

ACC

10000/143/1038

10000/143/1038

VENTURA, EUGENIO
SEPT. 1945 - MAY 1946

Minute No. 14.

28th May, 1946

14

To: Executive Commissioner,

Is you were interested in this case, have you any comment on the letter I propose to send to Prunas? AMH reply is at 21.

Ventura is again at liberty. I do not know why he should be so placed when all other alleged collaborators are detained. The Italian Government seem to be very slow in taking action in this case which, according to the late Director of Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives Sub-Commission, was a bad one and a clear case of collaboration.

I feel that there are influences at work behind the scenes in this case.

McLean Bigadier
M. Bigadier
VI. CA. Section.

15

Could we not suggest that if the Italians do

2680

not try him the other French will undoubtedly

ask for his re-arrest under War Crime & so

inform our French Rep. - who should be put in

the picture.

178/254

PK 31/5.

De Spahr - issue

MS (4)

16

Ex-Comm.

You asked for this file back in case you felt the

late Director of Intelligence, and a clear case of collaboration.

I feel that there are influences at work behind the scenes in this case.

McLean Brigades
L. G. Brigadier.
W. G. Section.

MS 3/15
2/15

15

2880

Could we not suggest that if the McLeans do

not try him the star French will undoubtedly

ask for his re-arrest under War Crimes & so

inform our French Ref. - who should be put in

MS 3/15.

the picture. MS 3/15.

Be Spoke - issue MS 3/15.

16

Ex-Comm.

I'm asked for this file back in case you felt the French representative should be informed.

A spare copy of 100 is in the file if required

MS 3/15
MS 3/15
KPC.A.S

3/6/46

PA/B.I. when Fr Ref. sec. int.

MS 3/15

Discussed with French Ref. by G. L. S. S. C. French Ref. by G. L. S. S. C.

11 June 46 P.S.S.C. French Ref. by G. L. S. S. C.

V.P. C.A.S.

11.

There written the (opposite) necessary letter
 to AFHQ. Would you follow up by telephone
 in a day or two & in meantime secure an action

ref by 69. 500. []

175/214

Copies withdrawn for CC sec pass.

12.

P.O.sfc.

Pl. see folios 6a and 7a.
 received from E.H.H.

13/7 file when reply

J. Keating-Wing
 C.A. Section.

5th April 44.

13.

V.P. C.A.S.

The attached letter is for signature
 please if approved.

6 APR 68. Would you follow up by telephone
in a day or two & in meantime send an interim

reply to 67 sub. []

179/214

Copies withdrawn for CC SEC files.

12

P.O. of C.

Pls. see folios 6a and 7a. 13/3 file when reply
received from
E.H.C.

J. Keating-Wray
Co. Sec. Inv.

5th April 68.

13

V.P. C.A.S.

The attached letter is for signature
please if approved.

27.5.46

E. J. Dyer Ltd.

14

Executive Commissioner.

Ref minute 3, letter at p.8A is submitted for signature of Chief Commissioner.

25 Mar 46.

C.S.O.

Chief Commissioner.

Approved
Attached is submitted for your information signature

6. MS 26/3.

E.C. Is he shown as the official list of war criminals? I want to be certain the item is precisely employed & not used.

Approved by Mr. [unclear] 26/3

MAR 26 REC

V.P. C.A.S.

Please confirm 178/24/3

Security Div

Ref above please confirm pass back through this Section

H.A. Carter

27/3/46

C.A. Section

28/3/46
D.A.G. (War Crimes) G.H.Q., does not confirm to an official list of war criminals. Details in accordance with policy laid down by C.C. of S. Instructions are awaited by G.H.Q. from Paris before change is made. Will appear before a United Court.

W.C. Sec. Div.

Chief Commissioner.

Attached is submitted for your information
signature

6. MS 26/3.

E.C. Is he shown as the official
list of war criminals? I want to be
certain the item is precisely employed & not used.

V.P.C.A.S. ✓ 7.

