

Also by Henri Michel

THE SHADOW WAR

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THE SECOND
WORLD WAR

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CHAPTER I

The Final Convulsions of the Nazi Reich

I GERMAN OPPOSITION TO HITLER.

WITHOUT any doubt, the most dramatic theatre of operations against the Hitler régime lay in Germany herself. The Nazis had come to power legally, through the workings of the electoral system; afterwards they had retained it by illegal means, through violence, but they had thus nipped any organised opposition in the bud by imprisoning their most determined opponents in the first concentration camps set up especially for that purpose; even before the war anti-Nazism had thus been very much weakened in Germany by the repressively preventive measures of those in power.

When war broke out, Hitler's great initial success unquestionably won him the support of the large majority of the population. His opponents were confronted with a tragic dilemma of conscience: was hostility to one's country's government in time of war tantamount to putting one's ideological preferences before the national interest? Did it not mean supporting the enemy of the Fatherland? In order to assert itself as anti-Nazi, German patriotism had to be backed by the very highest moral fervour and in apparent contradiction to the German nation's immediate interests.

In these circumstances it was impossible for there to be more than a few German resisters. Moreover they inspired very little trust in the other resisters in the occupied countries who quite simply denied that they existed and more often than not refused to make a distinction between good and bad Germans. The Allies, too, had no faith in their effectiveness and the fact that the German refugees were divided among themselves confirmed their mistrust, which had been expressed most clearly in the demand for unconditional surrender, a demand full of consequences for the future.

From the moment when the Wehrmacht became bogged down in Russia and the German people began to suffer more keenly, passive hostility to the régime tended to develop. It is difficult to determine whether it was the result of a deliberate intention or the bitter fruit of discouragement, the sum total of individual initiative or the result of proper organi-

sation. How can one know the motives of the thousands of German soldiers who were punished for behaviour contrary to good order and discipline?

However, active opposition had been enlisted and organised in various circles; the Communists had carried out acts of sabotage and collected information for the USSR; students – e.g. Hans and Sophie Scholl's 'White Rose' – had distributed leaflets; the 'Kreisau Circle' led by Helmut von Moltke brought together aristocrats, Jesuits and Social Democrats. None of this could nor did go very far. Not only had the German opposition to Hitler not 'gone underground' or carried out widespread acts of sabotage – it had not even published a clandestine press of any magnitude – but, with the exception of the Communists, it did not succeed in defining an ideology or even a plan of action able to replace Nazism; it could not formulate either war or peace aims which would be likely to modify Allied policy towards it and its influence on the German public remained slight.

Also, since they came from all walks of life and were united only by their hostility to Hitler, the opponents of the régime were not in agreement about methods either; some – the former political and trade union leaders – tended to favour the use of propaganda and an approach to the masses, a method which was necessarily rather conspicuous and therefore vulnerable; others thought that they should strike at the top and rid Germany of her Führer; but the pacifists refused to resort to murder and a palace revolution would involve coming to an understanding with leading figures who were compromised with the Nazis and many found this distasteful.

Within Nazi Germany there were two forces which had retained some independence and a certain amount of influence over the people: the churches and the army. It is true that the prelates were far from being all anti-Nazi; had not Bishop Hudal in 1936 stressed Catholic influence within National Socialism? By his servility to the régime, Mgr Groeber had earned the nickname of the 'brown archbishop' of Freiburg in Breisgau. Accordingly, both the Evangelical and Catholic hierarchies discouraged people from refusing to serve Nazism, as was commonly done by minor sects such as Quakers, Mennonites and Jehovah's Witnesses: Zahn has discovered, all in all, seven Catholic conscientious objectors – but also a chaplain who refused to give one of them the last sacrament. Condemnation of Nazism from the pulpit was generally limited to a denunciation of neo-paganism and even with men like Cardinal Faulhaber or Mgr Galea that was often partly cancelled out by prayers 'for the German people and its Führer'. It was nevertheless a fact that Catholics and Protestants formed a milieu which was receptive to anti-Nazism and that it was they who suffered persecution – for example, priests were deported to Dachau.

