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SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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TO : Commanding Officer
SCI 6th Army Group

SUBJECT: Interrogation of Bertha von EHRENSTEIN

ACTIVITIES OF SUBJECT IN THE SD FOR THE PERIOD JUNE 1938 TO
APRIL 1945

1. I was born 15 November 1907 at Landsberg/Lech. I spent my youth in Munich. My father is the city Elderman WAGNER. In the summer of 1935 I was married to Guntram von Ehrenstein, a farmer. I have two children a boy and a girl. I have never been a party member.
2. My husband earning little money, it was necessary for me to support myself. Through the local employment office (Arbeitsamt) I secured a position on 3 June 1938 as a stenographer with the SD Leitabschnitt Munich. I first worked for SS Sturmbannfuhrer GRILLENBERGER, who was killed in May 1940 while an Oberleutnant of the Wehrmacht. While I was working with SS Sturmbannfuhrer GRILLENBERGER I was in the Abteilung III (security, counter espionage and counter sabotage). Temporary successor to Herr GRILLENBERGER was Assessor Dr. BAUER (who as far as I knew has been for the past few years working in Oslo with the Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei). Successor to BAUER was SS Hauptsturmfuhrer KURRECK. KURRECK is now a Sturmbannfuhrer in Salzburg or Innsbruck.
3. In 1939 Abteilung III was consolidated with another Referat and my chief now headed the so called Abteilung VI (Auslandreferat) recently activated. DAUSER, an Untersturmfuhrer at the time, was appointed as a deputy to Herr KURRECK in the SD-LA. When Herr KURRECK was dismissed, Hauptsturmfuhrer Dr. GODE succeeded him, but he showed very little interest in his work, since he desired to be in the Department of Economics as a director. As far as I know he finally obtained a position as a vice-director in a munitions firm in Bruenn or in Prag. Herr Dauser became my chief in March 1942.
4. The purpose of this Referat was to gather foreign intelligence, which was done in the following manner:
 - a. The Gestapo sent us two or three times weekly a list of people seeking visas. From this list a few names were chosen arbitrarily. A letter was written to these people requesting them to visit us at the Dienststelle. Most of these people responded and were requested to bring political and economic information from the countries they visited (military matters were of no interest to us since that was the task of the Army - Abwehrstelle).

Since the majority of these people were not trained in these matters most of the reports were quite worthless. We were ordered to send these reports to RSHA, but usually told that they were of a too general nature and were even partly taken from foreign newspapers.

b. During the last years of the war as the Germans were being pushed out of country after country the intelligence service became practically impossible. Switzerland was the sole exception. Persons who brought us intelligence reports even though of quite worthless nature were:

Dr. DIESSL	Munich
Herr SCANZONI, Lawyer	Munich
Herr MUTTERER of the firm Haering e. Co.	Munich
Herr REPP of the Deutsch Ungarisch Gasellschaft	Munich
Herr Dr. Leibrecht, lawyer	Munich

There were many others whose names I cannot recall since they dealt with out Dienststelle only once or twice.

c. The above mentioned persons were honorary co-workers of the Referat VI. I am of the opinion that these people agreed to furnish information because it made it easier for them to get their visas.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

1. Through a certain American by the name of TAVARES, who spent some time in Munich in 1938 or 1939, and who during his stay in Munich was locked after by Referat VI, we became acquainted with his secretary Frau REISINGER and through her, her husband, a lawyer, got in touch with Referat VI. Her Reisinger frequently travelled to and from Switzerland and brought us unimportant reports.

2. During one of his visits to the Dienststelle (when he had come to inquire about a housing matter) he brought with him an old friend, Herr Faltermainer. Faltermainer is the owner of an import export firm in Munich. At this and subsequent meetings it was decided to open an import export firm in Switzerland for supplying to Germans rare or unobtainable items. Herr Faltermainer wrote a recommendation for the plan which was sent to the RSHA in Berlin. Inasmuch as there was no reply Herr Dauser asked personally about it during one of his visits to Berlin. He was told that this plan could not be put into effect because the Swiss authorities would not approve same, and the matter was dropped. It was clear that Herr Faltermainer had much to gain through such a plan.

