



TOP PHOTO: A member of the 7.SS-Mnt.Div. "Prinz Eugen" with a Croatian soldier (left). **BOTTOM PHOTO:** Muslim volunteers from the 13.W-Geb.Div.d.SS "Handschar" take a lunch break. (Erik Rundkvist Archives).

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Front Cover Photo: SS-Polizei Grenadier in Hungary, 28 November 1944, (Erik Rundkvist Archives).

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This issue of SIEGRUNEN, #61, marks the start of our 20th Anniversary Year! In that time there has been a big change in how the Waffen-SS has been perceived in the post-war era. For one thing, there has been a massive information explosion through the efforts of high-quality "secondary" publishers in several different countries. They have managed to produce a good deal of valuable, objective, first-hand literature about the Waffen-SS and much more is on the way! Unfortunately we can still pretty much write off the "mainstream" publishers who still remain beholden to special interest groups.

For the most part, Waffen-SS veterans are now enjoying a new found respect and appreciation. For instance the government of Estonia officially recognized the achievements of all of the European SS veterans that fought at Narva and has begun issuing them honors and decorations. Waffen-SS veterans visiting Russia have been accorded extremely warm receptions and certainly a percentage of the rural population still considers them "liberators" from the war years. So much for the old "Nazi-beast-murderer" propaganda that we have been forced-fed for over a generation.

SIEGRUNEN will still be published as long as we have some "fresh" material on hand and are able to fill a specific need. However I am a bit older and slower than I used to be and I want to publish some books and do some other things in between SR issues, so please bear with me if I fall behind schedule at times. For those of you who have been so helpful and supportive over the years, my thanks and gratitude! I certainly could not have pulled this off without you! In the meantime it is nice to be able to report that we are winning the information "battle" on all fronts, even despite the expensive, strong-armed methods of those who want to promote a "politically correct" but factually wrong view of history. In the long run that never works no matter what high pressure tactics are utilized. The truth always prevails in the end.

For those of you who may still accept the main elements of the "atrocities" propaganda directed against the Waffen-SS and others, I can only request that you endeavor to look up the other side of the story, ask questions and be skeptical! Many experts in various fields are literally putting their lives on the line to expose the hateful mythology of the WWII era, and they certainly have nothing to gain personally by doing so. I think we owe these brave people at least the courtesy of perusing their works, (providing you can find them, and you can if you make the effort). As I have said, and will continue to say, what is absolutely necessary is a full and open discussion and inquiry about "war crime" allegations attributed to every party in the war. This should be combined with

WAFFEN-SS PERSONALITY:

Stiftelsen norsk Okkupasjonshjelp

SS-Obersturmlührer Carlheinz Behnke



Carlheinz Behnke was born on 23 December 1922 in Hamburg. On 15 October 1940 he joined 1st Co./SS-Inf.Ersatz (Replacement) Bataillon. I in Radolfzell. He eventually transferred into the artillery regiment of the "Wiking" Division, serving with the observation battery during the first part of the Russian Campaign. In May 1942, he was sent to the SS-Junkerschule "Tölz", graduating in December 1942 with the rank of Standartenoberjunker (Officer designate). After two more months at the SS Artillery School at Beneschau (near Prague), he reported to the artillery regiment of the SS-Polizei Division near Leningrad. He served there as a battery officer and artillery observer, and for some months he was the acting commander of the 5th and 10th Batteries.

Ustuf. Behnke served with the Polizei-Div. Kampfgruppe at the Oranienbaum Pocket before rejoining the main body of the division in Greece in early 1944. He then became the "chief" of the 3rd Battery/SS-Pol.Art.Rgt.4, and he held this position throughout the retrograde fighting in Romania, Yugoslavia, and Hungary to Slovakia. From here the division was sent to Pomerania, however Carlheinz Behnke went instead to Landshut, Moravia to help reform two of the Polizei Division's artillery batteries (5th and 6th) into a IV. Heavy Artillery Detachment. In March 1945, the two batteries were however sent to join the 38.SS-Pz.Gr.Div. "Nibelungen" where they were combined into a detachment under Hstuf. Wode, of SS Art.Rgt.38 led by Ostubaf. Hornung. Ostuf. Behnke became commander of the 6th Battery, (see SR#38 for the history of the battery and regiment). By the end of the war 6th Battery had been reduced to 2 guns!

Carlheinz Behnke went into American captivity as an Ostuf. at Leoben, Steiermark, Austria. After the war, Behnke worked for awhile as a carpenter and then in May 1959, he was admitted into the West German Army (Bundeswehr). He subsequently served as an artillery battery commander, a tactical instructor and a commander of Defense District 434. He retired in March 1980 with the rank of Oberstleutnant (Lt.Col.).

