

KARL RESPA AND GERMAN ESPIONAGE IN CANADA DURING WORLD WAR ONE

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With the outbreak of World War One (WW I) on July 28, 1914 thousands of German nationals found themselves outside of the land of their birth. Canada declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914 while the United States (US) remained neutral until April 6, 1917. Some German nationals felt trapped in North America and wanted to help Germany defeat its enemies in Europe by conducting espionage activity. Members of the Auswärtiges Amt (German Foreign Office - AA) in the US organized and encouraged Germans to conduct sabotage activity for the benefit of Germany's war effort. Due to American neutrality AA members initially found the US a convenient location to carry out espionage. This intelligence activity was lead by Count Johann von Bernstorff, Germany's ambassador in Washington. He was aided by Karl Boy-Ed, naval attaché, Franz von Papen, military attaché, and Dr. Heinrich Albert, commercial attaché. With guidance and support from Berlin they established small groups of saboteurs within the US and Canada. These groups succeeded in organizing an espionage network, which attempted to delay aid and military supplies destined for Europe. This essay will concentrate on one saboteur, Karl Respa, who was willing to take up the fight in Canada for the benefit of Germany.¹

¹ Landau, Henry: *The Enemy Within*, Putnam's Sons New York, 1937, pp. 18-23, Rintelen, Franz von: *The Dark Invader*, Peter Davies London, 1933, pp. 83-186, Doerries, Reinhard R.: *Imperial Challenge*, The University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 1989, pp. 46-189, Selection from Papers found in the Possession of Captain von Papen (Hereafter von Papen Papers), His Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1916, pp. 1-24, March, Francis C., Beamish Richard J. and March, Peyton C.: *History of the World War Volume II*, Leslie-Judge Company New York, 1919, pp. 146-173, Dominion of Canada, Official Report of Debates

German spies and Canadians with pro-German leanings were feared by segments of the Canadian population. German reservists trying to return to Europe to fight, and German papers and pamphlets from American cities, circulating in Canada, enhanced these suspicions. In 1914 and 1915 German propaganda campaigns in Canada circulated rumours of German invasions from the US. This created a degree of panic and a fear of sabotage that required increased safety measures. Canada formed a security service consisting of telegraph operators, customs and immigration officers, local and special police, military guards, private detectives and watchmen. This protective service was under the authority of Lt. Col. Percy Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of the Dominion Police.² For the Canadian authorities the most important public utility that needed protection was the canal systems of Ontario and Quebec. The largest force used, one thousand, was deployed to protect the Welland Canal. This canal was a vital supply route running from Port Colborne, Ontario on Lake Erie to Port Weller, Ontario on Lake Ontario. It allows ships to avoid Niagara Falls by passing along the Niagara escarpment. Following the outbreak of the war von Papen opened an AA office in New York. In Sept. 1914 Horst von der Goltz, a German agent, visited Von Papen. He convinced Papen of the military necessity to dynamite the

House of Commons, Second Session Nineteenth Parliament, 1941, Vol.I, pp.308-309, Dominion of Canada, Official Report of Debates House of Commons, Fourth Session Eighteenth Parliament, 1939, Vol.IV, pp.4042-4047, Province of Ontario Archive (Hereafter POA) RG 23: Proof Links Bernstorff with Bombs, in Detroit Journal Dec. 7, 1917, Doerries, Reinhard R.: Deutsche Saotage in den Vereinigten Staaten im Ersten Weltkrieg: Die Jahren der amerikanischen Neutralität, 1914-1916, in Manfred Berg, Michaela Hönicke, Raimund Lammersdorf and Anneke Rudder (eds.) Macht und Moral, Vol. 14, LIT Verlag Münster 1999, pp. 72-75, Doerries, Reinhard R.: Tracing Kurt Jahnke: Aspects of the Study of German Intelligence, in George O. Kent (ed.), Historians and Archivalists, George Mason University Press Fairfax 1991, pp. 29-37. K. Respa was also known as Charles Respa, Resta, Resp and Charles Roberts.

² Elliot, Major S.R.: Scarlet to Green, Hunter Rose Company, 1981, pp. 49-51, Mount, Graeme S.: Canada's Enemies, Spies and Spying in the Peaceable Kingdom, Durdurn Press, Toronto, 1993, pp. 38-43, Duguid, Fortescue: Official History of Canadian Forces in the Great War 1914-1919, J.O. Patenaude Printer Ottawa, 1938, pp. 10-19, Police Knight Dies in Ottawa, in The Globe and Mail, dated Oct. 16, 1940, p.3, Kelly, William and Kelly, Nora: Policing in Canada, Macmillan of Company of Canada, Toronto, 1974, p. 19, Keshen, Jeffrey A: Propaganda and Censorship during Canada's Great War, The University of Alberta Press Edmonton, 1996, pp. 5-8, Hopkins, J. Castell, The Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1914, The Annual Review Publishing Company Ltd. Toronton, 1915, pp. 275-286.

