent social change. Thus he viewed leftist parties as a serious menace, a fear he transmitted to Dulles.³⁵ Into this framework Gisevius incorporated his clashes with other resisters, specifically Stauffenberg.

In his greatest controversy, he charged that Stauffenberg was an authoritarian, anti-Western figure who planned a joint German-Soviet campaign against the West. He blamed Stauffenberg for a shift to the left as Stauffenberg's influence rose in the opposition during 1943.³⁶ Gisevius's concern, as well as his resentment at being excluded from the center of the conspiracy, is revealed when he explained that

to the undermining of the Weimar republic. This may also be his justification for refusing to collaborate with leftist parties during preparation for revolt during the war.

³⁵ Dulles, *Germany's Underground*, 131; Bancroft, 187, noted his preoccupation with the Communist threat in his complaints that Allied bombing would make Germans more prone to Communism by impoverishing them.

³⁶ He failed to consider that Stauffenberg was in the hospital or recovering from wounds sustained in Tunisia in April 1943 and could have had no influence on the opposition until August-September. This accounts for the clumsiness of the effort to link the beginnings of the 'eastward orientation' to Stauffenberg's growing involvement in *coup* plotting.

"After the unsuccessful ventures [assassination attempts on Hitler's life] at the end of December 1943, Stauffenberg withdrew from all action for months. It is hardly credible that this long period presented no opportunity for an assassination. Convinced that the front in the East would remain stable, Stauffenberg and his circle wanted 'to give Hitler a last chance.' What they meant by that was the repulse of the Allied invasion of France, for until the summer [of 1944] they had all firmly believed that the invasion would either fail or come to a halt near the coast. Naturally it was not that they wanted Hitler to have this success to his credit. If the 'plutocrats' were dealt a bloody defeat there, the chances for an agreement with Russia would be heightened. ... The immediate circle around Stauffenberg sought an alliance with the extreme left, the Communists. The initiator of these proposals was Administrative President Count Fritz von der Schulenburg." ³⁷

Schulenburg opposed the 'reactionary' Goerdeler as chancellor after an overthrow of Hitler; his candidate was Julius Leber, a resistance member and former social democratic military expert in the *Reichstag*. Schulenburg's biographers, Albert Krebs and Ulrich Heinemann, deny Gisevius's implication of his cultivating Communist connections. ³⁸

Gisevius's memoirs show an interesting change of pace once the immediate prologue to the 20th of July became the subject. He had returned to Germany on 11 July 1944. At Beck's request, Gisevius arranged to meet Stauffenberg on 12-13 July. ³⁹ Gisevius asserted that sometime on 12 July Goerdeler complained to him about Stauffenberg's behavior in keeping Goerdeler and his friends away from details of the plot. The Gisevius-Stauffenberg

³⁷ Gisevius, 487; Balzer, 250. See above, Chap. 2.

³⁸ Albert Krebs, Fritz-Dietlof Graf von der Schulenburg: zwischen Staatsraison und Hochverrat (Hamburg, 1964), 157, 308, 310, 320. Ulrich Heinemann, Ein konservativer Rebell: Fritz-Dietlof Graf von der Schulenburg und der 20. Juli (1970), 104, 162. Balzer, 250-251.

³⁹ See above Chap. 2. Balfour, 282, note 6.

meeting held that night led to several major points of historical controversy, all resulting from Gisevius's account. These are:

(1) The eastern orientation' versus the 'western solution' debate.

(2) The allegation that Stauffenberg sought a continuation of dictatorship. ⁴⁰

(3) The disposition of German war criminals. ⁴¹

(4) The attempt by Gisevius, for the benefit of himself and his friends, to portray Stauffenberg as late-comer to the conspiracy.

This raises an obvious question: was a bid to rejoin the inner circle of the conspiracy rebuffed? ⁴² If Gisevius's primary purpose was

⁴⁰ Ibid., 504, 511.

Gisevius asserts that

"Stauffenberg wanted all the totalitarian, militaristic, and socialistic elements of National Socialism."

"On the one hand stood this soldierly revolutionary [Stauffenberg] who in the final analysis was fighting for the continuation of Nazi-militaristic 'legality'; on the other hand stood the anti-revolutionary civilians [Gisevius] militantly striving for something new."

⁴¹ Ibid., 511. Stauffenberg favored punishing Nazi crimes but refused to consider punishing Brauchitsch and Halder "for their well-known cowardice or the field marshals for their characterless attitude toward Hitler's invasions." Gisevius claims that Stauffenberg disputed his argument that only a German purge of these elements could convince the Allies that real change would occur and was necessary to preserve the army's reputation. According to Bancroft, 259, Schlabrendorff considered Gisevius's criticism of the generals 'too one-sided' because Gisevius never understood the complexity of the problems they faced. Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 411.

⁴² Ibid., 511-512. In what indicates that Gisevius sought re-admission into the inner circle of the plot he wrote

"I asked Stauffenberg to give my regards to Olbricht and to tell him that I would be ready to see him any time he wished. ... I knew the Gestapo was after me, he told me hotly; I must not let myself be seen or everything would be endangered. ... I therefore assured him that aside from Beck, Goerdeler, Nebe, and Helldorf, I did not expect to talk to anyone. 'Not even Oster!' he retorted in a tone of command. ... I could not help replying with equal sharpness that if Oster should show up in Berlin, I would see him the moment he arrived. ... Naturally I was not so mad as to send him a telegram informing him of my arrival or of our plans but I was infuriated by this exclusion of a man [Gisevius and

to seek re-admission to the inner circle of the conspiracy, he was bitterly disappointed. Gisevius quickly asserts that he sensed a vast and intrinsic difference between Oster's and Stauffenberg's values and that Oster (and Gisevius?) had fought early against Nazism while Stauffenberg had joined the opposition only after Stalingrad. ⁴³

Stauffenberg's defenders within the resistance soon challenged Gisevius's account of the meeting and provided for a poor historical reception of Gisevius's thesis. Of these survivors, Rudolf Pechel, emerged as one of Gisevius's sharpest critics, especially in his rendering of Stauffenberg's character and role in the resistance. ⁴⁴

In a brief synopsis of Gisevius's career in 1948, Pechel emphasized the probable falsehoods in Gisevius's memoirs, charged that Gisevius misused *Abwehr* funds for a luxurious lifestyle in Switzerland, and once again emphasized the false account of Stauffenberg's character and objectives. ⁴⁵ This criticism echoes throughout the historiography of the resistance at virtually every mention of Gisevius by German or English

his friends?] who had laid the foundation for all the work which Stauffenberg was now doing." Hoffmann, Stauffenberg, 411.

⁴³ Ibid., 512.

⁴⁴ Pechel, Deutscher Widerstand, 181, wrote "The picture drawn by Gisevius of Stauffenberg is a distorted one. It is distorted because of resentment that Stauffenberg would have nothing to do with him, Stauffenberg mistrusted him deeply and kept him out of the inner circle."

⁴⁵ Rudolf Pechel, "Der 'Historiker' Gisevius" Kurier 20 VIII 1948.

historians. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, in a study of foreign historians' views of the German resistance, comments on how Gisevius's treatment of Stauffenberg has damaged Gisevius's credibility.⁴⁶ Joachim Kramarz, a Stauffenberg biographer, remarks that Stauffenberg was the only member of the military resistance honored by the Communist East German government but that this is still no indicator of any Communist sympathies on Stauffenberg's part. Kramarz charges that "For years the general picture has been both obscured and distorted by [Gisevius's] subsequent accounts of this [first] conversation [between Gisevius and Stauffenberg on 12-13 July 1944] and of developments within the resistance. He [Gisevius] is responsible for the allegation that Stauffenberg was working for an 'eastern solution'."⁴⁷ Kramarz believes that Goerdeler prejudiced Gisevius against Stauffenberg before they met because Stauffenberg stated that the Soviet Union could not be left out of a post-war German policy and writes that "Gisevius's statements are probably a malicious reflection of the prejudice and vexation which had built up in Goerdeler's mind. ... Gisevius' judgment is in fact so distorted by prejudice that he does not perceive that other statements in his

⁴⁶ Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, July 20, 1944: The German Opposition to Hitler as Viewed by Foreign Historians: an Anthology (Bonn, 1969), 321, writes "Stauffenberg ... kept aloof from the members of the 'intelligence.' One of the active conspirators, [Rudolf] Pechel, emphasizes that Gisevius in his book for this very reason tries to malign Stauffenberg in every way."

