

Trading with the enemy

Before WW2 close ties were forged between the Nazi state-supported I.G. Farben chemical company and American firms notably Standard Oil and Dupont, with cross-membership of boards of directors and agreements on exchange of patents relating to synthetic rubber and petroleum products. With the approach of war in Europe, correspondence between Germany and its American interests was carried out in any manner which could avoid Allied mail interception, and there was a transfer of German company operations into Switzerland from where business could be continued in a "neutral country" Ha Ha.....

One route for correspondence was via German interests in South America, particularly in Argentina, and after the closure of the German air routes in 1939 mail was carried on the Italian LATI service from Rome, which travelled unhindered by Allied mail interception. Some mail from Germany into the United States was even routed through South America in order to avoid interception in Bermuda or Trinidad which could have occurred had mail been sent on the Pan American flights from Lisbon. After December 1941 and the entry of the United States into the war, the Allied censorship ring was completed by the establishment of US censor stations in San Juan and Miami, but in a short period from January to July 1942, Axis mail continued to be carried by Pan American Airways from Lisbon to Natal in Brazil without interception despite the setting-up of a British censor station in Bathurst, Gambia which the Pan American flights virtually ignored.

This display shows typical covers relating to "trading with the enemy", with emphasis on the role of specialist firms of patent lawyers in Switzerland and Argentina. The chemical processes handed over to the Germans by Standard Oil were utilised in the construction by I.G. Farben of chemical complexes at Blechhammer and Heydebreck in Upper Silesia, where large numbers of slave labourers including Allied prisoners-of-war were used in the "Bau und Arbeitsbattalions" (BAB). In January 1945, the camps associated with the chemical plants were evacuated, the Allied prisoners being marched on foot back to Germany and the slave labourers (largely Jewish) being transported to camps such as Buchenwald from which they never emerged. Farben ran these camps as a commercial enterprise, here from a 1942 share certificate for Blechhammer.



One irony is reported as follows:- *"The British Royal Air Force had to pay royalties to Nazi Germany through Ethyl-Standard for the gasoline used to fly Goering's bombers that were attacking London. The payments were held in Germany by Farben's private banks for Standard until the end of the war"*. [1]

[1] "The Nazi-American Money Plot", George Higham, 1981 New York.

Trading with the enemy

Germany to Argentina by Air France service 1935 via Dakar



Route: Berlin-Marseille (3 April 1935)-Dakar-Natal-Buenos Aires. Despatch Berlin 1 April 1935, Arrive Buenos Aires 10 April 1935.

Rate: Surface 20Rpf first 20g, 20Rpf next 20g, Registration 30Rpf = 70Rpf. Air fee paid 9Rm which means that the Post Office charged the Lufthansa rate (1.50Rm per 5g) rather than the correct French service rate of 1.60Rm per 5g.

Features: Illustrates the close inter-linking of French and German airmail services to South America. The cover was clearly intended to travel by Lufthansa but was instead sent by Air France. The handwritten endorsement "Par Avion France – Amérique du Sud" could not have been written by a native German if one studies the German handwriting of the period, but it is impossible to decide where the endorsement was applied.

Arrival in Buenos Aires coincides with arrival of the "Santos Dumont" in the period when all-air services were irregular and much mail between Dakar and Natal was being carried by surface.

From a patent lawyer in Berlin to the official Argentine government patent attorneys "Marval, Huntington & Marval" and still operating today.