Welland Canal. British security alerted Canada that the canal was a German target and security was intensified, the canal was not dynamited. In October 1914 Goltz was recalled to Germany, on his return trip he stopped in Great Britain to examine the success of German air raids. He was promptly arrested and extradited to the US. Goltz implicated others in the United States regarding espionage plans in Canada. He and his accomplices were imprisoned for their plans, but Goltz's arrest did nothing to abate German sabotage plans in Canada.

On 23 August 1914 Japan declared war on Germany and became an ally of Canada. Germany feared that Japanese troops could be transported to British Columbia, then with the railway across Canada to ships destined for Europe. On Dec. 12, 1914 Berlin told Bernstorff that he had to prevent Japanese soldiers from being transported to Europe. Arthur Zimmermann, undersecretary at the AA in Berlin, wanted Bernstorff to disrupt Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) traffic in several places. Bernstorff's initial target was a CPR bridge across the Croix River from New Brunswick to Vanceboro, Maine. Von Papen contacted Werner von Horn, a German reserve officer from Guatemala for this purpose. The AA assisted Von Horn in coming to Canada; through AA contacts he was able to successfully plant bombs despite Canadian authorities being warned. His bomb did little damage and after a mere six-hour delay in railway traffic the CPR line was open once again. Von Horn was arrested in Maine, pleaded guilty and went to a federal detention centre in Atlanta, Georgia. Canada demanded his extradition, which was successfully enacted in 1918.³

³ Duguid, p.16, Mount, pp.31-32, Doerries 1989, pp.178-179, von Papen, Franz: Memoirs, Andre Deutsch London, 1952, pp. 33-34, von Papen, Papers, pp.1-24, Dominion of Canada 1939, Vol.IV, pp.4043-4044, Slaght, Arthur G.: War Time Sabotage, T.E. Bowman, Printer to the Kings Most Excellent Majesty, Toronto, 1941, pp.9-11, POA RG 23 E66,1.2: Chief Commissioner of

Von Papen in his quest for other saboteurs met Albert Kaltschmidt through von Reisswitz, the German Consul in Chicago. Kaltschmidt had emigrated from Germany many years prior to the war and had settled in Detroit where he was the owner of a small machine shop.⁴ He had previously worked in Walkerville, Ontario as manager of the Tate Electric Company. This company was sold in spring 1915 and Kaltschmidt's position was terminated. Von Papen's memoirs described Kaltschmidt as "a person who could be trusted, and I instructed him to make plans for attacks on the [Canadian Pacific] railway. He had, however, much bigger ideas and wanted to blow up munitions factories." But according to German historian, Reinhard Doerries, von Papen was the ambitious individual. Kaltschmidt received orders from Papen to blow up a CPR bridge, ammunition factories and a tunnel with the full knowledge and support of Bernstorff⁵

Kaltschmidt spent his free time with other Germans in Detroit and was Secretary of the Deutscher Bund, a nationalistic cultural organization that was active in Europe and abroad. He wanted to do what he could for the Fatherland. In mid-May 1915 Kaltschmidt called a meeting of Germans to his Detroit office where he appealed to them as patriots to aid Germany. Kaltschmidt remarks swayed some through his impassioned speech; "We must do everything for our dear Fatherland. You should not care anything for America or Americans because America will throw you from your work, but we will give you good jobs after the war is over, and the Americans will trample you under their feet." Kaltschmidt received funds from the AA for exactly this purpose. In 1915 he received at least 35,200 US dollars to foment espionage in North

Police Sherwood to Major Joseph .E. Rogers Supt. of Provincial Police, dated Ottawa Dec. 29, 1917, Jones, John Price, Hollister, Paul Merrick: *The German Secret Service in America 1914-1918*, William Briggs Toronto, 1918, pp. 117-119.

⁴ von Papen, pp.30-35, Doerries 1989, pp.181-182, Landau, pp. 20-22, Hopkins 1917, pp. 259-260.

⁵ POA RG 4-32: J.H. Rodd Crown Attorney to I.B. Lucas Attorney General, June 28, 1915, POA RG 22: Statement of Willaim Lefler to Dominion Police and Pinkerton Detective Agency Sandwich June 29, 1915.

America.⁶ One of his recruits was Karl Respa. Respa was born in 1885 in Hamburg and immigrated to the US in 1904. He took out his first American residence papers in summer 1906. Respa met Kaltschmidt in 1906 while employed at the National Pin Company plant in Detroit. Kaltschmidt was employed as manager. Respa, his father and brother-in-law obtained a homestead near Edmonton, Alberta in 1912, but after a six-month hiatus returned to the US. He resided in Detroit thereafter with his married sister Mrs. Carl Schmidt. Besides Respa, Kaltschmidt's collaborators were Carl and Marie Schmidt, Gustav Stephen, William Jarosch, Richard Hermann, Wilhelm Scholz, William Loeffler and Fritz Neef.⁷ What exactly motivated Respa to turn to espionage is not known, but it appears he was moved by Kaltschmidt to do something for the Fatherland, ruling in favour of the land of his birth over his place of residence.⁸ Kaltschmidt also knew that Respa had not completed his service in the German armed forces prior to emigration. Therefore he could not return unless he was prepared to serve time in jail. Kaltschmidt gave Respa the impression that espionage activity in Canada was one way to free him from his military obligations in Germany.