In June 1985, Carlheinz Behnke became the Nr.1 Speaker-Representative of the SS-Polizei Division's Veteran's Association.

WAFFEN-SS PERSONALITY:

SS-Oberscharführer Per Imerslund

Writer at Arms; the Life
and Death of an SS Ideologist

By Erik Norling



I. AUTHORS TAKE SIDES

In a propaganda brochure published in 1937 entitled: *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War*, a well known list of English-speaking writers chose their side on the conflict that was devastating Spain. Each side argued the question on an ideological basis; one could either be pro-Republican, (supporting the legal, established government), or pro-Nationalist, (supporting the side of Franco). For the first time the intellectuals had to decide either to support Communism, (the Spanish Republicans), or the oncoming Fascism which was changing the face of Europe and being embraced by millions. This was the situation that remained through the three wars against Fascism, (as the historians now like to call WWII in particular), which began in Spain in 1936, continued in Finland in 1939 and concluded in Berlin in 1945.

The post-war historians have spread the idea that the "Fascists" lacked intellectuals, which was supposed to have made them much more "brutal" than the "good" side which had the support of the "intelligentsia". But nothing could be further from reality. Between 1936 and 1945, a great portion of Europe's authors supported the struggle against Communism, and even embraced Fascism. Among them were Ezra Pound, Knut Hamsun, (who had two sons in the Waffen-SS), Robert Brasillach, Drieu La Rochelle, José Strel and hundreds

of others, many of whom took up arms to defend Europe. Thanks to the postwar repression and the official censorship of the mass media and book publishers, a full generation of European authors disappeared without leaving a trace. Now, 50 years after the defeat, their names and books are being discovered again by the European youth.

One of those forgotten writers was the Norwegian Per Imerslund.

II. A LIFE OF ADVENTURE

Per Imerslund was born on 9 May 1911 into a peasant family in Hamar, to the north of Oslo. The rise of National Socialism struck deep into his conscience and he became a convinced supporter of the solutions that it proposed to save Europe and he felt that only with a federation of all Germanic peoples would it be possible to build a better future. Before he was even 20, Imerslund worked as a journalist for several Norwegian magazines and he had travelled to America looking for adventure. He spent several months in Mexico and the U.S.A., learned Spanish, and wrote a book entitled *Hestene star salet*, (*The Horses are Saddled*), which was published by one of Norway's leading book publishers. He became famous nationwide and a hero to youth, being promoted as one of the most brilliant and promising writers in the country. The philosophy contained in his book appealed to the younger generation to recover their dreams and revolutionary aims in a fight against the system that was being imposed upon them.

In 1933-34, Imerslund joined the newly formed movement *Nasjonal Samling*, (National Union), led by Vidkun Quisling, with the belief that this would be the Norwegian version of National Socialism. During the years that followed, Imerslund worked hard promoting Quisling's movement, and along with some friends, (NS Propaganda Leader Først, Jur.Stud. Tor Strand, and others), he was involved in the creation of the Volunteer Labor Service, an organization that would make it possible that youths from all of the social classes could come together and work shoulder-to-shoulder with the spade while learning to love their homeland. When Imerslund discovered the SS some years later this would also be one of his motives to join the Black Order.

In 1936, Imerslund would again receive the attention of the press, but this time it was for leading the NS Party squad that entered into Trotsky's house at Hoenefoss, near Oslo, where the Communist leader had established his revolutionary HQ. They succeeded in stealing many documents that proved that Trotsky was abusing the Norwegian hospitality that had been given him. The media gave a lot of attention to the case and Trotsky left Norway for Mexico. The NS members involved were prosecuted but let go. In the interim, Imerslund had left the party, since he had developed doubts about the direction the movement was taking. He fled the country in order to avoid the ("Trotsky" incident) indictment and made his way to Spain.

III. A WRITER AT ARMS

Imerslund succeeded in getting a visa as a journalist for the famous Norwegian newspaper *Tidens Tegn* and he joined Franco's side. In 1936/1937 he travelled as a war reporter but soon enlisted in the ranks of the pro-Franco Spanish Foreign Legion. On 13 May 1937, the leading Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, incorrectly published a short notice stating that Per Imerslund had been KIA at the Córdoba front. However, Imerslund was still alive, fighting the Communists in the uniform of the New Spain along with thousands of other European comrades, many of whom fell in the struggle and still lay under the

burning Spanish soil. However, he still found time to write articles for his newspaper. Despite his efforts, the mainstream press decided not to publish his chronicles as they were not "politically correct", but many of them would appear anyway in other newspapers and magazines, including the monthly *Ragnarok*, put out by his friend Hans S. Jacobsen. In November 1937, Jacobsen published a special monograph issue, entitled *Arriba España!* (Up Spain!), which was the battle cry of the Spanish *Falangists*, (thousands of whom would later fall in Russia fighting in the ranks of the Spanish Blue Division). This publication contained many articles written by Imerslund. Before the end of the Spanish Civil War, Imerslund went to Mexico, (circa late 1938-early 1939), to try and talk to Trotsky, but whether he succeeded in this or not is not known.

