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# The Art Looting Investigation Unit: Finding Their Place in World War Two History

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The Art Looting Investigation Unit:  
Finding Their Place in World War Two History

By  
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## ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the work done by the Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU) during World War Two. The ALIU was created as a subdivision of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), an American intelligence unit created during the war that was the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency. The ALIU men sought to collect and build on information regarding the Nazi “art looting machine”. As such, they bore a strong resemblance to the activities of the Museum and Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) commission (known as the “Monuments Men”). Thanks to a recent movie starring Matt Damon and George Clooney, the MFAA has become familiar to many Americans, and upon first examination, it appears that in comparison the ALIU had a much less exciting story.

While the ALIU was not physically hunting art, they did the intelligence work that led to the apprehension and interrogations of major art dealers who had worked with Hitler. Though the majority of these men were able to go back to their trade following the war, the information collected by the ALIU assisted in the conviction of two major war criminals, Hermann Goering and Alfred Rosenberg. The ALIU was also able to undercover the major actions of the Linz organization (Hitler planned to build a museum to rival all other major European art centers in Linz Austria, this was where the majority of the looted art was going to be sent to following the end of the war) and bring the plans to light following the war. However, the longer-term impact would prove to be the

information gathered during the war that would assist in the creation of databases and organizations dedicated to returning looted art for decades after the war.

The investigation into this unit relied on the primary source documentation housed at the National Archive in College Park, Maryland. This collection was comprised of progress reports; financial records; the final reports distributed by the unit; and correspondence between the London and Washington branches of the ALIU. Because of the lack of secondary source material present at this time, the primary source was essential for this research. The day to day actions of the ALIU men was seen through their monthly reports and their long term accomplishments were tracked through their Consolidated and Detailed Interrogation Reports as well as the Final Report, which was written after the end of the war.

The importance of the ALIU lies in the documentation they collected and created during the war because it was able to track the actions of the major looting figures and brought to light the larger organizations present. This unit provided the link between the recovery being done by organizations such as the MFAA and the prosecution and reparation efforts following the war; without these men, the destruction of culture would not have been considered or proven to be a war crime. Their influence surpassed the expectations of those who created, because their influence can still be seen today in the form of organizations that have been created to return the Nazi looted art.



## Chapter One:

World War II is a period that has received great attention from students, as well as historians; it is a surprising that there are still untold stories hidden within this dramatic and exciting time period. History books teach students about the heroic efforts of the soldiers who stormed the beaches of Normandy; the men who witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor; and the exceptionally strong men women and children who survived to tell the tale of Hitler's death camps. But there remain elements of World War Two that have been obscured by well-known events. It was not until recently that the story of "Monuments Men", or the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA), was made familiar to the public. Robert Edsel is largely responsible for giving the much-deserved credit to the 350 men and women in the military unit who helped save Europe's cultural treasures.<sup>1</sup>

The MFAA, however, was not the only effort by the United States to hold accountable those responsible for the looting of European art and antiquities. The Art Looting Investigation Unit, or ALIU, was created to document the massive looting that occurred in Europe during World War Two. The MFAA almost always overshadows the ALIU and leaves them obscured in secondary source material. This is probably because the story of the MFAA men hunting down physical treasure is much more exciting to readers than the hunting down of information. When looking for the importance and impact of the ALIU, it can be concluded that their effect was much less immediate in comparison to the MFAA. The ALIU men worked to prepare documents that would be used by the Allied governments for decades. These documents not only worked to

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Edsel, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street, 2009), xiv.

prosecute major war criminals, they also laid the ground work for the creation of major databases and organizations that are still being used to find pieces of Nazi looted art and their original owners. Thus, the ALIU had a profound impact, even though the treasure-hunting MFAA men so often get the focus.

The MFAA was created after many prominent figures in the art world met at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 to discuss the fate of Europe's cultural treasures and how the United States could protect them.<sup>2</sup> In response, the MFAA was formed with the backing of President Roosevelt with the backing of the Roberts Commission;<sup>3</sup> without this support, it is likely that the MFAA would have never been respected in the field.<sup>4</sup> The MFAA men had no formal military training and asked to serve their country as best they could with the little information and supplies provided for them.<sup>5</sup> In the end, the MFAA worked towards their mission from 1943 until 1951.<sup>6</sup> The Allied troops worked to collect "church bells, stained glass, religious items, municipal records, manuscripts, books, libraries, wine, gold, diamonds and even insect collections", the job of the MFAA was to travel through occupied Europe to pack, transport, catalogue, photograph, archive and return as much of this material as possible.<sup>7</sup>

When Justice Owen J. Roberts created the program in 1944 as a branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), it was decided that the mission was to be the following:

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 18.

<sup>3</sup> The American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, or Roberts Commission was housed in the National Gallery of Art and was comprised of a group of citizens who made plans to protect Europe's cultural monuments.

Greg, Bradsher. Michael Hussey, Michael Kurtz. "OSS Art Looting Investigation Unit Reports, 1945-46", National Archives College Park Maryland. <http://www.archives.gov/research/microfilm/m1782.pdf>. 6-7.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, 54 and 61.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, xiv.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 400.

It will be the primary mission of the Art Looting Investigation Unit to collect and disseminate such information bearing on the looting, confiscation and transfer of the enemy of art properties in Europe, and on individual organizations involved in such operations or transactions, as will be of direct aid to the United States agencies empowered to effect restitution of such properties and prosecution of war criminals.<sup>8</sup>

This mission statement makes the differences between the two missions clear. The ALIU was focused on finding information while the MFAA men were hitchhiking around Europe trying to protect a piece of art before the enemy destroyed it. The MFAA men were in the middle of the action and their letters provide an emotional connection they had to the art they were trying to protect; this is what makes them appealing to readers and moviegoers. The ALIU men conducted meaningful fieldwork, it was brief and they saw little action. The bulk of their work was done in Altaussee, Austria where they interrogated people either suspected of being a war criminal or individuals who could help shed light on the larger looting organization. While the ALIU found important information during their investigations, the MFAA was finding massive amounts of hidden Nazi gold; they were also finding some of the greatest masterpieces of all time, thus their story has much more inherent appeal. Moreover, because there is so much overlap, it seems that scholars have a difficult time differentiating between the two groups. In practice, however, the two were quite distinct.

The MFAA itself gained attention during the 1990's and 2000's, however, there are some sources from the years immediately following the war. Janet Flanner's book *Men and Monuments: Profiles of Picasso, Matisse, Braque and Malraux* from 1947 was the first major text to include a conversation about the "Monuments Men" and looting during World War Two; it was published just two years after the war ended. Flanner was

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<sup>8</sup>Bradsher, 2-3.

an American writer who spent the majority of her career as a correspondent for the New Yorker magazine in Paris.<sup>9</sup> Because Flanner wrote this book so soon after the war ended, she was able to lay the grounds for how this topic would be discussed in the future. As the title suggests, the major focus of Flanner's work was to give attention to these major artists. However, there is an entire chapter titled "Beautiful Spoils" which deals directly with the war. In the beginning of the chapter, Flanner explains that Hitler began looting on an ideological ground.<sup>10</sup> He was not taking works that he thought were the best but what he felt rightly belonged to Germany and that should be protected from the savage Allied troops.<sup>11</sup> Hitler was choosing art that he felt represented the Arian race and was attempting to eliminate work done by degenerate artists or pieces of art that in some way contained degenerate ideas. This all derives from his idea that the art world needed to be purified of degenerate art; and he thought the best way of doing was through looting.<sup>12</sup>

Since she was writing so immediately after the war, it can be ascertained that Flanner reflected in her book the popular opinion of the MFAA men during and after the war. In depictions such as Edsel's, which are much more separated in the sense of time between the event and publishing of the book, it seems that the MFAA men were widely respected by their contemporaries (maybe not by the army but by the people at home who read about their adventures in the newspapers). Flanner, on the other hand discusses how initially they were seen as "obituary writers" whose only reports were "brief and melancholy".<sup>13</sup> It was not until the end of the war when the mines that had hidden the

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<sup>9</sup> "Janet Flanner", last edited in 2015. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/209520/Janet-Flanner>

<sup>10</sup> Janet Flanner, *Men and Monuments: Profiles of Picasso, Matisse, Braque and Malraux* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1947), 220-221.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, 221.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 221.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*, 273.

Nazi's art and gold were discovered, that the MFAA began to gain some credit; Flanner was writing after these discoveries were made and likely represented the general opinion of the time. After the major discoveries, the story of the "Monuments Men" hit the front pages and they got a great deal of attention and respect. The discovery of "made art itself important".<sup>14</sup> James Rorimer, a former MFAA officer, released a book titled *Survival* in 1950 shortly after Flanner's book was released. This book contained the first hand account of Rorimer's time working for the MFAA during the war. The depiction was very similar to the one told by Flanner.

Flanner argued that the major job of the MFAA, as seen by contemporary governments and organizations, was to act as an unofficial "lost and found".<sup>15</sup> This idea stems from the fact that when the European people saw war as inevitable, they began to send their personal treasures to the countryside in an effort to protect them. When the war ended, they tried to return to reclaim their treasures and often found that they were no longer there. It is likely that the items they had sent to be kept safe in the country had ended up being looted by German forces as they were tearing through Europe. When this happened, they would turn to the MFAA men for assistance; it does not seem that Flanner saw this as their most important job, but one that took much of their time.<sup>16</sup> When Flanner wrote this book, the war had just ended; she was not able to see the larger impact that the activates of the MFAA would have on the process of restitution and conviction of war criminals. Flanner does explain the other tasks given to the men. She states that they were told to repair art, prevent improper billeting, and to inspect and report on the

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, 278.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, 271,

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 272.

condition of art and monuments.<sup>17</sup> This is an important aspect to the job of the MFAA men but there is much more detail that later historians work through.

After these two books were written, the topic of the MFAA was largely overlooked until the 1980's when Michael Kurtz published his book, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband*. This book is a more straightforward academic treatment that gives the reader historical context of looting that occurred before World War Two and the efforts that have been taken in the past to combat it. This book was first published in 1985 and then revised and updated and rereleased in 2006. Kurtz discusses the Nazi looting as well as the Allies' restitution efforts; he then looks at the result of the restitution work and how it translated to later conflicts, such as the Cold War. Due to his position as an Assistant Archivist for Records Services in Washington D.C., Kurtz was motivated by his desire to give the world a more complete understanding of what led to the massive looting by the Nazis, and how Allied governments dealt with it. As Kurtz explains in his introduction, "through the prism of plunder and restitution, we enter the darkest period of the most violent and bloody century in human history."<sup>18</sup> By giving historical context to the Nazi looting, Kurtz is able to show why the efforts of the MFAA were so important and so unique, and while celebrating the men, he neither romanticizes nor downplays their effort. Kurtz shows the obstacles that were faced by the men and how they overcame them.

The fact Kurtz released his book twice leads to the question of what changed during that time period, and why he felt it was necessary to rerelease the book? Kurtz

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 268.

Billeting refers to the idea that members of the military were provided with board and lodging in private homes. Thus, improper billeting meant that the military personnel would occupy historic buildings that were on the target list for the MFAA to protect.

<sup>18</sup> Kurtz, x.

explained that he “honestly believed that the story of cultural restoration after World War II and America’s role in it was pretty much a settled story, a part of the past,” when he wrote the first edition of the book.<sup>19</sup> The increase of materials and interest in the subject, between the 1980’s and 2000’s, came largely from the entrance of many restitution cases into the United States courtrooms.<sup>20</sup> As major figures in World War II looting began to die, their art resurfaced mostly on the black market. Both moral and legal issues have been brought up when dealing with restitution and how the American courts should deal with these pieces of art. As Kurtz says, “new information, new perspectives, and unfolding courtroom dramas provide the necessity for revisiting America’s role in the saga of cultural restitution.”<sup>21</sup> By revisiting the subject, Americans can be reminded of the truly horrible acts committed by the Nazis and that those acts are what brought the art to these individuals.

Lynn Nicholas’ book *The Rape of Europa: The Face of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* deals with many of the same issues as previous authors and likely informed Kurtz’s revision. This book was published in 1995; years before Robert Edsel’s famous book was released. When one picks this book up off the shelf in bookstores today they see a sticker on the front with a type of disclaimer; it reads “The real story behind the Major Motion Picture *The Monuments Men*”. This first impression is important because it shows the reader that this book often falls into the shadows of works that came after. Unlike Edsel’s book, this is not a depiction of a historical period as an adventure story. Nicholas initially discusses in depth, the initial

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Kurtz, *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband: The Recovery of Europe’s Cultural Treasures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), ix.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, ix.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*, ix.

stages of the Nazi looting machine. She then goes into the search, recovery and restitution of the art. Nicholas brings the reader across all of Occupied Europe to follow both the art and the men who were trying to save it. Unlike Edsel, she is not tied to only being able to follow the MFAA men and their actions.

Nicholas' book stands out in comparison to many other historical texts dealing with this period because she uses such a critical lens. She shows the power struggles and the failure of the initial staff that was brought together to create the program. By allowing the reader to see the many obstacles that the MFAA men had to overcome, their story becomes much more impressive. The MFAA men traveled on both sides of the line (in both Allied and enemy territory) throughout the war in response to reports of damage and looting by the enemy.<sup>22</sup> However, they not only have to catalogue what was damaged and destroyed, they also had to keep detailed notes on what had gone missing.<sup>23</sup> One of the officers wrote, "It is still not possible to ascertain what was hidden by...collectors before and during the German occupation, what the Germans destroyed in contradistinction to what they carried away...what was moved from one house to another by the Germans and what has just been mislaid during the period of disorder."<sup>24</sup> This quotation shows the chaos that the MFAA men were being faced with. The men were doing everything they could with situations that were not ideal.

Nicholas rounds out her discussion of the MFAA by discussing the work they did once the war was over. It was decided that works of art would only be returned to

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<sup>22</sup> Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe's Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 304

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, 308.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, 308.



governments of Allied nations, which could establish claim to those pieces.<sup>25</sup> The ability to lay claim to these works of art largely came from the investigations done by the MFAA. This was necessary, because during this period, every Allied nation was looking to get a percentage of Germany's wealth through reparations; the amount of money that each country would receive would be determined by the value and amount of artwork they were given back.<sup>26</sup> The discussion of the time following Germany's surrender gives the reader the final pieces of the very confusing puzzle. Nicholas shows the great triumphs for the "Monuments Men", but also shows where they had problems; this creates a very balanced and fair account of the time period.

Robert Edsel's book *Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History*, is arguably the best known text dealing with the looting and recovery of art during World War II. This book was written by Edsel, who is not an academic historian, in 2009 during the resurgence in the interest of both World War II and the "Monuments Men". Robert Edsel's personal history is important to note, because it varies greatly from the other authors dealing with this period. Edsel is the founder of the Monuments Men Foundation for the Preservation of Art. The mission statement of this foundation explains that it:

Honors the legacy of the men and women who served in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section...and their unprecedented and heroic work protecting and safeguarding civilization's most important artistic and cultural treasures from armed conflict during World War II. Raising public awareness is essential to the Foundation's mission.<sup>27</sup>

This statement shows the intense personal passion that Edsel feels for the topic. This interest began when Edsel was living in Florence; here he began to question how the art

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid*, 383.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid*, 383.

<sup>27</sup> "The Monuments Men Foundation". Last modified in 2014. <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/>

was protected against the Nazi looting machine.<sup>28</sup> Between 2000 and 2004, Edsel continually increase his devotion to this question, until in 2004 he made it his full time career. Sharing what these men accomplished has become Edsel's life work; this is clear when reading his books. He lives for these men and holds them up as heroes, and because of this his work is clearly celebratory.

The story of the "Monuments Men" is a dramatic and exciting one; this combined with Edsel's personal connection to the topic creates a breathtaking depiction of the historical period. The unusual cast of characters that made up the MFAA unit provides the perfect characters for this adventure story. These men were from very different backgrounds than those who typically are on the front line of war; the group represents the juxtaposition between the academic world and the world of combat. Edsel takes some creative license when writing the dialogue between the characters, but he also incorporates personal letters and documents written by the MFAA men. These elements all make the story seem like a fictional treasure hunt; however, the characters that brought the readers to the frontline were all real and the events were, for the most part, accurately depicted.