⁴⁷ Joachim Kramarz, Stauffenberg: The Architect of the Famous July 20th Conspiracy to Assassinate Hitler (New York, 1967), 178.

own book contradict the picture he paints of Stauffenberg.”⁴⁸ Another Stauffenberg biographer, Christian Müller, also attacks Gisevius’s account of Stauffenberg while declaring that Gisevius transmitted his distorted views to Dulles.⁴⁹

Historian Hans Rothfels considered Gisevius’s charges of an ‘eastward orientation’ and his portrayal of Stauffenberg as ‘radically false.’⁵⁰ Ritter faults Gisevius for ‘misunderstanding’ Stauffenberg’s need to discuss his next actions with friends and helpers in the days before 20 July.⁵¹

Stauffenberg biographers have, by discounting Gisevius and through testimony of other surviving resisters, established that Stauffenberg’s vision of Germany’s future specifically excluded Soviet domination.⁵² Fitzgibbon characterizes Gisevius’s account

⁴⁸ Kramarz, 179.

⁴⁹ Christian Müller, Oberst i. G. Stauffenberg (Düsseldorf, 1970), 14-15, 16-17.

⁵⁰ Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler: An Assessment (London, 1970) 123.

⁵¹ Ritter, 282.

⁵² For example, see Wolfgang Venohr, Stauffenberg: Symbol der deutschen Einheit, 149, 345-355; and Christian Müller, Stauffenberg, 14-17, 141, 410-412, 416, 434-443; Kramarz, 164, 178-180; Hoffmann, Stauffenberg und seine Brüder, 472-474. For an opposing viewpoint that uses Gisevius’s account to support the allegation that Stauffenberg sought an alliance with the Soviets, see Kurt Finker, Stauffenberg und der 20. Juli 1944 (Berlin, 1970), 184, 186, 187, 190, 199, 257, 260, 262, 367. Finker, 184-218, (1st edition) and 189-190 (2nd edition), in quoting statements by Goerdeler, Gisevius and Dulles, tries to prove Stauffenberg’s ‘eastward orientation.’ Hoffmann, History, 605-606, remarks on Finker’s use of Gisevius’s memoirs and maintains that Gisevius’s conversation with Stauffenberg on 12-13 July fails to establish any eastward or leftist orientation. Stauffenberg favored holding the Eastern front. Dulles, Germany’s Underground, 81, 169-170, largely bases his judgments of Stauffenberg on statements from Gisevius, 478-484.

of Stauffenberg as malicious fabrications growing out of personal animosities by citing comments by other members of the resistance.⁵³ Journalist-historian Terrence Prittie disputes Gisevius's allegations that Stauffenberg favored a turn away from the West to the Soviets.⁵⁴ Mary Alice Gallin's study of the ethical and religious influences on the anti-Nazi Germans rejects Gisevius's judgments about the eastern orientation of the *Kreisau* group citing Jakob Kaiser's assertions that Goerdeler and the *Kreisau* circle merged forces against the Nazis. She also faults his assaults on Stauffenberg.⁵⁵

Peter Hoffmann in his standard History of the German Resistance, comments that Gisevius presents a one-sided view of Stauffenberg based on comments from Goerdeler and Hansen. Hoffmann considers Gisevius's account of Stauffenberg as hearsay because Goerdeler met Stauffenberg only two or three times before 12-13 July 1944.⁵⁶ Hoffmann adds that "Skepticism is

⁵³ Fitzgibbon, The Shirt of Nessus, 149-150; Fitzgibbon, 20 July, 164-165.

⁵⁴ Terence Prittie, Germans Against Hitler (Boston, 1964), 257-258, declares
"Stauffenberg was not in favor of Russo-German entente, according to [fellow assassination plotters Fabian von] Schlabrendorff and [Axel-Freiherr von dem] Bussche. Gisevius disliked Stauffenberg because Stauffenberg distrusted 'this ex-Gestapo factotum and refused to take him into his confidence.'"

⁵⁵ Mary Alice Gallin, German Resistance to Hitler: Ethical and Religious Factors (Washington, D. C., 1961), 59, 69.

⁵⁶ Hoffmann, History, 661, notes that
"Gisevius probably exaggerates the alleged lack of information given to Helldorf and others so much that he gives the impression that he is putting into the mouth of men like Helldorf, Hansen, and Nebe, and even Beck his own annoyance at the fact that he is no longer in the

usually advisable when Gisevius reports negatively on Stauffenberg, despite Gisevius's reliability as a witness when he relates his own experiences." ⁵⁷ While Hoffmann rejects Gisevius's claim that Stauffenberg influenced the resistance to ally with the Soviets, ⁵⁸ he questions some of the effort that more recent Stauffenberg biographer, Christian Müller, made to disprove Gisevius's account. ⁵⁹

Herman Graml, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Joachim Reichhardt and Ernst Wolf in The German Resistance to Hitler agree that Gisevius recognized earlier from his Swiss mission than did the resisters in Germany that the Western Allies intended to remain united with their Soviet ally in destroying Hitler's Germany. However, they reject his supposition that Trott supported the

conspiracy's inner circle and in his long absence, no longer so completely informed."

⁵⁷ Hoffmann, History, 646, also asserts that Stauffenberg's biographer, Christian Müller, 577-8, omits a careful analysis of Gisevius's material. Hoffmann, History, 684, states that Christian Müller errs in his assertion (p. 607 note 10) that Gisevius drew his knowledge of the events of 20 July from Schlabrendorf's book, which had been published before Gisevius's work. Gisevius stated to Hoffmann on 8 September 1972 that his manuscript was finished and in Dulles's hands before the end of the war - which is how Gero von Schulze-Gaevernitz, the real author of Schlabrendorf's They Almost Killed Hitler got the material into Schlabrendorf's book. Bancroft, 258-259, corroborates this.

⁵⁸ Hoffmann, History, 235-239. Hoffmann, "War Stauffenberg 'ostorientiert'?" Die Zeit 53 (5 January 1979), 5.

⁵⁹ Hoffmann, History, 658, asserts that Christian Müller, Stauffenberg, (p. 593 note 173) uses an obvious printing error in Gisevius's 1954 edition of Bis zum bitteren Ende (p. 596) to help 'prove' Gisevius's unreliability. There Gisevius says 'Sonntagabend' ('Sunday evening') instead of 'Sonnabend' ('Saturday evening') - as he does correctly a few pages later in the same edition (p. 599), and in Ende, Vol. II, p. 350 and Bitter End, p. 525.

'eastern solution' and they do not accept Gisevius's judgment that the coordination of a 'revolution from above' with a 'revolution from below' by German and foreign workers, envisioned by Socialist resisters, would resemble a Communist revolt.⁶⁰ This is likely the product of Gisevius's fear of the masses.

Gerhard Ritter's study of Carl Goerdeler and the German resistance rejects Gisevius's assertions that Trott, Leber, or Stauffenberg had 'Communist tendencies'. The German Social-Democrats not only had long been bitterly hostile to the Communists; they wanted links to the West.⁶¹ Gisevius demonstrated little historical perspective in his assaults on German Socialists and the opposition groups that tried to extend the popular base of support. Besides attacking Stauffenberg, the *Kreisau* group, and the Socialist-Democrats, Gisevius took pains to explain his own role.

To defend his conduct and counter critics in Allied nations, in the German public, and in the German resistance, he defined the moral dilemmas confronting those whose values conflict with a totalitarian state. He linked himself to highly respected figures such as Goerdeler, Beck, and Oster, and omitted mentioning his services to the Allies. Protecting Oster, and by extension himself, from the charge of treason to the 'Fatherland,' Gisevius omitted Oster's name when discussing the decision to warn the Dutch Military Attache, 'Sas, of an impending attack in 1939-40. He was

⁶⁰Graml, Mommsen, Reichhardt and Wolf, The German Resistance to Hitler, 48, 51, 140.

⁶¹ Ritter, 262-265; Klemperer, 420 note 409.

vague about his own relationships with the British in Switzerland and never mentioned the important services he rendered Dulles, except in the purely political sphere. He excluded all references to his role of supplying key information to Dulles about the German rocket program and exposing German successes in code breaking.

Justifying himself before the German people, particularly the pre-war generation that valued patriotism, he defended himself against charges of treason by citing his higher moral obligation to humanity. To convince the reader that ethical components of his motives always overshadowed careerism, the moral obligation to oppose Nazism is a major theme of Gisevius's memoirs. To the Germans he argued that resistance was justified by Nazi violations of civilized behavior and that those who failed to resist shared in the guilt. The best independent sources for Gisevius's attitude are Hassell's diaries as well as Dulles and Bancroft who vouch for his sincerity.⁶² While illustrating the conflicting pressures that afflicted the opposition, Gisevius spelled out his justification for a radical response to totalitarianism.⁶³

⁶² See above, Chapter 2, for Gisevius's revelations about German code breaking and the rocket program. Bancroft, 195, wrote that during the war when an associate asked Gisevius where he drew the line so that he didn't feel like a traitor, Gisevius responded

"... If I knew German troops were going over the Brenner Pass to Italy on a specific day, I wouldn't tell Dulles so he could order an Allied raid and get another feather in his cap. But if I learned a piece of political news, for example, that an invasion of Sweden was being planned, I might alert him to that, because something might be done to put a stop to it."

