



BEAULIEU

The Finishing School for Secret Agents

CYRIL CUNNINGHAM

BEAULIEU
THE FINISHING SCHOOL
FOR SECRET AGENTS

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THE FINISHING SCHOOL
FOR SECRET AGENTS
1941-1945

by
Cyril Cunningham



Pen & Sword
MILITARY

This book is dedicated to
Lieutenant-Colonel S.H.C. Woolrych O.B.E.
Intelligence Corps
Commandant of the Beaulieu Finishing School

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Until he retired, **Cyril Cunningham** was by profession a Chartered Occupational and Forensic Psychologist. At the height of the Cold War he spent ten years working for various Defence Intelligence departments, was a frequent lecturer at the Army's School of Military Intelligence and was seconded briefly to the Information Research Department of the Foreign Office as an advisor and data analyst.

He left the Civil Service in 1961 to practise as an occupational psychologist in the oil industry but was recalled on several occasions to give evidence on Intelligence matters to a Privy Council committee and other high level Government committees. Later he joined the staff of the Portsmouth Management Centre (now part of Portsmouth University) as its resident senior lecturer in Occupational Psychology and remained there until he retired in 1988.

He was educated at Cambridge University, where he read Law, and Reading University where he obtained an honours degree in Pure Psychology. He joined the Navy in 1943 via Cambridge University Naval Division and was commissioned in the RNVR. He saw active service in Normandy and North West Europe.

He has written many feature articles for commercial magazines and newspapers, including *The Times*, as well as a long list of papers for learned journals including the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*. His book *The Beaulieu River Goes to War* was published by Montagu Ventures in May 1994.

FOREWORD

By

Sir Michael Howard, KT, CBE, MC.
Emeritus Professor of Modern History
Oxford University

In the darkest days of the Second World War, at the end of 1940, the British government established on the Beaulieu estate in the New Forest a very peculiar school indeed. Its curriculum included, among other scarcely less nefarious activities, burglary, forgery, sabotage, slander, blackmail and murder. By the end of the war over three thousand men and women had graduated in some or all of these highly undesirable skills and became agents or officials of the Special Operations Executive. Most of those trained as agents were then infiltrated into the mainland of Europe to inspire and assist the resistance movements in German-occupied territories. About 40% of them were caught by the Nazis, and many of those met terrible ends.

Many books have now been written chronicling the more spectacular of their adventures. M.R.D. Foot has given us an excellent 'official' history of SOE operations in France, and a similar volume has been promised on Yugoslavia, but even these cannot provide detailed and comprehensive accounts of their achievements. Perhaps no such account can now be written, or could ever have been written. Much of the necessary documentary evidence has been lost or destroyed, while even more vital information was never committed to paper. Yet the least that we can do for the memory of these lonely heroes is to ensure that every scrap of information about their activities should be preserved and published, and to this enterprise Mr Cunningham here makes a notable contribution.

As with so many aspects of the British war effort, much of what Mr Cunningham has to tell us is bizarre, verging sometimes on the farcical. Instructors in these arcane but necessary skills were not easy to find – at least, reliable trustworthy instructors. There was an understandable reluctance to recruit on to the staff people who were known to have spent their lives honing their skills at murder, burglary and sabotage, so amateur instructors had to learn as they went along. There was indeed one experienced safe-breaker on the staff, whose presence may remind admirers of Lewis Carroll of the billiard-marker, ‘whose skill was immense’ on the crew in *The Hunting of the Snark*. There was also a gamekeeper from the Royal Estates who was surprisingly skilled in survival techniques; but the nucleus consisted of handfuls of officers experienced in espionage from the First World War, which included the Commandant, Colonel Stanley Woolrych.

Otherwise the staff consisted of, as one of them put it, “some pretty odd fish”. These ranged from, at one extreme, the couturier Sir Hardy Amies and the film critic, scriptwriter and poet Paul Dehn, to the notorious Kim Philby at the other. Philby indeed played a major part at Beaulieu, not only as a memorably effective instructor, but in the foundation of the establishment and as a drafter of its syllabus. To do the old rogue justice, it must be remembered that for most of this period his employers in the Soviet Union were Britain’s allies and that he was as keen on the destruction of Nazism as anyone else. He deserves credit at least for the honourable part he played through his contribution at Beaulieu to bringing it about.

