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DETAILED INTERROGATION REPORT NO. 13

1 May 1946

Subject: KARL HABERSTOCK

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THEODORE ROUSSEAU, JR.
Lt. Comdr., USNR

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KARL HABERSTOCKNote:

A general review of Karl HABERSTOCK's career, with particular emphasis on his connection with the Linz project, has been included in Consolidated Interrogation Report No. 4, "LINZ: HITLER'S MUSEUM AND LIBRARY." The information contained in this report has been obtained from sources and documents which have come to hand since the publication of CIR #4.

Addresses: Berlin, Kurfuerstenstrasse 59 (gallery)
" Bellevuestrasse

Present whereabouts: In custody of U.S. Chief of Counsel, Nuremberg, as a material witness in War Crimes proceedings.

I. PREWAR CAREER

Born 1878 in Munich.

HABERSTOCK came of a middle-class family of peasant origin. His education was limited. He held no degrees for art study from any of the German universities, and expressed contempt for people who held them.

HABERSTOCK's entire career was based on two principles: anti-Semitism and Germanic chauvinism. He is said to have been a vociferous anti-Semite from the beginning, and to have attracted a certain clientele in this way, particularly in Berlin during the twenties, when the art market and other elements of the financial and commercial worlds were dominated by Jews. This clientele, drawn mostly from reactionary German circles, also had a natural taste for 19th century German art, as opposed to the "degenerate" French products of the same period or their own progressive German contemporaries.

When HITLER came to power, HABERSTOCK joined the Party. It is characteristic that he had not done so before. He never liked risks, and he always saw to it that he had something to fall back on should his plans miscarry. Even after he became a Nazi, he maintained his membership in International Rotary, and throughout the period of Jewish persecution he helped certain of his Jewish colleagues to escape. All of this he pointed to as evidence of his decent and liberal instincts.

When National Socialist cultural reforms were put into operation, HABERSTOCK became an enthusiastic crusader against the exhibition of "degenerate" paintings in the German museums. However, his fervor

was considerably tempered by self-interest. He played a leading part in the disposal of these paintings on the international market, thus obtaining foreign currency for the German Government and large profits for himself.

Thanks to his early clientele and his political activity, HABERSTOCK became the most important international dealer of Nazi Germany. He traveled throughout Europe and had affiliations with many of the leading dealers, such as Theodor FISCHER of Lucerne, in whose company he visited London in 1939; Georges WILDENSTEIN, with whom he owned pictures in joint account; and SELIGMANN Brothers, with whom he planned a system for representation in the United States. He had an account in London with the Swiss Bank Corporation, Waterloo Place.

In business dealings he was known by his colleagues as a sharp trader, and not entirely to be trusted. He almost always worked alone, although HOFER reports that HABERSTOCK once offered him a partnership. When he was not successful in obtaining the results he wanted, HABERSTOCK usually brought in his wife, who was known generally as one of the chief reasons for his success.

II. WARTIME ACTIVITY

HABERSTOCK's career was crowned with his appointment by HITLER as chief adviser to POSSE. In this capacity, he was able to exert a direct and powerful influence on the formation of HITLER's collection for Linz, and became so influential that he dared to oppose GOERING. His activity in this connection is described in CIR #4.

For his work outside of Germany, HABERSTOCK carried the following documents:

- (a) Special designation as adviser to the Director of the Sonderauftrag Linz;
- (b) A letter from the Adjutant of the Wehrmacht;
- (c) A letter signed by Reichsmarschall GOERING;
- (d) A letter from the Commander in Chief of German Forces in France - Kunstschutz Division.

(Note: Items (b), (c) and (d) were used by HABERSTOCK in securing the passage across frontiers of shipments of his purchases to Germany.)