When he returned to Norway, Imerslund was no longer involved with *Nasjonal Samling*, but he still remained active in politics. He joined the Pan-Germanic group which had formed around the magazine *Ragnarok*, this is where most of the intellectual dissidents from *Nasjonal Samling* were. They all considered National Socialism as a solution for the Germanic peoples, but also that only a Germanic federation of countries could save the *North*, which was the designation given to the countries of Northern Europe that shared culture, race and even language to an extent. For them, *Nasjonal Samling*, and especially Quisling, were too chauvinistic and old-fashioned in their conception of the New Order. When the war started, this Pan-Germanic group, including Imerslund, would play a prominent role in the internal tensions that existed between them, the Party, and the German Occupation authorities.

In November 1939, Russia attacked Finland. Thousands of young Europeans went to join the small Finnish Army, as they had done when Spain was in danger. From Sweden along, (with a relatively small population of 6,000,000 at the time), more than 15,000 Swedes made their way to Finland. In Norway, Per Imerslund was among the first to enlist to fight Communism and help save the "brotherland" of Finland. He joined the Norwegian voluntary force that was attached to the Swedish Army group that entered Finland in early 1940 and took over the defense of the vast region of Lapponia. Unfortunately for these fighters, who had hoped to fight more against the Communists, they were only in action for a few weeks as the Finnish-Russian hostilities ended in March 1940. But the respite did not last for long, and they would soon find new occasions to confront the Red menace.

On 9 April 1940, when most of the Finland volunteers had not yet returned home, the German Army invaded Norway in an attempt to prevent the planned "Allied" occupation of the country that would have blocked Germany's sea passage to the Atlantic Ocean. Per Imerslund was very suspicious of the German intentions, particularly when *Reichkommissar* Josef Terboven was appointed to rule the country with the help of a cabinet of prominent Norwegians.

Nasjonal Samling now grew fast, as the country's most politically active people joined the Party as the only way they could see to restore national independence and maintain local administration of Norway. All of the notable leftists or liberals had fled the country, avoiding the defense of their homeland, and they made their way to quiet Sweden or England, where they would enter into British service. Therefore the only place for patriots in Norway was the *Nasjonal Samling*. Imerslund saw how his closest friends of the *Ragnarok* circle rejoined the Party, but he would not even consider it. He told a close friend that: "The day the last Freemason has left *Nasjonal Samling*, is the day I will join it, but not before." He held fast to his principals and considered the NS Party to be infiltrated by the bourgeoisie, conventional right-wing people and Freemasons.

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When the war against the Communists broke out in June 1941, Imerslund had already sent in his application to join the Waffen-SS, and he left the country in July with the first train containing volunteers for the SS Division "Wiking". A Swedish SS volunteer remembered him at the time: "He was older than us, (29 years of age then), an intellectual guy with a pipe and a book always with him...his French beret was the inspiration for many jokes...but he left a deep impression with us."

Imerslund joined the *Kriegsberichters* (SS War Reporters) with the rank of SS-Schütze. He followed the SS Division "Wiking" during the heavy battles of 1941-1942 in Ukraine, writing articles and acting as a link with the home country for the young Norwegian volunteers (in the division). Following that, he was transferred to the Finnish Front with the rank of SS-Oberscharführer (Technical Sgt.), where the Norwegian SS-Skijäger Bataillon was deployed. In early 1943, Oscha. Imerslund was badly wounded in the Karelian forest during a scouting patrol behind the enemy lines carried out by 6.SS-Gebirgs Div. "Nord". German comrades brought him back to the first aid station and he was soon transferred to a hospital before returning to Norway for convalescence. However he would die from his wounds only a half-year later.