Dulles, Bancroft and Gisevius developed common interests in their association. Klemperer, 325, comments on Dulles's and Gisevius's fear of leftist parties. Dulles and Bancroft shared Gisevius's distaste for the 'unconditional surrender' formula.

⁶³ Gisevius, 414, wrote

To foreign critics of his decision to continue service in the Nazi government in spite of his hatred for it he explained that effective opposition meant being in a position to influence events in some way. The issue of effective and secret opposition assumed overriding importance in deciding whether to remain in government service. Several extracts from Gisevius's text illustrate the arguments he advanced for his decision to remain in civil service under Hitler in spite of the peril to his reputation. Similar entries from Hassell's diaries indicate that this was more than mere self-justification on Gisevius's part after the war; it was based on shared experiences. ⁶⁴ Sensitive to charges of having collaborated with the regime, Gisevius responded

"Under totalitarianism it is only possible to obstruct and oppose if one is in some manner 'on the inside.' But how far can a man participate in a hated system without selling his soul? The more the opposition leaders came to recognize that the Nazi rulers could be defeated only by their

"The Opposition had to consider its stand in the new [war] situation. A man might have fought bitterly against Hitler's insane war policy, but now that the war was there, how was he to react toward it? As an Oppositionist? As a patriot? As a European? Or as none of these, but quite simply as a soldier whose business it was to obey orders? ... totalitarianism and opposition are two mutually exclusive political ideas. In a democracy it is possible to practice opposition, but dictatorship permits no antagonisms; it does not even put up with the lukewarm and the skeptical. Whoever is not for it is against it. Oppositionists must keep silent, or they must decide on underground activity. ... the oppositionist under a totalitarian system must not try to reform at all. His good advice would only help the tyranny; any intelligent recommendation would support the reign of terror. Perhaps the penance for a nation that through folly or trickery has become subject to a dictatorship is precisely that it is left only with the alternative of exchanging tyranny for the yoke of the conquered. Or else the people of the nation must take upon their conscience the tremendous burden of devoting all their imagination and zeal to the purely destructive activities of underground work."

⁶⁴ Hassell Diaries, 2 Nov. 1939, 87, and Vom andern Deutschland, 100. See above, Chapter 2.

own methods, the harder it was for them to solve the question of conscience. It became more difficult for them to avoid objective as well as subjective guilt. ... many paid too dear a price for the sake of having one or both feet 'inside', and many others [Gisevius included, he implies] were unjustly accused of opportunism."

... The foolish talk of So-and-So's being 'paid' by Hitler is evidence of the grotesque misunderstandings of the Opposition's true situation.

... As far as I myself was concerned, I made the attempt in 1936 - on an irrational and sentimental basis - to escape this 'being paid by Hitler' by transferring to the 'free' business world; but in 1937 a special federal law forbade officials to leave the civil service - another point that is passed over by critics. Thus in the early part of 1939, I had to return to my former bondage; but even in retrospect I do not feel troubled in my conscience for having rejoined the class of salaried state employees. ... The potentialities for effective opposition were directly proportional to an individual's inclusion or exclusion from the Nazi government. Why else was it that the principle figures in the history of '*putsches*' from 1938 to 1944 were military officers, government officials, or industrial leaders while the Left never participated, not even in an unsuccessful partial action? The organizations of Left and Right and Center had been destroyed by the end of 1934; but politically and socially, the members of the Center and Right were closer to the generals and the high government officials; and that was what counted once the chance for an uprising from below had been lost." 65

Gisevius argued for an understanding of the opposition figures who were early supporters of Nazism but who changed their minds later. In his assessment, the Allied view of the conservative resisters as accomplices was unwarranted due to circumstances within Germany, explaining:

"If it is to become a principle of international law that men who make the mistake of contributing toward totalitarianism can never turn back (the totalitarians hang them as traitors; the other side condemn them as accomplices) some may be deterred; but such a principle would profit chiefly the statesmen of disaster like Hitler. If such politicians should succeed again in involving their followers, associates, or fellow travelers in guilt, they would be able to confront those they had tricked with an ultimatum: henceforth there was only one way to redeem

65 Gisevius, 416-418. This contradicts his assertions elsewhere that he tried to remain in civil service during the 1930's with the help of Schacht. See above, Chapter 1. He struggled unsuccessfully to remain in civil service in Berlin.

themselves internationally - to drag other nations down with them or - to win a war." 66

Gisevius's credibility, hurt by his association with and defense of, men such as Nebe, Helldorf, and Schacht, never recovered in spite of his argument that none of them intended events to unfold as they did.

Concern about Gisevius's motives is implicit in the historical criticism of his works and is often cited as a reason for the uncertain reliability of his account. Gallin accepts Gisevius's stated motives as genuine concern for survival of Christian civilization. 67 Allen Dulles and Mary Bancroft also accepted Gisevius as a genuine anti-Nazi, concerned with preserving traditional values, while Bancroft noted Gisevius's skill in projecting the particular image required for the situation, especially his ability to hide his anti-Nazi views. 68

Another Gisevius objective in his memoirs was to defend the German resistance against its detractors. He argued, along with many others, that the German opposition certainly deserved more help from the English than it received. He emphasized that the rest of Europe remained as inactive as German generals courting Hitler in the years when they could have stopped him and they ignored the overtures of the prewar 'resistance.' He made

66 Ibid., 432.

67 Gallin, 129-130; See Hassell Diaries, 16 June 1941, 147 and Vom andern Deutschland, 212, in which Gisevius discussed moral issues with Hassell.

68 Bancroft, 191, 199.

about his integrity. Furthermore, more than a few historians continue to doubt the genuineness of Nebe's conversion from a Nazi into an opponent.²⁸ The only available extant primary source about the early period, other than Gisevius, is the former Gestapo chief Diels's memoirs, and these are alternately illuminating and misleading. Diels simply accuses Gisevius and Nebe of trying to unseat him. Gisevius's 'admission' to Dulles's assistant, Mary Bancroft, in 1943 that he tried to seize the Gestapo from Diels may be the closest we get to the truth.²⁹ He cultivated the image of himself as a Gestapo agent to further his career or to protect himself, little anticipating the difficulty this would later cause him.

Gisevius glosses over the wariness of other opponents of the regime such as Beck, Canaris, Halder, and Stauffenberg in dealing with him. He creates the impression that his difficulties with Stauffenberg arose solely from political differences, an explanation refuted in Pechel's Deutscher Widerstand.³⁰ His condemnation of Halder for hesitation in the plotting against the regime is partly a reaction to distrust the general held for him.³¹ Canaris, so distrustful in the beginning, receives positive

²⁸Padfield, 142; Fitzgibbon, 20 July, 186.

²⁹ See above Chap. 2, note 68. Bancroft's memoirs contain no reference to this alleged admission. It appears in Persico, 145. See Pechel, Deutsche Widerstand, 254.

³⁰ Pechel, Deutscher Widerstand, 181. See above, Chap. 2, note 103.

³¹ See Chap. 1, Telford Taylor, Munich, 866-867, and Halder's biographer, Heidemarie Gräfin Schall-Riacour, 122, note 1, 211, 226-227, 229, 243-244.

numerous references to unavailing efforts to enlist English help, contacts which the English later disavowed. In doing so he probably over-emphasized the completeness and feasibility of opposition plans. From Gisevius's viewpoint, because the Allies ignored resistance overtures they shared some of the guilt. Fellow anti-Nazi, Fabian von Schlabrendorff's account acknowledges Gisevius's participation and defends German resistance figures against foreign critics in terms similar to those of Gisevius.⁶⁹

The question of reliability of Gisevius's memoirs has two facets. One of these, already alluded to, revolves about his character and the possible intent to mislead. The other concerns his tendency to 'honest' or unintended inaccuracy. Historians took him to task because much of his account is uncorroborated and second hand conjecture often incorrect in detail.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, Gisevius asserted, with support from Dulles, that his manuscript was mostly complete before 1944; more impressively he had written much of it when Germany was still winning the war in 1940-42.⁷¹ Since Gisevius delivered his manuscript to Dulles just before returning to Germany on 11 July 1944 when most of the leading conspirators were alive and could contradict his testimony, it is likely that Gisevius believed in the veracity of his account. He could not know which fellow resisters would survive

⁶⁹ Schlabrendorff, They Almost Killed Hitler, 90-91; idem, The Secret War Against Hitler (London, 1965), 212.

⁷⁰ Wheeler-Bennett, 332.

⁷¹ Gisevius, p. xiii. Dulles wrote the Introduction to Gisevius's book.

him in the upcoming revolt. Presumably Dulles would have combed the manuscript for more information as this was his primary reason for dealing with Gisevius. Significantly, in the following decades Dulles gave no derogatory information about Gisevius. Bancroft, after making allowances for Gisevius's foibles, also portrayed his account favorably, making no historical judgments about it.⁷² As noted, the most doubtful parts were his early Gestapo period and the revisions made after 11 July 1944.

