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EGQA-4402/10

30.11.1952/10

TRUE NAME: Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Classen AGE: 49 ADDRESS: Koniginstrasse 73a,
Munich, Germany
PROJECT: ARKSNITCH (Gesellschaft fur Wehrkunde; overt ex-officers' group.)

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 1952	
FBI - WASHINGTON	

IN PROJECT: Chief Agent; Installed by us as business manager of the Gesellschaft, he has directed its growth and shaped its policies, publications and activities according to OPC instructions.

SALARY: 1,550 DM per month.

CLEARANCE STATUS: Full operational clearance granted by WASHG 43260, dated 30 May 1952

RELATIONSHIP WITH AGENCY: The Gesellschaft fur Wehrkunde, a purely OPC creation, was founded a year ago when [] then in charge of the Soldaten Zeitung project, developed with his contacts the idea of organizing an overt, non-political study group, primarily composed of former senior German officers interested in the broader aspects of German defense. In full awareness of the nationalist-tinged tendencies of its potential membership, it was decided to restrict membership to those ex-officers and others who were willing to openly promise to oppose political extremism of both Right and Left, to work constructively for the democratic association of West Germany with the Western Allies and who were willing to accept as respected comrades those former officers who participated in the 1944 plot to overthrow the Hitler regime. The Gesellschaft was founded on the basis of these points and acceptance of them has remained a requirement for membership. Through the creation of local branches and sections, through discussion meetings and publications, the Gesellschaft was to stimulate West German feeling in favor of the Contractual Agreements and the European Defense Treaties.

Dr. Classen was recommended for the position of Gesellschaft business manager by Helmut Damerau, publisher of the Soldaten Zeitung. Damerau did not personally know Classen; the latter had been recommended to him by ex-General Felix Steiner. Classen was induced to resign from his position as business manager of a large German soft drink concern in Dusseldorf and was brought to Munich. He has since been in regular contact with a DEFENCE case officer and has shaped his management of the Gesellschaft (it now has over 100 local sections throughout West Germany and more than 2,000 members) according to our wishes and interests. Where his personal views or policies have conflicted with ours, he has accepted the course laid down by us.

ASSOCIATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS: He has no working connection with other projects. However, he is aware of our support of the Soldaten Zeitung and from the beginning has had considerable contact with Damerau, [] It is clear that the two have discussed mutual problems relating to U.S. support - Classen, for example, knows from Damerau that we are terminating support of the Soldaten Zeitung by the end of January 1953.

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BACKGROUND: Dr. Classen is a full professor and doctor of philosophy. He studied at the Universities of Koln, Jena and Munich in the fields of philosophy and geography. His first teaching assignment on record was in 1931 at the German Oberrealschule in Athens, Greece. From 1932-35 he was in the far East as a faculty member at the state college and college for economic affairs, Yamaguchi, Japan. He returned to Germany in 1935 to teach philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Early in the war he was assigned to the propaganda section of the OKW (German High Command) as an analyst of enemy propaganda and East-Asian questions. He returned briefly to the Far East in 1941 as member of a German academic delegation sent to visit Japanese colleges. After nearly three more years of OKW duty, he was transferred to the Abwehr (AMT VI/Mil) as Far Eastern expert in 1944. His final wartime assignment was as head of the East Asia section of the propaganda department in the short-lived government of Admiral Doenitz. He remained in internment until 1947, spent a year as interpreter with Military Government, then entered German commercial life.

MOTIVATION: The writer, who has been in personal contact with Dr. Classen for less than two months, finds it difficult on such short notice to accurately assess his motivation, nor are the files particularly revealing on this subject. The writer is convinced, however, that a variety of motivating factors undoubtedly are present: (a) Dr. Classen's genuine intellectual conviction that Germany's future lies in concert with America and Western Europe, (b) his apparent personal liking for military studies and military men and, possibly, (c) a longrange (but unexpressed) desire to play some kind of advisory role in a revived German Defense Ministry or ultimate General Staff structure. His occasional references to the Abwehr show a professional interest in intelligence work as such; however, there is no indication that this is a basic motivation nor is there any sign that he has been in contact with other post-war intelligence organizations. He is unknown to ZIPPER, although several others on the Gesellschaft board of directors have ZIPPER connections - one, in fact, is a listed ZIPPER agent. There is also no clear ground for belief that Classen has been motivated by financial considerations. He was earning a comfortable living when persuaded to make the change to Munich. As a matter of incidental interest, he does not expect to be able to return to his former work when the RESNICK termination is finished since the Duesseldorf firm is aware that he has been "working for the Americans" and would be reluctant to take him back.

PERSONAL INTEGRITY: Dr. Classen's honesty has been tested in many ways. He has precisely accounted for all Gesellschaft activities and each month has turned over for case officer inspection the complete financial records of the organization, including bank statements, receipted bills, etc. He has regularly presented almost verbatim transcripts of Gesellschaft board meetings as well as copies of office correspondence and original activity reports turned in on a monthly basis by local Gesellschaft chapters. In addition, OKFENCE has maintained (via SIS) a full mail and telephone intercept control over the Gesellschaft without producing evidence that

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Dr. Classen has in any way attempted to deceive us. Classen once turned in an intelligence report on pro-Communist veterans' organizations which the case officer recognized as a ZIPPER product. When casually asked later for the source of his information, Classen without hesitation said it had come from ZIPPER via a member of the Gesellschaft board who has close ties with that group.

CHARACTER: Again, the writer's short personal relationship with the agent is a limiting factor in a full consideration of his character. Dr. Classen is a scholarly, somewhat quiet and unobtrusive man of obviously high intelligence and education. His standard of living (the writer has seen his quarters) appears to be moderately comfortable and certainly not out of line with his income. His extensive library, dating from professorial days, shows an academic interest in political science and geopolitics and includes a large selection of standard American works on the subject. (His English is excellent.) From all appearances, he is devoted to his wife and children and leads a quiet family life. No known excesses. Intercepts of his office correspondence show a fairly wide - and innocuous - acquaintanceship with influential persons in many walks of life but no close or suspect relationships. State Secretary Lenz in the office of Chancellor Adenauer is a personal friend, though probably not a close one. His relationship with the writer, as well as with the previous case officer, has been marked by an open-minded, frank and friendly cooperativeness. He has willingly done everything asked of him, including the recent distasteful task (which was embarrassing to him) of forcing General Felix Steiner to withdraw from active participation in Gesellschaft affairs because of his obnoxious SS background and frequent indiscretions which made him persona non grata to OPC. Ironically, this long-desired step was completed during the same week that the decision was taken to terminate support of this project.

LAST CORRESPONDENCE ON SUBJECT FROM CASE: 2426-CFRMG, dated 22 January 1952. A detailed dispatch on project-termination plans with Dr. Classen's reactions to this development has been completed but not yet forwarded.

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