Kaltschmidt sent Stephen and Respa to Winnipeg to see if railway lines were vulnerable to attack. Respa reported that success did not appear likely. He then went to Port Huron, Michigan, at the southern end of Lake Huron, to determine if dynamite could be attached to a passenger train going through a tunnel near the Saint Clair River. Other targets entertained by Kaltschmidt included factories in Detroit, but ultimately he decided to attack Canadian targets. The Peabody Overall Company's factory in

⁶ Landau, pp. 20-22, POA RG23: Superintendent to W.H. Jenkins, Jan. 28, 1916.

⁷ POA RG 22.: Statement of Charles Respa given to A. Nash and N.H. Jenkins at Sandwich, Ontario, Sept. 1, 1915, Respa to Serve Life Sentence, in *Globe and Mail*, March 8, 1915, p. 5, Doerries, p. 181.

⁸ PAAA R77354: Albert Kaltschmidt to Auswärtiges Amt Berlin, Berlin Aug. 18, 1922, PAO RG 23 E66,1.2: Charles Respa given to Ontario Police, Walkerville August 19, 1915.

Walkerville and the Windsor armoury, both of Ontario, were selected as targets.⁹ The Walkerville plant had contracts with the British Army to make uniforms, gloves and clothing. The Armouries trained and provided residence for Canadian soldiers and a storehouse for some military equipment.¹⁰ Walkerville was chosen due to Kaltschmidts friendship with the night watchman, William Lefler. On June 21 Respa met Lefler in Kaltschmidts Detroit office where they were given two time bombs. These bombs were to be detonated at 3 AM that night. Respa, escorted by his sister, crossed the Canadian-American border, planted the bombs and then returned to American soil. The bomb at the factory detonated, the one at the armoury failed to explode. Canadian authorities were immediately suspicious of Lefler regarding the Peabody explosion and he was soon arrested.¹¹ Days afterward police found twenty sticks of dynamite near the Gramm Motor Truck Company building which had been selling trucks to the British, forty sticks near a residence for Ford City workers, and thirty-six sticks outside the Invincible Machine Company which was to be renovated to become a munitions factory. Prior to its alteration this building had been the Tate Electrical Company, where both Lefler and Kaltschmidt had been employed. Kaltschmidt appears to be seeking vengeance in choosing his targets. Canadian authorities speculated that the explosives had been deliberately left behind for sabotage activity at a later date.¹²

⁹ Landau, pp. 20-22, Slaght, pp. 10-11, POA RG 4-32: Information Statement by Alfred Miers Police Magistrate, Walkerville August 13, 1915, POA RG23 E66, 1.2: Constable A. Nash and J.P. Smith to Joesph Rogers Supt. OPP, Walkerville August 29, 1915, Dynamitard Sentenced in Canada, in The Times, Aug. 14, 1915, p. 5, Jones and Hollister, pp. 117-123.

¹⁰ Mount, p.30, POA RG23: No. 57 Reports, Detroit Michigan March 7, 1916

¹¹ Landau, pp. 20-22, Slaght, pp. 10-11, POA RG 4-32: Information Statement by Alfred Miers Police Magistrate, Walkerville August 13, 1915, POA RG23 E66, 1.2: Constable A. Nash and J.P. Smith to Joesph Rogers Supt. OPP, Walkerville August 29, 1915, and Dynamitard Sentenced in Canada, in The Times, Aug. 14, 1915, p. 5. Lefler is also known as Loeffler.

¹² Mount, p.30, POA RG23 E66, 1.2: A. Nash and J.P. Smith to J.E. Rogers Supt. OPP, Windsor June 26, 1915, Dynamite Discovered in Factory in Ford, in Globe and Mail, June 16, 1916, p.2.