It was the Army – that is to say the high command – which had benefited most from Hitler's success and it had meekly carried out his decisions, but defeats had undermined its confidence in him and affected its relationship with its Führer. The defeats on the eastern front had caused quite a turnover of generals; Manstein, for instance, had fallen from grace three times and von Rundstedt twice; Hitler had developed the habit of intervening more and more in the detail of operations; at the beginning of 1944 the prerogatives of the army leaders had been still further reduced when *Nationalsozialistische Führungs-offiziere*, that is, in reality, Nazi political commissars, had been assigned to every staff down to battalion level. The military leaders could not punish a member of the Waffen SS without referring the matter to Himmler and they had even less power over the SD and the Gestapo. With their authority reduced and themselves frequently an object of sarcasm for the Führer, the army leaders were worried as to what lay in store for Germany at the hands of her Master when defeat began to seem more and more likely; some of them, anxious to limit the effects of this defeat, decided to get rid of Hitler.

II THE PUTSCH OF JULY 20, 1944

With General Beck and Marshal Witzleben at their head, they resolved to seize power by surprise and establish themselves in the leading positions of authority in the state – this was the 'Valkyrie Plan'. The conspirators approached the principal German military leaders cautiously and often in veiled terms; their preliminary enquiries convinced them that they would receive quite considerable backing, which, even if it proved passive, gave them some hope of success – for example, Marshals von Kluge and Rommel, without committing themselves formally, let it be understood that they approved, while the military commander in France, von Stülpnagel, gave his full support.

The conspirators let civilians, like Goerdeler, the former Mayor of Leipzig, into their secret; they even made indirect contact with the Socialist, Leber, but he was arrested and the military, influenced also by class consciousness, made no further effort to attract any broader popular participation in their plot; they confined themselves to operating through official channels, while speculating on the masses' growing dissatisfaction with the National Socialists.

On the other hand, proper preparation for their plan involved making contact with staunch Nazis who were still in office, such as von Helldorf, the Chief of Police in Berlin, and through Popitz, the former Finance Minister, with Himmler himself! One wonders how in these circumstances the plot could have failed to be discovered and averted.

Although small, the group was thus a very mixed bag. Consequently, its views lacked unity. Some thought that they could bring Hitler round to better ways by making him more receptive to the advice of the general staff; others contemplated restricting him to honorary duties – this seems to have been the idea which was suggested to Himmler; a number, more daring, wanted to follow the lead given by Badoglio in his treatment of Mussolini and take the Führer by surprise; a small group led by Colonel von Stauffenberg was even more determined and considered that the only way to put an end to Hitler's hold over the German people was to eliminate him.

What the conspirators intended to do once the operation had been successful is not very clear. They knew of the decision taken by the Allies in Casablanca demanding Germany's unconditional surrender; accordingly, they could hardly entertain any hope of a compromise peace. Some, it seems, would have liked to come to an agreement or even reach an armistice with the British and Americans, so that they could then turn all their energies against the USSR. Von Stauffenberg, on the other hand, appears to have been in favour of establishing relations with the National Committee of Free Germany in Moscow. However that may be, no contact was made with any foreign country before the putsch. The days following it would therefore be full of uncertainty; at least the conspirators could hope to show the world that the Nazi Reich was not the only Germany; they doubtless considered that enough was enough and wished to free their consciences from having been too closely and too long subservient to a criminal régime.

On July 20, 1944, von Stauffenberg placed a bomb in a room of the Führer's HQ in Rastenburg during one of Hitler's working conferences. He was able to leave the room in time, heard the explosion, concluded that Hitler was dead and succeeded in fleeing to Berlin. The conspirators then carried out their programme and troops moved in to neutralise the SS and take over positions of authority – sometimes those responsible had no very clear idea of what was expected of them and sometimes they were even completely in the dark. In Paris the SS were quite simply put under arrest.

But Hitler had been protected by a heavy table and by the body of one of the men beside him, and although he was badly shaken by the explosion he came out of it alive. The conspirators were too heavily committed to turn back; nevertheless the determination of some of them weakened; those who were wavering immediately changed their tune, beginning with Fromm, the head of the Home Army; to crown it all, a major by the name of Remer went to see Goebbels and was easily persuaded by him to proceed to arrest the leaders of the conspiracy whom it was his very task to protect.