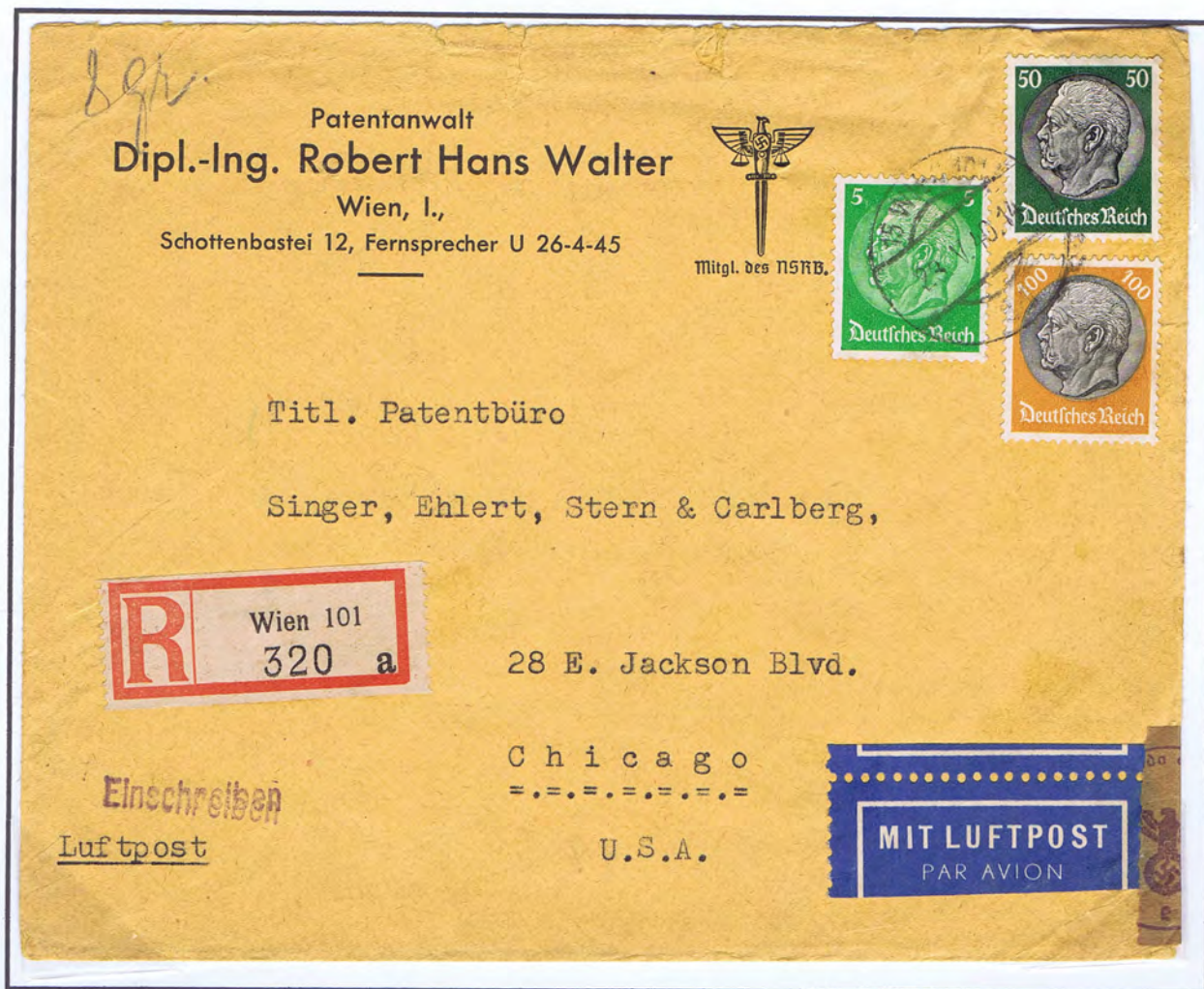
Trading with the enemy

Argentina to Germany by LATI 1941. I.G. Farben.