Please confirm

MS 26/3

Security Div

Ref above please confirm & pass back through this Section

MA.
C.A.S.

27/3/46

C.A. Section

D.A.G. (War Crimes) G.H.Q., does not confirm he is an official
list of war criminals. Unreliable in accordance with policy laid
down by C.C.G.S. Instructions are awaited by G.H.Q. from Paris
before changed is made. Will appear before a United Court.

28/3/46.

W.C.
S.A. Div.

Ex. Comm.

10.

When dealing with the matter in your absence I checked into
P.S. S/C that things contained in Mm. 1. could be relied on. P.S.
S/C was informed by G.H.Q. that Ventura had been arrested as a
war criminal and on that assumed that he was held. War Crimes
G.H.Q. do not now confirm that Ventura was on the Allied W.C.C.
list.

Consider the only way to deal with the matter, copies/submit it is to forward
copy of the letter at 4A to AFNEC and ask them urgently for info
on the subject to make a reply to be given to the Italian Govt. Monday 28/3/46.

MA. 114
W.C.C.

CA Section for Executive Commissioner.

Reference document 4.A. Information to this S/C from War Crimes Section, GHQ, CWF is:

1. Ventura is listed on the United Nations War Criminals list and was taken into custody for this reason.
2. The "French military authorities" mentioned in the Foreign Ministry letter, are the members of the French War Crimes Commission in Italy working in conjunction with other Allied organizations of similar nature.
3. Ventura is a French national.
4. Ventura is at present in British custody at Florence.

It would seem that this is a matter for submission to A.F.H.C.

Ext. 586
13 March 1945:

JOHN W. CHAPMAN
Colonel, JAGD
Director, Public Safety S/C.

John W. Chapman

677

C.S.O. The above information for info of the C.C. Com., please

add 14/3

C.S. this L.

Please draft letter to P.M. telling him of facts in 1-4 above & reminding him that P.C. have undertaken to hand over War Criminals. Copy to

other Allied organizations of similar nature.

3. Ventura is a French national.
4. Ventura is at present in British custody at Florence.

It would seem that this is a matter for submission to A.F.H.C.

Ext. 686

13 March 1946:

JOHN W. CHAPMAN

Colonel, JAGD

Director, Public Safety S/C.

John W. Chapman

J.W.

67

C.S.O. The above information for info of the C.S.O., please

*Adm
14/3*

C.S.O. Miss L.

Please draft letter to P.D. telling him of fact in

2650

1-4 above & reminding him that P.C. has

undertaken to hand over War Criminals. Copy to

ATCR.

W (14/3)

C.S.O. Ex-Com

letter

draft submitted at

20/3 18/15/3

is this letter?

20/3.

1-2/3.

C.S.O.

3.

*I have made no major amendment
otherwise agreed.*

McLamb

23/3

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
Civil Affairs Section
APO 394

Ref: AO/44318/PS

31st May 1946.

My Dear Mr. Prunas,

Referring to your letter to Admiral Stone dated 30th March 1946, and my interim reply on his behalf on 26th April 1946 concerning the arrest of Mr. Niguelio Ventura in Florence.

The matter has been investigated and the following facts have emerged :-

Records show that the Italian Office in charge of recovering works of art, made enquiries which resulted in the discovery on 12th August 1945 of nine expressionist paintings, which Ventura admitted having acquired in 1942 on behalf of Goering.

As a result Ventura was arrested on or about 12th August 1945.

The above information was passed to the Ministry of Education by the French Delegate to the Advisory Council for Italy and the investigations which led to Ventura's arrest were in the hands of the Italian Government, therefore it would seem the Government were, at that time, cognizant of events.

Shortly after his arrest, Ventura was given provisional liberty pending the initiation of charges of collaboration at the suit of your Government.

However on 6th February 1946 the French Ministry of Justice affirmed their wish for Ventura to be kept in custody.

He was located in Florence, interrogated by the French War Crimes Liaison Officer, at whose request he was again placed in custody by the British Authorities. At the request of the French Government he was released from hospital custody on or about 23rd March 1946.