In the end the affair was a total failure; too few of the conspirators held an actual command: and on the other hand there were too many young officers who were fanatically devoted to Hitler. The people, in the first place out of ignorance, but above all from lack of organisation, made no move. In Paris, the military and the SS, by mutual agreement, chose to forget the incident and tossed off glasses of champagne to celebrate their reconciliation, pretending to have been merely victims of a misunderstanding. But in Berlin and then throughout Germany, the plot ended in a blood-bath.

III NAZI FANATICISM

Once they had recovered from the shock, the Nazi leaders took advantage of the event to get rid of their rivals, the military leaders, once and for all. The official argument was that the attempt was the work 'of a small clique of ambitious, stupid, criminal and unscrupulous generals'; but Hitler told the Gauleiters that three-quarters of the army officers and NCOs were corrupt and could never lead Germany to victory. The Nazis first of all had the delight of seeing the military tear each other to pieces – Beck was forced by Fromm to 'commit suicide' and von Rundstedt agreed to preside over a military court which proceeded with great severity. Then a 'people's court' under Roland Freisler, a fanatical Nazi who humiliated and insulted the accused – Marshal von Witzleben appeared before his judges holding up his trousers with both hands because they were too big and his braces had been cut – sentenced thousands of people to be deported or hanged. Von Kluge and von Stülpnagel committed suicide; Rommel was forced to do the same in order to avoid being indicted. Admiral Canaris, chief of the Abwehr, died in the Oranienburg camp. Himmler had cheerfully ordered children to denounce their parents; the bodies of the leaders of the conspiracy executed by Fromm (who did not, however, thereby, save his own skin) were dug up and burnt and their ashes scattered to the four winds.

Nazi leaders took over command of the armies – Himmler was put in charge of the Home Army; at last the Nazis were going to be able to transform the aristocratic Wehrmacht into a people's army, inspired by the pure spirit of Nazism. The first measure concerned potential deserters: their families would be shot; any soldier absent without leave would be executed. It was announced that a mass levy would take place and old men and adolescents were enrolled in the Volksturm; invalids were mobilised like everyone else – one battalion was formed of men suffering from stomach complaints.

Hitler's health had been affected by the assassination attempt; it

aggravated the nervous illness from which he had been suffering for the last year; the trembling of his left arm and leg grew worse and he showed signs of deafness. This strengthened his distrust of everyone – except his astrologer-cum-doctor; he immersed himself in his bunker, talked to himself all the time, no longer listened to anyone, rejected any objections out of hand and even refused to hear a report through to the end; his outbursts of rage increased, followed by bouts of depression. But his determination and his faith in victory were as strong as ever.

Goebbels became the second man in the Reich, with responsibility for mobilising the people. Although his propaganda was still churning out the old themes of the Jewish-Bolshevik conspiracy, the threat of the destruction of Western civilisation and the danger that the Aryan race would die out, he began to place more stress on the need for total terror and the possibility of an epic end, a 'twilight of the gods'. Hitler pointed the way for his faithful spokesman; more than ever, he rejected the idea of giving up or even of retreating; he thought of denouncing the Geneva Convention and of putting Germany to fire and sword; he declared: 'If the war is lost, the nation must perish.' Germany's leaders thus made the people fear the worst, in order to galvanise their energies into one wild final effort. But they did not relinquish all hope of victory: did they not possess secret weapons capable of reversing the military situation in their favour?

IV GERMANY'S SECRET WEAPONS

Indeed, German science and technology had perfected inventions which were going to revolutionise air and naval warfare; since they were not available to the ground forces, they made no difference to the fighting in the east; but they aroused great anxiety in the British and Americans in the west.

Nothing much had been gained from early improvements made to the submarines, whether it was a question of using oxygen peroxide as fuel so as to be able to submerge more quickly, or the acoustic torpedo, or launching buoys called 'Aphrodites' intended to deceive enemy airmen through false radar echoes, or finally of explosives which, when they went off, gave the impression that the hunted submarines had been destroyed and thus led to the pursuit being called off.