HABERSTOCK had two groups of agents working for him in France during the war. The most important was centered in Paris. The other operated throughout the Free Zone, particularly in Provence. There follows a brief account of the agents who made up these groups, and their activities:

A. Paris

HABERSTOCK's interests in Paris were served by a number of agents who operated individually. There is no evidence that they in any way constituted an organization, although they were well known to one another.

ENGEL, Hugo

22 Blvd. Malesherbos

An Austrian refugee who had come to Paris before the war, he was HABERSTOCK's chief Paris agent. He sold pictures to HABERSTOCK, and also acted as his general representative.

In bills presented on 1 July and 27 November 1941, ENGEL lists the following services rendered:

"Running expenses for trips made in July and November."

"Packing and shipping of pictures and books."

"Tips to WILDENSTEIN, ENGEL and DEUSSEN employees."

"Printing and sending New Year's cards."

ENGEL is repeatedly referred to in HABERSTOCK's correspondence as the person to whom art objects, letters, messages, even wine, are to be sent for keeping or forwarding. In a letter of 15 September 1941 to D. BOUCHENE, 35 Ave. de Chatillon, concerning the purchase of pictures, ENGEL's address is given as c/o (in Haus) WILDENSTEIN, 57 rue de la Boetie.

ENGEL served as HABERSTOCK's intermediary with the following firms:

WACKER BONDY, shippers and packers, 236 Blvd. Raspail
 SCHENKER Co., shippers and packers, 5 rue Mayran
 Charles BLOT, packers, 14 rue de Penthièvre
 Alexandre VELLAY, packers, 7-9 rue de Penthièvre
 Maison STALL, frame makers and restorers of sculpture,
 11 rue Treilhard
 R. GAUTHIER, photographer, 2 rue Buffault

In his work for HABERSTOCK, ENGEL was closely connected with DEQUOY, BREUER and Dr. MELLER. He was assisted by an accounting firm, E. BISSON.

von POELLNITZ, Baron

Served as HABERSTOCK's representative in German official circles and on a higher "social" level. He was in close touch with DEQUOY at the time of the WILDENSTEIN "aryanization," and the latter's bootlicking letters identify him as HABERSTOCK's most important German collaborator.

Von POELLNITZ served as an intermediary for a number of people who wished to sell to HABERSTOCK, among them Serge CABELL (66 bis rue Sebastien Mercier) and A. POLIAKOFF (19 rue Monsieur). Evidence

obtained from other witnesses shows that von POELLNITZ used the HABERSTOCK contact to do business for himself on the side (see DIR #2). The fact that HABERSTOCK and his wife took postwar refuge in von POELLNITZ' castle at Aschbach (Bamberg) is final proof of the intimacy of their relationship.

DEQUOY, Roger

57 rue de la Boetie

The wartime representative of the WILDENSTEIN firm. There is no doubt that in addition to representing WILDENSTEIN, DEQUOY personally worked hand in hand with HABERSTOCK. The reason for this may have been in part to save what he could of the WILDENSTEIN stock, but an important incentive was the considerable personal profit derived from his contact with the most powerful of German dealers. (See CIRs #2, #4.)

It must also be remembered that when DEQUOY began this collaboration, the Germans appeared to be winning the war.

His most important single transaction with HABERSTOCK was the sale of the NICOLAS Rembrandts, for which he received a commission of 1,800,000 francs. In a letter of 10 March 1942, he admitted that he acted as a screen and intermediary for HABERSTOCK, writing "You know how much trouble I take to obtain fine pictures for you and for the museums of the Reich." His role as middleman is further confirmed in the following documents:

- (a) A letter to HABERSTOCK (in German) written 6 October 1942 by HALIM BEY MELHAME (113 rue de Grenelle), offering a Portrait of the Marquis Leganes by Goya, and designating DEQUOY as his intermediary.
- (b) A letter of 14 December 1942 from HABERSTOCK to Cesar de HAUKE (14 rue du Cherche Midi), confirming the purchase of a picture and requesting that it be sent to DEQUOY for forwarding to Berlin.
- (c) A letter of 22 September 1941 from HABERSTOCK to Dr. KUETGENS of the Paris Kunstschutz, advising that the latter consult his friend, DEQUOY, in a matter concerning a painting by David.
- (d) A letter of 20 November 1941, addressed to DEQUOY and marked "Copy for Mr. HABERSTOCK," describing conditions for advertising in the German-controlled Gazette des Beaux Arts.