3. Since the bombing of Berlin was becoming more and more devastating it came about one day (approximately October 44) that we received a telegram from RSHA, advising us to procure or build barracks for several hundred SS men in the Bavarian mountains. Searches at all Aussenstellen were unsuccessful since everything was already overcrowded. Through a co-worker of the local Dienststelle, who was the Leiter of the Akademische Auslandsstelle

which with slight additions would suit our demands. Herr Haendel, who had been arrested some 54 times (among them 40 or 50 for speeding) and who was being watched by the police, wanted to lighten the awaiting punishment.

4. On recommendation of Herr Engineer Ertel, police supervision of Haendel was dropped and he was to undertake immediately the remodeling of the buildings. Since Haendel's previous record was well known in his home town, the local people seeing that he sold his services to the SS were enraged, especially since the tenants had to vacate the premises at the time because of the housing shortage. Haendel was publicly abused by the mobs. When Referat VI was informed as to this it was decided to forego Haendel's project. When three Kriminalpolizei visited him one day he shot and killed one of them and then took his own life.

5. During my services with the SD I met one day in 1939 a Herr Schwend, who lived in Abbazia. Herr Schwend came several times a year to visit Germans in order to take care of his house at Prien/Chiemsee. It is my impression that he worked in ZOLLFAHNDUNGSTELLE and in DEWISENUEBERWACHUNGSTELLE in Munich (together with Councillor herr Scheuermann, an honorary worker in the SD and Counsellor Solinger). I think he reported people violating custom regulations, etc. During his trips to Germany he visited the Dienststelle at Franz Josefstr.

6. On several occasions I took Herr Schwend's reports on Abwehrstelle personnel, who according to him were guilty of negligence in their work, as, for instance, Herr Suess. These reports were forwarded to RSHA in Berlin to SS Sturmbannfuhrer Dr. Groebl and to Hoettl.

7. Herr Schwend often gave me private letters with sender "Federico Schwend, Abbazia" addressed to either a bank in Leichtenstein or in Switzerland (I cannot remember which since this was 3 or 3 years ago) in which he asked to send Swiss francs at best possible exchange rate to the Deutsche Bank" (or possibly Dresdner Bank) in Munich. Since Herr Schwend was a so-called Devisen-Auslaender everything was done legally.

8. In the first half of 1942 a man by the name of Vogelsamer (who during the time of Herr Kurreck visited him from time to time) offered an invention in which nobody was interested. He told me that he knew about a man who was half Jewish and would like to work in the service for protection (Vogelsamer reported the matter to me because of the absence of Dr. Gode). He stated that this half Jew would eventually be of help to us because of his knowledge of America and Switzerland. I was introduced to him and it developed to be Spitz. Spitz, who made a good impression on me told me that he was half Jewish, that he was suffering under the then conditions (persecution of Jews in Germany) and therefore would prefer to be of help to our service in order to obtain protection and to obtain a

passport permitting him to enter and leave Germany. After Dr. Gode handed over his position as Chief Leitabschnitt AMF VI to Dauser he naturally became acquainted with Spitz. Dauser mistrusted Spitz and told me "I think the good Spitz is all Jewish". He asked me then to get information on him from the Gestapo Vienna, the town in which Spitz formerly lived. The investigation showed that Spitz was in fact all Jewish. According to the then existing laws Spitz should have been reported to the Gestapo Munich for expulsion and internment in a concentration camp. He should not have been working in the SD. However, Dauser and I pitied the man and supported him and told him that in spite of this fact he could continue to work for us. Spitz never brought anything of any value, but simply came occasionally to the office in Munich or invited us for a cup of coffee in his hotel. I was usually present on these occasions.

9. I must mention that Spitz insisted on his story that he was only half Jewish and stated that he could give us proof in support of this. He stated further more that he had two sisters, one a cripple, whom he had to support. Spitz very often appeared to be depressed and said that he had a hard life and many troubles.