As for the students, they were an even odder collection of fish. In addition to the British trainees, there were the even more highly-motivated Frenchmen, Norwegians, Poles and Dutchmen dedicated to the liberation of their own lands. The Dutch were particularly ill-fated: most of them when they landed in Holland found Gestapo reception parties and became victims to the most spectacular German intelligence success of the entire war. The skill and courage of the French had to be balanced against their understandable determination to play the game by their own rules. Finally there was a group of Republican Spaniards, who had been pushed from pillar to post until, as a well known SOE operative put it, “they would cheerfully have killed anyone in the uniform of a British officer”. They, needless to say, required especially sensitive handling.

All these groups had to be kept in isolation from one another, and indeed from everyone else. Naturally the purpose if not the very existence of the school had to be kept secret from the local community, which made

for additional tensions and difficulties. Readers of another generation may wonder how such an establishment could survive and function at all for so long without being ‘blown’, but it was by no means exceptional in a wartime Britain in which secrecy was accepted as the norm and people knew that it was unwise to ask awkward questions – let alone publicize the answers.

In the following pages Mr Cunningham gives a wonderfully full account of how Beaulieu functioned; how it was staffed, how it was accommodated, how it was run, what the living conditions were like, what was taught there and by whom, and how the students reacted to the régime. Like the staff of the school themselves, he admits that they could do all too little to prepare their students for the terrible ordeals ahead of them; but the prospect of those ordeals had deterred none of them from volunteering. Most of them were very young, and all were completely inexperienced. Once in the field they would be hunted by ruthless and highly intelligent professionals. They might be prepared for brutality, but all too often they were to underestimate the skill and subtlety of their German interrogators. They also badly overestimated – at least in the early years of the war – the degree of support that they might expect from the population on which their lives depended. It was not all that easy, in 1941–42, to obey Churchill’s instructions and ‘set Europe ablaze’.

With hindsight it is easy to see, and Mr Cunningham freely admits, the shortcomings of the Beaulieu training. But – again as in *The Hunting of the Snark* – the crew had, at least initially, to depend on a map that was ‘a perfect and absolute blank’. They had to learn as they went along. As they gained experience they were able to fill in the blanks, and the disasters of the early years were to be redeemed by a steadily rising rate of success.

The history of SOE is one of lonely sacrifice and ultimate triumph. Mr Cunningham deserves our gratitude for describing how the seeds of the triumph were planted on the banks of the Beaulieu river.

INTRODUCTION

By

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu

In June, 1940, I was enjoying my last term at my prep school, St Peter's Court, which had been evacuated from Broadstairs to Crediton in Devon, and was sitting the Common Entrance Exam for Eton, which I duly passed. But before the Battle of Britain began I was suddenly sent for by my headmaster and told that I was to go home immediately as I was off to Canada. I was excited, but nevertheless sad that I was unable to enjoy my final weeks at school and say goodbye to my many friends.

The aftermath of the surrender of France resulted in many parents making sudden decisions to send their children overseas, as it seemed inevitable that it was only a matter of time before Hitler would invade a largely undefended Britain. My mother's decision was particularly influenced by my stepfather, Captain Edward Pleydell-Bouverie R.N., who had recently returned from France, where, as British Naval Attaché to the French Government, he was responsible for evacuating many of the diplomatic corps from Bordeaux. After seeing the blitz in France himself, he had no doubt that it was advisable to send us abroad. So after two hectic days at Beaulieu and shopping in London, I found myself on the liner *Monarch of Bermuda* sailing out of Liverpool, together with two of my sisters and a governess, and, after an exciting voyage, ended up living and schooling for the next two years in Canada.

When I returned home in September, 1942, Beaulieu was a very different place – the war had imposed itself on the whole area. There were pillboxes hidden in dovecotes, troops everywhere, including the Home Guard, the Navy on the River, but, most important, many of the houses which I knew were out of bounds. As a sixteen-year-old, all this secret activity fascinated me, but most intriguing of all was the talk of what went

on in these houses, whose occupants were affectionately known locally as the “Hush Hush Troops”. No one was allowed to visit them and friends who had lived there had vanished. What was equally surprising was that the permanent Instructing Staff, some of whom were there throughout the war, and the officers were in the habit of dining with us regularly, playing tennis and attending parties, and the younger ones paying court to my sisters. Consequently, we got to know the Instructors very well, but it was not until V.E. Day that we found out what and whom they were instructing. We also learned that the Germans, as a result of their interrogation of captured SOE agents, knew a great deal about what went on at Beaulieu, and apparently there was a report in Nazi files fully describing my family, including the name of my dog.

