

Hitler's Man in Havana: Heinz Luning and Nazi Espionage in Latin America

Thomas D. Schoonover

University Press of Kentucky (Aug 4, 2008)

Unknown \$29.95 (256pp)

978-0-8131-2501-5

Schoonover tells a hilarious story: the Abwehr sought the best but in Heinz Luning got the worst. It needed an agent in Havana: given naval routes and schedules, U-boats could wreak even greater havoc on ships carrying war materiel eastward to Britain and westward to the Pacific theater. Heinz Luning wanted a comfortable war: espionage in Latin America (he had lived briefly in the Dominican Republic) seemed ideal. The Abwehr had no faith in its agent; Luning had no commitment to his mission. He couldn't build a radio, mix secret ink, or recruit a network.

Identified via British mail intercepts in the Bahamas, Luning was arrested, tried, and executed for his never-made radio con-tacts with U-boats whose never-fired torpedoes caused imaginary Allied deaths. Schoonover demonstrates how everybody (except Luning) benefited; acclaim for UK, US, and Cuban security chiefs; a Cuban—US rapprochement; and boosted morale as the “massive spy network” had been neutralized. Ineptitude and manipulation get no better—but sparked Graham Greene's *Our Man in Havana*. Schoonover had to dig deep to find his facts; to prevent widespread embarrassment, a semi-official cover-up still persists.

PETER SKINNER (January 9, 2009)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The author of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the author for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.