10. One day Spitz was accidentally introduced in our office to Schwend. The latter was accompanied by the Blaschke Brothers, Oskar and Rudi. These men had an appointment later on at the Hotel Bayerischerhof, where Schwend was staying. What they discussed there I do not know. I do know that later Schwend later asked Dauser and myself whether we considered Spitz reliable because he would like to use him for a job. We assured him of Spitz reliability. Here I must emphasize that Schwend and the Blaschke brothers got their orders directly from the RSHA SS Obergruppenfuhrer Kaltenbrunner. Our service was only told through a letter from RSHA to assist Schwend in anyway, stating that Schwend was the chief of a special mission. The entire operation was classified as topsecret. Schwend asked Dauser whether he could borrow Spitz for this operation and Dauser agreed because he did not have a job for Spitz anyway.

11. Sometime after this Spitz received orders to take a trip to Amsterdam and he was given the necessary visas, etc. He bought there, he later told us, pictures of all old masters, genuine carpets etc for Schwend. The seller of these objects was a man named Middl, owner of the firm Goodstikker, Amsterdam. Spitz showed us photographs of the pictures he bought.

12. Several months later Spitz took another trip to Amsterdam, where he met Schwend and his wife and I believe Rudi Blaschke.

They conferred with Middl on a foreign currency transaction. Spitz told me later that the whole thing was dropped because apparently Middl wanted to be covered and asked for written confirmation by the RSHA, which Schwend could not give him. According to a statement by Spitz Middl worked directly for Goering.

13. On one of his trips - it might be years ago - Schwend told me that he had a mission from Berlin for a determined matter which had the cover name "Scahe 1". Further information about these operations would be none of my affair because it was classified topsecret - "Scahe 1" would be sufficient. I had to open new books with the following titles "Reichsmarks", "Kunar", "Lire" and "Stahl". Schwend gave me an amount of approximately 3000 RM as money for stamps, cable fees, tips, etc. These I listed in my special books. Schwend apparently knew about my bad financial condition and told me I could, whenever I needed monthly, take some of the money, naturally not too much. At the beginning I sometimes took 50 RM, and later when I had nothing to do with the matter I stopped. During the following period Schwend or one of the Blaschke brothers brought to our office sealed sacks or suitcases which apparently contained the above mentioned currency. We did not receive any Reichsmarks. They told me the amount which I entered in the credit side of the ledger. These statements were made to me by Schwend himself. When I asked him if I should not have some control over this money since I was responsible for the entries in my books, he told me that it was all right since he himself always counted the money. Through curiosity I intended to open one of these packages, but they were always very carefully wrapped and sealed. In spite of this I did receive one package of Kunar open and as nearly as I can recall it contained one or two million.

14. These suitcases or packages were stored in the same of the Referat which was in the cellar as protection against air raids. They never stayed long because always one of the abovementioned men took them away (one a man by the name of Manser who had a Swiss passport came and fetched one of the packages). Manser, as he told me, took a trip to Italy. He took - as nearly as I can remember - 20kilos of Stahl (they always measured Stahl in Kilos and I have never been informed of the meaning of Stahl) At the beginning I was angry about this because I thought that since I was responsible for the entries in my book they should have enough confidence in me to tell me all about the matter. By accident Mrs. Schwend and the Blaschke brothers were counting bank notes in the next room and forgot for a short moment to lock the door. I saw that they were English bank notes. Where these packages went I have never asked and would probably not have gotten the correct answer, because these men and particularly the Blaschke brothers were very careful and mistrusted everybody.

Dauser was always frantic when one of these men appeared, and many times states "These imbeciles should leave us alone. They only give us a lot of trouble when in reality they could take care of this in Berlin".

15. The end of 1943 Spitz, together with Rudi Blaschke, I believe in the car of the latter, took a trip to Belgium. They took several packages of "Stahl". I had to take the packages out of the safe and make the entries in my book, but I do not remember the exact amount and I wanted only a receipt from Blaschke. Blaschke told me that Schwend would be satisfied with this. I always had the impression that Schwend and the Blaschkes could not stand each other. After several weeks these men returned (Spitz brought me some presents from his trip - chocolates, stockings, shoes etc). Spitz never liked to take trips and was happy to be back in Beuerberg. He mentioned several times that he was disgusted with the entire affair.