When dealing with the protection and restitution efforts during the war, all of the previously mentioned authors largely focused on the MFAA; the Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU), who was also extremely active in Europe during this period, is only briefly mentioned. Why this is, is unclear. The ALIU was a much smaller program than the MFAA and both programs worked to gather as much intelligence as possible for both the people searching for art but also for the trials that would follow the war. Instead

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<sup>28</sup> "Robert Edsel". Last modified, October 29<sup>th</sup> 2014. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_M.\\_Edsel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_M._Edsel)

of trying to hunt down the works of art themselves, the ALIU worked to investigate and interrogate individuals that would shed light on the larger organization. It seems that because the story of these men was not as dramatic as the exiting lives of the treasure-hunting MFAA men, they often fall out of the spotlight. The ALIU men worked to create detailed documents that would later prove invaluable when trying to persecute the war criminals during the Nuremberg Trials.

Many of the former ALIU members wrote about their time in Europe during World War II. James S. Plaut, one of the ALIU men, wrote a short piece titled, “Investigation of the Major Nazi Art-Confiscation Agencies”, which has now been published in Elizabeth Simpson’s *The Spoils of War*. In this article he outlines the two major goals of the ALIU mission: to provide intelligence for the MFAA mission, and to provide evidence for the trials that would follow the war.<sup>29</sup> He also shows the major difference between the work of the MFAA and the ALIU: the MFAA was more focused on rounding up the art and the people who stole it, while the ALIU was focused on getting confessions and building cases.<sup>30</sup> Once the war ended, Plaut discusses how the ALIU set up a headquarters at Altausse, and from June of 1945 until the spring of 1946 they searched for and questioned Germans who were in one way or another involved in the looting operations.<sup>31</sup>

S. Lane Faison Jr. also wrote a short piece for Simpson’s *Spoils of War*, titled “Transfer of Custody to the Germans”. Compared to Plaut’s account of the war, this one was much more technical. Instead of discussing the ALIU as a group, Faison explained

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<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Simpson, *Spoils of War: World War II and Its Aftermath*. (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997), 124.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*, 124.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*, 124.

his role at the Munich Central Collecting Point (CCP). In 1950, it was decided that the United States would no longer participate in U.S. occupied zones for art reparation for both Germany and Austria.<sup>32</sup> Faison was sent to Wiesbaden, which was one of the major Central Collecting Points. He continued to review and return works that had been taken during the war.<sup>33</sup> The majority of the works that he dealt with came from the Altausse salt mine, which was one of the major locations in which the ALIU worked.<sup>34</sup> The accounts written by former ALIU men were, for a long time, the only pieces of documentation and publication of their work. Through their accounts, reader is able to understand what it was like for an academic to be on the frontline of the war. Like Edsel's and Rorimer's books, it is important to remember that these are not necessarily scholarly secondary sources; because they participated in the war, their opinions may be clouded slightly.

In Flanner's chapter dealing with the MFAA, she included a brief discussion of the ALIU. When she first mentions the work of Theodore Rousseau, James Plaut and S. L. Faison (the three ALIU men who worked in the field), she refers to them as a "roving secret service".<sup>35</sup> This seems like the perfect way to describe the work of the ALIU, and it is interesting that it was phrased this way so soon after the war because in Edsel's interpretation of the unit, it seems as if there was very little understanding of what the unit actually did. Flanner is clear in stating that the MFAA and ALIU were two separate organizations but does mention that there was only one Monuments man who was a full time detective who did similar work to the ALIU men; that was Walter Horn who worked

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid*, 139.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, 140.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, 140.

<sup>35</sup> Flanner, 285.

for the MFAA but supplemented the work being done by the ALIU.<sup>36</sup> This is the only moment when the tasks between the ALIU and the MFAA seem to be interconnected in Flanner's discussion of the topic. The lack of elaboration on the topic was not surprising; when Flanner wrote this chapter, the majority of the documentation from the unit was still classified because of the Nuremberg Trials.

Michael Kurtz does not talk about the ALIU at length but he does mention the organization and the men who were involved. When introducing the ALIU, Kurtz describes it as a "small art-looting investigation unit".<sup>37</sup> He then goes on to explain their close connection to the MFAA and that there was open communication and sharing of information between the two branches.<sup>38</sup> Kurtz included men such as Taylor (who worked to create the ALIU) in earlier discussion of how the MFAA was originally formed. It is important to note that Kurtz's book was not a study on one specific group, but instead gave a complete history of what happened before World War II, what happened during the war and what happened after; he was not focused on individuals or groups but on the larger picture and overarching themes. It can be assumed that Kurtz was not attempting to down play the importance of the ALIU but was forced minimize the discussion because of the amount of material he set out to cover.

Lynn Nicholas gives the ALIU much more credit for their work and explains the program more fully than Kurtz. She explains that the goal of the ALIU was to trace and "prevent the flow of assets to places of refuge where they might be used to finance the postwar survival of Nazism".<sup>39</sup> Their major role in the war was, like the other historians

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, 285.

<sup>37</sup> Kurtz, 89.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, 89.

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas, 282.

have said, to compile information that would help with the prosecution of Nazis after the war was completed.<sup>40</sup> Like Flanner, she clearly states that the MFAA and ALIU were two completely separate entities; the ALIU was not controlled by the Roberts Commission and was to work under the OSS.<sup>41</sup> They were technically listed under the armed forces but they were given permission to move through military and neutral zones in order to complete their mission.<sup>42</sup> Nicholas seems to give the best representation (up to that point) of the unit and the men who worked for it. She explains their position fully and explains the role of the three ALIU men who worked in the field.

Edsel, and the organization he oversees, has rolled the ALIU into the broader category of the “Monuments Men”. Each of the ALIU men have been included on the Monuments Men Foundation website. This is just one of the many examples of the ALIU being absorbed under the umbrella term of “Monuments Men”. The reason this stands out is because Robert Edsel mentions the ALIU man once in *The Monuments Men*. In the “Author’s Note” Edsel mentions an anecdote of going to visit S. Lane Faison Jr. who was a key member of the ALIU. Edsel gives a brief biographical look at Faison but the main purpose of the addition is to discuss the feeling when you speak to the men who were on the ground. He speaks about how the two of them met for three hours, and then Faison died just ten days later.<sup>43</sup> This short story has little insight into Faison and fails to mention the ALIU and the importance of the unit.

In the initial chapters of his book, Edsel does speak briefly of Francis Taylor, who was one of the key figures in the creation of the ALIU; but the ALIU itself is not

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid*, 282.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*, 282.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid*, 282.

<sup>43</sup> Edsel, xvi.

mentioned. Taylor is referred to as the “maker of big schemes” in regards to his time working on planning with the Roberts Commission.<sup>44</sup> Faison is mentioned again briefly when Edsel quotes him saying if people had read Hitler’s book *Mein Kampf*, they would have realized that “every single thing that’s happened was already predicted...the whole Jewish situation is there in clear writing in ink”.<sup>45</sup> As with Taylor, there is no reference to Faison’s connection to the ALIU or the OSS, Taylor is simply one of the men who worked for the organization. It is possible that Edsel intentionally left the ALIU out of the story to avoid the mention of another important group because of it would complicate matters and he was already tackling so much information. Another possibility is that Edsel simply did not see the work of the ALIU as significant in comparison to the MFAA. He included the men when it was convenient for his story line but that was the extent of it.

There is one source that is dedicated solely to the ALIU, its creation and its impact; that is Michael Salter’s book *US Intelligence, the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials: Seeking Accountability for Genocide and Cultural Plunder*; this book is a volume that is a part of a larger collection, which has been titled *History of International Relations, Diplomacy and Intelligence*. Salter’s book looks at the achievements and frustrations of the creation of the ALIU and the men who worked to create it. This is a unique source because its only goal is to discuss the ALIU and thus much more detail is given to the topic; and when the MFAA is mentioned, it is done so in a way that supports an argument being made about the ALIU. Salter does not tell a dramatic story about the ALIU but instead presents the historical facts and presents the reasons why they should

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 38.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 374.

be celebrated as a part of World War Two history. In his introduction, Salter states that the reason for the writing of this book was largely the recent declassification of intelligence files regarding the ALIU, but was also intended to provide a detailed case study of the Nazis who did the looting and the actions of the ALIU to bring them to justice.<sup>46</sup> He creates a complete summary of the program through using many of the authors previously discussed as well as the archives at College Park in Maryland. While this source is not as exciting as the one written by Edsel, it is important because it tells the story that was previously only present in primary documents hidden away in the archives.

These texts are representative of how the ALIU is generally presented in histories about this period. Some of the information available regarding the ALIU is from individuals who have taken a personal interest in the program and written online, or from oral histories collected before the death of the major ALIU men; but in order to get a well rounded impression of the program, a close study of the primary sources is required. There are publications written by the ALIU men from after their time in the war, but they very rarely discuss their experience. These men are after all scholars and that is what they return to following the war. Overall there is very little secondary source material detailing the actions of the ALIU. The primary source material that is available to the public tells an exciting and important story, but it is not taken advantage of. In order to find the importance of the work accomplished by the ALIU, it is necessary for one to look at the documents housed at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland. While there are archives that hold the personal papers of the ALIU men, the National

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<sup>46</sup> Michael Salter, *U.S. Intelligence, the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials: Seeking Accountability for Genocide and Cultural Plunder* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff: 2009), 310-311.



Archive holds all of the organization's official paperwork and documentation, which included financial documents, monthly reports, correspondence between the two main ALIU offices, correspondence with other Allied organizations and the four major publications produced by the ALIU. The three of the four reports were available in microfilm but the fourth, and smallest, was included in the physical collection. The four reports that were produced by the ALIU are as follows: the Consolidated Interrogation Reports, the Detailed Interrogation Reports, the Final Report and the report regarding the Final Mission to Europe. Missing from this collection are letters and personal documents generated by the ALIU members, which could likely be found in the possession of the families of the ALIU men or in the archives of institutions that they were associated with during their lifetimes. Through this research, the impact of the ALIU men on the history of World War Two could be explored and their long-term impacts towards restitution became evident.

## Chapter Two:

The Art Looting Investigative Unit (ALIU) was created to aid the larger art protection and art recovery missions already in place throughout Europe during World War Two. The purpose of this unit was to provide intelligence-gathering services, which would help other agencies uncover the art looting patterns of the Germans. They successfully apprehended and interrogated suspects, but their true influence was not present until after the war. To combat the problem of Nazi looting the Roberts Commission gathered a group of civilians in 1942 under the common fear that the cultural monuments in Europe were going to be destroyed.<sup>1</sup> Through the support of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the “American Commission For the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas” or “Roberts Commission” was created. The Commission was housed in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC and worked in cooperation with the U.S. Army to accomplish its goals.<sup>2</sup> The Roberts Commission did not directly oversee the various projects, but instead developed the ideology and collected individual to create programs such as the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) and later the Art Looting Investigation Unit (ALIU).<sup>3</sup>

In 1944, Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts approached William J. Donovan, director of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), with the request to create a special intelligence unit that would deal with art looting and build on the work already being done by the MFAA; Roberts hoped that this office would be formed and administered

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Bradsher, Michael Hussey, Michael Kurtz. “OSS Art Looting Investigation Unit Reports, 1945-46”, National Archives College Park Maryland PDF, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Bradsher, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Bradsher, 6.

under the OSS.<sup>4</sup> The OSS was created on June 13, 1942 as a successor to the Office of the Coordinator of Information and a predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency.<sup>5</sup> When it was created, the major goals outlined for the OSS were to collect, analyze and disseminate information regarding the German art looting operations, which could have an impact on the United States' national security.<sup>6</sup> It is likely that Donovan approved the ALIU to be apart of the OSS partially because he saw that this unit could assist the X-2's mission. Donovan created the X-2 branch of the OSS in 1943 with the intention of providing the British Intelligence service with liaisons from the OSS office.<sup>7</sup> The X-2 was given its own overseas station, and communication channels and operated alongside the British foreign and domestic intelligence services.<sup>8</sup> This branch of the OSS was known to be the most effective branch because the quality of its operatives.<sup>9</sup> The goals of the ALIU would work to help the X-2 mission of tracking the movement of Nazi operatives who were concealing assets.<sup>10</sup>

The Roberts Commission pursued the creation of the ALIU under the OSS for one very specific reason: they felt that the unit could provide useful intelligence information that they were not able to get elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> While they had a powerful role in its creation, the Roberts Commission did not have any direct power over the ALIU after it was

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<sup>4</sup> Bradsher, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Bradsher, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Bradsher, 8.

<sup>7</sup> "X-2", last modified June 28, 2008, <https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/books-and-monographs/oss/art07.htm>

<sup>8</sup> "X-2"

<sup>9</sup> "X-2"

<sup>10</sup> Michael Salter, *US Intelligence, the Holocaust and the Nuremberg Trials: Seeking Accountability for Genocide and Cultural Plunder Volume 2* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2009), 323.

<sup>11</sup> "Office of Strategic Services", Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives College Park, MD. – (Here after, OSS Records)

formed.<sup>12</sup> The personnel operating in the field were not to act as representatives for the Roberts Commission and were expected to be under the cover of G-2 or G-5 (G-2 and G-5 refer to US Army military intelligence divisions) or other government agencies.<sup>13</sup> Before being allowed to enter the field, all ALIU members, were required to receive basic OSS indoctrination as well as general X-2 and specialized ORION instruction.<sup>14</sup> Even though the ALIU men had already been enlisted in the war effort, they were required to complete the specialized training.

The ALIU was officially established in November of 1944 and given the code name ORION.<sup>15</sup> The guidelines given to the program by the OSS point clearly to the fact that the ALIU was an investigative and intelligence gathering unit; unlike the MFAA, they were not an agency that revolved around action.<sup>16</sup> The unit's mission did not include identification or protection of art.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the impact made by the ALIU was much less tangible; they recovered information that is likely still being used today but are viewed as less important when compared to the MFAA because they were not uncovering stolen treasures. The information found by the unit was to be used to provide the necessary information to complete the restitution project after the war.

The ALIU agents themselves were not involved in the restitution, however, the information they collected was. In the directive for the program, it was outlined as follows:

The primary mission of ORION was to collect and disseminate such information bearing on the looting, confiscation and transfer by the enemy of art properties in

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<sup>12</sup>“Establishment of Project ORION- December 14, 1944”, Folder 1723, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>15</sup> Salter, 329.

<sup>16</sup>“Exchange of Information on Art Looting Operations”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>17</sup>Salter, 323.

Europe, and on individuals or organizations involved in such operations and transactions, as will be of direct aid to the United States agencies empowered to effect restitution of such properties and prosecution of war criminals. It is anticipated that, coincident with the execution of its primary mission, ORION will obtain substantial information bearing on enemy espionage and on subversive individuals and activities.<sup>18</sup>

This statement clearly defines the ALIU as a unit that was created to solely investigative. The code name ORION was given to the project because of the hunting aspect of their work. Like the ancient warrior Orion, the ALIU men hunted throughout Europe to find information and individuals.<sup>19</sup> When first studying this unit, it can be assumed that since the ALIU was a part of the OSS they were a covert operation. However, during the war, the cartoonist, Crockett Johnson, created an image (attachment 1) in which “J.P. ORION” is referred to as the “mightiest hunter of them all.” The presence of this cartoon suggests that the operation was not covert and that the general public was aware of it.

The ALIU was instructed but its creators to collect information from other organizations and shared what they felt was appropriate. They were to look both at the enemy looting activity on the whole but also at individuals who had a stake in the action. They were not interested in finding where the art was hidden; this was the mission of the MFAA men. The ALIU men entered Europe after the MFAA men had already spent time working there. With their specific mission, the ALIU took information gathered by the MFAA men that they saw as useful and furthered their investigation. The only form of action the ALIU men were meant to take was to interrogate individuals who were given the highest priority by the Washington office. When the ALIU was being created, James

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<sup>18</sup>“Establishment of Project ORION”, Folder 1723, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>19</sup> Elizabeth Simpson, *The Spoils of War: World War II and its aftermath* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997), 124.