Lefler soon confessed to the Peabody crime and implicated Respa. Through the German community in Detroit Respa was warned and fled to New York, but being low on funds he returned to the city. Later he inadvertently crossed the Canadian-US border to attend a picnic on Bois Blanc Island, Ontario and was arrested for his part in the bombing. Due to Respa's confession and the information previously provided by Lefler, Kaltschmidt was soon arrested.¹³ According to Respa, in May 1915, while looking for work he met Kaltschmidt by chance. Respa noted that Kaltschmidt stated that he wanted to do some "blowing up" in Canada. They met again about a week later; Kaltschmidt took Respa to his garage where he showed him roughly thirty sticks of dynamite. Later on June 6th, 1915 Respa meet Lefler and received instructions to go to Canada for intelligence purposes. He admitted placing a suitcase laden with explosives under a walk leading from the street to the Peabody factory in Walkerville. He then proceeded to the Windsor armoury and placed a suitcase at the rear of the building. Although patriot reasons may have swayed Respa to conduct this crime Kaltschmidt also promised him two hundred dollars. Respa maintained that he was given only one hundred and fifteen dollars in small payments. Kaltschmidt needed constant prompting to fulfill even this part of his debt. When Kaltschmidt refused to pay the rest of the money he had promised, Respa threatened blackmail.¹⁴

¹³ Landau, pp. 20-22, Slaght, pp. 10-11, POA RG 4-32: Information Statement by Alfred Miers Police Magistrate, Walkerville August 13, 1915, POA RG23 E66, 1.2: Constable A. Nash and J.P. Smith to Joseph Rogers Supt. OPP, Walkerville August 29, 1915, Dynamitard Sentenced in Canada, in The Times, Aug. 14, 1915, p. 5, A Military Guard in Sandwich, in Globe and Mail, March 6, 1916, p. 7, POA RG22: Untitled and unsigned Report, Detroit Michigan Sept. 17, 1915.

¹⁴ POA RG 22.: Statement of Charles Respa given to A. Nash and N.H. Jenkins at Sandwich, Ontario, Sept. 1, 1915, POA RG 23 E66 1.2: Police Statement signed Charles Respa, witnessed by members of Ontario Provincial Police, Walkerville Ont. August 29, 1915, Hopkins 1916, pp. 223-227.

During preparations for the trial the security of all individuals involved in the judicial process, witnesses and Respa himself became a top priority for Ontario officials. Respa was originally confined to a jail in the county of Essex at Sandwich. Due to the attention his court case attracted and fear of German nationals breaking in and freeing him he was moved to the jail in Guelph. Due to suspicious figures being sighted in the area it was agreed to hold Respa in Guelph while holding the trial in Sandwich. The trial began on Feb. 8, 1916.¹⁵ During his incarceration Respa invented an alibi for the Walkerville explosion, which his earlier confession to Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) quashed. During court procedures Respa's direct involvement in espionage activity in Canada was proven. As well a direct link to Kaltschmidt through AA representatives in the U.S. was demonstrated.¹⁶ On March 7, 1916 the trial was over. The jury deliberated for less than thirty minutes rendering a verdict of guilty. Respa was sentenced to Kingston Penitentiary for life. The judge during the trial, Sir Glenholme Falconridge, seemed to take personal pleasure in berating Respa;

I can find nothing in your case to excite any sympathy. You have not even the poor excuse of a misguided feeling of devotion or spurious loyalty to some country with which we are at war. In planting those devilish devices when you did, you were, for the miserable reward of two hundred pieces of silver, acting the part of the hired assassin. [...] It has not been my practice in numerous cases in which it is necessary to impose the extreme penalty of the law to call the prisoners attention to the utter weakness of the crime. Respa, you have had sufficient time for reflection as to the seriousness of the crime while awaiting trial. If the engine of destruction which you placed at the Windsor Armories had not failed to connect you would have been the murderer of hundreds of sleeping

¹⁵ POA RG 4-32: Ontario Department of the Attorney General – Memorandum for the Attorney General, Toronto Sept. 30, 1915, POA RG 4-24: Ontario Department of the Attorney General to the Lieutenant General, dated Oct. 14, 1915, A Military Guard at Sandwich Jail, in *Globe and Mail*, March 6, 1916, p.7.

¹⁶ Respa Alleges an Alibi in *Toronto Star*, Sept. 28, 1915, p. 3, Dynamiter Convicted in Canada, in *The Times*, p. 7, POA RG E66 1.2: Superintendent to Samuel B. Diehl, Toronto Sept. 29, 1915, POA RG 23: Superintendent to Colonel A.P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner Dominion Police, Toronto Oct. 21, 1915.

men. If you, in your consideration of this vile work, have failed to bring home to your hard conscience the seriousness of it, my words would not do so. You [...] committed a horrible deed.¹⁷

After Respa's imprisonment he did not disappear from the attention of Canadian authorities. Since his incarceration Respa was furious with Kaltschmidt and sought revenge. He volunteered to go to the US and testify in an American courtroom against Kaltschmidt, but he also expected some kind of leniency regarding his sentence in an Ontario jail.¹⁸ Respa's contempt of Kaltschmidt served the Americans well as the American Department of Justice wanted both Lefler and Respa to testify against Kaltschmidt as witnesses. The Canadian government acquiesced to this request. Respa played a pivotal role in the Detroit trial. During proceeding both men were held in Windsor and transported to Detroit daily to serve as witnesses for the American authorities.¹⁹ Kaltschmidt was charged with breaking American neutrality laws, conspiring to destroy munitions plants, military installations and transportation links between the USA and Canada. It was also alleged that Kaltschmidt had grander schemes planned, wanting to blow up British munitions ships in New York harbour.²⁰

¹⁷ Respa to Serve Life Sentence, in *Globe and Mail*, March 8, 1916.