16. After the return of Spitz and Rudi Blaschke I had to do an errand in the hotel to give a message to Rudi Blaschke. In his room I saw several money sacks. I was surprised and asked Blaschke what they contained and he answered that they contained gold for the RSHA. I did not believe this.

17. As nearly as I can remember both men took another trip, this time to Hungaria. In the course of time the entire stock of packages disappeared from Munich and Schwendt and the Blaschkes did not return anymore. They worked with the service in Vienna directly because the responsible man of the RSHA (Sturmabfuhrer Dr. Hoettl was transferred to Vienna)! I suppose these men preferred to work with the service in Vienna because in the first place the distance between Italy and Vienna was shorter, and in the second place, Dauser was not always so kind to these men, especially as previously mentioned to Rudi Blaschke. Dauser referred to these men as "swine". Dauser and I learned that Schwend had been in Munich twice, but he did not come to visit us at Franz Josefstr. The relationship between Spitz, Dauser and myself was alright. Spitz gave me a little money on several occasions, as I had to finance a kidney operation for my son. Besides that he occasionally gave us some food.

18. Schwend used to live in Abbazia with his family, but moved to Meran when the war got closer, and became, I learned from Dauser and Spitz, chief of an Army post office. It was his duty to purchase goods for Germans, and such items as butter, food and clothing and gasoline for the troops.

19. Both of the above mentioned took a trip to Meran about a year and a half ago. Dauser's reason for going was to be well fed for a couple of days. He brought some food back with him, part of which he gave me.

20. About the ~~de~~count BENZEL I know only that he, together with Spitz sold and bought pictures. Besides that he sometimes gave Spitz transportation to Munich.

21. I must mention another incident about a certain vonLaak, half jewish, residence Munich. This man was introduced to Dauser by a man named Dr. Strobl, an Austrian writer and editor. von Laak came one day to the office at Franz Josefstr and asked Dauser to give him a job in order to save his mother who was a jewess formerly married to a German officer. VonLaak had the following plan. He suggested that he go to Spain as a wine salesman to visit some relations and to contact the English secret service in order to obtain from them a passport for his mother. VonLaak took the trip to Spain, apparently got in touch with the secret service, but neither got a pssport for his mother nor any information of importance to us. According to regulations our service reported to the RSHA and was told that von Laak should not take anymore trips into foreign countries. The Mother of vonLaak came several times to visit Dauser and asked for help. Once, for instance, she was to have been transferred to construction work and Dauser helped her to avoid being transferred. All this is stated to demonstrate that Dauser took his mission as Chief of his service not too seriously. He preferred to help people whenever he could. For instance Dauser should have dismissed his assistant Friedmann (who worked for AMT VIT Munich for approximately 8 months) who when he noticed that the war was not going well for Germany became "ill".. Friedmann apparently worked with von Laak, and as Dauser told me, had hidden one or more English PWs awaiting the arrival of the American Army.

22. How the whole affair ended I do not know. In the first place the months I was not interested in service matters anymore, and in the second place Dauser upon being asked what his intentions were with respect to Friedmann replied "nothing. I would not want to be responsible for the death of a man, and besides there is no use doing anything anymore".

23. Two months ago Dr. Knochen, SS Standartenfuhrer, formerly Chief of Sipo and SD in Paris and lastls inspector of the RSHA in Berlin came to Munich. I did not see the man. Dauser told me afterwards that Dr. Knochen was very dissatisfied, stating that Dauser should produce more interesting, actual and positive things. These men in Berlin had the wrong idea about realities, since it was no longer possible to do anything because of the intensity of air raids. No streetcars, no telephones, no teletypes were operation, and in addition most of the service offices had been evacuated. No one wanted to work any longer. As far as I am concerned I worked, for the last months, only one or two days in the office at Munich and then only for two or three hours. For the last three years I only worked four or five hours in the office in Franz Josefstr, which is the reason that I do not know everthing to the last detail.

