

SABO

Hitler's Secret

NAZI TEURS

Attack on America

Samantha Seiple

SCHOLASTIC
FOCUS
New York

Copyright © 2019 by Samantha Seiple

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Focus, an imprint of Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, SCHOLASTIC FOCUS, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher.

For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Seiple, Samantha, author.

Title: Nazi saboteurs : Hitler's secret attack on America / Samantha Seiple.

Description: First edition. | New York, NY : Scholastic Focus, [2019] | Audience:

Ages: 8 to 12. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018054402 (print) | LCCN 2019000901 (ebook) |

ISBN 9781338259247 (Ebook) | ISBN 9781338259148 (hardcover : alk. paper) |

ISBN 9781338259193 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: World War, 1939-1945—Secret service—Germany—Juvenile literature. | Espionage, German—United States—History—20th century—Juvenile literature. | Sabotage—United States—History—20th century—Juvenile literature. | Spies—Germany—Biography—Juvenile literature. | Nazis—United States—Biography—Juvenile literature.

Classification: LCC D810.S7 (ebook) | LCC D810.S7 S386 2019 (print) |

DDC 940.54/87430973—dc23

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 19 20 21 22 23

Printed in the U.S.A. 23

First edition, December 2019

Book design by Abby Dening

Chapter 1

THE MASTERMINDS

**Seven months earlier, November 1941
Berlin, Germany**

George Dasch was dissatisfied with his job. But this was nothing new. He'd never been satisfied with any job he'd held. Even so, in Nazi Germany, his current job was considered cushy. And Dasch knew that was nothing to complain about.

He had to admit that the work was very interesting and the pay was good. Plus, there were extra food rations, cigarettes, and other luxuries that weren't available to just anyone. He also appreciated that he wasn't in any danger of being drafted into the German Army.

Dasch was an expert on all things American, which was a highly valuable skill set in Nazi Germany. He worked in a listening post as an *erfasser*, or a radio monitor. His job was to listen to American radio newscasts and translate them from English to German. But having returned to Germany after spending nearly twenty

NAZI SABOTEURS

years living in the United States, his command of the German language wasn't very good.

In fact, he had trouble speaking his native language. He could remember only the local dialect of his hometown of Speyer. And he could express himself only in the simplest of words, like a child. But he had no problem expressing himself in English.

Dasch was a real talker, enjoying the sound of his voice and peppering his conversations with American slang and idioms, such as "scram" and "sight for sore eyes." He'd worked hard to learn English, and he spoke it with just a hint of an accent. When Dasch first started working as a radio monitor, he was worried that his rusty German was going to get him fired. But, to his surprise, after three weeks on the job, he was asked to take the final oath of secrecy. His cushy job was secure.

Even so, he was dissatisfied. George Dasch was thirty-eight years old and wanted to do something more, something bigger. After all, it's why he'd left his American wife behind and made the long voyage home to Nazi Germany. Dasch wanted to use his underappreciated intelligence and find success, to make his mark on the world. Something he'd tried but failed to do in the past.

For the nearly two decades that he had lived in America, Dasch worked mostly as a waiter. He was paid well because he was good at his job. But his earnings were dependent on tips from the customers he served. And Dasch felt that the tipping system was degrading. Plus, the work was not intellectually challenging to him.

Dasch believed the job was beneath him, so he never told his mother that he worked as a waiter in America. But when she came to visit him for the first and only time, in June 1939, he couldn't hide it from her any longer. Just as he suspected, she was very disappointed in him.

"Aren't you tired of being a waiter?" she said then. "Your father and I spent our hard-earned money to give you an education, better than any of the other children, and look what you're doing now. I'm ashamed to go home and tell anyone about it."

She urged him to come back to Germany to find a more impressive job. She praised Hitler and his Nazi regime, to his surprise, and spoke persuasively about the improved living conditions and happiness of the German people. "Germany isn't the way you remember . . . We don't have unemployment any more.

NAZI SABOTEURS

Everyone is working, there's lots of building and the people are happy . . . Just keep out of politics, mind strictly your own business, and everything will be all right," she said.

Dasch felt guilty. He was one of thirteen children in his family. Throughout his childhood in the medieval city of Speyer on the Rhine, his parents had struggled to make ends meet on his father's wages as a carpenter. But his mother, whom Dasch described as a "battle axe," had always managed to somehow provide food, clothing, an education, and a home.

His shame cut deep. This wasn't the first time his mother had been disappointed in him. When he was thirteen, his parents had paid to send him to a Catholic convent so he could enter the priesthood. But a year later, when Germany was in the throes of World War I, fourteen-year-old Dasch volunteered to work as a clerk in the German Army. Three years later, Dasch went back to school, but he soon changed his mind about becoming a priest and quit. His mother felt like he had thrown an opportunity away. And Dasch quickly found himself unemployed, like many Germans after their defeat in World War I.