It is understood that on his release, the Italian Authorities assured the French Embassy that Ventura would be tried immediately on charges of collaboration, from which it is inferred he is of Italian nationality.

So far there has been no indication of the prosecution of such charges.

FOR THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

2684

Yours very truly

Nob. Cavaliere Don Renato PRUNAS,
Ministro Plenipotenziario,
Segretario Generale,
Ministero degli Affari Esteri
ROMA.

MC

M. GARR
Brigadier.

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION
Civil Affairs Section
APO 394

10A

Ref: AG/44318/R3

31st May 1946.

My Dear Mr. Prunas,

Referring to your letter to Admiral Stone dated 8th March 1946, and my interim reply on his behalf on 4th April 1946 concerning the arrest of Mr. Eugenio Ventura in Florence.

The matter has been investigated and the following facts have emerged :-

Records show that the Italian Office in charge of recovering works of art, made enquiries which resulted in the discovery on 12th August 1945 of nine Dadaist paintings, which Ventura admitted having acquired in 1942 on behalf of Goering.

As a result Ventura was arrested on or about 12th August 1945.

The above information was passed to the Ministry of Education by the French Delegate to the Advisory Council for Italy and the investigations which led to Ventura's arrest were in the hands of the Italian Government, therefore it would seem the Government were, at that time, cognisant of events.

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2683

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FOR THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Yours very truly

Nob. Cavaliere Don Renato PRUNAS,
Ministro Plenipotenziario,
Segretario Generale,
Ministero degli Affari Esteri
ROMA.

M. Carr
M. Carr
Brigadier.

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION.
Public Safety Sub-Commission
APO 394

Tel: 489081-502

AC/14318/PS

26 April 1946

SUBJECT : Eugenio VENTURA.

TO : "A" Branch, G.H.Q., C.M.F.

1. Reference our letter of 2 April 1946.
2. May a reply be expedited please.

AHE/tm

EJB
E. J. BYE, Colonel
Acting Director.

2684

APC 394.

Ref: AG/14318/25

4 April, 1946.

Dear Mr. PERRAS,

I write on behalf of Rear Admiral Stone with reference to your letter 16/7609/19 of 8 March 1946 concerning the arrest of Dr. Eugenio VENTURA in Florence.

The matter is being investigated and I had hoped to have these investigations completed before this. The matter has been taken up with higher authority and I shall inform you of the position as soon as I am able to do so.

Yours sincerely,

W.C.
Brigadier.

Rob. Cavaliere Don Renato PERRAS,
Ministro Plenipotenziario,
Segretario Generale,
Ministero degli Affari Esteri,
ROME.

268

Ref: AD/11318/12.2 April 1946.

SUBJECT: Eugenio VENTURA.

TO : "A" Branch,
G.M.C., C.M.F.

1. On 8th March the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Government reported to the Chief Commissioner that a Mr. Eugenio VENTURA, an antique dealer of FLORENCE, had been arrested in FLORENCE and was being kept in custody pending his removal to PARIS by the Allied authorities.
2. The Minister of Foreign Affairs protested against this action in the attached letter.
3. On my instructions the Public Safety Sub-Commission sought information from you and elicited the following:
 - (a) that VENTURA was listed in the United Nations war criminals list and was taken into custody for this reason;
 - (b) that the "French military authorities" mentioned in the Foreign Minister's letter are members of the French War Crimes Commission in ITALY;
 - (c) that VENTURA was a French national and that he was at present in British custody in FLORENCE.
4. On this information a letter was prepared for the Minister of Foreign Affairs stating that in view of the facts described above and in view of the obligation of the Italian Government to hand over war criminals, Mr. VENTURA could not be released.
5. Before actually despatching the letter I again instructed that confirmation be sought as to whether Mr. VENTURA was actually on the war criminals list or not. I am now informed by your Section that he is not on the war criminals list but has been arrested in accordance with policy laid down by the C.C.S.
6. In order to enable me to reply to the Italian Government I should be glad to know what this policy is and by what right Mr. VENTURA, a French national in territory under the Italian Government, has been arrested by Allied military authorities without apparently any reference to the Italian Government.