Plaut, the director of the program, explicitly stated that the information collected would be analyzed with restitution and prosecution of war criminals in mind.<sup>20</sup>

When looking at the goals of the ALIU, some confusion can arise. In the directive, it is clear that dissemination and recovery of information is key to the mission. So how does restitution fit into this? The ALIU men were not personally responsible for the restitution of art following the war. The information that the ALIU men sought to gather would have a great effect on the efficiency and accuracy of the restitution effort following the war. As Rothfeld explains:

The ALIU acted as a ‘bridge’ between the art community’s (Roberts Commission) interests of recovering and restituting looted artworks and the intelligence community’s interest in finding German agents acting as art dealers and tracing the movement of hidden Nazi assets. The story of the ALIU was one of bringing together two agencies with different needs and their increasingly shared concerns with the movement and fate of Nazi looted assets.<sup>21</sup>

By looking at the important German figures involved in looting and how they operated, the ALIU hoped to gain more insight on the operation as a whole. Going into this project, the ALIU operatives knew that the enemy and their methods were what should be investigated first. The “looting machine” was a powerful and complex one that took months of recovery and investigation to more fully understand.

Even with the dissemination of information at the core of the ALIU mission, the evaluation of the information from the standpoint of restitution and persecution was to always take precedence. Because of this very specific directive, the success of this program was not to be measured by the volume of intelligence gathered.<sup>22</sup> Instead, the

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<sup>20</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190), OSS Records.

<sup>21</sup> Salter, 326

Salter credits Anne Rothfeld for this quotation. She wrote a masters thesis on this topic titled, which is not available to the general public.

<sup>22</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190), OSS Records.

ALIU would be judged by its ability to provide ample information that would help bring the stolen art back to its rightful owners in addition to the ability to put the criminals who stole the art behind bars. They worked side by side with other agencies in the field and worked to complete the tasks of other agencies that weren't successful or were not as effective as the ALIU proved to be. It is likely that the general public was not aware of the volume of information being collected by the ALIU; until the organizations documents were declassified it can be assumed that very few people knew the extent of the work that was accomplished by these men.

The ALIU was made up of six members of the United States armed forces; these men were qualified for this position due to their civilian experience in art museums and universities.<sup>23</sup> In comparison, by the end of the war, the MFAA was comprised of three hundred and fifty men and women who worked towards their mission from 1943 until 1951.<sup>24</sup> Initially it seemed that recruiting properly trained personnel would pose a problem when developing the ALIU; not only did the men have to be capable to conduct intelligence work, they also had to have a strong art background and be linguistically qualified.<sup>25</sup> To support the art historians working in the field, a second group was chosen for their strong analytical and clerical skills; they were not required to have an art historical background.<sup>26</sup> The structure of the various headquarters and members of the ALIU can become confusing. Attachment 2 shows the structure in a much more simplified manner. Despite the small size of the unit, the ALIU was both effective and efficient in its mission; this becomes clear through the examination of their records and

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<sup>23</sup>“Office of Strategic Services”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>24</sup> Edsel, xiv.

<sup>25</sup>“Lecture Notes: ORION Project – March 8, 1945”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>26</sup>“Office of Strategic Services”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

documents from this period. The ALIU provided ample documentation of their discoveries that were used by the Allied governments, as well as the United States government, to return looted art to its rightful owners long after the war ended.

Lieutenants James S. Plaut and Theodore Rousseau Jr. were the first men to be assigned to the ALIU. Plaut, who was chosen to be the director of the program, received his B.A. in Art History from Harvard University.<sup>27</sup> In 1935 he moved from teaching at Harvard to becoming an assistant curator at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and then the Institute of Modern Art in Boston in 1939.<sup>28</sup> Plaut entered the U.S. Navy and was assigned to North Africa in 1942.<sup>29</sup> Before leaving, he was worked with the OSS officials to create an initial plan of operation for the ALIU project.<sup>30</sup> The report from this time period shows that the ranks and responsibilities of the members of the ALIU was still being decided Rousseau, like Plaut, received his education in Art History from Harvard University.<sup>31</sup> Rousseau then went on to become the assistant curator of painting at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.<sup>32</sup> When the war began in Europe, Rousseau joined the Navy and served in Naval Intelligence before being transferred to the ALIU.<sup>33</sup> Once both men completed their specific OSS training, they were asked to travel through Europe to establish contacts at various field stations, and to brief the X-2 personnel on the specifics of the ALIU program.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>“Plaut, James Sachs”, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/plautj.htm>

<sup>28</sup>“Plaut, James Sachs”

<sup>29</sup>“Plaut, James Sachs”

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>“Rousseau, Theodore, Jr.”, <https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/rousseaut.htm>

<sup>32</sup>“Rousseau, Theodore, Jr.”

<sup>33</sup>“Rousseau, Theodore, Jr.”

<sup>34</sup>“Establishment of Project ORION- December 14, 1944”, Folder 1723, Box 516, (Entry 190), OSS Records.



While the members were being selected for the unit, the headquarters was established in Washington D.C.<sup>35</sup> Charles Sawyer was chosen to lead the Washington office and to make decisions regarding the policies of the program.<sup>36</sup> Sawyer received his degree from Yale University and was on the track to become a lawyer until Paul Sachs, associate director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, convinced him to attend the Harvard School of Fine Arts.<sup>37</sup> Paul Sachs went on to work with the Roberts Commission and other men to create the MFAA who would later work to create the ALIU and a recruiter for the MFAA.<sup>38</sup> He was a strong believer in the need for units to protect and return artistic and cultural treasures that had been looted during the war.<sup>39</sup> After completing his education, Sawyer became an art instructor and chairman of the Art Department of Phillips Academy when he took leave to serve in the U.S. Army.<sup>40</sup> In his book, Robert Edsel mentions Sawyer's attendance at the September 20, 1941 meeting in the New York where the first steps were made towards the creation of what would become the MFAA.<sup>41</sup>

Before being chosen for the ALIU, Sawyer spent about six months largely unassigned until he was placed with the MFAA unit in May of 1944.<sup>42</sup> Just a few months

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<sup>35</sup>“Office of Strategic Services”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>36</sup>“Establishment of Project ORION- December 14, 1944”, Folder 1723, Box 516, (Entry 190), OSS Records.

<sup>37</sup>“Monuments Man Charles H. Sawyer, Part One: Member of the U.S. Army, the Office of Strategic Services, and the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas”, last updated July 21, 2014. <http://blogs.archives.gov/TextMessage/2014/07/21/monuments-man-charles-sawyer-i/>

<sup>38</sup>Robert Edsel, *The Monuments Men*. (Hachette Book Group: New York, 2010), 41.

“The Harvard Group: Paul Joseph Sachs”, last modified 2015.

<http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-harvard-group/sachs-paul-joseph>

<sup>39</sup> “The Harvard Group: Paul Joseph Sachs”, last modified 2015.

<sup>40</sup> “Monuments Man Charles H. Sawyer”<http://blogs.archives.gov/TextMessage/2014/07/21/monuments-man-charles-sawyer-i/>

<sup>41</sup> Edsle, 18.

<sup>42</sup> “Monuments Man Charles H. Sawyer” <http://blogs.archives.gov/TextMessage/2014/07/21/monuments-man-charles-sawyer-i/>

later he was transferred to the ALIU where he was given the task of running the Washington office.<sup>43</sup> Sawyer was mainly responsible for creating travel plans for the unit, providing appropriate cover arrangements, and making sure the officers had the proper funds and equipment available in the field.<sup>44</sup> As explained in an analysis of the program, the information would first be sent to the London office and then passed along to the Washington offices, where they could be fully translated and prepared for dissemination.<sup>45</sup>

John Phillips was chosen to be the head of the ALIU operation in London. Phillips had an educational background in American silver and was also a director of the Yale Art Gallery.<sup>46</sup> Before joining the ALIU, he was stationed in Boston at the Army Counter Intelligence office.<sup>47</sup> On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1945 he wrote to Sawyer that the “art desk” was officially established; in these documents the term “art desk” is often used and refers to ALIU offices in both Washington D.C. and London. The London office was responsible for the day-to-day operations of the unit.

Since there were ALIU operatives traveling through Europe and headquarters in both England and the United States, the organization had to develop an effective way to facilitate communication; the solution was to create bi-weekly progress reports that would include updates from the men in the field but also what was being done at the two offices. Their activity is well documented from January 1945 until November 1945; any activity after this point was either included in one of the final reports or submitted

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<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>45</sup>“Analysis of ORION Project to Date – April 21, 1945”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>46</sup>“John Marshall Phillips”, last modified 2015, <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/phillips-cpl.-john-marshall>

<sup>47</sup>“John Marshall Phillips”

independently. While they were brief, these reports are useful in providing exact dates for the various events that occurred while the men were traveling to and throughout Europe. Rousseau left Washington before Plaut on January 18<sup>th</sup>.<sup>48</sup> Plaut left the Washington D.C. office on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1945.<sup>49</sup>

In many ways, the ALIU provided the service of tying up the loose ends left from other Allied intelligence agencies in Europe. Before the ALIU was established, various Allied governments had attempted to set up departments who would focus on documenting the art that was looted and attempt to discover who was responsible for taking it. Based on the frequency of their interactions, the organization that appears to be the most helpful to the ALIU men was the Commission for the Protection and Restitution of Cultural Material, or the Vaucher Commission, which was made up of French, Belgian, Dutch, Polish, Czech and English representatives.<sup>50</sup> The Commission had tried to develop a program with similar goals to the ALIU, but was never able to fully adapt to the conditions and problems they were faced with. By meeting regularly, Phillips and the other ALIU members were able to understand successes and shortcomings of Vaucher Commission's.

The documents created by the Vaucher Commission were made available to the ALIU men, and thus they were able to continue their work in a more effective and unbiased fashion.<sup>51</sup> The Commission had been working to compile cards containing information on German art personnel, which were active in occupied areas.<sup>52</sup> A problem

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<sup>48</sup> "Monthly Report, ORION Project, January-February 7, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> "Report on the organization of the Art Project -January 4, 1945", Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>51</sup> "Bi-Weekly Progress Report – February 27, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

that was outlined in a report from January 1945 was that some of the information in these cards was presented in a fashion that established guilt instead of focusing on objective facts.<sup>53</sup> That is not to say these cards were not valuable, but the ALIU men were able to provide a more objective standpoint. The Vaucher Commission representatives who wrote these cards had seen first hand the art being stolen from their home country and had experienced the pain that goes along with living in a war torn nation; the ALIU men were able to avoid the majority of this bias because of the fact that it was not their country that had been ransacked by the Germans.

Due to the small size of the ALIU, it was necessary to maintain close contact with other organizations that were either interested in preservation of art or groups who were also a part of the war effort. One of the most important functions of the Washington ALIU office was to maintain good relationships with liaisons from other government agencies. Plaut stated in January of 1945 that he expected the effectiveness of the ALIU to be based on how quickly information could be transmitted between agencies as well as continents.<sup>54</sup> On the American side of the program, it was essential for the ALIU to be in contact with the War Department, the State Department, the Foreign Economic Agency (FEA) and the Roberts Commission.<sup>55</sup> In London, the ALIU was interested in collaborating with the M.I.6, the Ministry of Economic Welfare (MEW) and London representatives of the French, Dutch, Belgian, Czech and Polish respective art looting related organizations.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>55</sup>“Memorandum for General Donovan – May 20, 1945”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

These groups viewed the ALIU as a central location where all of the Allied intelligence regarding enemy looting could be collected;<sup>57</sup> the OSS referred to the ALIU as a “Cultural War Room”.<sup>58</sup> This statement shows the importance placed on the ALIU; they were highly respected through all Allied territory and were able to get much accomplished in a short amount of time.<sup>59</sup> This opinion of the ALIU remained though out its existence. They were looked to as experts on Nazi looting; especially in regards to the larger organizations they studied and compiled reports on. It appears that they were not seen as less important than the MFAA; instead it was acknowledged that their purpose was very different. This efficiency of the ALIU program seems to be largely due to the positive relationships with other agencies as well as the fact that they made their mission known, through lecture and sharing of documents. It appears that in comparison to the MFAA, the ALIU was more universally known throughout the branches of the army. Along with the gathering of information, the dissemination of information was central to the mission of the ALIU; this task almost always took precedence.<sup>60</sup>

The ALIU was housed under the OSS, which meant that the men were able to move freely through militarized as well as neutral zones; this was a rare privilege and thus a great advantage.<sup>61</sup> While the MFAA men were allowed the freedom to move throughout Europe, they were given “no vehicles, no offices, no support staff, and no backup plan”.<sup>62</sup> It was clear to the leaders of the MFAA that the men in the field would have to fight for their own respect and use their passion and flexibility to be successful in

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup>“Function and Organization of ORION, Washington”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>61</sup>“British-American Liaison – February 24, 1945”, Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>62</sup> Edsel, 61.

their mission.<sup>63</sup> When the MFAA entered the field, military personnel were not convinced that their mission was necessary or even a good idea; this contrasts with the ALIU who came in towards the end of the war when it was clear that the work to investigate looting was necessary for the reparation process but also for the prosecution of war criminals.<sup>64</sup> By being able to see what organizations had done before them, the ALIU was able to carefully look at what had been done in the past and develop ways to be more successful in their own mission.

The importance of transparency of the unit's goals once again becomes apparent when it is mentioned that Plaut lectured to a group of prospective X-2 field representatives on the problems that were anticipated to face by the ALIU.<sup>65</sup> By sharing the mission of the ALIU men and the problems they faced, it seems that it would be more likely that the X-2 operatives would offer their assistance when needed. Initially, it was assumed that because the ALIU was created as a branch of the OSS, that it would be a covert operation; this obviously was not the case. While the MFAA program was also not a covert organization, their mission was not effectively shared throughout the branches of the United States Army and Navy. Not only did they not know about the program, those who did, as Edsel explains, probably would not have put up with the program if it had been formed without Roosevelt's backing.<sup>66</sup> Because of this, the MFAA men were often forced to find their own forms of transportation and soldiers often questioned their

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<sup>63</sup> Edsel 60-61.

<sup>64</sup> Edsel, 61.

<sup>65</sup> "Bi-Weekly Progress Report-February 14, 1945" Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records. Pg 2

<sup>66</sup> Edsel, 53.

credentials.<sup>67</sup> It is likely that the ALIU saw these problems and worked to create relationships that would allow for a more seamless operation to be conducted.

Even though Plaut had created a plan of operation for the ALIU before leaving the United States, work was still being done to decide the future of the program in late February.<sup>68</sup> The ALIU was constantly learning what methods were successful for running their operations and which were not. This meant that during the early months of the program, the men were continually changing and developing their plans. At this point the locations in which the men would focus their efforts had yet to be decided; restitution and the protection of art needed to happen in all corners of the European Theatre, so the ALIU had technically had no boundaries.

Due to the lack of physical boundaries, the ALIU men were able to follow a suspect from country to country. They would then report the information back to the appropriate nation. By the end of the war they had traveled to almost every European nation that was involved in World War Two. When he entered the European Theatre, Rousseau went directly to Portugal and Spain where he studied the effect of German looting on the Iberian Peninsula from January until May of 1945.<sup>69</sup> While Spain and Portugal were both neutral countries during the war, Rousseau was investigating possible German-owned property being held in these countries.<sup>70</sup> This investigation brought to light the actions of Alois Miedl, who was the financial agent for Goering and was mentioned throughout the second Consolidated Interrogation Report.<sup>71</sup> While no Detailed

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<sup>67</sup> Edsel, 61.

<sup>68</sup> "Bi-Weekly Progress Report-February 27, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records

<sup>69</sup> O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Final Report," Final Report Reports, 1946, RG 239, Entry 75 [A1], Microfilm m1782, National Archives, College Park, Maryland. (Here after, OSS Microfilm) pg 3.

<sup>70</sup> Salter, 342.