- Route:** Buenos Aires to Frankfurt by Italian LATI service. Despatch 13 September 1941, flight leaving Buenos Aires 15 September, arrive Rome 18 September 1941.
- Rate:** Surface fee 20c. 2 x air fee of 125c, total 2.70 Peso.
- Censor:** German re-sealing label of Berlin.
- Features:** Before America entered the war, I.G. Farben and various American chemical companies including Standard Oil and Dupont had reciprocal agreements on exchange of patents covering, amongst other subjects the manufacture of synthetic oil and rubber. Covers to and from Switzerland, Germany and Argentina show regular correspondence via Argentine patent lawyers. This cover from such a company in Argentina is addressed to the I.G. Farben patent office in Frankfurt. The two-way traffic continued after America entered the war and was the cause of concern and outrage in Allied military circles. By using the LATI air service, such correspondence escaped Allied mail interception and examination. In 1941 I.G. Farben built chemical plants in Upper Silesia to produce the synthetic oil and rubber enabling the German war machine to continue functioning. These plants were operated using slave labour and Allied prisoners-of-war, with I.G. Farben paying the Nazi S.S. a per capita fee for each labourer they supplied to Farben.

Trading with the enemy
Germany to USA by Pan American 1940.



- Route:** Vienna to Chicago via Lisbon Pan American flight 132 arriving New York 1st June 1940.
- Rate:** Surface fee 25 Rpf, 2 x air fee of 40 Rpf + (apparently) 50 Rpf "Eilzustellung" Express fee.
- Censor:** German re-sealing label of Frankfurt.
- Features:** Correspondence between patent lawyers possibly relating to dubious agreements between I.G. Farben and Standard Oil. Cover carries the emblem of the NSRB Nationalsozialistischer Rechtswahrerbund (National Socialist Lawyer's Association) Singer, Ehlert, Stern & Carlsberg published the "Guide to Patents, Trade Marks & Design" widely used by patent lawyers as a reference.

Trading with the enemy

Germany to USA by Italian LATI service 1941 avoiding Allied censorship



Route: Dresden to Philadelphia via Rome-Rio-Lima-New York. Transit marks of Balboa and Canal Zone. Despatched 22 April 1941, Balboa 12 May, arriving Philadelphia 14 May 1941.

Rate: 25pf surface fee, 30pf Registration, 30pf AR, four air fees of 215pf. Total Rm 9.45.

Censor: German OKW code letter d (Munich).

Features: Tortuous and expensive route to avoid Allied censorship on direct route Lisbon-New York via Bermuda. One reference to the cartel arrangements between I.G. Farben and United States companies says this [1]:

"I.G. had cartel agreements with Standard Oil of New Jersey, with Aluminum Company of America, with Dow Chemical Company, with E. I. duPont de Nemours, with Monsanto Chemical Company, with Pennsylvania Salt Co., with Rohm & Haas, with Plaskon Corporation, with Hercules Powder Company, with Remington Arms, with the Unyte Company, and with numerous other American companies which will be referred to later."

Remembering that it was I.G. Farben who manufactured Zyklon B; who built co-located chemical plants and concentration camps at Auschwitz and Blechhammer, the close co-operation of an American chemical company (and others) seems unfortunate, to say the least. One wonders what might have been enclosed in the cover and why it was deemed necessary to avoid mail examination.

[1] Borkin J. and Welsh Charles A. *"Germany's Master Plan, The story of Industrial Offensive"*, (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, New York 1943).

Trading with the enemy

Germany to United States via LATI service avoiding Allied censorship 1941



Route: Berlin to New York via LATI service from Rome via Rio de Janeiro-Buenos Aires-Lima-Cristobal-Mexico City. Despatch 7 March 1941.

Rate: 25pf surface fee, air fee 215pf. Total Rm 2.40.

Censor: German OKW code letter e (Frankfurt).

Features: Endorsed "Über Südamerika" as per Luftpostliste 1 March 1941. Tortuous and expensive route to avoid Allied censorship on direct route Lisbon-New York via Bermuda.

The "Allgemeine Waren-Finanzierungsgesellschaft" was a subsidiary of the Dresdner Bank and facilitated transfers of stolen money, gold and assets to "safe" accounts in Switzerland and the United States. One has to ask why this organisation was in correspondence with a US bank in New York using a devious mail route?