In his work for HABERSTOCK, DEQUOY was most closely connected with von POELLNITZ, DESTREM, ENGEL, and Madame Jane WEYLL. Moreover, considering his established association with FABIANI, it seems likely that the latter may also have played an important part in this group's activity. Further investigation in this matter is recommended.

WEYLL, Mme. Jane

178 bis Blvd. Berthier

Reported to have been von POELLNITZ's mistress, and an agent for HABERSTOCK. Her main job was to bid for him at sales in the Salle

DROUOT and to serve as his intermediary with the Commissaires Priseurs, ADER and Maurice REIMS. She seems to have had some sort of official connection with ADER. There are receipts for paintings bought by HABERSTOCK, signed by Mme. WEYLL on 23 and 24 April 1941. HABERSTOCK wrote to her on 4 April 1941, thanking her for previous services and adding a request that she get in touch with Prince Philipp von HESSEN.

MELLER, Dr. Simon

3 rue du General Apport

HABERSTOCK wrote to MELLER on several occasions, requesting urgently that he find him good pictures. In March 1941 MELLER was the middleman when HABERSTOCK purchased the large Rubens Venus and Adonis from Jean SCHMIT. This picture was later the cause of trouble between HABERSTOCK and GOERING. (See CIR #2 and DIR #11.) MELLER's commission was 60,000 francs. He also worked with Hugo ENGEL, JURSCHEWITZ and August L. MAYER.

LOEBL, A11

9 rue de l'Echelle

In addition to his activity with the WENDLAND-BOITEL group (see CIR #2), LOEBL acted as one of HABERSTOCK's agents, particularly in the expertising of collections. On 25 November 1941, LOEBL presented a bill for traveling and other expenses in connection with a trip to Dijon and expertises made there, and the expertise of the PATRIOLLAT Collection. On 24 November he again presented a bill, for the expertising of the GROULT Collection and for advances made to HABERSTOCK in connection with the purchase of photographs from GAUTHIER, tips to ADER's secretary, and the purchase of office equipment. On 27 November LOEBL acted as expert and intermediary in the purchase of paintings from Charles MICHEL (19 Ave. de Tourville).

SUESS

Director, Hotel Ritz

HABERSTOCK corresponded regularly with SUESS, who made contacts for him with other Germans visiting Paris -- for instance, the ubiquitous Prince Philipp von HESSEN. HABERSTOCK also had funds deposited with SUESS. On 15 March 1941, he wrote that Dr. MELLER would deposit 300,000 francs in this fund.

B. Free Zone

HABERSTOCK's activity was centered in southern France, where many of the German dealers believed that art discoveries could be made. His activities there seem to have been conducted through two chief intermediaries, each of whom, in turn, controlled a certain number of his own contacts.

BALL, Alexander

Paris, 9 rue Royale

Aix-en-Provence, Hotel du Palais

A former Berlin dealer, BALL had been a refugee in Paris shortly before the war and had worked with JANSEN. After the invasion he

moved to Aix, where he sought out private collectors who would be willing to sell to the Germans. On 3 January 1941, he wrote HABERSTOCK about a van Dyck and a Breughel discovered in a collection near Lyon. His brother, Richard, who lived at the Hotel Mediterranee, Marseille, worked for him. Both are reported to have reached the United States successfully. Seen in this light, their work for HABERSTOCK may be considered as an understandable means of escaping the fate of many of their fellows. However, in a passage of the same letter of 3 June 1941 to HABERSTOCK, Alexander BALL did more than indicate pictures. In the closing paragraph of this letter he wrote, "Mr. Guy de R. lives in La Bourboule." This passage refers to Guy de ROTHSCHILD, and appears to answer a query from HABERSTOCK as to his whereabouts. The implications of such a revelation are exceedingly grave, and BALL should be brought to account.