As a result of doubts about his accuracy, Gisevius's account has involved him in a long series of historical controversies about the Third Reich. Whether Gisevius in 1933 was a secret opponent as he later claimed or an ambitious opportunistic careerist, relatively unconcerned with the type of government he served as long as it fulfilled his desire for advancement, or a conservative informant sent to watch the Nazis and contest their hold on the police, or a combination of these, remains uncertain.⁷³ His activities are seen in the context of power struggles within the police and the conservatives' unequal coalition with the Nazis. George Browder's and Christoph Graf's studies of the transformation of the Prussian political police into the Gestapo relies upon Gisevius's memoirs and testimony but treats his evidence with the caution it probably deserves.⁷⁴ Browder,

⁷² Klemperer, 317-319, notes the distaste for the 'unconditional surrender' formula Bancroft and Dulles shared with Gisevius.

⁷³ Wheeler-Bennett, 389, refers to Gisevius as a 'renegade Gestapo official.'

⁷⁴ Graf, 140, 183, 187, 192, 202, 207, 209, 211.

whose study focuses on the formative period of the police forces of the Third Reich, states that

"Diels and Gisevius can be tested not only against the documents, but against each other. ... Diels, despite obvious minimizing of his involvement in actions he would conceal, proves generally more accurate and reliable than Gisevius, a member of the resistance. ... Gisevius was always on the periphery and, as a jealous opponent, had a jaundiced view." ⁷⁵

On the other hand, Jacques Delarue's history of the Gestapo uses portions of Gisevius's memoirs to reconstruct the early days of the organization without comment or criticism. ⁷⁶

In his study of the SS, Heinz Höhne's descriptions of Gisevius portray an ambitious young lawyer attempting to gain promotion in the new Gestapo by toppling Diels and Göring. However, his account also indicates that Gisevius turned against the regime very early. ⁷⁷ There is little attempt to discern Gisevius's motives, although the theme of ambition recurs in all works that mention Gisevius in the early period. Gisevius as a late-comer (*Märzgefallener*) to Nazi politics encountered distrust and found his chances for advancement limited.

In his assertion that the Nazis burned down the *Reichstag*, Gisevius remains the principle protagonist in the case against Göring-Goebbels and their agent Karl Ernst even when Fritz Tobias's studies of the fire cast some doubt on the previous

⁷⁵ Browder, 321.

⁷⁶ Jacques Delarue, The Gestapo: A History of Horror (New York, 1964), 44, 78, 92, 268, 321.

⁷⁷ Höhne, The Order of the Deaths Head, 100, 280, 403, 411, 578.

certainties. ⁷⁸ Gisevius's charge that an SA man named Heini Gewähr was part of an SA squad sent to burn the *Reichstag* continued into the post-war era. ⁷⁹ A Göring biographer and apologist, the former Irish diplomat, Charles Bewley, writes that

"In his attempted refutation of Tobias's articles, published in the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit*, Gisevius accused a Düsseldorf engineer, Hans Georg Gewähr [sic], of having taken part in the burning of the *Reichstag*. Gewähr brought an action against Gisevius, who was condemned by the court to withdraw his allegation and pay the costs of the action (50,000 marks).

Gisevius's allegations that the Nazis fired the *Reichstag*, initially popularized through his memoirs, remain unproved. ⁸⁰

Debates over events of 30 June 1934 center around three points, all contributed by Gisevius at Nuremberg and in his memoirs. Gisevius always insisted that the SA leadership planned no revolt, that Göring and Himmler staged the Röhm *Putsch* to eliminate the SA and that the military leaders colluded. Gisevius's allegations of military cooperation with the SS against the SA and

⁷⁸ Fritz Tobias, *The Reichstag Fire* (New York, 1964), 143, asserts that a forged letter dated 5 June 1934 from Berlin SA leader Karl Ernst to Breslau SA leader Edmund Heines, naming Ernst as the 'incendiary number 1' fooled Gisevius as well as others. Tobias refers to a 12 Aug. 1949 article in a publication named *Echo Der Woche*. This is the only reference to Gisevius in the book. See Chap. 1. R. J. Overy, *Goering: The 'Iron Man'* (London, 1984), 25, without mentioning Gisevius, states that the evidence clears Göring.

⁷⁹ Gisevius, 69; *IMT*, XII, 253.

⁸⁰ Bewley, 112. Bewley's sharp criticism of Gisevius refers to the lack of corroboration of his charges of Göring's involvement in many events of the 1930's. His book apologizes for Göring by attacking Gisevius's reliability since Gisevius is the main witness against him. See also Walther Hofer, Edouard Calic, Christoph Graf, and Friedrich Zipfel, *Der Reichstagsbrand: Eine wissenschaftliche Dokumentation* vol. 1, (München, 1978), 281, and vol. 2, 89 note 67.

his charges of Himmler's and Göring's role have remained a part of the historiography of the episode. Telford Taylor uses Gisevius's memoirs in discussing many of the instances of collaboration between the military leadership and the Nazis.⁸¹ Charles Bewley asserts that Gisevius is inaccurate in his claims that Röhm and the SA planned no revolt in June 1934. He also argues that Göring had nothing to do with the murders of Schleicher and Bredow, noting that the International Military Tribunal never convicted Göring of the murders and that Gisevius admitted that he could not state for certain under oath that Göring ordered the killings.⁸² In his view most of Gisevius's testimony and writing is based on hearsay and conjecture and is unworthy of consideration.

Gisevius's assertions that Göring plotted to displace Blomberg as War Minister in January-February 1938 have been the subject of historical debate since he first made the allegations at Nuremberg.⁸³ Wilhelm Keitel's biographer, Walter Görlitz, doubts Gisevius's assertions that the Gestapo had any role in the Blomberg case.⁸⁴ Göring's apologist, Charles Bewley, charged that Gisevius failed to prove his allegations against Göring.

⁸¹ Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 79-80, 112, 182, 204, 218, 227, 248, 347, 371.

⁸² Bewley, 139-141.

⁸³ See above, Chap. 1, notes 55 and 57 and Chap. 3 notes 71 and 73. Gisevius, 219-221; Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 146.

⁸⁴ Walter Görlitz, Generalfeldmarschal Keitel: Verbrecher oder Offizier? (Göttingen, 1961), 112.

Pierre Galante incorporates portions of Gisevius's memoirs in his account of the generals' plots against Hitler - especially his efforts to prod Brauchitsch into action during the Fritsch crisis of 1938 - and of Halder's strong dislike of the Nazis.⁸⁵ Hermann Bösch's account of Dr. Karl Sack's activities in the resistance also relies upon Gisevius's memoirs.⁸⁶

The claims of Gisevius that he and his friends planned and nearly executed a *coup* against the regime in September 1938, but for Chamberlain's misconceived decision to meet Hitler at Munich for negotiations, finds little support among historians. Largely discounted by Fitzgibbon, Taylor, Klaus-Jürgen Müller, and Wheeler-Bennett among many others, the debate centers around the thesis, advanced by the anti-Nazi Germans including Gisevius, that Chamberlain's concessions saved Hitler from his officers. Most historians conclude that there was little more than preliminary planning and that the plotters were in no position to execute their plans.⁸⁷ Wheeler-Bennett denies that there was ever a real plot to remove Hitler in 1938 and disputes Gisevius's account.⁸⁸ Gisevius, as a civilian on the periphery of the military plotting, would have had less knowledge of its details than he presumes.

⁸⁵ Galante, 50-52, 63.

⁸⁶ Bösch, 45-46, 48, 53-54.

⁸⁷ See Chap. 1, notes 72, 76, and 77. K. J. Müller, "Structure of Conservative Opposition" Koch, ed., Aspects of the Third Reich, 151. Taylor, Sword and Swastika, 218, 248; Wheeler-Bennett, 420, 421-422, discounts the 'excuses' Gisevius and others advance for the failure of 1938 plotting and Gisevius's account of Hitler's allegedly bellicose letter to Chamberlain.

⁸⁸ Wheeler-Bennett, 332, 374, 377.

On the other hand, Harold C. Deutsch, in his The Conspiracy Against Hitler in the Twilight War, generally accepts Gisevius's account of the anti-Hitler conspiracy in late 1939 and early 1940 though he finds that Gisevius is often inaccurate with dates.⁸⁹

Much of the skepticism regarding Gisevius's account is, to be sure, related to his personality as well as to his sometimes unsatisfactory explanations of his own role and his loose use of evidence. After an initial acceptance of his testimony and memoirs, Gisevius's story came under increasingly close scrutiny because of his self-elevation, because of his associates, and because of his past service in the Gestapo. Historical criticism emerged because other resistance figures discredited his harsh judgments of Stauffenberg and others and then expanded to inaccuracies in other parts of his account. This shaped historians' interpretations as early as 1946 and eventually caused some of them to discount Gisevius completely when writing about the anti-Nazi German resistance.