¹⁸ PAO RG 23: No. 57 Reports, dated Detroit Michigan March 7, 1916, POA RG 22: Statement of Charles Respa to A. Nash and N.H. Jenkins at Sandwich, Ontario, Sept. 1, 1915, p. 5.

¹⁹ National Archive of Canada (Hereafter NAC) RG 13 A-2 Vol. 212 File 760(1917): Consul General American Consulate General to C.J. Doherty Minister of Justice, Ottawa May 1, 1917, NAC RG 13 A-2 Vol. 212 File 760(1917): Charles Warren Department of Justice, Washington to the Secretary of State, dated April 21, 1917, NAC RG 13 A-2 Vol. 212 File 760(1917): Barclay to Minister of Justice, Paraphrase of Cypher Telegram from British Embassy to Governor General, Washington May 27, 1917, NAC RG 13 A-2 Vol. 212 File 760(1917): Deputy Minister of Justice to the Under-Secretary of State, dated May 29, 1917, National Archive Research Administration (Hereafter NARA) RG 165 File 9140-4554 Military Intelligence Division Correspondence 1917-1941: Cecil Spring Rice British Embassy Washington to Duke of Devonshire Governor General of Canada, Dec. 6, 1917, NAC RG 13 A2 Vol. 217 File 2041-2062 1917: Frank L. Polk, the Counselor for the Department of State Washington to Mr. Ambassador, Dec. 1, 1917.

²⁰ NARA RG 165, File 10514-33-4 Military Intelligence Division Correspondence 1917-1941: Chattanooga written by Finlay, Dec. 3, 1917, NARA RG 165, File 9140-4554 Military Intelligence Division Correspondence 1917-1941: Detroit written by Wm. F. Ochsenreiter, Dec. 3, 1917, Blow up Munitions Ship, in *Toronto Star* Dec. 6, 1917, p. 14, Conspired to Wreck Munitions Vessels, in *The Globe and Mail* Dec. 6, 1917, p.2, NARA RG165 File 10345-4-2: Office Chief of Staff Executive Division Military Intelligence Branch War Department, Oct. 26, 1918.

During the trial Respa tried to demonstrate that he had been under Kaltschmidt's influence, "that Kaltschmidt had scared him into being an obedient tool was the gist of much of Charles Respa's testimony. He said he placed the bomb at the Windsor armouries, but set it so it would not explode. When [...] asked why he left the bomb at all, he replied that Kaltschmidt would have been very angry. He wanted to avert Kaltschmidt suspicion that he was to blame for the failure of the plot". Due to the niggardly compensation paid by Kaltschmidt to those who actually carried out the espionage activities, many turned against him in court. Kaltschmidt was seen to be the mastermind of the plotters and was convicted guilty of three crimes. These were 1. organizing the bombing of the Peabody Overall plant in Walkerville, the attempt to blow up the Windsor armoury and a plot to destroy a Canadian Pacific bridge in Nipigon, Ontario, 2. conspiracy to bomb the Detroit Screw works and munitions plant, 3. conspiracy to damage the Saint Clair river tunnel, between Port Huron and Sarnia. Kaltschmidt was sentenced to four years in Levensworth and fined \$20,000.²¹ Canadian authorities considered American justice light. Sherwood noted "if the government should decide to bring this man [Kaltschmidt] back to Canada and try him for the indictment now pending against him, there is no doubt whatever if he were brought before the proper Judge (Sir Glenholme Falconbridge) he would receive a life sentence. This he is properly entitled to. [...] arrangements can be made to have Sir Glenholme on that circuit. I am satisfied nothing would give him more pleasure than pronouncing sentence on this scoundrel."²²

Both British and Canadian officials worked unsuccessfully to have Kaltschmidt extradited to Canada. Once the Americans declared war on Germany, German intrigue and intelligence activity declined in Canada. One of the first acts the American authorities did was to raid the offices of the Hamburg-American shipping line in New York. Incriminating evidence involving Bernstorff and von Papen was discovered. This included information establishing the fact that von Papen had furnished funds to Kaltschmidt for the Peabody Overall plant blast in Walkerville, and the plans to blow up the Windsor armoury.²³ Bernstorff, in his memoirs, denied prior knowledge. He stated

²¹ POA RG 23: Plot Evidence Encircling Six, in unnamed newspaper, probably Detroit Journal Dec. 1917, German Plotters' Heavy Sentences, in The Times, Dec. 24, 1917, p.5, POA RG 23: Proof Links Bernstorff with Bombs, in Detroit Journal Dec. 7, 1917, POA RG 23: Untitled article from unnamed newspaper, probably Detroit Journal Dec. [22], 1917.