24. Following are the names of employees of the Referat VI in Munich.

Clerk, Franz Fischer, present residence unknown.
Frau Wortmann, stenographer. Since Februarz 1945
residence unknown.
Friedmann, Assistant to Dauser, AMT VI CULT.

x 107 learned

Additional Statements of Mrs. Von Ehrenstein

Question: Who besides Schwend and Blaschke would know about the hide-out of the gold and all the other treasures?

Answer: Probably Dr. Neuhold (brother of Mrs. Hedda Schwend). He was the bookkeeper and probably learned from Dauser and Spitz. Dr. Neuhold's description is (I only saw him three years ago) tall, slender, darkhaired, blue eyed, about 35 years old, no eye glasses. Last known residence: Meran in the house of Schwend. Also Schwend's parents who lived in the same house.

Dr. Gysslyng (formerly Consul General in the United States). He was chief advisor to Schwend in art and antiques and lived for a short while as a guest in the house of Schwend.

Captain Glaband (Glavan) Yugoslav, formerly in Agram. Glaband was a man who was very devoted to Schwend and his wife. He was hated by the Blaschke brothers.

Question: When did the Service in Munich cease to be involved in the Schwend affairs?

Answer: About a year and a half ago.

Question: Do you think Scheuermann knows much about the organization "Scahe 1" and about the hideouts of the gold and treasures?

Answer: I do not believe that Scheuermann knows much about "Scahe 1" because in the first place it was top secret and forbidden knowledge to others on penalty of death. Schwend did not need any advice in this operation because he had his orders and missions directly from the RSHA SS Sturmbannfuhrer Dr. Hoettl. Therefore I do not believe Scheuermann knows about the hide away. Last known residence of Scheuermann was the duty officers quarters Zollgebäude of Landshut.

Question: Do you think that Spitz knows about the hideout?

Answer: In no case do I think that Spitz knows anything about it. In my opinion the hideouts are in or in the vicinity of Meran. Spitz is much too frightened to have demanded to know about this. Also the relations between Schwend and Spitz were not very good at the end. Balschke spoke badly about Spitz to Schwend.

Question: Do you think that this money was transferred only in gold and jewelry or do you believe it could have been invested in foreign firms or enterprises?

Answer: I do believe that the Blaschke brothers transferred the money exclusively in gold and jewelry, as well as pictures. Knowing Schwend I could think of the possibility that he invested money in several firms and enterprises because of his ambition to be well known and to be a rich man. He had

a plan years ago to buy a big estate in the Ukraine and he did own an estate in the surroundings of Abbazia. About the flight of the above mentioned I could not imagine. I do remember that Blaschke once said to Dauser that whenever things went wrong with the war he would go on a ship from Abazia into the open see for a long time until danger was passed. I should imagine that Schwend tried to reach Switzerland with his wife and child, who is one year old. There is the possibility that Schwend went to Lichtenstein where he was a good friend of a man names Dr. Vogt, who holds an important government position.

Cover names as far as I can remember are:

For Schwend - Wendig. Schwend's second man was Rudi Blaschke who did not like to take orders from Schwend. Schwend I think is less dangerous than Rudi Blaschke, but I think he will defend himself to the last minute. Schwend is a kind and ~~xx~~ educated man and typical parvenu.

Blaschke, Rudi certainly the most dangerous of the gang. The important traits in his character are ~~xx~~ avarice and greed. He is never satisfied. He likes women but prefers alcohol. He is a very heavy drinker. Spitz once told me that on days when he saw Blaschke he was generally drunk. Six or seven years ago he was prosecuted by the Italian police for smuggling. Although he was held temporarily for interrogation he was released. He is very clever and capable of doing anything in the interest of himself. One of his cover names is Hacker.

Oskar Blaschke. Less dangerous than his brother who is 4 years older. He is charming, kind and likes women very much. He does not bother so much about business as his brother and acts more or less on the orders of his brother.