<sup>71</sup> O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Final Report," Final Report Reports, May 1, 1946, RG 239, Entry 75 [A1], Microfilm m1782, National Archives, College Park, Maryland. (Here after, OSS Microfilm). p. 3.

Interrogation Report was written about Miedl, there was a document that was distributed by the ALIU in February of 1945 that detailed to findings of Rousseau during his time in the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>72</sup> The work done by Rousseau later became the keystone in the later investigation into the German art looting in Holland.<sup>73</sup>

While Rousseau focused mainly on the Iberian Peninsula, Plaut was active in Italy during March of 1945.<sup>74</sup> He was in Italy to supervise the interrogation of Wilhelm Mohnen, who was a German espionage agent as well as a minor player in the German art looting activities in France.<sup>75</sup> The MFAA took over the majority of the work in Italy and for the rest of the war Plaut acted as a consultant and received the information that would prove useful to the ALIU investigations.<sup>76</sup> After returning from Italy, Plaut met with Professor Thomas Whittemore, who was a long time resident of Istanbul.<sup>77</sup> He was able to give the men an idea of the condition of art and artifacts in the East and the effect of German looting; the ALIU men were particularly interested in the possibility of an operation in Turkey, but this never was put into action.<sup>78</sup>

By possessing a clear and concise definition of their mission, the ALIU was not being distracted by multiple goals. They were sent into the field to collect information strictly regarding art looting war criminals and information that would aid in the restitution process. In comparison, the MFAA was sent into the field within days of invasion with very little idea of what they would be facing; the leader of the program, George Stout, just wanted to get his men over there to give them a chance to prove

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>77</sup> "Bi-Weekly Progress Report-February 27, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.



themselves.<sup>79</sup> They had a general idea of where the structures and museums that they wanted to protect were but that was the extent of the preparation available to the unit.<sup>80</sup> This is arguably the greatest difference between the two programs and what made the ALIU function in a much more organized fashion.

Since the ALIU was seen as a location to deposit all information regarding looting, they were quickly faced with the problem of how and where it would all be stored. It was eventually decided that the Washington office would keep a card catalogue with about 800 persons of interest.<sup>81</sup> Sawyer's major responsibility was, with the help of his assistant Mrs. Elizabeth Lambie, to create the file of personalities and material of interest to the ALIU mission that would be added to throughout the time the ALIU men were in the field.<sup>82</sup> The information cards were designed so that information regarding German individuals could be quickly found. In order to accomplish this, each card was organized in the same way: name, alias, origin, address, date and place of birth, description, profession, background information and their present activities.<sup>83</sup> Cards were created for each person of interest and each of their possible aliases. This is what later developed into a substantial card file that was located in Washington, and was used to decide which targets were highest priority for the ALIU men to interrogate.

In the end of March, the ALIU dedicated two weeks to working with the Vaucher Commission to screen and edit lists of art dealers who were reported to be working with

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<sup>79</sup> Edsel, 61.

<sup>80</sup> Edsel, 61

<sup>81</sup> "Analysis of ORION Project to Date – April 21, 1945", Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>82</sup> "Monuments Man Charles H. Sawyer, part I: Member of the U.S. Army, the Office of Strategic Services, and the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Area", last edited July 21, 2014. <http://blogs.archives.gov/TextMessage/2014/07/21/monuments-man-charles-sawyer-i/>

<sup>83</sup> "ORION Files – Control Cards", Folder 1747, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

the Germans in France.<sup>84</sup> From the information gathered and organized during this period, the ALIU was able to develop around 300 new person of interest cards; they added to the files in the Washington D.C. ORION office.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the Washington office was working to create list of personnel to be targeted by the ALIU men as well as a list of repositories in Germany.<sup>86</sup> These documents would eventually assist in the effort to decide which individuals the ALIU men would personally interrogate.

For the first time, photographs were being added to the files in April of 1945. These photos were of art objects that had been stolen by the Nazis. Now, not only were the ALIU men able to see photographic evidence of what had been stolen, they were also able to see the faces of the men and women they were tracking down. In April alone, two thousand photographs were added to the ALIU's files.<sup>87</sup> These photos were obtained from the Schencker firm that was located in Paris; before this time, there were no photographs added to the file.<sup>88</sup> In addition to these photos, one thousand one hundred and sixty-three German personnel cards were obtained from the MFAA branch of the British Element Control Council for Germany and added to the ALIU card file.<sup>89</sup> In addition to this information, the author explains the valuable meeting between the Vaucher Commission's president and an unspecified ALIU member.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "Art Unit Progress Report March 15, 1945 – March 31, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> "Progress Report for Period April, 1 1945 – April 14, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

In April a new member of the ALIU field operations team was added: Lieutenant Samson Lane Faison was a Williams College graduate who earned his Master's degree from Harvard and a Masters of Fine Arts degree from Princeton.<sup>91</sup> Faison had been an assistant professor at Yale, and in 1936 became a professor and department head at Williams College before enlisting in 1942.<sup>92</sup> Initially, Faison was serving as a Naval Flight Recognition Instructor and a Training Officer for the Navy.<sup>93</sup> Because of his background in art and art history, he was asked by the OSS to join the mission of the ALIU, and completed his OSS and X-2 training in May.<sup>94</sup>

In June it was announced that Sawyer was officially appointed as the Assistant Secretary of the Roberts Commission.<sup>95</sup> Sawyer's current obligations for the ALIU were to be maintained, but he would work on a part time basis with the Roberts Commission.<sup>96</sup> To compensate for his newly acquired workload, Ellen O'Neill was hired on a temporary basis to help pick up the slack.<sup>97</sup> Sawyer spent a period of the month in New York City speaking with Francis Taylor, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a member of the X-2 Branch in New York, on matters regarding ORION. It seems likely that the meetings in New York were to further discuss the future of the program and how the information that was being collected would be used. Charles Sawyer's appointment to

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<sup>91</sup> "S. Lane Faison Jr.", last edited in 2015. <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men/faison-lt.-cdr.-s.-lane-jr>.

<sup>92</sup> "S. Lane Faison Jr."

<sup>93</sup> "S. Lane Faison Jr."

<sup>94</sup> "Progress Report for April – May 7, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records

<sup>95</sup> "Progress Report for June, 1945, ORION, Washington – July 10, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>96</sup> "Progress Report for May, 1945, ORION, Washington – June 12, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>97</sup> "Progress Report for June, 1945, ORION, Washington – July 10, 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

Assistant Secretary was put into effect on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1945.<sup>98</sup> In addition to the hiring of O'Neill, Captain Otto Wittmann was hired to compensate for Sawyer's new position.<sup>99</sup> Yet another member was added to the team during this period; Clara Ann Simmons was added to the department on July 16<sup>th</sup> 1945.<sup>100</sup> Like O'Neill, the specific job Simmons possessed is not made clear, however since they were both working in the Washington office it can be assumed they likely worked on an either secretarial or analytical basis.

By investigating the primary documents from this period it is important to note the large percentage of documents that simply outline the goals of the program and the break down in leadership. This was initially surprising but then the reason for it became clear. It was important for the mission of the ALIU to remain focused. By sending out the strict description of the program to all agencies involved, the goals of the program became universally understood and respected. Here another comparison can be made to the MFAA; when they entered the field, very few members of the Army were aware of their mission, and thus were less likely to provide assistance. This lack of awareness came from the lack of sharing of documents that was present in the ALIU organization. Since the ALIU men entered the field after the MFAA, it seems that they must have taken note of this problem and tried to rectify it by briefing as many people as possible.

By making their mission known, the agencies throughout Europe were aware of where they could locate the information they needed and what they had access too. This program, in comparison to the MFAA, was extremely organized. There was little leeway for change because the mission was so concise. And by informing the appropriate agencies, the ALIU men could go about their business without being questioned and

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<sup>98</sup> "Progress Report for July, 1945, ORION, Washington", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

without delay. These major changes may be due to the time in which the program was established, but it also might be largely thanks to the organization that oversaw it. While the progress report and general memorandums may at some points feel tedious and repetitive, they are effective in showing the activities of the men. The ALIU was a small unit that quickly became the premier source for information and advice on the Nazi looting machine. They were able to not only provide information they collected from other agencies, but also produce information they had discovered through their own investigations and interrogations.

The impact of the ALIU was a result of their careful collection of information that, while it didn't lead to many convictions, it shed light on looting activities and was a valuable source to the Allied countries well after World War Two ended. The ALIU entered Europe just weeks after the biggest battle on the Western Front of the war had been fought.<sup>101</sup> It was clear that the end of the war was nearing, and decisions were being made at the Yalta Conference to decide how Germany and Austria would be divided.<sup>102</sup> The work being done by the ALIU was to help prepare for life after the war, unlike the MFAA men, they were not protecting pieces of art they were preparing plans for future trials and reparations. By studying the Interrogation Reports, it is easy to understand the accomplishments of the ALIU men and the amount of work they accomplished in a short amount of time becomes clear.

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<sup>101</sup> "Timeline of World War Two," Last updated 2007.  
[http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at\\_war\\_timeline\\_1945.htm](http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_war_timeline_1945.htm)

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

### Chapter Three:

The ALIU was developed with the purpose of providing a central location where information on the art looting activity in Europe could be collected and later disseminated. As previously discussed, the card files that were held in Washington D.C. were used to organize information on potential targets, but due to their size they could only contain basic information. Once targets were picked for the three ALIU men to pursue, it had to be decided how the information would be presented in its final form. Up to this point, the reports sent to the London and Washington offices show that Plaut and Rousseau were moving through Europe collecting information and developing a plan of how best to move forward in their mission. Once victory had been declared on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the ALIU men were able to travel even more freely through Germany to carry out the remainder of their investigations.<sup>1</sup>

By July 27<sup>th</sup> the three ALIU men had reported for duty at the ORION Detention Center, which was located in Altausse, Austria.<sup>2</sup> The operations had been set up at “House 71” in Altausse largely because of the convenience of the location.<sup>3</sup> The majority of the senior Nazi officials had fled to this area to avoid Allied advances; the ALIU were able to find the majority of the individuals they needed to interrogate in this area.<sup>4</sup> In addition, this detention center was located in close proximity to the salt mines of Altausse, where a great percentage of the Nazi looted art had been hidden.<sup>5</sup> The “House

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<sup>1</sup> Salter, 355.

<sup>2</sup> “Art Unit Progress Report July 1945 – July 27, 1945”, Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) Records of the Office of Strategic Services, Record Group 226, National Archives College Park, MD. (Here after, OSS Records).

<sup>3</sup> Salter, 358-359.

<sup>4</sup> Salter, 358-359.

<sup>5</sup> Salter, 357.

71” was made up of cells that each held multiple prisoners; the average amount of time spent in this detention center was around forty days.<sup>6</sup>

There is no direct documentation on when it was finally decided which German individuals would be interrogated by the ALIU. However, by the time July 27<sup>th</sup>, when the United States was in the midst of the Potsdam Conferences used to decide the fate of Europe and Japan following the war, the decision had been made and the investigations were in progress. When the final reports were submitted, the ALIU had prepared Detailed Interrogation Reports which focused on the following individuals: Heinrich Hoffman, Ernst Buchner, Robert Scholz, Gustav Rochlitz, Gunther Schiedlausky, Bruno Lohse, Gisela Limberger, Walter Andreas Hofer, Karl Kress, Walter Bornheim, Hermann Voss, and Karl Haberstock. Many of the targets were higher ups in museums, some art critics and one was Goering’s personal assistant. While very few of these individuals were ever convicted, they provided useful information that shed light on the larger looting operation.

It is important to note that the list of reports available today, does not represent the entire collection that was prepared during the war by the ALIU men. There were originally fifteen Detailed Interrogation Reports created, three of which were not included in the microfilm material.<sup>7</sup> The ALIU men gathered the information for the reports regarding Kajetan Muehlmann, Maria Dietrick and Rose Bauer but the Direct Interrogation Reports were never completed.<sup>8</sup> While all three of these documents were

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6 Jonathan, Petropoulos, *Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 94.

<sup>7</sup>“Final Report,” 1946, RG 239, Entry 75 OSS Microfilm, 7.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, 7.

completed by the time of publication, they were not included because the majority of the relevant material was covered in the Consolidated Interrogation Reports.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, there was a fourth Consolidated Interrogation Report listed in the index of the compiled document but it was never completed. The third Consolidated Interrogation Report was supposed to regard the German or Nazi methods of acquisition during the war, however the ALIU men never completed it.<sup>10</sup> Finally there are five institutional reports issued by the ALIU which should also be mentioned: “The Miedl Case”, “Interim Report of German Looting of Works of Art in France”, “Report on Progress of Current Investigation of Looted Art in Switzerland”, “U.S. Investigation of Looted Art in Switzerland”, and the “Report on Activities of the Art Looting Investigation Unit in France”.<sup>11</sup>

In contrast to the individual reports, the Consolidated Interrogation Reports focused on the larger organizations that were active during the war. The ALIU produced four reports that addressed the following issues: the activity of Rosenberg in France, the Goering Collection, and the Linz Museums. The interrogations are unique in the fact that the ALIU allowed British, French and Dutch representatives to assist in the questioning where they felt it was necessary.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the program’s history it has been clear that it was largely collaborative; this piece of information makes that even clearer. The ALIU appears to not be concerned with being the only organization to work on the interrogations; they seem willing to share the responsibility but also the credit. These are valuable documents because they give first hand accounts of the information that was

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<sup>9</sup> “Final Report,” p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Bradsher, 2.

<sup>11</sup> “Final Report,” p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> “Progress Report, X-2 Branch, 1 August to 31 August 1945”, Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.



received by the ALIU men during their interrogations. Aside from the information regarding their actions during the war, the reports contain information on the career, business endeavors, family, relationship with Hitler and the larger German art-looting mission.

The first Consolidated Report to be produced by the ALIU was in regards to the activity of Alfred Rosenberg during the war. The *Einsatzstab Reicheleiter Rosenberg fur die Besetzen Gebiete*, or the Einsatzstab, was formed during World War Two under the Foreign Political Office of the Reichsleiter Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>13</sup> The position of Reichsleiter was held by several individuals and was the rank directly under the Führer.<sup>14</sup> The Reichsleiter, or Reich leaders, were responsible for various portfolios that dealt with topics such as finance, propaganda, foreign policy, and laws during the war.<sup>15</sup> Rosenberg's job was originally to collect political materials from countries occupied by Germany with the intent of exploring the "struggle against Jewry and Freemasonry".<sup>16</sup> However, in November of 1940, Goering extended formal orders that gave the Einsatzstab the authority to confiscate "ownerless" pieces from Jewish art collections; this quickly became the primary function of the Einsatzstab.<sup>17</sup> By the end of the war, it is estimated by Plaut that the Einsatzstab, in France alone, took a total of 21,903 objects from 203 collections.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Activity of The Einsatzstab Rosenberg in France," Consolidated Interrogation Reports, Report Number One, 1945, OSS Microfilm. p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> "Reichsleiter", last modified in 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/496414/Reichsleiter>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> "Activity of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg," OSS Microfilm p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 20.

On November 18th 1940, Hitler ordered all confiscated works of art to be sent to Germany so that they could be at his personal disposal.<sup>19</sup> The efficiency of the Einsatzstab was repeatedly put at risk by the lack of authoritative direction as well as internal friction; Goering had created a monopoly on the art being collected by the Einsatzstab.<sup>20</sup> In the early stages of the Einsatzstab activity, the program was described as being in a state of chaos; during his interview, Scholz stated that the Einsatzstab employed irresponsible men, who were not qualified to be doing the art historical work and proper protocol was rarely followed.<sup>21</sup> While being interviewed for their own DIR reports, Scholz, Lohse and Schiedlausky all stated that the art historians who were a part of the mission constantly protested the “irregularity of this procedure”; they also made it clear that they had refused to send work to Germany until basic inventories had been prepared.<sup>22</sup>

James Plaut, the author of this CIR, wrote, “it is the utmost significance that, whereas the confiscations of the Einsatzstab in France were conducted under authority vested in the Rosenberg office by the Reichschancellery (Hitler), the important operations were dominated by Goering”.<sup>23</sup> This was as a direct contradiction of the orders issued previously by Hitler. Instead of collecting art for the personal use of Hitler, Goering was now using his “personal sponsorship” to exploit the activities for his own benefit; this happened from 1940 through 1942.<sup>24</sup> While it is likely that Rosenberg felt he should follow Hitler’s orders exactly, he did not have enough political power to oppose

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 15-16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 5.