This was not the case with the 'snorkel', which came into use in the middle of 1944. Through a double vertical tube submerged submarines were able to breathe air from the surface and to discharge waste gases; consequently, the submerged submarine was able to use its diesel motors instead of electric propulsion, which had only a small range of action; it

could thus remain submerged for an almost indefinite period; moreover, it was virtually impossible for aircraft to spot it; the disadvantages were that it could not submerge to any great depth because of the limited length of the tube and that its cruising speed was reduced to six knots.

Thus at the last moment the submarine war suddenly flared up again in a way which constituted a dangerous threat to the Allies. It was not until September 1944 that the last U-boats had disappeared from the Mediterranean – before that the Germans had succeeded in evacuating 37,000 men from Crete and the Aegean islands. Allied convoys were to suffer losses in British coastal waters as late as April 1945; since the aircraft were returning from their missions empty-handed, the number of escort boats had to be increased. Even in March 1945 Admiral Doenitz sent a group of six submarines to the east coast of the United States; the American Intelligence Service discovered the *kommando*, but four aircraft-carriers and forty destroyers had to be employed to destroy five out of the six submarines.

The danger to the Allies was therefore not inconsiderable; but the number of German submarines equipped with a snorkel was never very high; production was held up and eventually stopped altogether as a result of the incessant bombing raids on naval shipyards. Consequently the new German inventions, against which it is difficult to see how the Allies would have been able to protect themselves, were in practice unable to go into action in time or in any great numbers. And these inventions were impressive; Doenitz had ordered more than 100 electrically powered submarines of 1,600 tons capable of a speed of fifteen knots while submerged and carrying three times the amount of electrical equipment of ordinary submarines so that they were able to cover 15,000 miles while submerged and were fitted, besides, with torpedoes with homing heads which found their targets of their own accord. But in May 1945 they were still in the experimental stage in the Baltic; only eight were in service between the British Isles and Norway.

Besides, from the end of 1944 onwards the naval war had lost its strategic importance; six months earlier this certainly would not have been the case. This confirmed both Hitler's miscalculation at having sacrificed everything to a short war as early as 1938 and the Allies' wisdom in giving the Germans priority over Japan as enemies.

The jet aircraft was another example of an invention which came into operation too late and once again Hitler was personally responsible for the delay. Propeller aircraft had reached the limit of their development, since above a certain speed the blades were no longer gripping the air. As early as August 1939 a Heinkel aircraft had used the inrush of air into the engine to expel it more quickly than it had entered; this jet propulsion produced speeds and heights which had never been achieved before –

560 miles an hour and a height of 35,000 feet reached in three minutes. The first flight of a British aircraft of this kind did not take place until May 1941; as for the Americans, they had completely neglected this aspect of aeronautics.

But Hitler was not greatly interested in this invention. In 1939 and again in 1940, convinced that the victory on which he was staking everything was close at hand, he reduced the allocations for new research and ordered an increased output of current models. Afterwards, when Allied bombers were beginning to reduce Germany to rubble, the Führer could think only of reprisals; he did take an interest in jet aircraft, particularly in those built by Messerschmitt, but only as bombers; when it became evident that the jet aircraft's speed was heavily reduced when it was loaded with bombs and that it consumed too much fuel to have the range of action needed to reach Britain, Hitler broke into one of his familiar violent rages which may have intimidated men but had no effect on machines.

It was not until June 1944 that he authorised the building of jet fighters, and not until November that he gave orders for it to have priority over all others; after superseding all the experts of the Air Force, among them General Galland, Inspector General of the fighter Air Force, he put Himmler, who was totally incompetent, in charge of the operation. In the meantime Messerschmitt had perfected another revolutionary aircraft, rocket-propelled, the first trials of which dated back to 1941. At the end of 1944 both types of aircraft began to be produced in numbers and caused a sensation by their manoeuvrability and their attacking possibilities; in March 1945 Allied formations which had been sent to bomb Berlin suffered unexpectedly heavy losses. As usual, success filled Hitler with wild hopes; he imagined the streets of Berlin cleared of their ruins to become runways for the ME 162 and 163, whose mass intervention would reverse the situation against the Russians – but there was to be no 'new miracle of the house of Brandenburg'.