After the war I became increasingly interested in recording the contribution that the SOE at Beaulieu had made to the war effort. So I was delighted when Cyril Cunningham accepted my commission to write a book about it and sincerely congratulate him on his comprehensive research and commitment to the task. His previous work, *The Beaulieu River Goes to War*, was equally well researched. Over the years I tried to meet as many SOE personnel as possible – people like Peter and Odette Churchill, Sir John Wedgwood, Hardy Amies, Maurice Buckmaster, and particularly Paul Dehn, who wrote the wording on the memorial plaque in Beaulieu cloisters, which I was finally able to persuade the Special Forces Club to support, after some years of frustrating opposition. The day of the unveiling by Major General Sir Colin Gubbins, former head of SOE, brought back many old SOE instructors and pupils from all over Europe, and many laughs and tears graced the occasion as old adventures were recalled and comrades remembered.

All at Beaulieu are proud of how this small Hampshire village played such a vital part in defeating the enemy and giving support and succour to those valiant men and women behind the enemy lines. Thanks to Cyril Cunningham’s efforts, this book will ensure that the achievements and courage of Beaulieu’s SOE pupils will be remembered for all time.

Montagu of Beaulieu
August 1997

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Foremost among those whom I have to thank is Lord Montagu of Beaulieu who commissioned and sponsored this research, gave me access to his archives, and above all gave me his continuous support and encouragement during the long and disheartening process of seeking a publisher.

I am enormously grateful to Mr. Robert Woolrych and Professor Austin Woolrych, sons of the late Lieutenant-Colonel S.H.C. Woolrych, the Commandant of the Beaulieu Finishing School, without whose generous subvention this book may never have been published. I also have to thank them for information about their father and for permission to use his photographs, the Woolrych Collection in the Intelligence Corps Museum.

My special thanks are also due to Mr Graham Carter of Montagu Ventures Ltd., for much practical help and sterling advice.

I have to thank the following for providing me with substantial amounts of information:-

Mr Gervase Cowell, SOE Adviser, Foreign Office, for information on the School's establishment, curriculum, and an outline description of agent training.

Mrs Ann Sarell (nee Keenlyside) for much information on the School staff and a description of arrangements at The Rings.

Miss Susan Tomkins, Lord Montagu's Archivist, for searching for correspondence between Captain Henry Widnell and the leaseholders of the requisitioned properties, and between Widnell and the Army authorities, including the School's Commandants. Also for providing me with access to the reference library of Montagu Ventures Ltd.

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General George Berge and Madam Berge for information on Inchmery House and Operations Savanna and Josephine B.

Madam Alma Kerjean for putting me in touch with numerous former RF Section agents, and Mr R. Hansford for his unstinting assistance.

Major Richard Shaw, the Curator of the Intelligence Corps Museum, for allowing me access to documents and photographs.

Mr Denis Hendy, who provided much information on the early days of the SOE occupation of The Drokes.

One of my principal sources of information was the former Lieutenant-Colonel Cuthbert Skilbeck, one of the School's first Chief Instructors, to whom I am greatly indebted and with whom I spent a very enjoyable day in February, 1995. Alas, he died in June, 1996.

The following also gave me help:-

Mr Owen Aisher for putting me in touch with Joachim Ronneberg; Miss Vera Atkins, the former Chief Intelligence Officer of the French Section, for putting me in touch with Mrs Sarell; Mr Francis Cammaert, Mr Daniel Cordier, Madam Pearl Cornioly, Mr J. Darton, all former secret agents; Mr Peter Doneaux; Mr Bernard Ettenfield, formerly of Field Security, for his information on the Spaniards at The Drokes; Sir Anthony and Lady Evans for allowing me into The Drokes; Mr John Farmer, former secret agent; Mr H.G. Fleming, formerly Field Security, for his information on the Dutch agents Dorlein and Ubbink; Mr George Jackson for information on Johnny Ramenski; Mr Ivor Kregland of the Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum; Mr R. Lagier, Mr J.J. Landau, Mr. G. Ledoux, former RF Section secret agents; Lieutenant-Colonel Terry Message, Secretary of the Special Forces Club, for putting me in touch with many former agents; Count and Countess Michalowski for allowing me into The House in the Wood; Mr A. Philion for allowing me to visit Inchmery House; the late The Hon. Mrs Pleydell-Bouverie; Mr Joachim Ronneberg, (who led the team of saboteurs that blew up the Norsk Hydro heavy water plant at Vemork); Mrs Decia Stephenson, Archivist of the FANYs; Dr B. Thornton; Mr Jack Trott, Mr Andre Watt, former secret agents.