Nevertheless, virtually every historical approach to the anti-Nazi German resistance has used portions of Gisevius's memoirs in some way. The traditionalist interpretation, often called the Hitler centrist or intentionalist, which emphasized totalitarian aspects of Nazism under control of a step by step program can find support in Gisevius's memoirs in his accounts of Göring's, Himmler's, and Heydrich's roles. Yet the 'revisionist' or polycentrist or functionalist theories can also derive support from Gisevius's

⁸⁹ Deutsch, 220-224, 331.

memoirs. This is especially evident in his participation in the struggles over police authority. Usually the focus has been on controversies such as the *Reichstag* fire or Stauffenberg rather than Gisevius himself. There is little attention given to Gisevius's activities in Switzerland during 1940-1943 and the question of his troubles with the Gestapo in early 1943. Self-elevation and ambition are inadequate explanations for explaining *all* of his behavior or his memoirs. His values determined his motives and brief glimpses of them from Hassell's diaries and from Mary Bancroft suggest that some historical reinterpretation of Gisevius's character is in order.

Conclusion

There is considerable evidence that Gisevius, while never a leading figure in the national conservative opposition to Nazism, rendered valuable service and was close enough to the leaders to observe and record many of their activities.¹ The important secrets he funneled to the Allies, particularly to the Americans, indicate that he had sources well positioned within the government as secret opponents. Perhaps these resisters were the most effective of all since they recognized, belatedly, that only foreign armies could rid Germany of Nazism. Gisevius was an important bridge between this resistance leadership and the Allies. In many descriptive portrayals in the historical literature his name is frequently cited along with Oster, Goerdeler, Beck and Canaris. Unlike the others, historians, taking their cue from some surviving opposition figures, have, from the beginning, shown a critical, if not hostile, approach to Gisevius's account. In contrast to literature concerning Beck, there has never been a view depicting all of Gisevius's activity, his political ideas, and his behavior from the standpoint of the resistance. In historical interpretation of Gisevius, the element of excessive ambition and opportunism was usually present.

Gisevius has been a victim of a tendency to separate collaboration from resistance. Depicted often as an ambitious opportunist willing to serve the regime until he became the

¹ K. J. Müller, *Armee und Drittes Reich*, 93, states that Gisevius was a major figure in the resistance. Klemperer, 66 note 31 identifies Gisevius as a 'tireless' opponent of Nazism.

disgruntled loser in numerous bureaucratic power struggles, Gisevius is seen as merely stumbling into opposition. In such a perspective, other factors in personal and political development become unimportant.

The postwar German authorities, in their endeavor to give the new German republic legitimacy, cultivated the remembrance of the opposition with an understandable overemphasis on the image of a democratic political outlook. This contributed to the heroizing of opposition figures, such as Leber, Moltke, Stauffenberg, and even Beck, and the ignoring, not only of Communists but of others, such as Gisevius, whose more obvious authoritarian conservatism was an unwelcome reminder of a conservative-Nazi coalition and authoritarianism in German politics. Yet, Gisevius was a more typical member of the opposition than many Germans would want to admit. Like so many others, he frequently misread political realities and his initial support of, or benevolence toward, Nazism only gradually changed into hatred. His memoirs are a testimony of such a process. A typical member of the Prussian civil servant class, he absorbed the values of traditional Prussia which sought an authoritarian German state whose strong military would create internal balance and external respect. His character and values are the starting point for understanding his behavior as well as his sources of disillusionment with the Nazi state.

Thus, Gisevius's checkered historical reputation is the product of his anti-democratic politics before 1933, his early Gestapo service in 1933, and his association with Frick, Helldorf,

Nebe, and Schacht. His political stance during the Weimar period, which he barely mentioned in his memoirs, and during 1933-34 became the basis for the disrepute attached to him subsequently. Little allowance would be made for possible changes in his outlook over the next twelve years, although he mentioned these changes himself and by 1945 he had participated in activities unthinkable in 1930-34. Consequently, two contradictory images of Gisevius emerge and both are inaccurate. The image he projected of himself as a determined secret resister from the very beginning is very probably untrue and is the result of a post-war necessity to depict his opposition as resistance. The other image, just as improbable, is that of a natural intriguer quite willing to serve in the government until Nazi officials barred his way because he was 'ideologically impure'; that is, he was not an adequately committed Nazi. Certainly, ambition and self-importance would have served him well in the Nazi state as these had served Göring were he but to submerge himself. But his elevated self-image and his strongly held values clashed with the regime's insistence upon obedience and Gisevius was not someone easily coerced or led.² Whichever, in serving a detested regime, Gisevius's reputation and place in history suffered in spite of his arguments that effectiveness of opposition frequently depended upon holding a government post.

² Bancroft, 237-238. Gisevius's mother told Mary Bancroft that Gisevius had never been able to do anything he did not want to do; he was 'too superior as a personality to be able to take orders from anyone. ... He had to give orders. He had to rule.' Bancroft, 240, mentioned Gisevius's 'grandiose ideas.'

In 1933 he sought personal advancement and influence in a Nazi government thought to be a short term limited dictatorship. Soon disenchanted with a growing Nazi power and disturbed by increasing evidence that they were 'untamable', he joined with conservatives within the bureaucracy who tried to restrain the Nazis and restore equality to the Nazi-conservative *entente*. In a process of incremental disillusionment, the years 1934-1938 were spent in ever growing frustration which was later depicted as 'resistance.' By 1938 Gisevius was among those determined to seek an overthrow of the Nazis completely rather than a mere restraint of their power.³

Gisevius's evolution from a conservative extreme enough to collaborate with the Nazis, to a participant in the anti-Nazi resistance should be seen within the framework of an *entente* between national-conservative elites and the Nazis on the one hand and his personal values on the other. As the Nazis pushed aside conservative leaders in 1933, they alienated old elites, including the professionals in the civil service and the military. For men like Gisevius, absorption into Nazi organizations meant a loss of status previously held in old parties. The Nazi assault on the professionalism of the civil service created progressive

³ K. J. Müller, *Armee und Drittes Reich*, 115, notes the divergence between Halder-Canaris, who wanted to restrict police power and remove the threat to the military, and Oster-Gisevius, who wanted the military to overthrow the regime. K. J. Müller, "The Structure of the National-Conservative Opposition" *Aspects of the Third Reich*, 150, acknowledges that Gisevius and Oster wanted to purge Germany of Nazism. However, conservative opposition activities were not properly conspiracy or resistance contrary to claims advanced. He cites Oster's 'news service', 152, as an example.

chagrin as Gisevius saw his personal opportunities fade and his values under attack. In 1933-34 he was not in fundamental opposition to the regime but was intent on applying or preserving bureaucratic professionalism against the inroads of arbitrary police power. Like other conservatives, Gisevius thought he could mitigate the worst excesses by being in position to correct them. Gisevius viewed conservatism as a steadying influence against a radicalized social revolution. However, conservatives, including Gisevius, misread the situation in 1933. Focusing exclusively on the perceived danger from the left, they failed to see it from the Nazis. He shared the conservatives' self-confident conviction that Hitler and his movement would become more responsible after assuming a limited power within a coalition.

In such a view, the new regime seemed to provide more opportunity than threat. In 1933 he certainly failed to see the inherent danger to his values which the Nazis represented. His immediate concern then was to topple Diels. He allied with Nebe, Himmler, and Heydrich, to accomplish this, failing to see that the real problem was the Nazi movement itself. The turning point at which he realized that the Nazis were fundamentally opposed to his values came with the 'Night of the Long Knives' on 30 June 1934. Thereupon, Gisevius joined a loose alliance of conservative Nazis and old-line conservatives who saw in the army the hope of forcing a return to the equality of coalition partners prevailing in early 1933. When he turned for aid to the army, the traditional bulwark of the state, he found to his dismay that this institution collaborated with the Nazis and was permitting them a free reign

with the rest of country. The bulk of the army leadership seemed unconcerned with what was going on in the rest of society as long as the Nazis respected military prerogatives and were willing to check the ambitions of the SA. Gisevius and other civilians failed to convince military leaders that they shared a community of interests with the professional civil servants in restoring a conservative component to the regime. The army's 'desertion' of true Prussianism partially explains Gisevius's distrust of the generals. Oster, disgusted with the army's refusal to protect its own, encountered Gisevius, who was disgusted with a conservative leadership that misled its followers into a coalition with the Nazis and then failed to protect them as the partnership unraveled. Gisevius became a bitter enemy of the regime as he was horrified by the arbitrary terror the Nazis unleashed through their police. His desire to dismantle the Gestapo in particular became an obsession. It is likely that Oster and Gisevius, privy to much that the public seldom knew, 'radicalized' each other. Whether his attempt to secure *Abwehr* support in his campaign against the Gestapo was his own initiative, as he suggests, or whether it was part of a larger conservative effort to restrain the Nazis, it demonstrates his fundamental ideological differences with Nazism as early as 1934.