It was too late. The Allied bombers had reduced the assembly works to rubble, despite the fact that Speer had ordered them to be dispersed; carpets of bombs had also been dropped on the revolutionary aircraft's enormous takeoff areas, which could be easily spotted; then the advance of the Allied armies had made it possible for both to be occupied. In no other field had Hitler's blunders and the ignorance of the Nazis so hampered and then cancelled out the Germans' amazing technical superiority and lead over their opponents.

Hitler was, however, more interested in von Braun's flying bombs. The V-1s (the initial of the German word *Vergeltungswaffe*, an instrument of reprisal) were small, jet-propelled, pilot-less aircraft; they flew at 2,900 feet at 375 miles an hour and could carry half a ton of explosives over a

distance of about 185 miles. They were employed in the landing battle on June 13, 1944 but solely against London, not during the actual fighting. Seven thousand five hundred were launched in three months; half of them exploded in flight, missed their target or were intercepted by fighter aircraft; but the other half made Londoners relive the worst day of the 1940 blitz by destroying 25,000 houses in the British capital and killing 6,000 people; afterwards the port of Antwerp was used as the sole target for the V-1s.

The Allies had been informed about the new weapon by the French and Polish Resistance – some of the V-1 components were manufactured in the underground factories employing deported men, in particular Dora; in August 1943 they were thus able to detect, bomb and destroy most of the launching ramps in France before they were used, followed by the factories on the island of Peenemünde – the most important bombing raids of the whole war; finally, their advance on the mainland put British soil out of the range of V-1s, at a time when, at the end of 1944, Germany was producing 2,000 of them a month.

The V-2s which came next in September 1944 proved formidable in a different sort of way; they were rockets propelled by gases produced by the combustion of alcohol and liquid oxygen. The V-2s were launched vertically, rose to a height of twenty-five miles, flew at a speed of 310 miles per hour and then fell free at some 950 miles per hour; they were faster than sound and exploded before they were heard; the fighter planes and the AA were powerless against them. London received more than 500 of them and Antwerp more than a thousand.

All that the Allies could do was to attack the launching pads and factories. Fortunately for them the V-2s did not reach large-scale production until November 1944; it was then held up by the Germans' difficulty in procuring the necessary alcohol and liquid oxygen; in addition, Hitler was obsessed by his fixed idea of reprisals and had reserved the V-1s for London, while according to the British Air Marshal Joubert, if they had been launched against the Portsmouth–Southampton area they would have made it extremely difficult for the convoys to cross the Channel, while if they had been used six months earlier they might have constituted a serious threat to the success of the landing.