From the internet, relating to investigation of the Dresdner Bank:

"Nicht zuletzt war die Bank auch zur Abdeckung geheimer Operationen bereit: Ihre Filialen in Afrika und Südamerika dienten als Spionagestützpunkte der SS, über das Tochterunternehmen Allgemeine Waren-Finanzierungs-Gesellschaft (Allwafinag) wurde deutsches Auslandsvermögen getarnt. Eine besondere Rolle in der Geldpolitik der Dresdner Bank während des Zweiten Weltkrieges spielte die Deutsche Orientbank (DOB) in Istanbul, die sie 1933 übernommen hatte."

<http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/das-hannah-arendt-institut-hat-einen-ersten-zwischenbericht-ueber-die-taetigkeit-der-dresdner-bank-waehrend-des-zweiten-weltkriegs-vorgelegt-golddrehscheibe-istanbul-16416190>

Trading with the enemy

Switzerland to United States intercepted Bermuda 1941.



- Route: Despatched 10 July 1941. Basel-Barcelona by rail. Barcelona-Lisbon by Ala Littoria. Lisbon-Bermuda by Pan American FAM-18 via Horta. Intercepted in Bermuda and returned to London. Forwarded UK-New York in February 1946.
- Rate: 30c surface fee. 30c Registration. 2 x Air Fee 70c. Total Fr. 2.0.
- Censor: Bermuda CL9a (167) 5472. Opened and re-sealed London Censor 8053.
- Features: Uncommon local Bermuda printing CL9a label. Cover intercepted and returned to London. Held and released in 1946, forwarded to New York, arriving 13 February 1946. Cover from "H.S.-Sch. & Co." which is abbreviation for the bank "Hans Seligman-Schürch & Co." an organisation known to be involved in Nazi and Holocaust related dealings. Firm was on the US Proclaimed List and presumably also on the British censorship "Watch List" in Bermuda. A note from the US Legation in Bern to the Secretary of State in Washington reads:

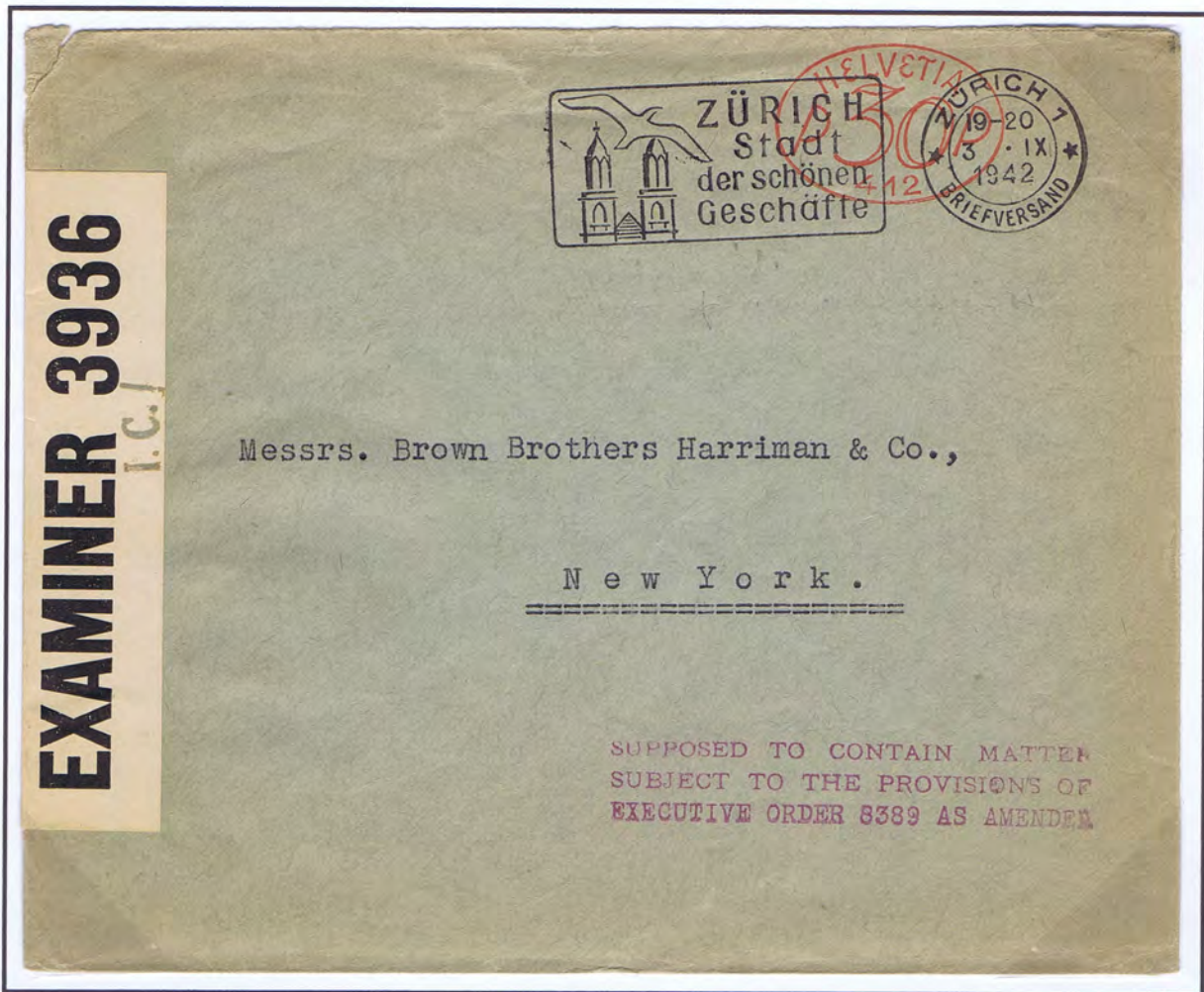
"My British colleague has brought to my attention an astonishing communication which the British Consulate General at Basel has received under date of October 14, 1942, from Messrs. Hans Seligman-Schürch and Company, bankers at Basel. This company is listed in the Proclaimed List.

The letter states that a gentleman has arrived in Switzerland from Holland who has proposed, with German approval, that 250 Jews now in Holland be permitted to leave Holland for overseas destinations against a payment of 5,000,000 Swiss Francs. The contract must be assured by a Swiss bank and payment is due when the 250 hostages involved have reported to the Swiss Consulate in Lisbon. One of the provisions of the proposal is that the 5,000,000 Swiss Francs shall remain on deposit in Switzerland until the end of the war."

Neutral Switzerland?? Don't make me laugh!

Trading with the enemy

Switzerland to United States intercepted Bermuda 1942.



- Route: Despatched 3 September 1942. Basel-17 directly by rail to Lisbon then by sea. Intercepted in Bermuda and forwarded to New York after examination.
- Rate: 30c surface fee.
- Censor: Bermuda opened and re-sealed Examiner 3936 IC.
- Features: Mail from an anonymous PO Box in Zurich addressed to Brown Brother Harriman in New York. Carries US endorsement "...subject to the provisions of Executive Order 8389 as amended". This order from President Roosevelt was out in place to prevent the transfer of illicit funds from Nazi held countries into the United States.

Brown Brothers Harriman are cited in most references to wartime illicit money transfers and the texts make uneasy reading. The firm's connection with I.G.Farben and their operations in Upper Silesia is quoted in [1]. Fortunately people in Bermuda and the US were keeping watch on BB&H. Ironically the slogan canceller reads "Zurich. Town of good business"

"The holdings of Brown Brothers Harriman in Consolidated Silesian were a small part of a larger partnership between Brown Brothers Harriman and the German Steel Trust".

