

Concentration Camp Sachsenhausen Germany's Secret War: *Unternehmen Bernhard*

In the summer of 1942, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt Amt VI* (RHSa, Reich Central Security Department, Bureau VI), the office in charge of supplying forged identification documents for secret agents, undertook a secret plan to counterfeit British currency. About 140 Jewish men skilled in banking, graphic art, engraving, and printing were brought to Sachsenhausen to carry out *Unternehmen Bernhard* in an isolated block of the camp. Operation Bernhard was named for Friedrich Walter Bernhard Krüger, the Nazi SS officer in charge, who had previously been Chief of Police in occupied Poland. In 1943, this team was producing one million counterfeit £5, £10, £20, and £50 bank notes per month. German spies in neutral countries used high quality counterfeits; lesser quality notes bribed collaborators in occupied countries. The bogus money circulated freely in most parts of the world including England.



Bank of England

⁵¹M 36211 to pay the Bearer on ⁵¹M 36211
the Sum of Twenty Pounds

1935 Aug^r 15 London 15 Aug^r 1935

Twenty

For the Gov^r and Comp^{rs}
of the Bank of England.

⁵¹M 36211
H. O. Pennington
Chief Cashier.

A counterfeit £20 bank note from Operation Bernhard, manufactured by skilled prisoners at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Operation Bernhard counterfeits are the most faithful reproductions of British currency ever produced.