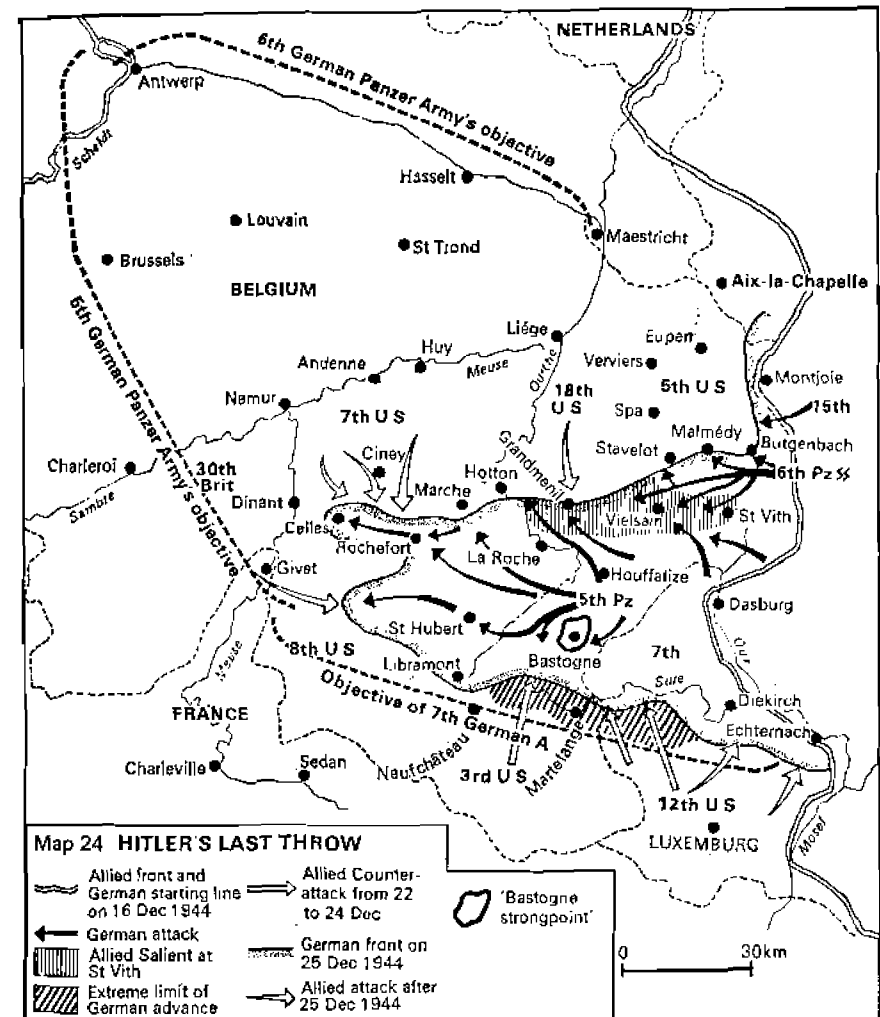
The Germans did not have time to finish the A-9, a V-2 fitted with wings which enabled it to cover more than 1,250 miles, the A-10, an eighty-five-ton rocket missile – the V-2 weighed thirteen tons – nor the A-14, with a virtually unlimited range of action. They were unable to use a whole arsenal of poison gases, the trilons, which were extremely dangerous and were still being worked on in May 1945. Finally, in the manufacture of the atom bomb, the ultimate weapon of the age, they went off on the wrong course and were forestalled by the Americans.

The new German weapons added an extra dimension to the war and gave a glimpse of an apocalyptic future; they showed that in the future an army's success would depend on a scientific discovery and consequently the work of the secret services would from now on be concerned exclusively with scientific and industrial espionage. But at the same time it became apparent that inventions would inevitably depend on technological advance and industrial power in order to be turned into effective weapons. Henceforth strategy would be bound up with the rate of production; success would be a result of the leaders' ability to choose between possibilities which could be only half assessed – what was later to be called 'prospection'. It is easy for the survivors of Nazi Germany to heap blame on Hitler today for his unfortunate decisions,¹ which he alone had to take among the heads of the countries at war. In any case, Germany did not have, or no longer had, the human and economic potential needed to conduct efficiently both a war of numbers on the Russian front and a push-button war against the British and Americans. All that Hitler could now do was to try to force the hand of fate by attempting to achieve a victory as sudden and decisive as his first triumphs. For the scene of this victory he chose the Ardennes, where the utter defeat of the French Army four years previously seemed a good omen.

V HITLER'S LAST THROW

Once again Hitler had to force his generals to accept his plan; Model and von Rundstedt admitted that a counter-attack would be useful but they thought it would be possible only for reducing the salient at Aix-la-Chapelle in order, at best, to reach the Meuse and capture Liège. Hitler rejected this 'paltry solution'. He ordered an offensive by three armies on a sixty-mile front; the main effort would take place in the north, towards Antwerp; a minor thrust would be carried out in the centre, in the direction of Brussels; and the whole campaign would be protected in the south by a cover operation. Commanded by Skorzeny, an SS brigade dressed in American uniforms would seize bridges over the Meuse and create havoc in the enemy's rear by acts of sabotage. Afterwards further operations would be launched in the direction of Maestricht and Breda and from Colmar in the direction of Strasbourg. The attack was planned for December 16; according to the weather forecast there would be several days of thick fog at this time which would keep the American air force grounded.