This is just one of many references.

[1] Yeadon G. and Hawkins J. "The Nazi Hydra in America". (Progressive Press, California 2008).

Trading with the enemy

Iran to United States intercepted New York 1944.



- Route: Despatch date unclear. Baghdad transit 1 November 1944. Surface Teheran-Baghdad then air probably by ATC to West Africa (but not confirmed).
- Rate: 3 Rials 50 Dinars surface fee. 15 Dinars air fee?
- Censor: Opened and resealed Baghdad Anglo-Soviet censorship. New York 5905.
- Features: Brown Brothers Harriman being carefully watched by US Censorship. Cover carries the ".....Executive Order 8389 as amended" applied to correspondence related to illicit money transfers.

Trading with the enemy

Brazil to United States intercepted Trinidad 1943.



Route: Sao Paulo to Trinidad by Pan American. Despatch 4 November 1943. Arrive New York 14 November after censorship delays.

Rate: 9 x 5000 Reals combined fee to US. 800 Reals registration. Total 45,800 Reals on cover.

Censor: Opened and resealed in Brazil and in Trinidad examiner IE/8056.

Features: Addressed to Transmares Corporation, a dummy company set up as a front for money transfers and financed by no less than Dulles....for the German agent Gero von Schulze Gaevernitz. Reference [1] contains some interesting detail:

"As late as October of 1941, Gaevernitz listed his occupation in Switzerland as agent for Schildge Rumohr, Inc., a New York dummy corporation known subsequently as Transmares (the financing for which Dulles himself had expedited through J. Henry Schroder), and identified by the Department of Justice as a front for circumventing the British blockade with strategic materials for embattled Germany".

Once again there was intervention shown by the ".....Executive Order 8389 as amended" cachet.

[1] Burton Hersh. *"The Old Boys. The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA"*. (Burton Hersh. ©2000)

Trading with the enemy

Colombia to United States 1940.



Route: Cali, Colombia to New York via SCADTA. Despatch 14 October 1940.

Rate: Air rate to US 35 centavos.

Features: Addressed to Transmares Corporation, a dummy company set up as a front for money transfers and financed by no less than Dulles....for the German agent Gero von Schulze Gaevernitz. Colombia and SCADTA were heavily Germanic, so it is no surprise to see that the sender of the letter was one Günter von der Heide with an address in Cali. Equally no surprise to find him listed in the US "Proclaimed List". American concerns over German influence in South America had existed for some time. The American military attaché in Colombia:-

"reported to the War Department on the operations of the SCADTA air line. This had been formed in 1919 by Captain Peter Paul von Bauer, a German aviator in the First World War. Its equipment was German. So was its entire personnel, who, adopting Colombian citizenship.....nevertheless retained their German citizenship under the laws of their native land. By 1924 Major H.H.Arnold considered SCADTA's operations 'far too close to the Panama Canal to be ignored' ...".

Major H.H. Arnold was of course eventually General "Hap" Arnold who figured prominently in wartime aviation in the South Atlantic.



Trading with the enemy

Obligado & Cia.



The Argentinian firm of Obligado & Cia was founded in Buenos Aires in 1889 and specialised in Patent and Industrial Law. By 1900 the company had achieved a high reputation for their expertise and was appointed the official Patent Agent for the Argentine government, an arrangement which lasted until the 1950s when the government took over publication of the "Official Bulletin".

In the 1930s and during WW2, Obligado & Cia were deeply involved in patent work for German interests in Argentina, and covers from the start of mail interception in 1942 show that the firm must have been on the censor "watch list" judging by the amount of mail that was intercepted en route between Axis Switzerland and Buenos Aires. This cover shows the early connection between patent lawyers in Germany and the Argentine government lawyers.

Despatched Berlin 3 March 1935 the cover was carried by the Deutsche Lufthansa service on flight L-73 via Bathurst in British Gambia to Natal and Buenos Aires.