Goering.<sup>25</sup> Goering was able to help Rosenberg's operation by supplying much needed transportation and military escorts through the Luftwaffe men, which gave him control.<sup>26</sup> It was not until June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1942 that Rosenberg finally told Goering that he could no longer use the Einsatzstab for his own personal collection.<sup>27</sup>

In December of 1940, Robert Scholz was asked by Rosenberg to visit Paris to determine the extent to which Goering was taking advantage of the Einsatzstab.<sup>28</sup> Scholz was an integral member of the Einsatzstab organization because of his position as the personal advisor in art matters for Rosenberg but also as the Director of the *Amt Bildende Kunst*. When in Paris, Scholz was told that Goering had received the approval of Hitler to examine the confiscated collections and make the decision of what should be done with them.<sup>29</sup> Scholz, according to Plaut, had concluded that many of the men in the Einsatzstab in Paris were working with Goering's best interests in mind instead of the Führer and that he was in fact collecting confiscated art for his own personal collection.<sup>30</sup> It was clear to Plaut that Goering had taken over the Einsatzstab's operation. Goering would give forty-eight hour notice for when he would arrive in Paris and expected a special exhibition of works to be presented to him at the Jeu de Paume museum.<sup>31</sup>

While writing the Consolidated Report on the Rosenberg activity, Plaut also interrogated Scholz directly because of his obvious connection with the Einsatzstab through his association with Rosenberg. During the war, Scholz was both a painter and an art critic, which is what made him so appealing to Rosenberg. He oversaw the creation of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 12.

scientific records of the works, the shipment to Germany, and the maintenance of the locations to which the art was being sent.<sup>32</sup> When being interviewed, multiple sources confirmed to Plaut that Scholz had expressed his desire to terminate the activity of the Einsatzstab in France; he was worried about the condition of the art and what would happen to them after they were taken.<sup>33</sup>

During his interrogation, Plaut notes that Scholz repeatedly tried to show that he was not personally responsible for any of the looting action that was conducted by the Einsatzstab; he argued that his main contribution was the creation of catalogues for Rosenberg.<sup>34</sup> Plaut states in his report of the interrogation that this was all a lie; aside from Alfred Rosenberg, Scholz was the highest-ranking official of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg in custody, and thus he should suffer the consequences of his actions.<sup>35</sup> Plaut concluded that Scholz should be held personally responsible, along with Rosenberg, for the implementation of all the art confiscation that was undertaken by the Einsatzstab; in other words, he was to be labeled a war criminal.<sup>36</sup>

Another important individual to the case being compiled against Rosenberg was Bruno Lohse. In the early months of 1941, Goering chose Lohse as his personal art representative, based on his art historical background.<sup>37</sup> Lohse was an art historian but also a member of the Nazi Party and was interrogated by Plaut in August of 1945.<sup>38</sup> Lohse was given credentials, which were signed by Goering that ordered all German

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>33</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Robert Scholz," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Three, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>37</sup> "Activity of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg," 7.

<sup>38</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Bruno Lohse," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Six, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 1.

military and civilian units to facilitate his mission.<sup>39</sup> Lohse and Gunther Schiedlausky were ordered to arrange exhibits of confiscated work, which they thought, would be appealing to Goering.<sup>40</sup> In addition to this, Lohse was supposed to make surveys of the open Paris art market on Goering's behalf.<sup>41</sup> When interviewing Schiedlausky, Plaut found that between November 1940 and December 1941, he and Lohse had arranged ten exhibits for Goering.<sup>42</sup> Once Goering was shown the works that had been collected by the Einsatzstab, he had to "legitimize" the acquisitions; this meant that Goering along with his chief buyer Walter Andreas Hofer would choose which pieces he wished to acquire for his personal collection.<sup>43</sup> In the documentation from these exchanges, there was never a form of payment specified and the Einsatzstab was not compensated.<sup>44</sup>

According to the report, Lohse thought that the Einsatzstab confiscated art on legal terms and that there had been an agreement made between both the French and German governments.<sup>45</sup> His initial responsibility had been to prepare catalogues and inventories of the newly confiscated Einsatzstab objects.<sup>46</sup> After giving a tour of the Jeu de Paume to Goering, Lohse was ordered to remain in Paris with the assignment of recommending art for Goering's private collection as well as the Linz collection.<sup>47</sup> Lohse was never fully satisfied by his position under Goering; he felt that he was not given the right amount of independence and was always being overpowered by Hofer.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 9.

Towards the end of the war, Lohse often asked his superiors to be released from the art unit and to be returned to active duty in the field; Goering was not willing to allow this to happen because of his ability to help the program.<sup>49</sup> When summarizing his investigation, Plaut outlines the four accusations against Lohse: his responsibility for reckless confiscation of French art objects and properties, the personal theft of valuable works of art, threatening and persecution of Frenchmen, Jews and other individuals and for being an active member in the Schutzstaffel or S.S.<sup>50</sup> Throughout the interrogation, Lohse never tried to deny his personal responsibilities for the acts and crimes that were committed by the Einsatzstab; he additionally did not try to separate himself from Goering or minimize his relationship with him.<sup>51</sup> After conducting the interrogation, Plaut firmly believed that Lohse never received commission, never kept confiscated pieces for himself, never threatened or persecuted Jews and thus should simply be held as a material witness in the later trials to be held against Goering.<sup>52</sup> If he was to be brought up on charges as a war criminal, Plaut argued that he should be given leniency because of his cooperation with the ALIU.<sup>53</sup>

Gunther Schiedlausky was an art historian who had been working at the State Museum of Berlin, since February of 1935.<sup>54</sup> From the beginning of World War Two until June of 1940, Schiedlausky was credited with engaging in the protection and concealment of works of art that had belonged to the State Museum.<sup>55</sup> Schiedlausky was drafted in June of 1940 but was transferred in November to work with the Einsatzstab

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 9-10.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>54</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Gunther Schiedlausky," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Five, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 1.

Rosenberg.<sup>56</sup> His initial assignments for the Einsatzstab was to prepare exhibitions of newly acquired work for Goering; he clarified during his interrogation that by the time he had been drafted the major items had already been confiscated from family homes and was already in the possession of the Germans.<sup>57</sup>

A major change was made to the Einsatzstab in December of 1941; Rosenberg recommended to Hitler that all the furnishings in “ownerless” Jewish residents within the Western Occupied Territories should be seized.<sup>58</sup> The purpose of this seizure would be so that Party officials could furnish bombed-out areas in the East.<sup>59</sup> Once approved, this newly established confiscation legislation came to be known as the *M-Action*.<sup>60</sup> Scholz and Schiedlausky worked to prepare a “Revision” report which included the proposal that the future activity of the art staff should be restricted to the following “(a) the methodical conservation and cataloging of the collections already in had and (b) the rigid control of all materials confiscated under the new *M-Action*”.<sup>61</sup> It was becoming clear, according the Plaut, that the men working for the art staff were becoming aware of the highly complicated task they were undertaking; they were now becoming responsible for making inventories of all art objects that were found in residences that had been requisitioned by the German military for officers’ billets.<sup>62</sup>

During his investigation, which was held in August of 1945, Plaut discovered that Schiedlausky was also responsible for the cataloguing, inventory and research of the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>58</sup> “Activity of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg,” p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>62</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Activity of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg,” Consolidated Interrogation Reports, Report Number One, 1945, p. 11.

pieces that had been confiscated by the Einsatzstab.<sup>63</sup> On September 1941, Schiedlausky was assigned to Neuschwanstein (a German castle where much of the stolen art was being kept) where he became the “custodian of the deposit”.<sup>64</sup> When the United States Army moved into German territory, Schiedlausky placed himself in their custody; because of this, it was decided by Plaut that he should not be considered a war criminal but instead be used as a material witness during the Nuremberg Trials.<sup>65</sup> In addition, it was suspected that under supervision, Schiedlausky could be used as a valuable asset in the restitution process.<sup>66</sup>

Karl Kress was a photographer during World War Two who was responsible for documenting works of art for the Einsatzstab,<sup>67</sup> this work kept Kress mainly working in Paris.<sup>68</sup> It was important to the Einsatzstab operation that Kress was able to protect the negatives of the images he took so that Hitler could use them when assembling his collection after the war ended.<sup>69</sup> Kress worked only at the Jeu de Paume and never accompanied the Einsatzstab on their trips to private homes.<sup>70</sup> Plaut concludes that Kress was a relatively unimportant figure in the large looting machine and held no responsibility for what happened; because of this, Kress was released from ALIU custody and was not to be called as a material witness.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>67</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Karl Kress,” Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Nine, OSS Microfilm, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 2.



Gustav Rochlitz was also interrogated by Plaut and was useful to this CIR because of his activity as an art dealer during the war.<sup>72</sup> Before the Second World War, Rochlitz had been a painter and illustrator and became an art dealer.<sup>73</sup> Throughout the war, Rochlitz dealt only to German citizens; according to the report, this was not his choice but instead determined by the situation.<sup>74</sup> This means that Rochlitz did not determine his buyers by their nationality, but they were the largest group who were active buyers of possibly confiscated or stolen goods during this period. He was very emphatic on his position as an anti-Nazi and was attempting to become a French, instead of German, citizen; by dealing only with Germans, he was worried that he would be labeled as a collaborator.<sup>75</sup> In 1944, Rochlitz discovered that twenty-nine of the paintings he had sold were being sent to the Linz museum; because he had now made a substantial addition to the collection, Rochlitz hoped that he would not be sent back to active duty.<sup>76</sup>

Throughout the entire investigation, Rochlitz admitted he was aware that eighty-two of the paintings that he received from the Einsatzstab had been confiscated illegally from French Jewish collections.<sup>77</sup> He attempted to argue that he was forced by the Einsatzstab to cooperate.<sup>78</sup> But when interviewed by Plaut, the people who worked with Rochlitz stated that he was always willing or even eager to work with the Einsatzstab.<sup>79</sup> They pointed to three key reasons that enticed him to do the work that he did: he could make huge profits, he was able to establish a prominent position in the German art circles

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<sup>72</sup> James Plaut, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Gustav Rochlitz," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Four, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 11.

and was able to avoid military service.<sup>80</sup> Plaut wrote in the report that “he appears to have acted at all times in his own interest as an unscrupulous opportunist”.<sup>81</sup> It was decided by Plaut that due to the case made against him, Rochlitz should be placed at the disposition of the French government where they would decide if he should be given criminal charges.<sup>82</sup>

The second Consolidated Interrogation Report explored the Goering Collection and the history of its formation as well as the methods that were used to apprehend the cultural items from all over Europe.<sup>83</sup> Hermann Goering was one of the primary leaders of the Nazi Party and was instrumental in the creation of policies regarding looting.<sup>84</sup> During the war, Goering held the title of Reichsmarschall of the Third German Reich; this meant that he was the “Marshal of the Empire”.<sup>85</sup> With his powerful position, Goering created a widespread enterprise that touched every area occupied by Germans.<sup>86</sup> When writing this report, Theodore Rousseau used information that had been compiled by the ALIU from countries all over Europe.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the following individuals were interrogated and their Detailed Interrogation Reports shed light on the larger organization: Hofer, Limberger, Lohse, Kress, Walter Bornheim, and Karl Haberstock.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>83</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “The Goering Collection,” Consolidated Interrogation Reports, Report Number Two, 1945, p. 1, RG 239, Entry 75 [A1], Microfilm m1782, National Archives, College Park, Maryland. (Here after, OSS Microfilm).

<sup>84</sup> “Hermann Goring”, last modified July 13, 2014.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/239310/Hermann-Goring>

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “The Goering Collection,” Consolidated Interrogation Reports, Report Number Two, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

Other individuals such as Kajetan Muehlann, Rose Bauer, and Aloys Miedl were interviewed, but their reports are unavailable.<sup>89</sup>

Goering had begun his art collection after the end of the World War One. When Hitler came to power in the 1930's, he quickly aligned himself with the new Führer and worked to create a plan, which would allow him to gather an even larger collection.<sup>90</sup> The collection in question was going to be named the Hermann Goering Collection and would be housed in a large museum whose site was never chosen.<sup>91</sup> The collection that was amassed by Goering included everything from tapestries to *objets d'art* to jewelry.<sup>92</sup> Goering initially hired Binder, a Berlin art dealer to be his advisor; Hofer was assigned to be his successor after a short time.<sup>93</sup> When asked about Goering in his interrogation, Hofer noted that he was a hard man to work for because while it was often “easy to bring him around and change his mind” he could also prove to be immensely stubborn.<sup>94</sup> Goering was determined to make a collection of art that would be envied on an international basis. He relied on men such as Hofer to assist him to make this possible.

Rousseau outlines three main aspects of Goering's personality that played a large role in the creation of his collection: he saw no limits to what he desired, he had unlimited resources at his disposal and he always bargained no matter how low the original price was.<sup>95</sup> Rousseau comments that Goering was a “hard-headed, acquisitive businessman”: he wanted to buy everything and at the lowest price possible.<sup>96</sup> It was also important for Goering to have the public appearance of always being correct; Rousseau

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 157.

states that Goering made it clear that he did not steal any of the work in his possession because he always intended on eventually paying for it.<sup>97</sup> Possibly most remarkable of all, no matter what state the German defense was in, Goering was always focused on and put the most time into his collection.<sup>98</sup> Rousseau also explains that Goering had a strong tendency to distrust everyone who worked for him.<sup>99</sup> The feeling of distrust apparently spread to his staff; during their interrogations, both Limberger and Hofer accused their fellow employees of concealing information.<sup>100</sup>

Gisela Limberger was an integral to the investigation of Rosenberg but even more so for the investigation into Goering because of her role as his trusted assistant; she worked for the Nazi party, she never became a member.<sup>101</sup> When interrogated by Rousseau she was able to provide information of the inner workings of the Goering looting machine.<sup>102</sup> Limberger was trained as a librarian but had no direct training or interest in art.<sup>103</sup> Her main job was to oversee and control Goering's private correspondence and his finances; because of his great distrust in people, she was the only one who was trusted to type on his behalf.<sup>104</sup>

While her main tasks were secretarial, Limberger was able to make two significant contributions to the effort against Goering's art looting. The first contribution that she made was insisting that Goering create lists of every piece of art being taken in by his unit and where it was taken from; without this information, restitution would have

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>101</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Gisela Limberger," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Seven, 1945, OSS Microfilm, p. 1.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>104</sup> "The Goering Collection," p. 7.

proven to be much more difficult.<sup>105</sup> In addition, Limberger was able to convince Goering that he should not take items from Monte Cassino (a monastery in Italy) as Hofer had previously recommended.<sup>106</sup> Because she was not involved directly in the looting mission and was simply an office worker she was released and not required to give testimony; however, she decided to volunteer herself as a witness.<sup>107</sup>

Walter Andreas Hofer proved to be one of the most influential individuals that the ALIU interrogated. Hofer had a background as both an art historian and art dealer, which is what made him appealing to the German government.<sup>108</sup> He was closely aligned with Goering for five years during the war developing the collection and deciding methods that would be used to obtain the objects; formally, Hofer was Goering's personal art advisor and art buyer.<sup>109</sup> During his time with Goering, Hofer never joined the Nazi Party because it was not a requirement; however, during his interrogation he made it clear that if he had been asked to join he would have done so.<sup>110</sup> Rousseau noted that, during his interrogations, Hofer often tried to down play his importance and involvement in the looting actions; he argued that he only advised Goering on items that had been purchased legally.<sup>111</sup> This was hard to believe given his position as chief advisor and, and as Rousseau notes in is DIR, Hofer was always at "his master's elbow, with a plan, fair or foul, to obtain the objects which they desired".<sup>112</sup> Rousseau states that there is undeniable

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<sup>105</sup> "Gisela Limberger," 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>108</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Walter Andreas Hofer," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Nine, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 1.