Like the military leadership, Gisevius had the illusion that the military was still an independent authority. Like some others, he presented pre-war opposition activities as a 'struggle to prevent war.' Gisevius saw himself as an example of the conservative bureaucrat unreconciled to Nazi control, an attitude

which he insisted was widespread. As a highly ambitious and difficult subordinate he clashed with Nazi elites that he considered his inferiors.⁴ As German conservatives became trapped by their own scheming and found that almost every initiative further enmeshed them in the Nazi system, Gisevius made his break, or had it made for him, in 1936 when he was dismissed from any further police service.

During the war, Gisevius's ultimate goal, shared by the remaining conservative elite, was to preserve Germany's social structure by discarding the Nazi regime in time to prevent total destruction. However, the conservatives underestimated the tenacity of the Nazis and the determination of the Allies.

Gisevius failed to salvage his conservatism as it became an anachronism. He had no chance as the war went on in persuading the Allies to negotiate with the conservative opposition. After the war he failed to achieve a literary recognition because his disparagement of Stauffenberg isolated him from other survivors, although he added his voice to those who sought to bring the victors to a realization that a German opposition existed. But his failures are also a contribution because he provides insight into the process that alienated so many from the regime.

In any case, Gisevius was part of a German opposition that had to contend with a postwar disregard, if not disdain from its own people as well as from the victors. Furthermore, even though his life had been in danger during the Third Reich, his earlier

⁴ Bancroft, 237-238.

actions endangered his reputation after the war. Formerly useful traits of unbridled ambition retroactively, were seen as liabilities once the Third Reich was evil history. Gisevius had hidden his true feelings so effectively during the Nazi era that a subsequent rehabilitation proved difficult. Beyond that, Gisevius was hard put to shake off recurring implications that he attached himself to the conservative military leadership only to gain power after the hoped-for overthrow of the Nazis or that he would have supported the Nazis but for their dismissal of him in 1933.

Regardless, Gisevius genuinely believed that holding a position in government was essential for effective opposition. Certainly, as a member of Oster's network, his activities for several years damaged the Third Reich. Gisevius's relationship with Oster indicates a clear determination to eliminate Nazism even at the price of national defeat. Yet his closeness to Goerdeler and Schacht and their designs for a still dominant Germany as well as attempts to avoid unconditional surrender, reveal a reluctance to face the prospect of total defeat.

Some of the best insight into Gisevius's character appeared in Mary Bancroft's observations about his choice of friends and models. He was intensely loyal to Goerdeler, Schacht, and Oster.⁵ He reserved his greatest admiration for Goerdeler, Oster, and for Pastor Martin Niemöller who had publicly refused to compromise

⁵Ibid., 239.

with Hitler and had spent over seven years in a concentration camp.⁶

Gisevius exploited his connections with the Allies to further the aims of the national-conservative opposition but he endowed the conservative resistance with more influence than it warranted. In attempting to pressure the Allies into dealing exclusively with his ideological cohorts, he also hoped to save Germany from Communism and to show Germans that his efforts aimed to protect them from foreign - especially Soviet - occupation. Of course he also meant to mitigate the fact that he had collaborated with Germany's wartime enemies.

That he was biased in his assessments of other resisters is as obvious as the bias of others toward him. Especially serious is his prejudice against the Left and his inferring that contacts with Socialists meant a reorientation toward a rapprochement with the Soviets. He obviously hoped for a split among the Allies and a recognition by the West of the Beck-Goerdeler group. Whether this was his own idea or whether he was instructed by Goerdeler is unclear. Moreover, it is highly probable that his exclusion from the inner circle of the Stauffenberg group led him to distort their motives.

Nevertheless, despite all of its controversial aspects, Gisevius's role in the resistance and the worth of his account of it cannot be discounted. More than that he demonstrates that traditional

⁶ Bancroft, 254, commented that Gisevius held only Oster in higher esteem. In 1937 Gisevius, using his police sources, learned that the Gestapo would arrest Niemöller and warned Frau Niemöller through the lawyer, Hans Koch. Koch hid Gisevius after 20 July. See Chapter 3.

values - whatever their range - were not always *gleichgeschaltet* ('coordinated' or altered to suit the regime) and decisively provided motives for rejecting a system which ultimately perverted not only all values but German history itself.

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Appendix

Data on Personalities Appearing in this Work

Bancroft, Mary (1903-) Born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, she moved to Switzerland after marrying her second husband in October 1935 and worked there as a journalist and free-lance writer until December 1942 when Allen Dulles hired her as an intelligence analyst for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). In her work she translated intercepted German dispatches and Gisevius's manuscript. Through Gisevius, she served as an intermediary between the anti-Nazi Germans and US intelligence.

Beck, Ludwig (1880-1944). A leading figure in the German military opposition to Hitler. As Chief of the General Staff he opposed Nazification of the army and Hitler's war plans. Beck resigned in August 1938 at the height of the Sudeten Crisis after his failure to secure the support of other officers in stopping Hitler's plans. He remained close to others who opposed Hitler's war, especially Canaris, Oster, von Hassell, and Goerdeler. On the failure of the 20 July 1944 Bomb Plot he twice attempted suicide.

Blomberg, Werner von (1878-1946). Field Marshal and Minister of Defense from 1933 to 1938. Initially sympathetic to Hitler, he opposed the risky march into the Rhineland and foreign adventures. In 1938 a scandal, probably engineered by Göring and Himmler, led to his resignation and Hitler assumed the role of Defense Minister.

Bonhöffer, Dietrich (1906-1945). Evangelical Protestant theologian who opposed Nazism. His psychiatrist father, Karl, planned to have Hitler confined as insane. He worked with Beck, Dohnanyi, Josef Müller, Oster, and Canaris in making secret contacts with the Allies and in protecting anti-Nazi Germans. He was arrested with Dohnanyi in April 1943 and executed in April 1945.

Brauchitsch, Walter von (1881-1948). Army Commander-in-Chief from February 1938 to December 1941. He refused to support Generals Beck and Halder and other military professionals in opposing Hitler's war policies.

Canaris, Admiral Wilhelm Franz (1887-1945). Chief of the Armed Forces High Command intelligence department or *Abwehr* from January 1935 to February 1944. A complex personality whose

motives remain unclear, he probably feared the consequences of Nazi ambitions to Germany without having serious moral objections to an aggressive national policy. His department became a center of anti-Nazi activity and a haven for those who sought to end the war and overthrow the regime. He was executed for contacts with foreign powers in April 1945.

Daluege, Kurt (1897-1946). Founded the first SA group in Berlin, became an SS officer in 1928, a Nazi delegate to the Prussian Assembly from 1932, and member of the *Reichstag* from 1933. Göring and Himmler moved him into the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in 1933 where he took control of the Prussian Order Police ('Orpo') and later became chief of all German Order Police. He was hanged by the Czechs in October 1946 for crimes committed in reprisal for Heydrich's assassination.

Diels, Rudolf (1900-1957). Prussian Interior Ministry official specializing in political police work. In 1933 Göring appointed him to head the new secret political police, which became the Gestapo. Diels found himself involved in a power struggle between Göring and Himmler in late 1933 which led to his dismissal in April 1934. Göring continued to act as his patron and protector, securing him a position in the local government in Cologne and preventing repercussions when he refused to round up Jews. Although arrested in July 1944, he survived the Third Reich and served in local government after the war.

Dietrich, Josef ('Sepp')(1892-1966). Commander of Hitler's SS bodyguard and later of an SS Panzer army. He participated in the executions during the Röhm Purge of June 1934. He surrendered his forces to the Americans in May 1945 and was tried for war crimes. He died in Ludwigsburg in April 1966.

Dohnanyi, Hans von (1902-1945). A lawyer in the Justice Ministry and from 1933 assistant to the President of the Supreme Court. He assembled a dossier on Nazi misdeeds and joined his brother-in-law, Dietrich Bonhöffer, in opposition activities. In 1938 he aided Carl Goerdeler, Beck, Canaris and others in clearing General von Fritsch of bogus charges of homosexuality. With help from Oster he entered the *Abwehr* where his anti-Nazi activities continued. He was arrested in April 1943 and executed in April 1945.

Dulles, Allen Welsh (1892-1969). Head of the American intelligence in Switzerland from November 1942. He established contacts with the anti-Nazi Germans through Gisevius in 1943-44 and rescued him after the 20 July 1944 Bomb Plot failed.