Simone de BEAUPERTHUYS, Avenue de la Grande Armee, Paris, was BALL's secretary. He offered her services to HABERSTOCK, and she is known to have brought him several paintings.

ENGEL, Herbert

Nice, 70 Blvd. Francois Grosso
(formerly Blvd. Gambetta)

Son of Hugo ENGEL, but apparently on bad terms with his father. He acted as HABERSTOCK's "cutout" and "mail box" for agents who were looking for pictures in southern France. The most important of these appeared in the correspondence as "Henri ANTOINE," an expert whom HABERSTOCK held in some respect. HABERSTOCK, in a letter of 12 September 1943, asked whether ANTOINE had any information about certain collections to be liquidated by the French State. On 10 October 1941, he sent questions for transmission to ANTOINE concerning a painting by Goya. A letter of 6 May 1943 revealed that ANTOINE must have previously reported on WENDLAND's recent visit to the South. Comparison of a letter from ANTOINE with an expertise written by August L. MAYER, the well known German authority on Spanish painting, tends to indicate that they were one and the same man. MAYER disappeared in 1944, and WENDLAND reported that he met his end in the gas chamber. The details of his work for German dealers during this period are not clear; nor is the story of his falling into the hands of the SS -- in spite of the possibilities of protection he enjoyed from HABERSTOCK and others.

Another of Herbert ENGEL's informants was Arthur GOLDSCHMIDT, who, prior to his escape to Cuba, also worked as a picture scout for HABERSTOCK. In September 1943, after his escape, ENGEL wrote to HABERSTOCK that he was "doing his best to replace him."

Herbert ENGEL escaped to Switzerland in 1943. In a postcard from Zurich dated 17 May 1943, he wrote HABERSTOCK that he was living with his sister, Frau FEIERABEND (Stampfenbachgasse), and offered his services for anything that HABERSTOCK might want in Switzerland.

SIMON, O.

Nice, 17 Blvd. Auguste Raynaud

An industrialist and agent who had worked with the Germans before

the war; he also offered pictures, including a Raphael, to HABERSTOCK through ENGEL.

III. TRAVEL

HABERSTOCK traveled extensively during the war. His activities in France, which he visited more often than the other countries, have already been described.

He went to Holland in 1940, and, in partnership with BOEHLER, negotiated the purchase of the GUTMANN silver collection. A complete dossier of this transaction is available in the files of the Central Collecting Point, Munich, and a report on the matter has been prepared by Captain Vluc of the Dutch services. It was during this visit that HABERSTOCK claims to have played a part in the liberation of FRIEDLAENDER. HABERSTOCK says that he visited Switzerland once during the war to settle certain of his affairs with FISCHER. He claims to have made no purchases at that time. He also vigorously denies having any assets in Switzerland. His presence in Italy has also been reported, but not confirmed.

IV. REPOSITORIES

HABERSTOCK is reported to have paintings and other belongings stored in the following places:

Heidenhaim
Schloss Turn
Schless Poellnitz, at Aschbach

In all likelihood he has funds concealed in Switzerland and Franco. The recent activities and travel of Hugo ENGEL, apparently connected with the WENDLAND interests in Paris, should be investigated for possible HABERSTOCK connections.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

A. It is recommended urgently that HABERSTOCK be questioned further regarding his knowledge of the activities of FABIANI and BALL, and in particular, the disappearance of MAYER.

B. It is recommended that he be tried on the same level as the leading members of the Sonderauftrag Linz. He was, beyond any possible doubt, one of the individuals most responsible for the policies and activities of this group which dominated German official purchasing and confiscation of works of art from 1939 through 1944.

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