<sup>109</sup> "The Goering Collection," 10.

Walter Andreas Hofer," 1.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 1.

proof that Hofer visited the Jeu de Paume to choose which confiscated paintings would be sent to Goering.<sup>113</sup>

In the end, his paper trial proved Hofer's guilt; they showed a direct knowledge and involvement in the confiscation, payment and sale of stolen works.<sup>114</sup> It was observed in his file that he was dishonest and underhanded in not only his interrogation, but in his business practices.<sup>115</sup> In his personal letters to Goering, there is clear reference to his involvement in financial matters and how he succeeded in lowering prices of the works he purchased.<sup>116</sup> Rousseau states that Goering "opened up to him the doors, not only of collections in Germany, but of almost any source of works of art in the occupied countries. It also gave him the possibility of promising protection to those persecuted by Nazis in exchange for the sale of something they desired".<sup>117</sup>

Hofer profited by encouraging friends and contacts of Goering to use him when they were looking to buy gifts for Goering.<sup>118</sup> While his purchasing activities took up the majority of Hofer's time, he was also responsible for the conservation, storage, transportation, and cataloguing of the items that came into Goering's possession.<sup>119</sup> This report shows the degree to which Hofer was involved in the Goering organization; he worked directly with Goering and accompanied him on trips to find artwork.<sup>120</sup> Rousseau concludes his report stating that Hofer should be held as a material witness but should then also be indicted as a war criminal himself for his involvement with Goering.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>117</sup> "The Goering Collection," 10.

<sup>118</sup> "Walter Andreas Hofer," 4.

<sup>119</sup> "The Goering Collection," 11.

<sup>120</sup> "The Goering Collection," 12.

<sup>121</sup> "Walter Andreas Hofer," 9.

Walter Bornheim was another individual who was interrogated by the ALIU and worked on the Goering Collection. Bornheim proved useful to Goering because of his educational background in sculpture.<sup>122</sup> After Goering visited his shop in Cologne, Bornheim became a buyer of sculpture for the Goering Collection; Goering asked him to “take advantage of any opportunities offered by the art market”.<sup>123</sup> While he worked for Goering from 1938 until the end of the war, Bornheim never became a member of the Nazi Party.<sup>124</sup> Bornheim quickly became the biggest German art buyer in Paris and was also the most well known; he was known for buying every type of object and also paying high prices for the works he acquired.<sup>125</sup> During his interrogation, Bornheim voluntarily shared all the information that was relevant to the case.<sup>126</sup> Rousseau states in his report that out of all the agents working for Goering, Bornheim seemed to be the most honest.<sup>127</sup> He acted solely as an art dealer and was never involved in the actual looting or confiscation of art; based on the evidence available to Rousseau, it appeared that he never used the position given to him by Goering to pressure those who were unwilling to sell their work.<sup>128</sup> He was called to be a material witness for the Nuremberg Trials and was placed as a resource for the French government for restitution.<sup>129</sup>

Bruno Lohse, while important to the Rosenberg case, was also vital to the case being made against Goering. During his trips to Paris, Goering would visit the Jeu de

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<sup>122</sup> “The Goering Collection,” 14.

<sup>123</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Walter Bornheim,” Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Eleven, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 2.

“The Goering Collection,” 15.

<sup>124</sup> “Walter Bornheim,” 1.

<sup>125</sup> “Walter Bornheim,” 3.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>127</sup> “The Goering Collection,” 16.

<sup>128</sup> “Walter Bornheim,” 6.

“The Goering Collection,” 15-16.

<sup>129</sup> “Walter Bornheim,” 7.

Paume to see exhibits of materials, which had been confiscated by the Einsatzstab since his last visit.<sup>130</sup> Many of the individuals who were interrogated for the case being made against the Einsatzstab Reichsteilter Rosenberg overlap with the case against Goering; this is because Goering used the work of the Einsatzstab for his own benefit. In the report prepared by Rousseau, it is stated that Goering took five hundred ninety-six items from Einsatzstab custody at the Jeu de Paume.<sup>131</sup> An interesting element that is mentioned in this report is that the art that was taken by the Nazi Party from Germany was not considered looted.<sup>132</sup>

Karl Haberstock was one of the many dealers who made exchanges with Goering, but is relevant because he was also interrogated by the ALIU. Before the beginning of World War Two, Haberstock had been in close contact with Goering.<sup>133</sup> The report begins with a striking claim made by Rousseau; he states, "Haberstock's entire career was based on two principles: anti-Semitism and Germanic chauvinism."<sup>134</sup> Haberstock joined the Nazi Party and was an enthusiastic member; he was even referred to as a "crusader" against "degenerate" art.<sup>135</sup> The high point of Haberstock's career came when Hitler appointed him as the chief advisor to Hans Posse at the Linz Museum.<sup>136</sup> In this position he would have direct influence over how Hitler's collection at Linz would be created and what it would contain.<sup>137</sup> Because of this appointment, he was briefly cut off

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<sup>130</sup> "The Goering Collection," 18.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>134</sup> Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Karl Haberstock," Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Thirteen, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 2.



from his position as an advisor to Goering.<sup>138</sup> Throughout the war, he traveled to through occupied territories but spent the majority of his time in France where he did much of his dealing.<sup>139</sup> Haberstock's position in the Nazi Party and his leadership role in the purchase and distribution of stolen art led Rousseau to come to the conclusion that he should be tried at the same level of severity as the leading Linz officials.<sup>140</sup>

During World War Two, according to Rousseau's report, Goering liked to refer to himself as a "Renaissance type"; this meant that he was interested in collecting every medium of art and artifacts and also from every occupied country.<sup>141</sup> By trusting few individuals with his personal information he was able to create a façade of being, as Rousseau puts it, "the best of the Nazis".<sup>142</sup> As the investigation into his organization continued, it became clear that this was just that, a façade. Rousseau concludes his document with the statement that Goering was "cruel, grasping, deceitful and hypocritical, well suited to take his place with Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels and the rest".<sup>143</sup> The information for this report would not have been available had the ALIU men not conducted their interrogations. Throughout the document, Rousseau cites where and whom his information was coming from, and in the majority of cases it came from Limberger and Hofer.

The fourth and final report is an exploration of the plans for the Linz museum and library written by Faison and completed in December of 1945. In the preface of this document, Faison outlines the three goals of this report were the following: "to identify

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<sup>138</sup> "The Goering Collection," 121.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>140</sup> "Karl Haberstock," 7.

<sup>141</sup> "The Goering Collection," 174.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid, 176.

the personalities involved and the particular role played by each, to classify the methods employed in amassing the collection and to indicate the sources from which the works were obtained".<sup>144</sup> There is significance behind the choice of Linz as the new center for art created by Hitler; Linz was where Hitler grew up.<sup>145</sup> Faison explains that Hitler wanted the people who knew him in his youth to "bask in his success"; he saw that the best way to do this was to create a national museum that would rival the other major European art centers.<sup>146</sup> In order for this dream to become a reality, Hitler was prepared to completely remake the city, with the Führermuseum at its center; this would all be done under his close supervision.<sup>147</sup>

The information that was used for this report was primarily taken from the Detailed Interrogation Reports of Voss, Haberstock and Hoffmann.<sup>148</sup> However the ALIU reports created for Hofer, Lohse, Limberger, Buchner and Bornheim were also used.<sup>149</sup> When this report was created, there was little information regarding the distinction between the works of art that were destined for Hitler's private property and the art that was intended for the Linz Museum.<sup>150</sup> Until the documents were sorted and it was determined which items were designated for which purpose, a complete understanding of the project would not be possible. The differentiation between these two purposes of the art, however, was not vitally important to the work of Faison: it seems that Faison treated the two as the same for this report to look at the overall looting patterns.<sup>151</sup> This was one

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<sup>144</sup>S. Lane Faison, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, "Linz: Hitler's Museum and Library," Consolidated Interrogation Reports, Report Number Two, 1945, OSS Microfilm, pg i.

<sup>145</sup>"Linz: Hitler's Museum and Library," 1.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid, 1.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid, i.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid, ii.

<sup>150</sup>Ibid, iii.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid, iii.

of the first studies to be done of the Linz museum and its connection to Nazi looting. The MFAA had not been interested in the Linz organization for the same intelligence reasons as the ALIU. Instead they were focused on finding where the art, which was destined for the museum, was being hidden for the remainder of the war. The ALIU provided a source that would be used as a basis for all further study of this topic.

Hitler looked to Haberstock to see whether or not he thought this dream would be able to become a reality.<sup>152</sup> Haberstock believed that the Dresden museum held the status Hitler wanted to achieve; when it was discovered that the director, Hans Posse, had recently lost his job Hitler quickly offered him the job of directing the Linz museum.<sup>153</sup> During their interrogation with the ALIU both Haberstock and Hoffmann stated that, contrary to current belief, Hitler only wanted a few paintings for his personal residence but instead intended for the large body of work that was being collected to eventually be used for the museum.<sup>154</sup> Because they were not yet sure of the amount and quality of the work that would end up being confiscated, Hitler decided to wait until the war was over to sort the works and then if there were ones that neither he nor the Linz museum wanted, they would be sent to the provincial museums around German.<sup>155</sup>

Posse, unlike Hitler, had a trained eye for art and appreciated a larger selection of art and artifacts.<sup>156</sup> Before Posse's appointment, Heinrich Hoffmann had been Hitler's main advisor; Hoffmann and Hitler were similar in the fact that their taste in art did not extend much past nineteenth century German painters.<sup>157</sup> Posse was determined to

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 3.

increase the quality and breath of the collection that would be housed in the Linz museum.<sup>158</sup> In his position given to him by Hitler, Posse had the authority over all collections that were destined for the museum in Linz; this collection of materials came to be known as the “Führer Reserve”.<sup>159</sup> Posse would work in conjunction with Hitler to decide which items he wanted specifically targeted and found throughout the occupied territory. Posse oversaw this operation until his death in December of 1942; Hermann Voss was then appointed as the director of both the Dresden museum and the Linz operations.<sup>160</sup>

On April 21, 1943, Martin Bormann ordered, on behalf of Hitler, that all objects, which were seized by the Einsatzstab, be immediately sent to the Führer’s experts for further handling; one of these experts was Voss.<sup>161</sup> Hitler oversaw the entire looting organization, Bormann worked directly under him and then Voss was the next tier of power.<sup>162</sup> When it became unsafe to store the artwork in Germany this group of men worked together to decide that it should be sent to the Steinberg salt mine in Altaussee and stayed there for the remainder of the war.<sup>163</sup> This is what led to the major art repositories discovered by groups such as the MFAA.

Hermann Voss was an art historian who also had a background in political intelligence and was interviewed by Faison.<sup>164</sup> When he was being interrogated, he claimed that the reason he took the position in the museum was so that he would be able

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 14-15.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>164</sup> S. Lane Faison, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Hermann Voss,” Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Twelve, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 1.

to protect the art from inside the organization.<sup>165</sup> He made the argument that the art was going to be confiscated no matter what, and why not have that art sent to where he could control it and ensure its safety?<sup>166</sup> Faison writes in the Direct Interrogation Report that Voss was able to “keep his hands clean by leaving the dirty work to others”;<sup>167</sup> it was hard to make conclusions about the man because he left virtually no paper trail and often served behind the scenes. While much of his work was to create inventories and protocols to protect the art that had been taken, Faison argues that Voss had “the chance to stop proceedings and that he did not”.<sup>168</sup>

Voss is a hard individual to understand; much of his work seems to be done with positive intentions but he probably could have done more to stop what was happening right under his nose. In the Consolidated Interrogation Report, Faison argues that the most questionable of Voss’ activities was his involvement in the purchase of the Schloss collection.<sup>169</sup> At the end of the interrogation, it was decided that Voss should be labeled as a potential war criminal and should be tried at the Nuremberg Trials.<sup>170</sup> However, because of his experience and knowledge of the collection, he was to be used as a consultant at the Central Collecting Point in Munich where he would work through inventories and work on the redistribution and restitution projects.<sup>171</sup>

Heinrich Hoffmann was a close personal friend of Hitler’s and they possessed a very similar taste in art; they both preferred German art that was created before the

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>169</sup> “Linz: Hitler’s Museum and Library,” 18.

<sup>170</sup> “Hermann Voss,” 24.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 24.

nineteenth century.<sup>172</sup> Because of their friendship, it is likely that Hoffmann had a personal knowledge of the plans and goals of Hitler; however, it is unlikely that he had much of a role in the development of the Linz collection.<sup>173</sup> As Rousseau states in the conclusion of his Detailed Interrogation Report, he was a man who was a “parasite of the Nazi regime”.<sup>174</sup> Hoffmann made his name in the art world by developing a monopoly on photographs and their reproductions during the war, which were later, used to create an art magazine that was targeted to the common man.<sup>175</sup> While he was never employed by the Linz operation, Hoffmann often worked as a middleman.<sup>176</sup>

Hoffmann proved to be a very unreliable source because he changed his story from day to day and also changed his opinion on Hitler and the other Nazi officials he worked with.<sup>177</sup> Hoffmann’s colleagues during the war did not even seem to respect him; Haberstok made his low opinion of him known in his interrogation.<sup>178</sup> The only way he could prove to be useful would be to assist in the investigation to identify works of art and the countries from which they were acquired; in addition it was recommended by Rousseau that he be put at the disposition of the G-5 or the MFAA.<sup>179</sup>

As explained in conjunction with the discussion on the Goering Collection, Haberstok was a major art dealer during this period. The majority of his success during the war came from his ability to skillfully use his position within Nazi circles for his own

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<sup>172</sup>“Linz: Hitler’s Museum and Library,” 3.

Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Heinrich Hoffmann,” Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Twelve, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 3.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>176</sup> “Linz: Hitler’s Museum and Library,” 44.

<sup>177</sup> “Heinrich Hoffmann,” 8.

<sup>178</sup> “Linz: Hitler’s Museum and Library,” 43.

<sup>179</sup> “Heinrich Hoffmann,” 8.

personal benefit.<sup>180</sup> Hitler favored him as a dealer because their taste in art was similar.<sup>181</sup> In his interrogation, Voss accused Haberstock of using “unscrupulous methods to force certain museum directors to exchange for works by nineteenth century German masters”.<sup>182</sup> Throughout his interrogation, Haberstock repeated that he had acted honestly and correctly in every deal he participated in throughout the war; every source that was found or person who was interviewed contradicted this statement.<sup>183</sup> Voss stated in his interrogation that when speaking with Posse’s wife, it became clear that both Posse and Hitler were becoming “suspicious of Haberstock’s shrewdness”.<sup>184</sup> These opinions and accusations add more explanation to Rousseau’s conclusion that he should be tried at the same level as leading Linz employees.

One of the minor figures in the overall Linz operation was Ernst Buchner, who was the director general of the Bavarian State Museum during World War Two.<sup>185</sup> Buchner was never an official agent of the Linz operation but was consulted often by Linz authorities on the grounds of authorship and authenticity of various items.<sup>186</sup> During his interrogation, Buchner denied having any detailed knowledge of the Linz operation or the provenance of the pictures he examined.<sup>187</sup> Even though Buchner was a member of the Nazi Party, it is likely that he was an honest worker and joined simply because it was a requirement for his position.<sup>188</sup> In the conclusion of this document, Rousseau

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<sup>180</sup> “Linz: Hitler’s Museum and Library,” 47.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, 56.

