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# 276

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS  
Headquarters IV Corps  
204 CIC Detachment  
APO 304

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

Como May 22, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICER IN CHARGE

SUBJECT: Hans Otto Meissner

1. Dr. Hans Otto Meissner was born 4.6.1909 at Strassburg, Alsatia. Consul I Class, Diplomatic passport nr. 1997 issued Foreign Office September 25, 1943; his wife, Estelle Meissner has a diplomatic passport nr. 28 issued by the Foreign Office on January 12th. 1942. Paragraph 2 to 6 inclusive represent information obtained from subject.

2. Personal history of Hans Meissner:  
June 4th. 1909 born in Strassburg ( Alsatia)  
1924-29 Collage Berlin - Dahlem  
1927 Summer School in England, in Peaslake-Gonshall-Guilford-Surrey.  
Universities in Germany: Heidelberg, Goettingen, Freiburg. 1929-30-31  
Universities abroad: Cambridge, Trinity College; Grenoble; Lausanne.  
1933 Final Law Examination (Referendar) at Celle. May 1934 Doctor of Law in Goettingen, after six months law-practice at Werder (Hav.)  
February 1934 entered the Foreign Office in Berlin as an unexamined attache.  
1935 promoted Attache.  
May 1937 Secretary of Legation (Second Secretary)  
August 1941 Counsellor of Legation II Class (Gesandtschaftsrat)  
May 1944 Counsellor of Legation I Class, with the same grade as consul I Class.

3. Appointments:

1935-1936 German Embassy London (Ambassador von Hoesch)  
January 1935-1939 German Embassy Tokyo (Ambassador von Dirksen and last year Ambassador General Ott)  
January 1939 untill outbreak of war: German Embassy of London (Ambassador von Dirksen)  
March 1940 - June 1941 German Embassy of Moscow (Ambassador Count v.d. Schulenburg)  
Dec. 1944 - May 1944 Consul and "Third in Command" at the German Consulate General in Milan.  
May 1944, Consul and Assistant in Chief at the Consulate General in Milan.  
October 1944 this Consulate was transferred into a branch office of the German Embassy.  
April 1945 this appointment practically ceased to exist.

4. Nature of Work in Diplomatic Service: first two years in Berlin and London, all-round apprentice work in all departments. At Tokyo chief of Protocol-Section, Second time in London, observer of interior politics and parliamentary sessions. At Moscow, consular department, chiefly passports. At Milan in the first year protocol-work, German school; university

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lectures. In the second year all cultural work, exchange-students, guest-professors, guest-conductors, etc. From Dec. 1943 also partly propaganda.

5. General Activity: the subject founded the well-known "Barbagianni" a humorous propaganda magazine, which received 750,000 lire from the German Embassy. 220,000 copies were published weekly. The director Dr. Capucci, personally put another 750,000 lire in it. Subject stated that since German soldiers were sacrificing their blood on the front and civilians were dying at home under the bombs, he, being a young man and having the great chance of not being on the front, felt obligated to carry the fight in every way possible within his sphere to the bitter end against the Anglo-American enemies. Sometime between July and November 1941 the subject worked at the Oberkommando of the Wehrmacht, Amt/Ausland/Abwehr Abteilung II a, (the German Counter Intelligence Corps) under Colonel Lahousen. The Subject's duty was to go to camps of prisoners and recruit those prisoners who were willing to work against their own country. These were mostly Georgians, Armenians and some Aserbaidjanese.

6. Mr Henry Delvaux was interviewed regarding the subject. Delvaux confirmed the fact that Meissner came from Berlin to Italy about Dec. 1941 as Consul II Class and later promoted to I Class at Hotel Principi Savoia in Milan where the German Consulate had its offices. There the subject was in charge of the Information and Propaganda branch of the Consulate, his duties including the publication and distribution of leaflets and recently the newspaper "Barbagianni" a humorous propaganda paper. Delvaux reports that subject during his stay in Milan from 1941 to 1945 procured money illicitly by charging large sums for the issuing of licenses to Italian businessmen. Though not in possession of proof, Delvaux reports that Meissner was also involved in the printing of false American currency. In August 1944 Meissner was supposed to be transferred to Spain, but after an interview with von Ribbentrop in Berlin, was returned to Italy. In 1943 at Erba, province of Como, a trainload of cars was plundered by Italians and Meissner personally received from the loot a number of Red Cross packages, supposed to have been delivered to British prisoners of war. Three out of a great number of empty cartons found under the roof of the subject's house are being forwarded with the original of this report. In January 1944 the subject under the threat of sending his uncle to a German concentration camp, forced his uncle Delvaux to sign papers which transferred title of subject's house and land at Limonta, Bellagio, to the name of count Giannino Citterio. Delvaux verified the fact that subject had regularly been stationed in Milan from 1941 to the present, but aside from above indicated information could not state that the subject had been involved in intelligence or counter intelligence operations.

7. Interview with Dr. Herbert Scholz, German Consular Official, verified the fact that subject was sent to Milan in a consular capacity at the end of 1941 and that his duties there, were those of chief of the Information and Propaganda branch of the German Consulate in Milan.

8. Interview with France Bremmi, Swiss Consul in Como, revealed that subject has been in Milan and Como area for about three and a half years, and during that time Meissner has not been in Switzerland to the knowledge of Mr. Bremmi, nor does he know of any other Hans Meissner in Switzerland. Mrs. Meissner between 1941 and 1945 has been in Switzerland on one or two occasions, when Mrs. Meissner's daughter was sent to live in Switzerland.

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Brenni describes Meissner as distinctly a confirmed nazi who, on one occasion when other diplomats walked away from a description of anti-jewish atrocities, remained to applaud the stories. Subject was a proud nazi, who wore his SS uniform regularly up to two or three months ago, when the German situation in Italy started to become critical. Brenni does not know of any espionage or counter-espionage activities in which Meissner may have been involved. He added that subject personally feared and disliked by his co-workers, would not have been entrusted with such duties, because of the power which might go with such a post.

9. Agents' Notes: These agents note that subject was personally disliked by a ll above named informants, including his uncle. However these agents believe that the facts are substantially as given. These facts, verified by personal interview with subject, reveal that he is of nazi sentiments, convinced of the justice of German war aims and still prepared to continue the propagation of German aims in whatever manner possible. The only indication of espionage or counter-espionage activities, aside from his propaganda duties at the Consulat, is the subject's own admission that he was employed by German counter-intelligence (probably between June and Nov. 1941) recruiting Allied prisoners of war to work against their respective countries.

H.T. Ellison  
Special Agent CIC

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Special Agent CIC

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