And finally I wish to thank my sister, Pauline Cunningham, for checking many versions of the manuscript for errors and my wife Mary for her constructive advice on structuring many passages, proof reading, and her support throughout this project.

Prologue

THE PLAQUE IN THE BOOKCASE

On a chilly February afternoon I stood alone in a mood of veneration in the quadrangle within the medieval ruins of Beaulieu Abbey. Before me in the ancient cloister wall was a recess known as the 'Bookcase', where hangs a large, modern, circular plaque which reads:-

Remember before God
those men and women of
the European Resistance
Movement who were secretly
trained in Beaulieu to fight
their lonely battle against Hitler's
Germany and who, before enter-
ing Nazi-occupied territory
here found some measure
of the peace for which
they fought.

These words commemorate over 3000 men and women of at least fifteen different European nationalities and a number of Canadians and Americans who, during the Second World War, had been trained as secret agents of various sorts, at what was officially known as the 'Finishing School', a complex of twelve country houses in the Beaulieu area that had been requisitioned by a secret British organization called the Special Operations Executive.

Lord Montagu had asked me to undertake the task of discovering as much as I could about this extraordinary school, which had ceased functioning half a century ago. He knew of me only through my reputation as a local historian and was unaware that I had been an intelligence officer

and was uniquely well qualified to carry out the research. In an early phase of my professional career, at the height of the Cold War, I had spent a decade working for a number of intelligence agencies and had actively participated in the training of secret agents. And I had worked with several men, and one or two women, who, during the Second World War, had risked their lives as spies and other kinds of secret agents. I had also worked with spycatchers and had been trained as an interrogator.

The Bookcase is not visible to anybody ambling past the doorway of the cloisters. Visitors to the National Motor Museum, in the grounds of which the abbey ruins stand, must have wondered why a tall, elderly man with grey hair and spectacles, casually dressed and with his hands stuffed for warmth into the pockets of his blouson, was standing bare-headed and shivering in the cold for so long, staring at an ancient wall! But I was shaking, not, as a casual observer may have thought, from the cold, but from the haunting of my private ghosts and the sense of loss and mourning that I felt for all those courageous people I had known whose lives had been packed with high adventure. Most of them had died of old age and their deeds long forgotten but one of them had been shot down while attempting to escape from his tormentors and I had been given the unpleasant duty of investigating the circumstances of his death.

I am by no means alone in being fascinated by the exploits of secret agents. I am particularly interested in what sort of people they are, what traits of personality enables them to stay alive and cope with the enormous strains of leading a double life under the constant threat of exposure. And there is usually a good story in how they came to be agents or how they entered the less hazardous occupation of intelligence officers.

I gathered my wits and began to think about the present. I was acutely aware that Lord Montagu's request had catapulted me back into a business I had left long ago and would impel me to revive my knowledge of techniques that happen to be common to historians as well as intelligence officers. They both have to organize networks of sources and display a wary patience with scraps of information that must be carefully weighed for their validity before searching systematically for their place in a massive jigsaw.

This spot in the tranquil surroundings of the ancient abbey was as good a place as any to gain a glimmer of inspiration as to how I should tackle the task of pursuing a very stale trail and build from scratch a network of sources to provide me with sufficient material for a reasonable history of the school. I was afraid that most of the people who could have enlightened me would now be dead, and if not dead, would be octogenarians

with fading memories. As a seasoned researcher I was very much alive to the fallibility of the human memory when trying to recall distant events. I was conscious that gathering thousands of scraps of data is simple compared with the task of piecing it together into a meaningful whole, and I began to wonder if I still retained the knack of spotting the gaps in the fabric and tracing sources and material to make a seamless patch. A smart computer is still no substitute for a sharp eye and an inquisitive brain. I took courage from the fact that at least I had the advantage of some knowledge of the organization and methods of our secret intelligence services, even if I had long since lost touch with my contacts in that business.