Rate: 25 Rpf first 20g surface fee, 15 Rpf next step fee, 6 x 150 Rpf air fee. Total 9 Rm 40 Rpf.

Trading with the enemy

Pan American LATI substitute Route 8 Germany to Argentina May 1942



- Route:** Geneva to Barcelona by rail through unoccupied France avoiding German interception. Barcelona to Lisbon by air then by Pan American Route 8 flight to Natal, Brazil. Despatch 13 May 1942. Probably carried on flight 8004 leaving Lisbon 29 May.
- Rate:** Surface fee 30c. Registration 30c. Air fee 1Fr. 50c (PanAm rate). Total 2Fr. 10c..
- Censor:** PanAm failed to call at Bathurst for censorship so cover travelled all the way without interception.
- Features:** From the office of consulting engineers in Geneva addressed to the Argentine government patent attorneys. Until the joint US/UK censorship was established, much Axis mail was carried direct from Lisbon to South America without examination.

Trading with the enemy

Pan American LATI substitute Route 8 Switzerland to Argentina July 1942



- Route: Geneva to Buenos Aires via Barcelona-Lisbon-Bathurst-Fisherman's Lake-Natal-Rio de Janeiro. Despatch 11 July 1942.
- Rate: 30 centimes surface, 30 c Registration, 1Fr.50c air fee. Total 2Fr. 10c.
- Censor: Opened and resealed by censor 5453 at Bathurst.
- Features: Imperial transit censorship at Bathurst only in period February to July 1942 on a clandestine basis for airmail between Axis countries and South American countries with Axis sympathies. Stops at Bathurst recorded as "unscheduled" and referred to as "emergency calls". Censorship function moved to San Juan, Puerto Rico from late July 1942. Pan American's "LATI substitute" service initially concealed from public knowledge.
Note endorsement suggesting air carriage applied only from Barcelona.

Trading with the enemy

Germany to Argentina 1942.



Route: Despatched 1 September 1942. Remscheid-Berlin-Lisbon. Lisbon-San Juan by Pan American "LATI substitute" via Bolama-Fisherman's Lake-Natal. San Juan-Natal-Buenos Aires return by Pan American FAM-6 after examination.

Rate: 25Rpf surface, 90Rpf air fee. Total 1.15Rm.

Censor: OKW Berlin. San Juan examiner 2912.

Features: Addressed to a member of the Lahusen family who owned and ran a large chain of department stores in Argentina. Quoted as:

"The Lahusen organization facilitated the German espionage system through Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay in both world wars. Every town and village in Patagonia had its Lahusen store and agent, and it was a standing joke in Buenos Aires' diplomatic circles that Hitler knew more about Patagonia than the Argentine government did."

At least the censors at San Juan caught this one. Unusual for a German sender to risk interception. The sight of Hitler stamps must have automatically alerted Allied censors.

Trading with the enemy

Pan American LATI substitute service Germany to Argentina December 1942



- Route: Berlin to Buenos Aires via Lisbon-Bolama-Fisherman's Lake-Natal-Belem-Trinidad-San Juan-Trinidad-Belem-Natal. Despatch 24 December 1942. Arrive 27 January 1943.
- Rate: Rate introduced 5 October 1942. 25 Rpf surface. 2 x 90 Rpf air fee. Total 205 Rpf. Overpaid 215.
- Censor: Berlin Ab. Re-sealed by censor 14035 in San Juan.
- Features: Routed via the Pan American combined FAM-18/"LATI substitute" Route 9/10 clockwise South Atlantic service. Cover carried beyond Natal to San Juan for censorship as per the "San Juan Agreement" then returned by FAM-6 service to Natal and onward to Argentina.

At least the censors at San Juan caught this one. Unusual for a German sender to risk interception. The sight of Hitler stamps must have automatically alerted Allied censors.