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OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES
ART LOOTING INVESTIGATION UNIT
APO 413
U.S. ARMY

DETAILED INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 3

15 August 1945

Subject: ROBERT SCHOLZ

J. S. Plaut
J. S. PLAUT
Lieutenant, USNR
Director

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By *SP12* NARS, Date 31 MAY 1975

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ROBERT SCHOLZ

Note: SCHOLZ was interrogated at a special interrogation center in Austria during the period 27 June - 15 July 1945. This report is supplementary to Consolidated Interrogation Report #1, "Activity of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg in France," dated 15 August 1945, which is based largely on his statements, and in which the extent of his own activity is delineated.

I. PERSONAL

(a) Birth, Family and Education

Born 9 February 1902 at Olmütz/Mähren, Moravia (then Austria, subsequently Czechoslovakia). Father, Norbert SCHOLZ, merchant. Mother, Josephine SCHOLZ, nee FLEISCHER. Attended primary school in Olmütz, and went to Berlin in 1920 to study painting. Took a four-year course in pictorial arts, and spent three years in the Berlin Academy.

(b) Positions Held

SCHOLZ became a painter in 1924 and, in 1927, an art critic for the newspaper Die Deutsche Tageszeitung, with which he remained until 1934, when he went over to the Voelkische Beobachter. In the same year he became a naturalized German citizen, and met Alfred ROSENBERG, through the architect, Professor SCHULTZE-NAUMBURG.

On 1 January 1935, SCHOLZ joined the NSDAP as member No. 3,206,458, and in the same year became Kunstreferent in the Party Kulturgemeinde. In 1937 he became Kunstreferent in the Amt Reichsleiter Rosenberg and editor of the art journal Kunst im Dritten Reich (subsequently Kunst im Deutschen Reich).

In 1939 he was appointed Director of the Moritzburg Museum at Halle.

II. ACTIVITY IN THE ROSENBERG ORGANIZATION

In 1940, SCHOLZ was made Director of the Amt Bildende Kunst (Office for Pictorial Art) in the Rosenberg organization. The Rosenberg Office of Art Administration had been headed from 1937 by Dr. Walter STANG. This office comprised four sub-sections, of which SCHOLZ headed one; the others being Music, Pre-History, and Theater and Cinema. In 1940, each of these sub-sections ("Referate") became an independent office, and there was a proportionate promotion in grade of all officials. The Office of Art Administration became the Hauptamt Kunstpflege, and the Pictorial Art section became the Amt Bildende Kunst.

In this capacity, SCHOLZ was responsible for the professional conduct of all art activity coming under the jurisdiction of the Amt Rosenberg, and was Reichsleiter ROSENBERG's personal adviser in art matters. When Amt Westen of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg was founded in Paris in the summer of 1940, SCHOLZ assumed direction of the work of the professional art historians attached to the Paris staff. For the most part, he remained in Berlin, directing policy and research from the central office of the Amt Rosenberg. Inasmuch as Amt Westen of the Einsatzstab was a subdivision of the Rosenberg Aussenpolitisches Amt (Foreign Political Office), and since SCHOLZ' authority stemmed from the Hauptamt Kunstpflege, which was a branch of the Amt fur Weltanschauliche Schulung und Erziehung (Office for World-political Education and Indoctrination), administrative confusion became inevitable at the outset. (See Consolidated Interrogation Report No.1.)

It has been confirmed from various sources that SCHOLZ wished and sought to terminate the Einsatzstab operation in France as early as 1941, after the majority of important art confiscations had been effected. In this he was opposed vigorously and constantly by D.R.K. Oberfuehrer Kurt von BEHR, Director of the art staff in Paris. The personal and ideological conflict between the two men was the dominant element in the internal relations of the Einsatzstab.

In 1942, SCHOLZ collaborated with Abschnittsleiter Lieutenant Hermann von INGRAM in the preparation of an exhaustive report for ROSENBERG on the progress and accomplishment of the Einsatzstab to date, in which both men stressed the chaotic conditions under which the professional art historians, through lack of adequate personnel and constant friction with von BEHR, had been obliged to work. The authors of the report insisted that active confiscatory operations of the Einsatzstab be terminated, and that the staff occupy itself with the orderly cataloguing of the confiscated works of art already in hand, with simultaneous supervision of the large-scale looting of Jewish house furnishings undertaken by a separate branch of the Rosenberg organization, newly headed by von BEHR and formalized as the so-called M-Action. (See Consolidated Interrogation Report No. 1, Chapter II.)

With the apparent acceptance by ROSENBERG of the von INGRAM and SCHOLZ recommendations, SCHOLZ' stature within the organization increased. Von BEHR was ousted from his position at the head of the art staff in Paris early in 1943, and SCHOLZ took the dominant role in the professional guidance of the staff, von INGRAM assuming the primary responsibility for its administration.