Frick, Wilhelm (1877-1946). Reich Minister of the Interior from January 1933 to August 1943 who drafted the laws removing the rights of the German states. His opposition to Himmler's growing power led to his eclipse and then dismissal in August 1943, but as a consolation he received the position of Protector of Bohemia and Moravia from 1943-45. He was condemned as a major war criminal at Nuremberg and hanged in 1946.

Fritsch, Freiherr Werner von (1880-1939). Army Commander-in-Chief under Defense Minister Blomberg from 1934 to 1938. He was hostile to the Nazis and the SS military aspirations. When he questioned Hitler's war plans against Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Nazis used a trumped-up charge of homosexuality to remove him. Although a military court cleared him, Hitler tightened his grip over the army high command.

Fromm, Friedrich (1888-1945). Commander of the Reserve (Home) Army during the war. He vacillated between opposition and loyalty to Hitler. Unaware of the full extent of the plot to overthrow Hitler, he ordered the arrest and execution of his Chief of Staff, Colonel Stauffenberg, who had just returned from Rastenberg after attempting to kill Hitler on 20 July 1944. Implicated in the plot himself, Fromm was tried and executed in March 1945.

Funk, Walther (1890-1960). Minister of Economics from 1938-1945. He was arrested and tried as a major war criminal at Nuremberg and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Gaevernitz, Gero von Schulze (1901-). A naturalized American of German extraction whose father served in the Weimar *Reichstag*. Dulles's main assistant in Switzerland who introduced him to Gisevius.

Goebbels, Josef Paul (1897-1945). Nazi Propaganda Minister and early Hitler admirer who helped create the Hitler Myth. On 20 July 1944 he saved the regime when he convinced a key commander that Hitler survived an attempted assassination. He

joined Hitler in Berlin at the end of the war and committed suicide in late April 1945.

Goerdeler, Carl (1884-1945). Mayor of Leipzig, 1930-37, and civilian leader of resistance to Hitler. In 1934 he was Reich Price Commissioner and Controller of Foreign Exchange. Before the war, he contacted British politicians to warn of the Nazi danger. He joined with Canaris, Beck, and Oster to try to persuade senior officers to overthrow Hitler. While some anti-Nazis assumed that he and General Beck would lead a new Germany, others, such as Stauffenberg, considered him too conservative. Goerdeler, already a fugitive before the unsuccessful assassination attempt of 20 July 1944, was arrested in August and hanged in February 1945.

Göring, Hermann (1893-1946). World War I air ace, principal advisor to Hitler in industrial and military matters, and in dealings with President Hindenburg. He was President of the *Reichstag* from 1932, Minister without Portfolio in Hitler's Cabinet, Prussian Interior Minister from 1933, Prussian Prime Minister in April 1933; he held many other offices for Hitler, 1933-1945, including control of the Air Ministry, the *Luftwaffe*, and the German war economy. Convicted of war crimes at the International Military Tribunal, he committed suicide following a sentence of hanging.

Grosscurth, Helmut (1898-1943). Colonel in the general staff who participated in planning for the overthrow of the regime. Died in Soviet prison camp in April 1943.

Gürtner, Franz (1881-1941). Hitler's Minister of Justice from 1933 until his death. While serving as Bavarian Minister of Justice from 1922-32, he protected Hitler and his Party.

Halder, Franz (1884-1972). Beck's successor as Chief of the General Staff from August 1938 until September 1942. He plotted to arrest Hitler during the Sudeten Crisis in September 1938 and participated in plans to forestall a widening of war by a revolt in November 1939. Arrested after the failure of the July 1944 Bomb Plot, he was freed by the Americans and gave evidence at the Nuremberg Trials.

Hansen, Georg A. (1904-1944). Anti-Nazi chief of the *Abwehr* after Admiral Canaris's dismissal. Executed after 20 July.

Hase, Paul (1900-1944). Anti-Nazi general designated to be commander of Berlin area forces after an overthrow of the Nazis. Tried by the Nazi People's Court and executed for his part in the 20 July plot.

Hassell, Ulrich von (1881-1944). German ambassador to Rome from 1932 to February 1938. He joined Beck, Goerdeler, and others in plotting against the Nazis and was hanged after the failure of the July 1944 Bomb Plot.

Hayessen, Egbert (1913-1944). Army Major and liaison officer between Helldorf and Olbricht on 20 July. Executed after 20 July.

Helldorf, Wolf-Heinrich Graf von (1896-1944). Police President of Berlin from July 1935, SA *Gruppenführer* after 1933, and later member of the resistance. Executed after 20 July. He was one of Gisevius's major sources of inside information about police activities.

Heydrich, Reinhard Tristan Eugen (1904-1942). Chief of the Reich Security Main Office (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or RSHA). Chief of Himmler's SS Intelligence Service, the SD, 1931-1934 and of all police including the Gestapo, 1939-1942. He organized the SS murder squads, the *Einsatzgruppen*, which followed the German armies into Russia and planned the extermination of Europe's Jews. He was Protector of Bohemia and Moravia from September 1941 until his assassination in May 1942.

Himmler, Heinrich (1900-1945). Reich Leader of the SS from 1929 and Police President of Bavaria in 1933, he gradually extended his control over the police forces until June 1936 when he became Chief of all Reich Political Police. After British forces captured him in May 1945, he committed suicide.

Hindenburg, Paul von Beneckendorff und von (1847-1934). Monarchist and right-wing nationalist. As Field Marshal and Chief of the General Staff, in 1918 he advised the Kaiser to abdicate after the defeat of the First World War. He became the last President of the Reich in April 1925 at the age of 78. He was re-elected in 1932 and reluctantly appointed Hitler as Chancellor in January 1933. Upon his death in August 1934, Hitler combined the office of President with that of Chancellor and required the

military to swear the loyalty oath to himself rather than to a constitution.

Hoepner, Erich (1886-1944). Anti-Nazi General who participated in plots to remove Hitler from 1938. His task on 20 July 1944 was to replace Fromm should he refuse to back the plotters. Hoepner was tried and executed for his role on 20 July.

Hugenberg, Alfred (1865-1951). Right-wing politician, media magnate, Minister for Economics and Agriculture in Hitler's first cabinet, and *Reichstag* deputy for the nationalist DNVP until it was disbanded in June 1933. He retired from politics during the Nazi era.

Kaiser, Hermann (1885-1945). Captain in the reserves and former school-master who served as liaison between Stauffenberg and Goerdeler. Executed after 20 July.

Kaltenbrunner, Ernst (1903-1946). He joined the Austrian Nazi Party in 1932 and became a leader of their SS units. After the *Anschluss*, he continued service in the German SS. With Himmler's support, he became head of the RSHA, SS Security, Gestapo and SD after the assassination of Heydrich in May 1942. He was tried as a war criminal at the International Military Tribunal and hanged in 1946.

Keitel, Wilhelm (1882-1946). Chief of the newly created *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* (OKW), the High Command of the armed forces, after War Minister Blomberg's resignation in 1938. As a loyal follower of Hitler, he was tried at the International Military Tribunal and hanged in 1946.

Kluge, Field Marshal Günther Hans von (1882-1944). A World War I artillery and General Staff officer, he rose to general's rank and commanded a military district in 1934-1938. His intermittent contact with the opposition gave them some hope that he would participate in overthrowing Nazism once Hitler was eliminated. He committed suicide when recalled to Germany in August 1944 after failure of the July Plot.

Koch, Hans (1893-1945). Berlin lawyer who hid Gisevius after the failure of the 20 July 1944 Bomb Plot. Arrested by the Gestapo in January 1945 and shot in April.

Leber, Julius (1891-1945). A Socialist *Reichstag* deputy who was a constant opponent of Nazism. From 1933 to 1937 he was in concentration camps. After his release he contacted Goerdeler, the *Kreisau* Circle and Stauffenberg. Arrested just before the 20 July Plot after a meeting with the Communist underground, he was hanged in January 1945.

Lüninck, Ferdinand Freiherr von (1888-1944). Former chief administrator (*Oberpräsident*) in Westphalia. Allegedly helped Gisevius arrange a meeting between Kluge and Schacht in February 1937. Hanged in November 1944 for anti-Nazi activities.

Moltke, Graf Helmut von (1907-1945). A great-grandnephew of Field Marshal von Moltke of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, he formed a group of anti-Nazi gentry which met at his *Kreisau* estate to discuss the social order that would emerge after Nazism. Moltke added trade unionists and Socialists to what became known as the *Kreisau* Circle. Arrested in January 1944 for warning a friend about to be seized, he was hanged in January 1945.

Müller, Heinrich (1896-1945?). Bavarian police official and Himmler supporter. Heydrich selected him to take over the Gestapo from Diels in 1934 - thus the name 'Gestapo' Müller. He remained as chief of the SS RSHA Amt IV, Gestapo headquarters, until the end in 1945. After Heydrich's assassination in 1942, Müller's new chief was Kaltenbrunner. Müller vanished in 1945.