²² POA RG 23 E6-6.1.2: Percy Sherwood Chief Commissioner of Police to unnamed Colonel, Dec. 28, 1917.

²³ POA RG 23 E66 1.2: Chief Commissioner of Police to Major Joseph E. Rogers Supt. of OPP, Ottawa Dec. 29, 1917, POA RG 23: Superintendent [OPP] to Constable M.S. Wiggle, Toronto April 20, 1916, POA RG 23: Kaltschmidt Trial is Sequel to U.S. Raid on German N.Y. Quarters, in Detroit Journal, Dec. 1917, Mount, p. 30.

that the charges laid against Kaltschmidt were unfounded and were the work of his enemies in the US and Canada.²⁴

Canada maintained “Germany instigated and equipped a campaign, of dynamiting, destruction and international murder by placing large sums of money [...] in the hands of her diplomatic representatives then residing in the United States. On the surface they were there to carry out their diplomatic functions and to preserve friendly relations with the United States. Surreptitiously they were there to direct German sabotage activities, which they did.” AA personal used one hundred and fifty million dollars for this purpose. Sabotage attempts from AA funds took place either on vessels on the Great Lakes, in coastal harbours, ships that recently departed from such harbours and were returning to Europe, in Canadian and American factories, transportation centres and railway links.²⁵

After WW I ended and Respa’s name appeared again in Canadian circles. At this time Canadian authorities planned to deport enemy aliens currently in detention. According to Canada, Article 220 of the Treaty of Versailles gave them the right to deport all German nationals it wanted. In addition Canadian immigration legislation was abused to deport unwanted Germans.²⁶ Yet Respa represented a problem for authorities. The Justice Department maintained that criminal elements, such as Respa, would have to serve a substantial portion of their sentence before they could be removed from Canada. In contrast the Solicitor General of Canada advocated that he

²⁴ Bernstorff, Count: My Three Years in America, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York 1920, pp. 119-120.

²⁵ Dominion of Canada 1939, pp. 4042-4043, Slaght, pp. 9-20.

²⁶ NAC C 10435 File 912971 Vol 616: Monsieur Carlin to Monsieur Isler, Nov. 6, 1919, NAC C 10435 File 912971 Vol. 616: Swiss Minister to Lord Curzon, Circulated to the King and War Cabinet, March 4, 1919, NAC C 10435 File 912971 Vol. 616: Swiss Minister to Lord Curzon, Circulated to the King and War Cabinet, Feb. 28, 1919, NAC C 10435 File 912971 Vol. 616: [Swiss Minister to British Government], Oct. 1, 1919, NAC C 10435 File 912971 Vol. 616: Ass. Deputy Minister of Immigration and Colonization Memorandum, Dec. 11, 1919.

spend a ten years in prison before he could be deported.²⁷ AA representative in Canada, Ludwig Kempff, tried to take advantage of this divide in philosophy and lobbied for Respa's deportation to Germany.

Kempff did not defend Respa's actions, but he believed they were due to idealistic and patriotic reasons that often occur during wartime. He advocated that Respa was entitled to some leniency, something that the presiding judge, Falconridge, had not done. Kempff noted that German nationals guilty of intelligence operations in the US were dealt with more humanely than in Canada. This appears to be true; Kaltschmidt although also arrested in 1915 had been in Germany for years after serving approximately five years in an American prison. In contrast to Kaltschmidt Respa had already been imprisoned more than seven years. Kempff referred to cases where German citizens had experienced moderation in the US for similar crimes. Kempff noted that Germans that had been convicted in the United States for similar offences received lighter sentences. According to Kempff Respa's predicament was beginning to play a role in relations between Canada and Germany. He wrote Canadian Prime Minister King making the point that Respa was the only man imprisoned in the North American for sabotage. Articles on Respa had appeared in Germany, if he was not soon released it would create the impression that Canadians are more hostile to Germans than other former enemies such as the US.²⁸ King promised to give Respa's

²⁷ NAC RG76 Vol. 395 File 563236 Part II: [Paragraph] 805239 Nr.1908, NAC RG 76 Vol.394 File 563236 Part 8: Private Secretary of [King] to Major W.J. Morrison Superintendent Toronto Municipal Farm, Feb. 13, 1922, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen 15 Canada: Ludwig Kempff to Sir L. Gouin Minister of Justice, dated June 1, 1923, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amtes [Hereafter PAAA] R77354 Rechtswesen 15 Canada: German General in Canada to Auswärtiges Amtes, June 20, 1923.