Theodore Rousseau, O.S.S. Art Looting Investigation Unit, “Ernst Buchner,” Detailed Interrogation Reports, Report Number Two, 1945, OSS Microfilm, 1-2.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 10.

recommended that Buchner be placed under house arrest at the disposition of the MFAA.<sup>189</sup> In addition, it was stated that he was to be prohibited from holding any positions in the newly formed German fine arts administration.<sup>190</sup>

In the conclusion of his report, which was completed in December of 1945, Faison discusses the Nuremberg Trials (which began in November of 1945 and lasted until October of 1946). He discusses that the Linz Museum was currently being seen as a valid and legal escape for the decisions made by high-level government official in Germany.<sup>191</sup> The Nazis put laws into place that made their looting and confiscation legal; in order for the legal basis of the Linz Museum to be called into question the prosecution would have to prove that it was a criminal organization.<sup>192</sup> The Nazi party was skilled at making it look as if their purchases were legal and paid for at the proper price, even though this was almost never the case.<sup>193</sup> Faison made three major recommendations that he hoped would be followed after the presentation of the ALIU material. He stated that: the Linz commission or museum should be declared a criminal organization, the members of the Linz museum should stand on trial and that the German art dealers and agents who worked for the museum be investigated on an individual basis.<sup>194</sup>

By the time the ALIU reports were completed (in August, September and December of 1945), Europe had already celebrated V-E Day and had begun to develop plans for what would come next in Europe. The Allied countries had to decide how best to deal with the massive losses they suffered. These losses were much more than the

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>191</sup> "Linz: Hitler's Museum and Library," 85.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 85.



pieces of art that were stolen, they had lost a huge percentage of their population. It is important to remember this when looking at these documents. The ALIU were not an isolated entity, they were working during a very emotional time for Europeans and navigated the landscape as best they could to prepare for the repatriation of what had been stolen.

The importance of the ALIU and their mission becomes apparent when examining these documents. This was not simply an organization that collected information. Through their interrogations, as well as information provided to them by other organizations, the ALIU men were able to prepare documents that would help prosecute major war criminals. When studied independently from the Consolidated Interrogation Reports, the individuals interrogated by the ALIU men may seem relatively unimportant when compared to major war criminals such as Hitler. However, the Consolidated Reports show how the information gathered from these individuals came together to synthesize a strong case against the following three organizations: the Linz Museum, the Goering Collection and the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg. The task of the ALIU men and their influence went much further than simply collecting and disseminating information. They had quickly become experts on the larger operations of the Nazi looting machine and were looked to by European governments for assistance in completing their own investigations, but also for advice of how to best set up an ALIU type organization of their own. It quickly becomes clear that the work of the ALIU was not done when they finished their Interrogation Reports.

#### Chapter Four:

The Consolidated and Detailed Interrogation Reports represent the accumulation of the work that was accomplished by the ALIU men while they were working in Europe during World War Two. The current plan for the information that was being collected was that it would be used for the anticipated trials regarding war crimes.<sup>1</sup> While the majority of the men interrogated by the ALIU were not convicted, their testimonies worked to shed light on the larger, and arguably, more important organizations, the Linz Museum, Goering's Collection and Rosenberg's activities. This is where the legacy of the ALIU stands; it was a small organization that worked to create reports that were used to develop case against the men who worked with Hitler to capture Europe's greatest cultural treasures. However, their legacy did not end here. The ALIU had developed detailed information on the looting activity that had taken over the continent; their documentation would prove to have a lasting effect, decades after the completion of the war when looted art was continuing to be found and its origins determined.

In September, Plaut was sent to report in Washington D.C. to discuss the future policies of the ALIU operation.<sup>2</sup> While Plaut was gone, Rousseau and Faison continued their work in Altausse.<sup>3</sup> At the end of September, Rousseau was called to London to meet with the Office of United States Counsel for Nuremberg.<sup>4</sup> Faison closed with the ORION Detention Center in the final weeks of September and the ALIU men were sent back to London. Rousseau was sent to Paris on October 25<sup>th</sup> and was to continue to Switzerland

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<sup>1</sup> "Progress Report, X-2 Branch, 1 August to 31 August 1945", Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>2</sup> "Progress Report September 1945" Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

later that month.<sup>5</sup> Plaut and Faison left London together on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and went to Nuremberg and then on Munich.<sup>6</sup> There are no details included about what the men were doing in these locations; it can be assumed that the men were tying up loose ends to their investigation and meeting with representatives for the Nuremberg Trials because of the cities mentioned in the file.

In the first week of November, Plaut was in Nuremberg working to establish a relationship with the United States Chief of Counsel for the upcoming Nuremberg Trial.<sup>7</sup> During this trip, new channels were discovered that would prove to be useful for future attempts of persecuting German art looters.<sup>8</sup> During this period, Rousseau was in France developing relationships with high-level French authorities; he was interested in the persecution of French collaborators in the German art-looting machine.<sup>9</sup> While Plaut and Rousseau were planning for the future, Faison was continuing to investigate the Linz Collection in and around Munich.<sup>10</sup> This is the final progress report that is present in the material located at the National Archive in College Park. These final reports are important because they show that the ALIU men were still active after finishing their reports. This supports the fact that the men were not just interrogators and writers, but were knowledgeable and valuable assets in the creation of cases against the war criminals and also in the efforts towards restitution.

The ALIU issued its Final Report on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1946 from the Washington D.C. office.<sup>11</sup> This report include an outline of the history of the unit, an index of reports

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<sup>5</sup> “Progress Report October 1945” Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> “Progress Report November 1945” Folder 1748, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> “Final Report”, title page.

created, the problems that remained outstanding, recommendations for further actions, and a biographical index of individuals involved in art looting.<sup>12</sup> This document proves to be invaluable in judging the effectiveness of the unit because it clearly outlines what was accomplished in each section of Europe where the individual men worked. It also lists the suggestions of elements they feel still need to be investigated. The first chapter of the document outlines the basic formation of the program and the mission statement that they followed through out their time in Europe; the information presented here is identical to what had been present in their reports to other government agencies and operatives during the war.<sup>13</sup> The next section of the report proves to be more useful because it outlines the activity of the ALIU operatives in the field and gives further information into what they had been doing during periods that were glossed over by their progress reports.

There are other countries mentioned in this initial section of the report but they were more obviously explained in either the progress reports or in the Interrogation Reports. The Final Report served as a summary of the accomplishments of the ALIU and especially outlined the elements to their investigation that had not been highlighted in their larger reports. This document might have also included information that could not have previously been released because of its classified status; there is no way to prove this fact but it is one possible explanation for why these elements to the investigation had not been explained in previous documents.

The report then moves on to a discussion of the problems facing the ALIU men and their investigation; because their investigations would lead to the reparation of art it was still an active and ongoing investigation even if the men were no longer interrogating

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> "Final Report", 1.

suspects. The major problem facing the men during the war, as stated in the report, was the limitation of both time and manpower.<sup>14</sup> In regards to the Einsatzstab Rosenberg, the major activities had been discovered and presented in the Consolidated Report, but there was evidence that there had been clandestine disposals of art that had been used for personal gain.<sup>15</sup> This is just one of the many example of information and questions that were discovered during interrogations that were left unanswered because of the lack of time allotted to the ALIU unit.

When developing a list of individuals the ALIU would interrogate, Josef Angerer was included; however, the ALIU was not able to conduct this interrogation because Angerer was released from Allied custody prematurely.<sup>16</sup> This caused problems for the ALIU investigation because he was very active in German art looting and would have been able to shed on the following issues: German art looting immediately after the France-German armistice; the methods as well as volume of furniture tapestries and decorative art confiscated for the Goering Collection; the purchasing activity in Italy on Goering's behalf; and finally Angerer's role in the Goering operation would have become more clear.<sup>17</sup> Due to their timetable, the men were restricted in the number of individuals that they could interrogate. This meant that the ALIU was not able to get the full picture of what was happening in every section of the German art-looting machine. For this to be fully explored, a much larger team, probably close to the size of the MFAA, would have been required as well as unlimited time.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 10.

The final issue addressed in this report was the fact that the outline of the policies created by the Germans regarding the acquisition of art of the Linz museum was not made available until after the report was released.<sup>18</sup> Throughout his report, Faison was forced to rely on the testimony of the men who worked inside the organization; by seeing the official rules put into place, the entire operation and the intention's of its leaders would have been more completely understood. These were the major questions that were left in the minds of the ALIU men as they departed Europe. With more time in the field it is likely they could have resolved most, if not all, of these questions and problems. There were areas, such as German looting in the East that was left completely unexplored because of the lack of access and manpower to conduct investigations.<sup>19</sup>

The Final Report is concluded with a discussion of the recommendations outlined by the ALIU men for further action in Europe.<sup>20</sup> The authors of the document appear to feel that it was obvious that there needed to be continued investigation done before the case of German art looting could be closed.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, because of their close collaboration nature of the work being done during the war between the American government and the British, French, Swiss and Dutch governments, they were going to be forced to stay continually involved even after the duties of the ALIU were completed.<sup>22</sup>

Following the completion of both the Interrogation Reports and the Final Report, the majority of the work assigned to the ALIU was completed. In April of 1946 Walter Surrey, who was a member of the Division of Economic Security Controls of the State Department stated that it was highly recommended that the ALIU men remained present

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 16.

in Europe “for the next few months...this will not only expedite current work of this Division but will also enable the project to be concluded in an orderly manner, satisfactory to the Governments concerned”.<sup>23</sup> The director of the program agreed with this and felt that one member of the ALIU should conduct a final mission through Europe; during this mission, it was hoped that the ALIU operative could make final conclusions about the state of the various countries, their efforts towards restitution but also to meet with the governments to advise them in the next steps that were required.<sup>24</sup> Otto Wittmann was chosen to conduct this final investigation and it was decided that he would visit France, England, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden and Denmark over the span of four months.<sup>25</sup>

Like with the ALIU’s initial mission, clear guidelines were set out for Wittmann’s mission, because, once again, there was a strict time restriction. The Wittmann was told he was supposed to:

(a) Make a final survey of the remaining problems connected with enemy looting of art (b) to arrange with other U.S. Government agencies (Military Government in Germany and State Department in other areas) to continue investigation and controls initiated by the unit (c) to confer with agencies of certain foreign Governments, who have also been working on the problem of art looting (d) to survey the extend of continuing traffic in looted art and (e) to undertake certain concluding investigations of problems connected with looting art.<sup>26</sup>

This information was to be collected on a country-by-country basis and be organized into a final document that would be widely distributed.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Otto Wittmann, “Final Mission to Europe – 10 June 1946 – September 1946”, Art Looting Investigation Unit, Folder 1750, Box 516, (Entry 190) OSS Records, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 2.

France was the first country to be visited by Wittmann; he stated that throughout the summer he had returned to this location from time to time because of its distinction as the base of operations for much of the looting activity.<sup>28</sup> Following the completion of the war, it remained important that the French Government and their agencies continued to have a positive liaison relationship with the United States.<sup>29</sup> When in France, Wittmann met with Albert Henraux who explained the current status of the French restitution efforts.<sup>30</sup> By the time this report was written, the majority of objects, which had been taken by the Germans, had been returned to the French by the MFAA.<sup>31</sup> At this point, the French were continuing to track down and apprehend German nationals who were connected to the art looting effort in France; this is where he told Wittmann they still needed assistance.<sup>32</sup> In addition to this investigation, other French representatives asked for the cooperation of the United States so that they could continue to conduct investigations in the American Zone in Germany (attachment 3); they felt that this investigation would help in the discovery of the French objects and pieces of art that were still missing.<sup>33</sup>

In their recommendations for the future of the individuals interrogated by the ALIU, there was one case in which it was decided that the individual would be sent into French custody and they would conduct the trial. The French, they set up what had come to be known as the “Seine Tribunal”; they were given the task of investigating the individuals in their custody, indicting them and then conducting the prosecution.<sup>34</sup> This

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 5.



tribunal was reserved for those being charged as “French collaborationist art dealers”.<sup>35</sup> Strict protocol was followed when dealing with these cases; first a judge was required to determine whether the evidence held against the individual in question was to be considered incriminating.<sup>36</sup> If the individual was guilty but their activity did not warrant a formal trial, they would be sent to the *Comite d’Euration Artistique Interprofessionnelle*, which had the power to ban an individual from future participation in trade.<sup>37</sup> If the case being brought against the individual was so severe, they would then be sent to the French Criminal Courts where they would stand for trial.<sup>38</sup> Gustav Rochlitz was the individual interrogated by the ALIU who would be sent into French custody. In the Appendix to Wittmann’s report, Rochlitz is not listed as one of the men to have already been brought to the Seine Tribunal; it is possible that he had not yet been tried or they had sent him to a different court.<sup>39</sup>

Wittmann is harsh in his assessment of the French government and their ability to create a unit that would take over the responsibilities of the ALIU. In his conclusion, he states that the majority of objects taken during the war had been returned but the government wanted to continue investigating those that were still missing.<sup>40</sup> The problem that arises, in Wittmann’s opinion, is that the French had yet to find a way to use the extensive documentation provided to them by American and Allied agencies in a successful manner.<sup>41</sup> In addition they were working slowly to come up with their own organization; this was allowing dealers who had collaborated with the Nazis to continue

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, Appendix A.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 7.

their business practices as if nothing had changed.<sup>42</sup> The major fear left in the minds of many of the French officials, and what Wittmann completes his report with, was that the dealers had already been able to transfer looted items to the United States.<sup>43</sup> The concern will be present for the majority of the countries discussed in this report.

England was the next country to be visited by Wittmann; here he found that the British government had almost completely dissolved the units created to investigate art looting, except for the section of the MFAA.<sup>44</sup> Before leaving London it had been decided that a central international file for the information regarding art looting during the war would be the most effective method of storing the information that was accumulated.<sup>45</sup> This file would include lists of persons who were active in art looting during the war, catalogues of art objects that were still missing, and as many photographic files as they could find of works that should be classified as stolen.<sup>46</sup> It was important that this information was protected and kept in an organized manner because it was suspected that much of the missing art would stay off the markets for at least ten years before it resurfaced in the market.<sup>47</sup>

Wittmann explains that it was assumed during this period that high value pieces would only be put on the market when it appeared that the active investigation into the recovery of the art had ceased; Kurtz explained, in his book on this topic, much of the art did not surface until the dealers and collectors active during this period began to die.<sup>48</sup> Since this project would be a demanding long term commitment, it was decided that it

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Kurtz, xi.

could not be completed by any individual country; because of this, it was suggested that there be an international agency created which would be the “clearing-house” for this information.<sup>49</sup> This discussion seems to be very similar to the one that led to the creation of the ALIU; it had been clear that the individual European countries were not effective in their investigations and they needed an agency that would be able to focus solely on the mission in order for it to be effective. The ALIU was the central location where all information could be sent and where it was most likely information could be found regarding the looting machine.

Switzerland was the country that had the most unsolved elements to their investigation into the enemy looting of art during the war. Both the MFAA and ALIU had worked to recover art stolen from the Swiss and also apprehend the individuals responsible but they were not successful.<sup>50</sup> In discussions between the Swiss and American governments, it was decided that the Swiss would continue their investigation into the art looting and art transactions that took place during the war; this investigation had been started by the British and the ALIU but due to the time restraints had to be passed on to the Swiss government.<sup>51</sup> In February of 1946, a census was taken of all works that had been looted during the war by the Germans; in addition, the Swiss government sent out a decree that stated that any art that had a doubtful provenance must be reported to the government.<sup>52</sup> Both of these efforts proved useless, because none of the important objects, which had likely been looted, were found.<sup>53</sup> Like in France, the Swiss dealers who worked with Nazis were continuing to work following the war in; it is likely

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<sup>49</sup> Final Mission to Europe”, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 12.

that they were finding ways to traffic stolen art into France, Holland and the United States.<sup>54</sup>

In regards to the recovery and return of looted pieces of art, the Swiss government was holding a strictly neutral stance, and they took very little action to recover their assets.<sup>55</sup> There were seventy-six paintings included on a list created by the Allies which they believed were stolen from Switzerland during the war. These works were taken in by the Swiss and kept at the Berne Museum; they would be held there until it was determined how restitution would be handled.<sup>56</sup> These works, which were brought to the attention of the Swiss by American and British forces, were the only pieces to be recovered up to that point.<sup>57</sup> From this report, it appears that the Swiss government was either not able to provide the resources to attack the problem of finding art that was looted or that had more pressing issues to resolve. Whatever the case, they seem to have stalled and the creation of an international organization, like the one discussed in England, would proved helpful.