Müller, Josef (1898-). Munich lawyer who contacted the British through the Vatican in 1939-1940. Arrested in April 1943 after the SD discovered his contacts, he was liberated by the US army from Dachau in 1945.

Nebe, Arthur (1894-1945?). As a senior officer specializing in criminology in the Prussian Police who had secretly joined the Nazis before 1933, Nebe was appointed head of the Kripo (Criminal Police). He claimed to have secretly renounced Nazism when Göring ordered him to murder Gregor Strasser in 1934. Gisevius joined him in an attempt to replace Rudolf Diels as chief of the Gestapo in 1933. Subsequently, Nebe acted as Gisevius's protector and served as a valuable source of information and warnings to German anti-Nazis about Gestapo plans. However,

Nebe commanded one of the extermination squads in Russia in 1941 and as a high ranking SS officer was considered as a possible successor to the murdered Heydrich in 1942. His friendship with the conspirators was discovered in July 1944 when he fled with Gisevius and remained at large until his arrest in January 1945. According to Gisevius and Nazi court records he was tried and hanged in March 1945 but historians are reluctant to accept this.

Niemöller, Martin (1892-1984). World War I submarine commander who later became a leader in the struggle against Nazi takeover of the Protestant Churches. Arrested in 1937, he spent the next eight years in a concentration camp. He was one of Gisevius's most admired personalities. Gisevius had warned Frau Niemöller, through Hans Koch, that the Gestapo was planning her husband's arrest.

Neurath, Freiherr Constantin von (1873-1956). Hitler's Foreign Minister until 1938. Appointed Protector of Bohemia and Moravia 1939-1941. Sentenced to fifteen years of imprisonment by the International Military Tribunal in 1946, he was released from Spandau prison in 1954.

Olbricht, Friedrich (1888-1944). Commander of the 24th Infantry Division from November 1938 - March 1940 and then chief of the general army office in the army high command where he worked for the overthrow of the Nazis. This post, second only to the commander of the replacement army, gave him command over corps area commanders, and command over formations, schools, and training units stationed within Germany. With these elements, the conspirators planned to seize power under pretext of suppressing domestic disturbances. Olbricht was shot with Stauffenberg on 20 July after the plot failed.

Oster, Hans (1888-1945). From 1938-1943 he was chief assistant to Admiral Canaris, head of the German military intelligence service, the *Abwehr*. Oster disliked the Nazis from 1934 and organized a secret network of informants within the bureaucracy. Oster wanted to overthrow the Nazis. He warned foreign powers that Hitler planned to attack them and plotted Hitler's assassination until he was suspended from duty in April 1943 after the arrest of Dohnanyi. Arrested after the July 1944 Bomb Plot he was hanged in February 1945.

Papen, Franz von (1879-1969). Reich Chancellor in 1932 and Vice-Chancellor to Hitler, 1933-1934. He was later ambassador to Vienna until 1938. Afterward he was ambassador to Turkey. He was acquitted by the International Military Tribunal in 1946.

Remer, Otto-Ernst (1912-). Army Major who commanded the *Grossdeutschland* Guards Battalion on 20 July. Sent by the plotters to arrest Goebbels, he learned that Hitler was alive. In a telephone conversation with Hitler, he received authority to crush the revolt.

Röhm, Ernst (1887-1934). One of Hitler's earliest associates in the Nazi Party, he was head of the SA from 1931. His ambitions to replace the army with the SA and the dislike from other Nazis, including Göring and Himmler, resulted in the Hitler-approved elimination of the SA leadership including Röhm on 30 June 1934 in the 'Röhm Blood Purge', or the 'Night of the Long Knives.'

Sack, Karl (1896-1944). Ministerial director and chief judge of the army. Executed for his role in the resistance.

Schacht, Hjalmar (1877-1970). Hitler supporter in 1932 and Minister for Economic Affairs September 1934- November 1937. He was President of the Reichsbank until January 1939 and Minister without Portfolio until 1943. Fearing that Hitler's rearmament was bankrupting the country and seeing the danger of war, Schacht became a member of the opposition; he employed Gisevius in efforts to contact foreign powers and military officers and protected him from close scrutiny. Gisevius testified on his behalf at the International Military Tribunal where he was acquitted in 1946.

Schellenberg, Walter (1910-1952). Schellenberg joined the Nazi Party and SS in 1933 and the SD in 1935. He became head of the SS foreign intelligence department in 1941. His SD teams captured the British agents Payne and Best at Venlo in 1939. After August 1942 he urged Himmler to explore opening peace negotiations with the Allies. He conducted secret meetings with the head of Swiss intelligence to uncover spy networks operating there. When Nazi Germany collapsed in May 1945, he fled to Sweden. Called back to Germany to give evidence at the Nuremberg Trials, he was charged as a member of the criminal SS and SD but received a light sentence. Released in 1951, he settled in Italy and wrote his

memoirs, The Labyrinth, also known as The Schellenberg Memoirs.

Schlabrendorff, Fabian von Before the war, at Oster's request, he warned the British that Hitler intended to attack Poland. He participated in the attempt to blow up Hitler's plane in March 1943. He recruited Stauffenberg for the plotters. Arrested after 20 July he was saved by the Allied bombing of Berlin when a bomb landed on the Nazi People's Court in early 1945. After the war he wrote They Almost Killed Hitler.

Schleicher, Kurt von (1882-1934). Principle political intriguer during the period before Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, 1932-1933. For a brief period at the end of 1932, he was Reich Chancellor. He attempted to bring Gregor Strasser into prominence within the Party at Hitler's expense. He was assassinated on 30 June 1934 during the Röhm Purge.

Schulenburg, Fritz-Dietlof Graf von der (1920-1944). A colonel in the reserves and Police Vice-President of Berlin. Executed for his part in the 20 July plot.

Seldte, Franz (1882-1947). Founder of the *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmets) in November 1918 and co-leader of this veteran's movement until its dissolution in 1933.

Stauffenberg, Claus Schenk Graf von (1907-1944). Planted the bomb in Hitler's headquarters on 20 July 1944 after several previous attempts and more than a year's planning. He distrusted Gisevius and excluded him from the inner circle of plotters. He was shot on the day the plot failed.

Stieff, Helmut (1900-1944). General and chief of the organization branch of the Army High Command who participated in military resistance activities. Hanged in August 1944.

Strasser, Gregor (1892-1934). Founder of the Berlin SA and Hitler's deputy in Berlin. Disagreements led to a rift with Hitler. His association with Schleicher, which could have led to his being made Schleicher's Vice Chancellor and gaining Party prominence at Hitler's expense to the point of splitting the Party, led to his murder during the Röhm Purge on 30 June 1934.

Strünck, Theodor (1895-1945). Doctor of law and an insurance director in civilian life. He was a reserve captain in the *Abwehr* and liaison between Canaris and Oster in Berlin and Gisevius in Zurich. Arrested in August 1944 and murdered in Flossenbürg concentration camp in April 1945.

Stülpnagel, Karl-Heinrich von (1898-1944). Infantry general and leading resistance personality. Executed after a failed attempt at suicide.

Thomas, Georg. Economics expert in the general staff who tried to convince the leadership that Germany could not win a world war. Participant in anti-Nazi activities who testified against them after the war.

Thyssen, Fritz (1875-1947). Multimillionaire industrialist and early Hitler-Göring benefactor who later broke with the Nazis.

Trott zu Solz, Adam von (1909-1944). Counselor in the Foreign Office and member of the *Kreisau* Circle. Executed for his role in the resistance.

Waetjen, Eduard (1907-). A Berlin lawyer whose mother was American. He knew Moltke from 1939 when the *Kreisau* Circle formed. He persuaded a reluctant Gaevernitz to meet Gisevius in December 1942. In January 1944 after Gisevius came under suspicion, the *Abwehr* arranged for Waetjen to become Vice-Consul in Zurich to serve as liaison between the resistance and the Americans. With Gisevius he participated in several meeting with Dulles in 1944 to induce the West to negotiate with the resistance.

Witzleben, Erwin von (1881-1944). Long-time opponent of Nazism who planned action against the SS as early as 1938. Field Marshal von Witzleben was to become commander-in-chief of the armed forces on 20 July 1944 after the removal of Hitler. Hanged for participating in the plot to overthrow Hitler.

Vita

Paul G. Hammer was born in San Angelo, Texas on 27 July 1954. He attended elementary schools in Virginia and Tennessee. He graduated from Maury High School in Dandridge, Tennessee in 1972 and received his Associate of Science Degree from Walter's State Community College in 1974. In 1976 he graduated from the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and was commissioned into the Army as a Second Lieutenant. He left active duty as a Captain in 1986 and reentered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

He is presently employed as a Special Projects Student Assistant and Computer Operator at the University of Tennessee Computing Center and is a Major in the Army Reserve.