My mind was already grappling with the problem of how to convert a catalogue of personalities and events into a form that critics often describe as 'a good read', one which publishers are apt to judge in terms of the number of copies likely to be sold. My instant dread was a publisher who might require his editor to re-work and 'pep up' my manuscript into the modern idiom by transposing events that took place half a century ago into a conversational narration that any half-wit would recognize as an impossible feat of memory on the part of the alleged narrator. The narratives in this book are transcriptions of tape recordings and not figments of my imagination.

On my way home I decided to follow the well-tried research formula of starting by making a systematic search of the literature while simultaneously building a network of people who might be able to help. My first step was to contact the Special Forces Club with a letter of enquiry about SOE training. It produced a response from the Foreign Office and arrived in time to save me from looking, in my ignorance, in the Public Record Office for information on SOE. It was not encouraging. It informed me that 87 per cent of the official records of SOE had been destroyed, that the remaining 13 per cent is buried in the archives of the Foreign Office and is not open to the general public. It said that the SOE Adviser would attempt to answer any questions put to him but made no suggestions as to how one could frame penetrating questions from a basis of utter ignorance. It also stated that the residue of the official records was unlikely to contain very much about the organization and nuts and bolts of agent training. However, I was sent a seven-page handout giving a skeleton outline of the organization of the Finishing School, the names of a few key members of the staff, a broad outline of a few aspects of the syllabus and some information on training problems. Unfortunately it was ambiguous or uninformative on a number of key issues such as exactly what topics

were included in the curriculum, and which of them had been taught at which of the schools in the Beaulieu complex, and by whom. And, I was to discover, much of it referred to the situation that had prevailed at the end of the war and did not correspond with eye-witness accounts of what had existed during the earlier years.

When I started my search of the literature, I found that most of the books about SOE had long been removed from the shelves of the public library and had been consigned to a central store and could now only be obtained on payment of a fee, accompanied by an exasperating delay in delivery.

I soon realized that the lack of official records was not, unfortunately, supplemented by the enormous number of books that have been written about SOE. All of them concentrate upon the organization, politics and operations, with brief, if any mention of training. One book, *Specially Employed*, written by Maurice Buckmaster, the former Head of the French Section, which was said to contain valuable information on training, turned out to be very disappointing. It gave only a vague outline of the principles of agent training. Even M.R.D. Foot's official history, which is otherwise very thorough, deals cursorily with the subject of training and is inaccurate in some of the details.

The awkward truth is that there is no authoritative published account of the activities of the British training schools, how they came into being and how they were organized and run. Consequently from the outset my task appeared to be daunting to say the very least. It dawned on me that I had stepped onto a roller-coaster of frustration and elation which would only be endured by a gritty determination to succeed and hopefully a few dollops of downright luck.

As an experienced researcher, I should have expected a bumpy ride in my quest for original data. There were bound to be arid periods when I would make no progress at all after expenditure of immense effort, leaving me with the feeling that I had run up against a brick wall. I ought to have realized, but did not, that there would be unexpected breakthroughs. Sometimes these came by letter and sometimes by phone; in one instance a phone call from the south of France produced a mass of material – in French! But for the most part I acquired data frustratingly slowly, painstakingly, chip by chip, creeping usually towards another dead end and another bout of despair. And on each occasion, just when I had reached the point of abandoning the whole project, another breakthrough would land on the doormat with the morning's post.

While working my way systematically through the personal reminis-

cences and biographies of agents who had been caught by the Nazis and had suffered horrible experiences, I found that a high degree of emotional detachment was required in order to examine the facts objectively and carefully to discover whether they had put their training into effect and whether it was effective against routine or stealthy German counter-espionage techniques. Here my experiences as a former intelligence officer and my lifetime of professional knowledge of scrupulous and unscrupulous investigation, interrogation and interviewing techniques proved invaluable.

Most of the British-trained agents took several courses in different establishments; the Beaulieu Finishing School did not have the monopoly of training in certain subjects. Many of the published accounts of training by former agents do not recount with accuracy which particular topics were taught at which schools.