Wittmann visited Germany in the summer of 1946 twice; the first time was to meet with the MFAA section that was working to expand the intelligence organization regarding art that was looting.<sup>58</sup> This effort was intended to incorporate much of the work that had been completed by the ALIU; because of this, the MFAA wanted to maintain close contact with the ALIU men for as long as the program remained in tact.<sup>59</sup> During this trip it was also proposed that the MFAA work to develop a more extensive program

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 14.

that would investigate looted art; this operation had originally been conducted by one individual and now would be expanded to a Chief Investigator, a Research Assistant and an additional Investigator.<sup>60</sup> In addition, it was decided that closer relationships and better communication should be held between the various MFAA groups that were working in the American Zone.<sup>61</sup>

When in Germany, Wittmann was asked to consult because of the ALIU's primary focus on art dealers who worked with looted art.<sup>62</sup> The MFAA intended to use the reports created by the ALIU to screen dealers before they were given licenses; they set out guidelines that, they hoped, would help control the German dealers who were still active.<sup>63</sup> These rules stated that all German dealers were required to hold a license, dealers who were dealing in objects created before 1850 must provide evidence of valid provenance before selling the work, and that dealers could sell all art objects that were produced in Germany after 1850 without having to report to the Military Government.<sup>64</sup>

The second time Wittmann visited Germany was to interrogate and prepare a report on Hans Wendland.<sup>65</sup> Wendland was a German who was responsible for much of the looting done in Switzerland during the war.<sup>66</sup> He had been interviewed with little success by the ALIU previously, but when it was discovered that he traveled to Rome during the war, he was arrested and brought to Germany to be interrogated by both the

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 16.

Note: Neutral countries were often used by the Germans to hide their looted art. It was suspected by the ALIU that they also stole what they could from these areas as well.

MFAA and ALIU.<sup>67</sup> It was hoped that Wendland would be able to help solve the many questions left unanswered in Switzerland.<sup>68</sup> This interrogation shows that even though the ALIU accomplished a great amount during their time in Europe, there were still elements left untouched and areas where they could contribute further.

Sweden was one of the few countries that were not visited by the ALIU during their investigations during the war. Wittmann notes in his report that this is surprising given that it would have been a perfect location for Germans to conceal their looted items because of its status of neutrality.<sup>69</sup> While the Swedish government was aware of the concerns held by Wittmann, they claimed that there were no great examples of looted art assets being found in Sweden.<sup>70</sup> The final task that Wittmann hoped to solve while in Sweden was to interrogate Alfred Anderson, who was a German refugee art dealer who had previously spoken with the ALIU.<sup>71</sup> Wittmann could not locate Anderson and thus, in his conclusion, state that he should be found and questioned in greater detail regarding his actions during the war and his connection to Karl Haberstock (who at the time of the creation of this document was being held in custody in the American Zone in Germany).<sup>72</sup>

The final country to be visited by Wittmann was Denmark; this was another country that was not visited by the ALIU during the war.<sup>73</sup> The reason that Denmark was not visited was because it was considered unlikely that items looted by the enemy would

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 20.

be kept here.<sup>74</sup> The reason for this visit was that when visiting with Swiss government officials, it was brought to Wittmann's attention that there had been reports made during the war that suggested art was being concealed in Denmark.<sup>75</sup> When meeting with the Commercial Attaché of the American Legation in Copenhagen, Wittmann found little evidence of any concealment in Denmark and it was known for a fact that the Germans stole no Danish art that was of great importance.<sup>76</sup> Wittmann concluded that no further investigation was needed into the looting activity in Denmark.<sup>77</sup>

In the conclusion of the document, Wittmann states that by the summer of 1946 between seventy-five and eighty percent of the art that was taken during the war by the Germans had been returned to their countries of origin.<sup>78</sup> Those remaining pieces of art were either still missing or had yet to be identified.<sup>79</sup> The majority of the identification, safekeeping and return of art had fallen under American jurisdiction because it was found in the American Zone of Germany.<sup>80</sup> The documents created by the ALIU were used as primary documents in the identification of art and personnel involved in looting.<sup>81</sup>

The number of art dealers, collectors and agents who collaborated with the Nazi party that were able to return to their business and avoid any serious prosecution, shocked Wittmann.<sup>82</sup> The United States was the largest market for the sale of valuable art objects; this meant that American art dealers and private collectors would be forced to carefully screen the art they considered buying for at least the next decade to ensure that they were

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 21.

not stolen pieces.<sup>83</sup> A list had been made between the British, French and United States that listed the looted art that was still missing; this list was to be used by customs control offices to ensure that stolen pieces of art were not entering the country.<sup>84</sup> In addition to this list, it was suggested that the Final Report created by the ALIU be used to screen the visas of art dealer and art agents entering the country.<sup>85</sup> The final suggestion regarding the custom's process was to create an international list of missing looted art objects that could be used by all nations to insure that when examining art coming into the county that no looted pieces slipped through the cracks.<sup>86</sup>

This was the final report written and produced by the ALIU and marked the end of the operation.<sup>87</sup> From this time on, the documents that had been in possession of the ALIU were transferred to the Department of State, who had a continued interest in these matters.<sup>88</sup> The success of the ALIU should not be judged based on the number of people they interrogated or the number of reports that were created; instead they should be judged by the impact they had. The ALIU provide support to countries that were unable to accomplish the investigations that were required to prosecute war criminals and for the restitution of art following the end of the war. These European governments looked to how the ALIU was organized and tried, and often struggled, to create a mimicked version of this for their own country. The reports show that even after the ALIU had left Europe, they were still being sought after as experts on the art looting organizations that had ransacked so many European cities. This document, which provided closure for the

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 22.



program during the time it was written, also is the perfect way to end a discussion of the ALIU and their place in history because it outlines the accomplishments of the ALIU and shows their activity over their short stay in Europe.

### Conclusion:

The ALIU was a small unit that was given a large task. When they entered the European Theatre in January of 1945 the major battles of the war had already been fought and the Allied governments were beginning to make plans for the future of Europe. The ALIU worked to prepare documents that could be later used to establish the ownership of various looted pieces but they were also able to determine who should be held responsible for looting. In comparison, the MFAA men entered the field on the heels of the first invaders and were constantly on the frontlines of the war rushing to get protect art and monuments before they were destroyed. This story, while often more adventurous and dramatic, should not overshadow the work that was done by the ALIU.

Through studying the work of the ALIU men, there is the constant ability to compare their work to the work being done by the MFAA. However, the two should be treated as two entirely different types of groups. The ALIU worked to collect documents and information, while the MFAA collected pieces of art. The effect of the MFAA was much more immediate because they were bringing treasures back to their homes. The ALIU had a much more long term and lasting effect. The men had quickly become experts that were sought after by all the Allied governments because of the information they had found that would assist in the massive task of repatriation.

At first glance it can appear that, since the interrogations conducted by the ALIU did not result in any convictions or even trials at the Nuremberg Trial, that their mission was a failure. This is not the case. The ALIU men used the interrogations as a way to gain insight into the larger organizations. Just because the Allied governments did not follow the suggestions laid out by the ALIU men for how the individuals should be handled

doesn't mean they were not respected. It can be assumed that because of the volume of individuals facing much more severe charges, they were just a lower priority. The information developed by the ALIU did have one contribution that had immediate ramifications. Through their many interrogations, the ALIU worked to develop files that eventually contributed to the conviction and eventual hangings of Hermann Goering and Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>1</sup>

Due to the fact that none of the men interrogated by the ALIU appeared in the Nuremberg trials, their fate is not always entirely clear. For those whose actions cannot be traced after the war, it is likely that they were never convicted and lived out their lives avoiding any further attention from the government; these men were Heinrich Hoffmann, Gunther Schiedlausky, Walter Bornheim, Karl Kress and Hermann Voss. Gisela Limberger is another individual who did not get any attention following the war, but this was expected given her position as a secretary. Even when with the ALIU, she was never held against her will but instead volunteered testimony.<sup>2</sup>

For those who can be traced following their interrogations, it appears that they were forced to go through denazification; Karl Haberstock was one of these individuals. Even after this had been completed, the attorney general of Nuremberg continued to look into his actions during the war into the 1950's.<sup>3</sup> While he was able to reestablish his business in 1951, many of his colleges as well as many family members cut ties with him because of what his actions during the war.<sup>4</sup> To avoid public ridicule, Haberstock was forced to work out of his private apartment and work at a much smaller scale for the

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<sup>1</sup> Edsel, 403.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Petropoulos, 97.

<sup>4</sup> Petropoulos, 97.

remainder of his life.<sup>5</sup> In a final attempt to redeem himself, Haberstock donated a large part of his personal library to the Augsburg Municipal Art Museum, and he and his wife set up the Karl and Magdalene Haberstock Foundation.<sup>6</sup>

Robert Scholz, Bruno Lohse and Walter Andreas Hofer were not able to escape the punishment for their actions as easily as Haberstock. The Parisian Military Tribunal tried these three men for “wartime expropriation of artwork in France.”<sup>7</sup> Scholz and Hofer both refused to attend the tribunal and stayed in Germany to avoid their conviction of ten years in jail.<sup>8</sup> Hofer chose to stay out of the public eye and waited to revive his career until the 1950’s and 1960’s.<sup>9</sup> Scholz, on the other hand, rehabilitate his career immediately, but was forced to refrain from publishing and was required to stay in his hometown to avoid being sent to prison.<sup>10</sup> When he did eventually begin to publish his writing again in the mid 1960’s, he continually attempted to rationalize, but never apologized for, his actions during the war.<sup>11</sup>

Unlike Hofer and Scholz, Lohse appeared in front of the Military Tribunal, it is not clear whether this was his personal decision or if it was forced upon him. When he stood for his trial, he, like the previous two men, was found guilty of being involved in expropriation during the war. The influence of the ALIU becomes clear during this case. Due to Lohse’s cooperation while being interrogated, the United States government asked for leniency in his sentence. Lohse had provided vital information, which led to

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<sup>5</sup> Petropoulos, 97.

<sup>6</sup> Petropoulos, 98.

<sup>7</sup> Petropoulos, 143.

<sup>8</sup> Petropoulos, 143.

<sup>9</sup> Petropoulos, 105.

<sup>10</sup> Petropoulos, 149.

<sup>11</sup> Petropoulos, 148.

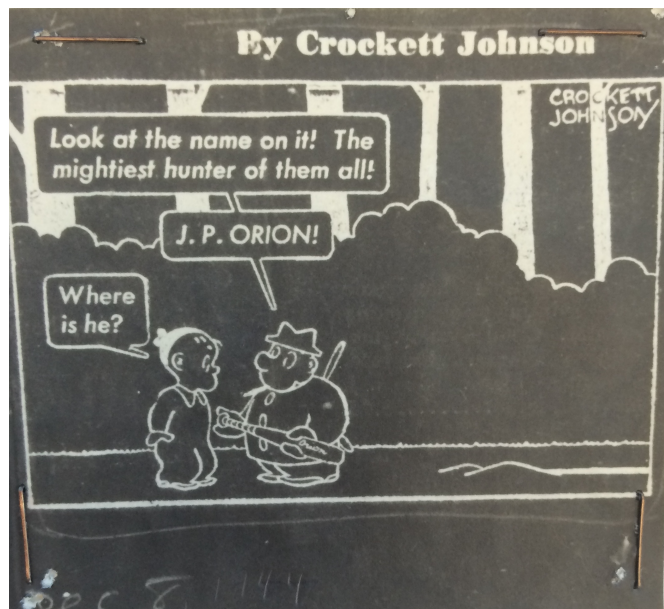
convictions but also the discovery of stolen art, and because of this he was released from his sentence.<sup>12</sup>

While the fate of the men interrogated was not determined by the ALIU, their accounts were valued when assessing the guilt during the trials following the war. The ALIU was able to be successful in their mission because of the support of the OSS and United States Army, their dedicated team, and their organized mission. Before being sent into the European Theatre initial plans had been established for how the team would precede and a very specific mission was outlined. They were able to follow this mission and quickly determined which individuals needed to be interrogated and how best to locate them. The major influence of the ALIU comes from their ability to compile such detailed documentation of the looting activities. This information was used, and likely still is used today, to track the origin of pieces of looted art. Without the work of the ALIU, the process of repatriation would have taken much longer and would not have been done in such an organized fashion. Their legacy lasted long after they left the European Theatre, and their influence should not be overshadowed by the work done by the MFAA.

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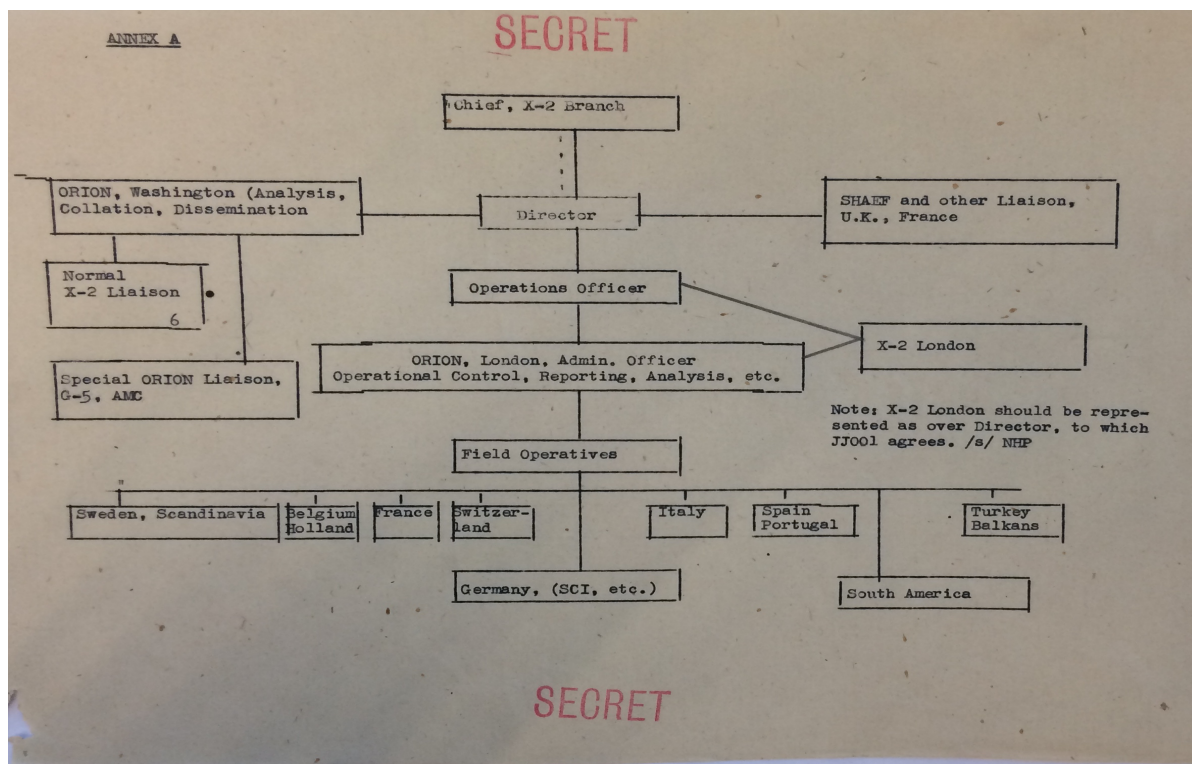
<sup>12</sup> Petropoulos, 143.

Attachments:



Attachment No. 1:

Crockett Johnson Cartoon – “Records of the Office of Strategic Services,” Record Group 226, Entry 190 Folder 1747 National Archives, College Park Maryland.



Attachment No. 2:

“ALIU Organizational Chart” – “Records of the Office of Strategic Services,” Record Group 226, Entry 190 Folder 1747 National Archives, College Park Maryland.



Attachment No. 3:

“Map of Allied Zones of Occupation in Post-War Germany,” from *Global Security*, last modified April 5, 2003. [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/other/us-army\\_germany\\_1944-46\\_map3.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/other/us-army_germany_1944-46_map3.htm)



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