SCHOLZ stated that he never traveled to Holland, nor to the Occupied Territories of the East, on Amt Rosenberg business. On one occasion, in the autumn of 1943, he went to Belgium, stopping in Brussels for two days enroute to Paris. The purpose of this visit was the examination of a substantial number of art objects which the Treuhandgesellschaft, Brussels (a German organization for the safekeeping of enemy property in Belgium), had appropriated at an earlier date, and the determination of cultural value sufficient to warrant transfer of this property to the E.R.R. In Brussels, SCHOLZ conferred with MUECHOW, Director of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg for Belgium and Northern France. One of the art historians from the Paris staff, Dr. ESSER, was in Brussels when he arrived, and showed him the material which had already been placed on display in rooms taken for the occasion by the E.R.R. SCHOLZ worked out the details of transfer with MUECHOW, and suggested that Dr. BORCHERS be

sent from Paris to handle the transfer, as he did not believe ESSER fully competent. SCHOLZ stated that, at a later date, the Treuhandgesellschaft requested payment for the objects turned over to the E.R.R., comprising furniture, rugs and a few minor paintings and prints, but that the request was refused. He added that the confiscations involved were entirely divorced from the M-Action.

SCHOLZ was responsible not only for the scientific recording of all art objects confiscated by the E.R.R. and for their shipment to Germany, but for the maintenance of the various deposits within Greater Germany to which the confiscated material was brought. In 1944, when the air raids on Berlin had begun to jeopardize the security of records held in the city, SCHOLZ moved his staff to Schloss Kogl/St. Georgen, Attergau, Austria, one of the Einsatzstab deposits; here he remained with Dr. BORCHERS, Fraulein WEBER and other E.R.R. personnel until the entry of the American forces. In the period immediately preceding the American occupation, SCHOLZ feared that Kogl would be captured by the Russians and, consequently, had the basic art index and photographic files of the Einsatzstab transferred to the large deposit at Schloss Neuschwanstein/Füssen, Bavaria.

III. SUMMARY

SCHOLZ must be regarded as having occupied a leading and influential position in the Rosenberg organization. That he was prominent -- as ROSENBERG's personal adviser in art matters -- as early as 1935, is confirmed by a letter of that year written by him to HITLER, inviting the Fuehrer's attention to an exhibition of North European "Aryan" art, and inviting him, in ROSENBERG's behalf, to attend. It has not been established finally to what degree SCHOLZ personally initiated German policy with respect to the confiscation of Jewish-owned art properties in occupied countries; all the evidence at hand would indicate that he was a burning protagonist of National Socialist cultural ideology, and that he participated actively in the "struggle against Jews, Freemasons and enemies of the Reich." Under interrogation, he has sought to convey the impression that he was personally responsible only for the orderly cataloguing and "safekeeping" -- in well-fitted deposits -- of the works of art confiscated by a branch of the Rosenberg office which he in no way controlled. Detailed interrogation, however, has developed the following points:

- (a) that SCHOLZ was at all times empowered to control the assignment of personnel to, and removal from, the special art staff of the Einsatzstab;
- (b) that he took an active, possibly the leading part, in the preparation and execution of the 28 exchanges of confiscated paintings which the Einsatzstab conducted with various individuals; and that he ordered and directed the compilation of a list of confiscated Impressionist paintings, which were to be made available for exchange or sale by the E.R.R.
- (c) that he represented ROSENBERG directly in relations with the Reichschancellery, other Party organizations, and the German military, where questions of broad policy related to art matters were involved.

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Personally, SCHOLZ is shrewd, hypocritical and unreliable. He made a poor impression on his interrogators by attempting throughout to minimize his own responsibility, cloud the dominant issues and implicate his collaborators. He is credited by various sources with the statement that all modern French painting was "degenerate" and could under no circumstances be brought to Germany. One source attributes to him a plan to destroy all such works of art, rather than return them to their rightful owners; but SCHOLZ is considered, instead, to have sponsored the commercial exploitation for Germany of such material as was "unsuitable" ideologically for importation into the Reich. Under interrogation, SCHOLZ attempted frequently to defend the "legality" of the Einsatzstab confiscations; yet he stated on several occasions that he had always been convinced that the question of title would have to be referred to an international commission upon the termination of hostilities, and that the activity of the Einsatzstab had been salutary in preventing the "wanton" destruction and loss of a substantial portion of the cultural heritage of Europe.

SCHOLZ stated that he had never held a purely political position within the Party, and that he had never been paid a retainer by the Party; that throughout his career he had remained a professional art critic, painter and museum director. The magnitude of his responsibility within the Rosenberg organization gives the lie to these statements. However, it is believed that the motivation for SCHOLZ' activity with the Einsatzstab was essentially ideological rather than material, and that he derived no financial profit from the confiscations effected with his knowledge and under his direction. In addition to his salary as Bereichsleiter, SCHOLZ claimed to have received a monthly expense allowance of three hundred reichsmarks (RM 300), and to have received no further compensation whatever. This statement is believed to be accurate.

IV. RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

Aside from Alfred ROSENBERG himself, SCHOLZ is the highest-ranking former official of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg presently in Allied custody. Von BEHR, unquestionably the leading sponsor of organized looting in France, is dead by suicide; and Gerhard UTIKAL, Director of the Einsatzstab throughout the greater part of its activity, has not been found. Under the circumstances, SCHOLZ must be held personally responsible, with ROSENBERG, for the implementation of all art confiscations undertaken by the Einsatzstab. It is the recommendation of this unit that he be tried as a war criminal, and that the severity of charges brought against him be determined by the extent to which complicity in this organized looting operation is judged to have been criminal. SCHOLZ is presently in internment at Civilian Internment Center No. 7 (3rd U.S. Army), Peuerbach, Kreis Linz, Austria.

J.S.P.