Unemployment wasn't all that was ailing the

The Masterminds

German population. To make peace, the German government agreed to sign the Treaty of Versailles in June 1919. This angered and humiliated many Germans and, most notably, Adolf Hitler. Hitler had been a soldier in the war and had been wounded. He and many others believed that the German government ended the war too early and was “stabbing” the German people in the back.

By signing the treaty, Germany had accepted the blame for starting World War I and agreed to pay billions of dollars in reparations to other countries.

Valuable German territory was also taken away as part of the treaty, causing the loss of industrial and agricultural income. And to hinder Germany from starting another war, the treaty reduced their armed forces, which caused more jobs to be lost. Soon, there were food



Adolf Hitler.

NAZI SABOTEURS

shortages, and inflation made their money so worthless that people began burning it for fuel. The middle class fell into poverty, and people became so desperate that the crime rate went up.

While the German economy was in a tailspin toward disaster, the Roaring Twenties were in full swing in America. The stock market was going up and up, and Americans were living big. So, like many Germans at the time, nineteen-year-old Dasch came to America in search of better opportunities. He wanted to be a success and to make his mother proud.

But he didn't have enough money to buy a ticket for passage, so Dasch snuck onto a ship and sailed to America as a stowaway. Even though he entered the country illegally, he was soon hired as a dishwasher in a restaurant. Dasch quickly learned the restaurant business and sought a job as a waiter with the goal of improving his English. Throughout the years, Dasch held various waiter jobs, working at very expensive restaurants and luxury resorts in New York City and Long Island. But in the next decade, the stock market crashed in 1929 and America suffered through the Great Depression. By the time his mother

visited in 1939, Dasch felt he had nothing to show for his effort.

He wasn't even an American citizen, although he had passed all the examinations, paid the fees, and just needed to sign the final papers and be sworn in. But when Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, and launched the start of World War II, Dasch decided his duty was to his native country. He believed that if he didn't return to Germany, he would be considered "unpatriotic" and a "slacker." He didn't want to be a "rat" and renounce his German citizenship in a time of war. Plus, his mother, whose opinion he highly valued, had persuaded him that Hitler was leading Germany down the right path. She convinced him that he wasn't a success in America but there was a chance he would be one in Germany.

At the time, the Nazi regime was encouraging Germans living outside of the country to return to their homeland. The government was even paying for their passage back. But they weren't letting just anyone return. They wanted men with specific skill sets and experience to help Hitler win the war. They also wanted Nazis. This last piece was a problem for Dasch.

NAZI SABOTEURS

He wasn't a member of the Nazi Party, or any political party. Although people who knew Dasch would call him a communist, he considered himself a socialist, like his mother. He strongly supported more rights and equality for the working class, such as better wages and the right to join labor unions. In fact, Dasch had taken it upon himself to organize a union for waiters in New York City.

But in Hitler's Germany, labor unions were outlawed, and neither communism nor socialism was tolerated even though the Nazi Party's full name was the National Socialist German Workers' Party. Many German socialists were arrested and imprisoned. At the same time, the Nazi Party considered democracy even worse, and was vehemently opposed to it.

When Hitler was appointed the chancellor of Germany six years before Dasch decided to return, on January 30, 1933, it marked the end of democracy for the country and the beginning of nationalism. By invoking a state of emergency, Hitler was able to suspend Germany's constitution. This gave Hitler all the power, and he could issue new laws without consulting anyone.

Dasch watched from afar as Hitler established a one-party state and banned all other political parties. This eliminated elections and the people's right to vote. But the German people were desperate for change, and many believed Hitler's message that he was their savior.

Hitler was a charismatic and hypnotic speaker. He spoke passionately, using simple and clear language, and told the people what they wanted to hear. The Nazis were going to solve all their problems, which at first, Dasch did not believe.

In the beginning, Hitler was vague about the Nazi Party's policies. He wanted to reach a wide range of people. He promised to abolish the Treaty of Versailles, calling it "unfair punishment." Many Germans agreed with him. He also promised more jobs, which appealed to the unemployed working class—and would resonate strongly with Dasch.

From what Dasch was told by his mother, Hitler delivered on these promises. But the increase in employment wasn't what it seemed. The Nazi Party used propaganda, which was a powerful weapon, allowing them to twist the truth or outright lie to support their

NAZI SABOTEURS

agenda. They also used censorship to silence any opposition to their message.

So, while the Nazis did increase the number of new jobs by building and repairing roads, railways, and houses as well as building up their military, they also took employment away from other Germans. Many women and Jews were fired from their jobs, but the Nazis did not count them as unemployed. This made it seem like unemployment had decreased. And, perhaps more important for Hitler, it made him look like he was saving Germany, compelling many Germans, including Dasch, to return.

To maintain his power, Hitler quickly turned Germany into a police state. He took away basic freedoms, such as the freedoms of speech, press, and assembly. The German people also lost their right to privacy, so government officials could read their mail, listen to their telephone conversations, and search their homes without needing a warrant.

Hitler controlled all aspects of their lives, including their leisure time. Teenaged boys were required to join Hitler Youth groups, where they were groomed to become Nazis.