IV. IMERSLUND AS AN SS IDEOLOGIST

Per Imerslund discovered the SS ideology when he enlisted in the Waffen-SS and he became not only a devoted SS man, but also an SS thinker and a contributor of ideological articles and essays to the magazine *Germaneren*, the "Combat Journal" of the Norwegian Germanic SS branch, (*Germanske SS Norge-GSSN*). Since Imerslund was not a member of *Nasjonal Samling*, and therefore a "free" intellectual, he wrote openly, even on occasion clearly attacking the official Party line. For him the SS was the new military-political order that would become the elite of the country after the war, a place where all social classes could come together and where the workers would have their place. In his own words: "The SS sees potential SS aspirants in many of the Norwegian workers. They fulfill both the physical and moral character conditions required in our military order of men of Nordic blood, something that can not be said of the most of the bourgeoisie." (From: "Norwegian Workers and the SS", *Germaneren*, 16 January 1943).

It was here that Imerslund introduced an important aspect of the SS ideology: the place of the workers in the New Order. His comments: "The Norwegian worker will develop from a proletarian to be a convinced racist, with a soldier's outlook on life." But the SS was also an order of Nordic people, the place where the best of them would be able to develop and only the best could be members. Imerslund continues: "The SS is an elite of Nordic men, therefore there are many requirements of the moral and physical sort. No one will be more free or determined than a Norwegian SS man, and no others will be more prepared to sacrifice himself and fight for the Cause more than him." (From: "Freedom and Obedience", *Germaneren*, November 1942).

For Imerslund and *Germaneren*, one of the most important goals of the war was the reunification of all of the Germanic peoples. These peoples could only survive if federated together, and therefore in Imerslund's words, it was necessary to fight: "...against liberalism...and for a Norwegian and Greater Germanic outlook". (*Germaneren*, January 1941). They opposed Quisling's struggle for an independent Norway, as they saw unification with Germany as the only way to save the country. Quisling's policies were seen as old-fashioned; in their opinion the world had changed and there was no place for the same old

pre-war nationalistic views. It is important to make clear that this Pan-Germanic ideology should not be mistaken for a simple subordination to German rule; instead it proposed a free federation of Nordic countries, all with the same rights and duties. It would have been a United States of Northern Europe built upon the principals of National Socialism. In this New Order, led by the SS, it was envisaged that only the real fighters would have a place, not the "gray" party bureaucrats. As Imerslund put it: "A National Socialist that has not fought and does not want to fight, is only a waste. He is not a National Socialist." (From "National Socialism and the Trenches", *Germaneren*, 24 March 1945). And: "Only they who are able to throw away all of their bourgeois prejudices and learn to respect destiny will be able to lead into what the front soldiers consider the New Age." (From: "To Those Feel Hurt", *Germaneren*, 2/30 January 1943).

The enemies of the Nordic countries were seen as the usual assortment of Communists, "aliens" and liberals along with the reactionary Free-Masons. Imerslund particularly attacked the Free-Masons who were now highly posted Party officials and even government ministers. In his words: "Old Free-Masons who call themselves old NS-people are for us only saboteurs in our own ranks." (From "Saboteurs In Our Own Ranks", *Germaneren*, 8 August 1942). This ideological and oppositional activity provoked the antipathy of many Party officials who saw Imerslund as a "German agent", and they had strong suspicions about his loyalty to Quisling. The article about the Free-Masons in the *Nasjonal Samling* was really the drop that caused the glass to overflow. Even the German authorities realized that, even though they first applauded it. Later they worried about the consequences. In the bi-weekly report to the SS-Hauptamt in Berlin, the SD leader in Oslo wrote in August 1942 that: "These articles have found their best reception among the youngest activists and the frontfighters...the Fører (Quisling) now (will have to) act harder against the Free-Mason front." But in September the comments were much more skeptical.

The suspicions about Imerslund were in fact well-founded. He was organizing an oppositional group of veteran frontfighters and *Ragnarok* people, with plans to liquidate the German Reichskommissar Terboven and kidnap Quisling! So Imerslund was really an anti-German agent rather than a pro-German one! He was an open man, who loved action and not a conspirator. His decision to take this step can only be seen as an act of desperation to do the best for the homeland as he saw it. But his early death, as well as the surveillance the police had made on him, made it impossible to fulfill these plans. It was around the turn of 1943-1944 that Imerslund, along with many other intellectuals, became disappointed with the German attitude. He had even written a long letter to the Reichsführer-SS Himmler complaining about the treatment of Norwegian volunteers, that was discussed in the highest circles between Himmler and SS-Obergruppenführer Berger, the manpower procurement head of the SS. Imerslund also several times complained to the German officials in Norway about their mistakes.

It can only be considered a disgrace that Imerslund could not join with the *Nasjonal Samling* and fight for his Fatherland together with all of the other comrades that saw Quisling as their leader. NS developed into a real anti-German organization during the Occupation, not against National Socialism, but in opposition to what was perceived as the Germans using the war for old-fashioned colonial expansionism to gain the "lost colonies". Recent studies describe perfectly this dramatic ideological struggle that real European National Socialists had against the "*Gross Germanische*" groups, as Ogruf. Berger called them in a secret speech to high SS officials in 1944. According to Berger, these were the people who delayed the expansion of National Socialism and gave a wrong impression of Germany's intentions.