The Special Forces Club put me in touch with a number of survivors who in turn passed my enquiries on to others and brought me into contact with many war heroes and heroines of several nationalities. It was a trail that was to lead to numerous parts of France, to Spain and Norway, to the Norges Hjemmefrontmuseum in Oslo, and to the Polish Stadium Polski Podziemnej in London which sent me photocopies of some very interesting original documents. I also managed to contact such distinguished former members of SOE as the legendary Vera Atkins, formerly the Chief Intelligence Officer of the French Section, now in her eighties, who told me in no uncertain terms that my quest was twenty-five years too late! Nevertheless she put me in touch with an invaluable and generous source of information about the staff and administration of the Beaulieu complex, one of its former secretaries, Mrs Ann Sarrell. Also, thanks to the Special Forces Club, I was able to meet a former Chief Instructor of the Beaulieu training staff, Cuthbert Skilbeck, now sadly dead. I spent many enjoyable hours in his company.

Some former secret agents who survived the horrors of the Nazi concentration camps did not wish to be reminded of their wartime experiences. Others have long forgotten the details of their stay in Beaulieu, or, if they recollected significant events, were quite unable to pinpoint them in time.

At a very early stage of my research I discovered that wartime security measures in the Beaulieu area were so tightly enforced that people living on the doorsteps of the houses requisitioned by SOE had no idea of what was going on in them. The trainees living in the SOE houses were forbidden to talk about their activities and were forbidden to wander outside the bounds of their schools, though some of them did. Field

Security personnel were sent into the nearby villages and especially into local pubs to monitor the conversations of members of the School staff and seek out and return erring students to their houses.

Most of the agents who were trained at Beaulieu are now unable to identify in which of the houses they had been trained, because the houses bore no names during the war years and because the agents were usually transported in and out of them in trucks that had their rear canvas flaps strapped down so that nobody could see who or what was being transported, curtailing the passengers' view of their whereabouts. Nor could they remember, with a few exceptions, the names of those who had tutored them.

It was with misplaced hope of obtaining information from residents in the New Forest area that I appeared on the Richard Cartridge show on Radio Solent and made an appeal for information from anybody who had any recollections of the Beaulieu School. The response was, as I should have anticipated, very disheartening. Only one person contacted me.

After more than a year of probing and prodding, when I had accumulated a substantial amount of data and had already made some key surmises, the Foreign Office came up with information about the School's organization. They had been unaware they possessed it and had found it tucked into the records of another school, STS 17 at Brickendonbury. It included a list of all the topics that had been taught at Beaulieu, but they were unable to name which instructors had taught which subjects. They also discovered the manuscript of the Commandant's Opening Address to new students, and I was able positively to identify the author as Lieutenant-Colonel Woolrych; the alterations were in his distinctive handwriting, which I had come to know well through examining documents that he bequeathed to the Intelligence Corps Museum and by reading his correspondence with Captain Widnell, the Montagu estate's land agent.

Despite the expenditure of a great deal of time on the tedious task of combing through a large number of books, talking to survivors and painstaking research, there remains a shortage of data on recruitment and training policy, who taught what and where at particular periods of the war, who made the assessments of the trainees and how the assessments were made.

I cannot therefore guarantee the veracity of everything that I have written. I have done my best with the material available.

Chapter I

THE SILENT SISTERS AND THE HOYDEN

How do you begin to describe to the descendants of the wartime generation the scale of the calamity, the immensity of the atrocities and the extent of the destruction inflicted upon the world by Nazi Germany over a period of ten years? There are no words to express the magnitude of the evil and the havoc caused by the Third Reich, a nation of seventy million people, when it plunged the entire world into a war that was ultimately to consume the lives of forty million people and devastate most of Europe.

With the exception of Sweden, Switzerland, Spain and Portugal, the whole of mainland Europe including much of Russia was conquered or annexed by Nazi Germany, and four hundred million people were held in brutal subjugation until liberated by the Allied Armies in 1944/5.

The German conquest of Europe began in 1935, two years after Adolf Hitler and his gang of murderous opportunists seized power in the German Republic. By the summer of 1942 the German empire stretched from the shores of North Africa to the Arctic and from the English Channel to the doorsteps of Turkey, Persia (Iran) and the Caspian Sea. In North Africa the British Forces had been driven out of Libya and German armies were entrenched in Egypt poised to strike towards Cairo and the Nile, forming the southern arm of a huge threatening pincer movement aimed at linking up with the German forces in Russia through Asia Minor.

The demands which these conquests made upon German industries, materials and manpower could not be met from its own resources and it ruthlessly plundered the occupied countries to support its war against the free world. The savagery with which it went about this task defies belief. Millions of able-bodied men and women were rounded up and consigned to forced labour in Germany or to slave labour camps and millions of the less able-bodied and those sections of the populations considered to be