For the Chief Commissioner:

M. S. LUSH

2670

Copy to: Chief Commissioner.
Exec. Commissioner.Brigadier,
Executive Commissioner.

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

APO 394

Office of the Executive Commissioner

5A

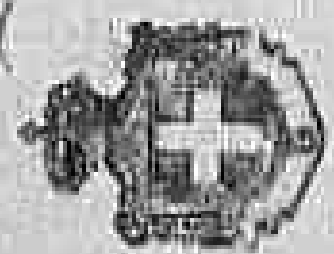
see 1A-4A

Public Safety Sub Com.

Ref conversation Luch. Byg. Would you
investigate & inform me.

MS 12/13

2670



Ministero degli Affari Esteri

IL SEGRETARIO GENERALE

Rough translation

n° 16/7609/19

Rome, March 8th, 1946

Dear Admiral Stone,

A report has been received from Florence by the "Reali Carabinieri" stating that on March 4th inst. at 12 noon the French military authority, with the British Police assistance, have proceeded to arrest Mr. Eugenio VENTURA, an antique dealer, and that same is now under guard in a private hospital, pending his removal to Paris by Allied Authorities.

I have reason to believe that Mr. Ventura's arrest is related to the finding and the seizure by the Italian Authorities, following information supplied by the Allied Commission Monuments and Fine Arts Sub-Commission, of nine pictures by French painters, presumed to have been illegally removed by the Germans and which were found in Mr. Ventura's possession. This matter has been for some time the subject of correspondence between this Ministry and the French Embassy in Rome, which has been informed that said paintings will be returned to the French Government as soon as the latter has furnished proof that the paintings in question were a part of French collections. On the other hand the proper Italian Authorities are investigating Ventura's actual responsibilities and there is no doubt that they will proceed in the matter according to the provisions of Law and rigorously.

In view of the above, I am obliged to point out that:

- 1st - In accordance with provisions of International law as established by custom and usage, the power of punish vested in the Occupation authorities with regard to the occupied State's citizens, only concerns occurrences during the occupation and dangerous to the security of the occupying forces, omitting former occurrences and facts having no connection with the occupation;

Admiral Ellery W. Stone

n° 16/7509/19

Rome, March 8th, 1946

Dear Admiral Stone,

A report has been received from Florence by the "Reali Carabinieri" stating that on March 4th inst. at 12 noon the French military authority, with the British Police assistance, have proceeded to arrest Mr. Eugenio VENTURA, an antique dealer, and that same is now under guard in a private hospital, pending his removal to Paris by Allied Authorities.

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Admiral Ellery W. STONE
Chief Commissioner
Allied Commission
R O M E

p.t.o.

- 2nd - According to the terms of the Armistice between the United Nations and Italy, the enforcement of rights of occupying Powers is attributed to the Allied Commander-in-Chief and does not belong - separately - to the French Armed forces;
- 3rd - In provinces returned to Italian Administration, the Allied Armed Forces' power to undertake arrests may be implemented only toward persons who have accomplished actions or crimes to the damage of same Allied Armed Forces;
- 4th - Even if Ventura's alleged act could be included in those cases in which the Allied Forces have maintained powers of undertaking arrests, Ventura should be judged by the Italian judicial authority, unless the Allies deem it is a case to be submitted to their military courts in Italy, which - though conforming to their own procedure - apply Italian laws;
- 5th - Ventura's extradition cannot take place because it is contrary to provisions of Italian laws as well as to the terms of the Italo-French extradition agreement of May 12th, 1870, excluding extraditions of citizens of the respective countries. Nor does the Armistice convention depart from such rule.

It is our viewpoint on the question that Mr. Ventura, instead of being transferred to France, should be handed over to the Italian Authorities which alone have jurisdiction in the matter.

I am convinced, dear Admiral Stone, that you share such opinion and that, accordingly, you will issue suitable instructions to the proper Allied Authorities.