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 V. THE END OF AN SS MAN

In the final analysis, Per Imerslund was an independent man; an intellectual with deep ideological convictions who could be extremely critical and he adjudged that his place was not with Quisling. On 7 December 1943, SS-Oberscharführer Per Imerslund died at the Akershus Hospital in Oslo as a result of his wounds received during his service at the front. His wounds had become complicated and deteriorated due to blood poisoning. His comrades organized a funeral chapel, and four of them served as honor guards, two of them in SS uniforms and two in civilian clothes with his beloved Norwegian flags. Imerslund was cremated, as he was not a Christian, and with him ended one of the most interesting lives that the Norwegian literary world had ever had. He was married and left one child.

The official Party press chose to avoid publicity about Imerslund's death and published only short columns about the deceased under the heading: "Known Frontfighter Dead". But the German SS magazine for the *SS-Kriegsberichter* published a full obituary with a photo of Imerslund in SS uniform. The obituary stated: "With him, an ardent idealist and early fighter for the New Norway has gone forever...All of us who knew him know how great the man was and that he was always a warrior without compromise." *Ragnarok*, (9-10/1943), published a special issue dedicated to Per Imerslund with articles by all of his intellectual friends. Finally, his close friend, the painter Stein Barth-Heyerdahl made a compilation of his unpublished articles along with some that had appeared, from his days in Spain and Mexico, and assembled them in one book in 1944 under the title *Videre i Passgang*, (**Forever on the March**), which was put out by the Kamban Publishers, a Pan-Germanic publishing center.

ABOUT THE SOURCES

In the research for material regarding Per Imerslund, the archives of the Oslo based *INO-Institut for Norsk Okkupasjons historie*, (INO-Institute for the History of the Norwegian Occupation), has been extremely helpful, not only with their collection of *Nasjonal Samling* material, (propaganda, internal orders, press publications, etc.), but also for the interesting people that they were able to introduce me to. Another institution containing important material is the Norwegian *Riksarkiv* (State Archives), which contains approximately 90,000 files with information on people who were indicted during the era of postwar repression for their activities on the "other" side. However I was unsuccessful in trying to get Per Imerslund's SS file from the former Berlin Document Center, which has now been transferred by the Americans to the German government. The wartime reports from German authorities in Norway to Berlin have been copied at the German Koblenze Federal Archives.

Finally, mention must be made of the Norwegian expert Tom Jensen, who may be the man who knows the most about the *Nasjonal Samling*. He was able to provide me with useful material as well as a rare picture of Imerslund. E.N.

* * * * *

Now available through SIEGRUNEN: *THE HISTORY OF THE 7TH SS MOUNTAIN DIVISION "PRINZ EUGEN"* (\$40); *THE HISTORY OF THE "DAS REICH" DIVISION VOL II* (\$40); *HITLER'S FIGHTING FRENCHMEN* (Magazine Article) (\$5); *THE GERMANIC SS LEITHEFT* (English Translation of a 1942 edition) (\$10). Please add 10% postage. Write for free booklists!

REMEMBRANCES OF 9TH COMPANY/SS-REGIMENT "DEUTSCHLAND"

A Private War Journal, Part III

Provided by William P. Harriman



ABOVE: An officer and NCOs of 9./"Deutschland" in the field, 1941.

This installment picks up with the SS Regiment "Deutschland" still on security duty in Holland and continues on through the beginning of its redeployment in the Balkans.

14-15 December 1940: The preparations for our Christmas celebration in Leiden (Holland), continued on. However we were not badly surprised, when during the late evening a state of alert was called. Our vehicles were brought out and the process of loading them up began. Some of the men spoke of a relocation to southern France. We worked through the night to get ready. Shortly before 05:00 hours we were sitting in our vehicles and then at 05:00 hours we moved out of the city. We next drove in the direction of Rotterdam, then went through Breda-Tillburg and then back into Germany to Mönchen Gladbach, Cologne and Blankenberg. Late in the night we reassembled and were housed in private quarters.

16 December 1940: At 10:00 hours we drove on the Reichsautobahn to Frankfurt. The "march" soon got stuck in traffic as we were proceeding with two other columns. We first reached Frankfurt at dusk. We had long halts on the Autobahn as English planes flew over us dropping bombs. From Frankfurt we continued on through Heidelberg to Karlsruhe. We reached the Karlsruhe