²⁸ PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: Kempff GGC to Chief of the Remission Branch, Department of Justice, Ottawa, Oct. 27, 1922, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: L Kempff GGC to Prime Minister King and Secretary of State for External Affairs, June 4, 1923, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: J.D. Clarke Chief of Remission Branch to Kempff GGC Montreal, June 5, 1923, Dorries, pp. 144-190 and 338-339, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to Sir L. Gouin Minister of Justice and Acting Solicitor General signed Kempff, June 1, 1923.

case careful consideration; his request was conveyed to the Canadian Department of Justice. The head of the justice department, Clark, was sympathetic to Respa's appeals, as he believed that Kaltenschmidt was the party ultimately responsible the espionage acts committed by Respa. Kempff was optimistic and hoped a change in King's cabinet and a new Solicitor General would help Respa's cause.²⁹

With a limited immigration allowed in early 1923 the Canadian government didn't want to give German authorities an excuse to propagate anti-Canadian propaganda. Any unfavourable attention in Germany could be damaging. Kempff made them aware of Respa and put pressure on the CPR to talk to the Canadian government.³⁰ Owing to Canada's emigration concerns in Germany, Kempff's persistent lobbying on Respa's behalf and L. Gouin being appointed Minister of Justice and Solicitor General for Canada Respa was released in late January 1924. He had spent eight and a half years in prison for his acts of violence. In contrast Kaltenschmidt had served roughly five years. Thus Kempff was correct that Canada was harsher in dealing with German saboteurs than the Americans.³¹

²⁹ PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to AA signed Kempff, June 20, 1923, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: F. A. McGregor Private Secretary from the Prime Ministers Office to L. Kempff GGC, June 9, 1923, NAC C4689: F.C. Blair Secretary of Immigration to Georg Kirsch, Jan. 3, 1923, NAC C4689 W. J. Egan Deputy Minister to Sir Joseph Pope Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, Feb. 8, 1924, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: Prime Ministers Office to L Kempff signed McGregor Private Secretary, June 9, 1923, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to Chief of the Remission Branch, Department of Justice signed Kempff, Oct. 27, 1922.

³⁰ PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to AA signed Kempff, June 20, 1923, Wagner, Jonathan F.: *Troubles in Paradise - Letters to and from German Immigrants in Canada, 1925 - 1939*, Scripta Mercaturae Verlag, St. Katharinen, 1998, pp. 21-27.

³¹ PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to Sir L. Gouin Minister of Justice and Acting Solicitor General signed Kempff, June 1, 1923, Dorries, pp. 175-189 and 338-339, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: Karl Respa to AA July 7, 1924, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: GGC to AA signed Kempff, Jan. 29, 1924, PAAA R77354 Rechtswesen Kanada Abteilung III: L Kempff GGC to WL Mackenzie King Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, June 4, 1923, POA RG 23: RG 23 E6-6,1.2: Percy Sherwood Chief Commissioner of Police to unnamed Colonel, Dec. 28, 1917, Respa to Serve Life Sentence, in *Globe and Mail*, March 8, 1916, p. 5.

For over a decade Respa's name was forgotten in Canada, but with Adolf Hitler's ascension to power and the National Socialist ideology gaining prevalence within some sections of German speakers overseas Respa name was again heard in Canada. With the outbreak of World War Two (WW II) the Canadian Department of Justice and Royal Canadian Mounted Police examined German espionage acts in Canada during WW I. Due to the acts of Respa and like-minded individuals Canada acted swiftly to imprison potential enemy agents during WW II. Canada maintained that from the known facts and lessons of the last war, there were subversive elements in Canada. These elements were equipped with money, and means for the purpose of destroying Canadian contributions in supplies and manpower for the war. Canadian security establishments relived the acts of Bernstorff, Von Papen and Boy-Ed. Respa's crimes were re-examined in order to defend Canada. Canadian authorities attempted to learn from WW I to prepare the country for possible new espionage committed by Nazis. Years later Respa's story caused Canadian security measures at the start of WW II to be heightened.

Canadian losses due to German saboteurs during WW I appeared to be small although the exact number is a matter of historical debate. Arthur G. Slaght, a distinguished lawyer from Ontario, Member of Parliament for Parry Sound, Ontario from 1935-1945 and war emergency planner during WW II calculated that AA representatives were responsible for ninety-two acts of sabotage in North America. The majority of Slaght's figures list a US city or port, but some simply gave the name of a ship or factory without a point of origin. Although Slaght believed many more occurred in Canadian territory deriving exactly how many occurred in Canada according to his research is

open to scrutiny. It can only be stated with certainty that four took place within Canadian borders.³² Bernstorff attempted to play down the role German insurgents fearing that Germany could be held accountable for damages inflicted on Canadian property. He wrote that there was but one case of successful and three cases of unsuccessful sabotage.³³ Historians have compiled different figures. Hannant examined Slaght's findings and stated that there were few cases of attempted or actual sabotage in Canada. Elliot listed the total number to be nine (seven in eastern Canada and the Maritimes, two in the west), while Duguid gave the figure at eleven (one in the west, ten in Eastern and Atlantic Canada). Sawatsky never mentioned how many occurred nationwide but stated that no German sabotage occurred in western Canada. Hopkins appears to give weight to almost all rumours of espionage. Hopkins stated that at least nineteen occurred in Canada, these were broken down as; a minimum six acts of sabotage occurred in 1914, at least four in 1915, five in 1916, and four in 1917 (Ontario and Quebec only). One reason for these varying numbers is due to the various sources used and the problem collecting raw data. During WW I some unexplained occurrences that were linked to Canada's war effort were viewed as sabotage, e.g. negligence at factories, unexplained fires, acts of vandalism, mysterious deaths, labour unrest, etc. Unfortunately, in some circumstances, innocent individuals who were accused of committing or planning crimes suffered as a result.³⁴