1. Messerschmitt wrote that 'if they had listened to him 10,000 V-1s per month could have been built, at the right time' – but this was said after the war.



Hitler explained to his generals that the main thing was to make the British and Americans lose the complete confidence in victory which had buoyed their hopes since June 6. But he also entertained the hope of an outright success which would put an end to the enemy supplies through the port of Antwerp and even cut off and isolate the British and Canadian group of armies in the north, as had once happened with the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk. For the purpose of this ambitious objective twenty-eight divisions were assembled in the Ardennes and six in Alsace – the latter under Himmler; all the available tanks were re-grouped, but their petrol was rationed; it was hoped that fuel could be

captured from the enemy, who had vast stores of it within reach of their first advance.

Eisenhower had disposed his troops so as to launch an early offensive; he had, logically enough, massed sixteen divisions to the north of the Ardennes mountains and ten to the south, but only five behind the mountains themselves, so that they stretched out in a thin line of about ninety-five miles. The Germans succeeded in keeping the operation very secret and the Americans were taken completely by surprise, despite the scraps of intelligence which they had picked up; these were misinterpreted and made them think that an attack on a limited scale was going to take place in the direction of Liège.

In the first stage of the battle everything went in the Germans' favour, even though they were moving along narrow, winding roads and against the flow of the rivers. Preceded by V-1s launched on Liège and Antwerp, the five German armoured divisions advanced according to plan. However, the Americans held on in St Vith and Bastogne – which were real strongpoints in the Germans' positions – and the Panzers did not succeed in seizing the vast reserves of petrol which they could glimpse almost under their wheels; the Americans just had time to set fire to them.

It was not until December 18 that the Americans discovered the vast scale of their opponents' plans and realised the seriousness of the situation. In the south Patton's offensive, which was to begin on the 21st, was cancelled and, despite his protests, one division was taken from him; but General de Gaulle refused to abandon Strasbourg in order to shorten the lines, in spite of Eisenhower's threats to stop the French armies' supplies; in the north all the Allied troops were placed under the command of Montgomery, who was not a little pleased with himself at being cast in the role of saviour.

The Germans did not manage to capture Bastogne; the saboteurs had been unsuccessful in their tasks and most of them were captured and unmasked by having to answer detailed questions on American baseball or football and then shot; on December 24 there was a break in the dense cloud, sufficient to enable operations by the Allied Air Force, which immediately took control of the sky. However, the Germans had arrived within about four miles of Dinant; Hitler intervened in the battle and gave orders not to continue in this direction, in spite of the success which had been achieved, but to advance northwards, because the objective was Antwerp and also because the commander in this sector was the ss Sepp Dietrich, to whom the Führer wanted to give the chance of brilliant success which would redound to the credit of the régime.

When the British and American counter-attack began, Hitler was opposed to any withdrawal; what is more, on January 1 Himmler attacked as planned in the direction of Strasbourg, which de Gaulle ordered

Delattre to defend inch by inch, whereas the Americans would have liked to retreat to the Maginot line. Himmler succeeded only in establishing a small bridgehead and in advancing to within twelve miles of Strasbourg. On January 5 the situation was reversed; in the Ardennes, Montgomery attacked in the north and in the west; on January 13 the German withdrawal was complete; Hitler's 'last throw' had failed, even though the battle for Strasbourg lasted until January 21.

From now on the Wehrmacht was reduced to waging a desperate defensive battle; all its best equipment had been lost and the fact that some generals had been superseded and Himmler promoted to be Commander-in-Chief on the Vistula did little to make good the losses! There was one last hope, one final thought: could Hitler rely on a split among his opponents? The French and Americans and the Americans and British had indeed been somewhat at loggerheads. Montgomery in particular had claimed all the credit for their success and had started arguing the point with Bradley on the subject at a press conference. Goebbels cleverly seized upon the incident; through Radio Arnhem, which was still available, he broadcast anti-American statements which were attributed to Montgomery and which the Americans thought came from the BBC! The best proof of the solidity of the coalition lay in its success. If Hitler had thought for a moment that 'the strange alliance' would break up as the danger which had brought it into being diminished, the Yalta Conference was going to strip him of his last illusions.