³² Dominion of Canada, 1939, pp. 4042-4047, Dominion of Canada, 1941, pp.307-310, Slaght, pp. 5-26, Duguid, pp.10-21, Appendix 36, Roberts, Charles G.D.: The Canadian Who's Who 1948, Volume IV University of Toronto, 1949, p. 867, Enemies at Work, in The Globe and Mail, Oct. 10, 1939, p. 6.

³³ Bernstorff, pp. 112-121 and Doerries 1991, pp. 29-30.

³⁴ Elliot, pp. 49-50, Duguid Appendix 36, Sawatsky, John: Men in the Shadows, The RCMP Security Service, Doubleday Canada Limited Toronto, 1980, p. 58, Mount, pp.29-43, Hannant, Larry: The Infernal Machine, Investigating the Loyalty of Canada's Citizens, University of Toronto Press Toronto, 1995, p. 32, Hopkins 1914, pp. 280-283, Hopkins 1915, pp. 445-458, Hopkins, 1916, p. 227, Hopkins, 1917, p. 263.

Despite the precautions enacted by Canada German agents planned many, yet accomplished relatively few sabotage successes in Canada. These did little to disturb Canadian efforts to aid Great Britain during the Great War. This was partially due to Canadian, British and American intelligence, but a more important role lay in German hands. How many agents were active in North America is not known, but AA representatives were simply unable to find capable individuals to carry out these ambitious and dangerous ideas. Bernstorff and his AA associates had elaborate plans involving Germans, Irish and even East Indians to disrupt the Canadian war efforts and even invade Canada. Doerries noted that the Irish often surpassed German acts of bravery, although some contemporary Germans hotly contested this claim. Another problem was that too many projects were planned and too few being successfully completed. One would have to add Respa to this list as he only carried out half of his plan effectively. He also lacked the maturity and discipline to remain quiet when arrested. When placed in detention he implicated others and later willingly testified against Kaltschmidt. Unfortunately Respa's amateur conduct did not prove to be the exception to Germany's espionage activity. Doerries noted that Germans actions in North America were often unprofessional and ineffective. Ameringer repeated this assessment, he wrote that Germans "engaged in covert action – and incredibly clumsy covert action, at that."³⁵

³⁵ Doerries 1989, pp. 45-181, Mount, pp. 28-43, Jones and Hollister, pp. 60-72 and 105-129, Scott, W.J.: Sabotage Prevention, T.E. Bowman, King's Printers Ottawa 1941, pp. 2-16, Otto, Max: Das Kreuz in der Wildnis: Erlebnisse, Grethlein Verlag, Leipzig, 1930, pp. 304-314, Otto, Max: In Kanadas Urwälder und Prärien, Verlagbuchhandlung Paul Parey, Berlin, 1926, pp. 137-142, Doerries 1999, pp. 82-83, Ameringer, Charles D.: U.S. Foreign Intelligence, Lexington Books Toronto 1990, p. 106.

Even though Respa had been deported in 1924 his actions were not forgotten in Canada during WW II. Respa was one of many German nationals wanting to do what he could to help the Fatherland during war. Whether motivated by money, promises or acting out of blind patriotism his actions gave him a place in Ontario and Canadian history, one that started in June 1915, lingering throughout WW I and onto WW II. Unfortunately his infamy landed him a heavy sentence by Ontario judge Glencombe Falconridge. Although the AA in the US organized and encouraged German nationals to conduct espionage for the benefit of Germany Respa appears to be one of the least formidable AA recruits. Respa was not a soldier or a military minded person who was willing to suffer for the Fatherland. He was a man with a definite aim that hoped to gain from his espionage activities but he represented a poor choice as a man of intrigue and espionage. Others may have succeeded in stopping or delaying essential military equipment and supplies destined for Europe, but Respa's efforts appear to be misguided. Respa claimed to have been duped by Kaltschmidt in believing that espionage was an action that would please German authorities; he was also swayed by the promise of money. But Respa did not delay the production of any vital products, although he may have created some panic in Canada and the United States. The fear of sabotage required increased safety measures and Canada had to react, thus possibly holding Canadian troops at home that were otherwise destined for Europe. Perhaps in some small way Respa did assist Germany's war effort and made a small contribution on Germany's behalf.