I shall be very grateful to you if you will kindly keep me informed as to your action in the matter, and I avail myself of this opportunity, dear Admiral Stone, to convey to you the expression of my friendliest greetings.

Very sincerely yours,

(sgd) R. PRUMAS

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

URGENTE

Roma,

2 MAR. 1943

46/7809/19

Caro Ammiraglio,

L'Arma dei Reali Carabinieri segnala da Firenze che il 4 corrente, alle ore 12, l'Autorità militare francese, assistita dalla Polizia inglese, ha proceduto all'arresto dell'antiquario sig. Eugenio Ventura, e che questi si trova ora piantonato in una casa di salute in attesa della sua traduzione a Parigi a cura delle Autorità alleate.

Ho motivo di ritenere che l'arresto del Ventura sia in relazione con il ritrovamento ed il sequestro operati presso lo stesso Ventura delle Autorità italiane, dietro segnalazione della Sottocommissione Alleata per i Monumenti e le Belle Arti, di nove quadri di pittori francesi, presumibilmente oggetto di illegali asportazioni da parte dei tedeschi. Su tale argomento questo Ministero è da tempo in corrispondenza con l'Ambasciata di Francia, alla quale fu comunicato che i quadri in parola saranno restituiti al Governo francese appena questo avrà fornito la prova della provenienza dei quadri stessi da collezioni francesi. D'altra parte la competente Autorità italiana stà accertando le effettive responsabilità del Ventura e non v'ha dubbio che essa procederà con il dovuto rigore e a termini di legge nei suoi confronti.

Ciò premesso, mi corre l'obbligo di farle presente che:

Ammiraglio Ellery W. STONE
Commissario Capo

257v

Caro Ammiraglio,

L'Arma dei Reali Carabinieri segnala da Firenze che il 4 corrente, alle ore 12, l'Autorità militare francese, assistita dalla Polizia inglese, ha proceduto all'arresto dell'antiquario sig. Eugenio Ventura, e che questi si trova ora piantonato in una casa di salute in attesa della sua traduzione a Parigi a cura delle Autorità alleate.

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Ciò premesso, mi corre l'obbligo di farle presente che:

Ammiraglio Ellery W. STONE
Commissario Capo
Commissione Alleata

R O M A

- 1° - in base alle norme di diritto internazionale consuetudinario il potere punitivo delle Autorità di occupazione nei riguardi dei cittadini dello Stato occupato si riferisce a fatti compiuti durante l'occupazione ed aventi carattere di pericolosità per la sicurezza delle forze occupanti, prescindendo da fatti anteriori ed estranei all'occupazione stessa;
- 2° - ai termini delle condizioni d'armistizio fra l'Italia e le Nazioni Unite, l'esercizio dei diritti di Potenza occupante è attribuito al Comandante in Capo alleato e non appartiene separatamente alle forze armate francesi;
- 3° - nelle provincie restituite all'Amministrazione italiana la facoltà delle Forze Armate Alleate di procedere ad arresti può esercitarsi solo nei confronti di persone che abbiano commesso atti o delitti in danno delle stesse Forze Armate alleate;
- 4° - anche se il fatto imputato al Ventura potesse comprendersi fra i delitti per i quali le Forze Armate alleate conservano la facoltà di arresto, il Ventura dovrebbe essere giudicato dall'autorità giudiziaria italiana a norma delle leggi italiane, a meno che non si tratti di giudizio che gli Alleati ritengono dover sottoporre ai propri tribunali militari in Italia, i quali peraltro, pur seguendo la propria procedura, applicano la legge italiana;
- 5° - l'estradizione del Ventura non può aver luogo perchè contraria sia alle norme della legge italiana in tale materia, sia alla convenzione di estradizione italo-francese del 12 maggio 1870 la quale esclude l'estradizione dei cittadini rispettivi. Nè la convenzione di armistizio con l'Italia deroga a tale regola.

Il nostro punto di vista sulla questione è che il Ventura, anzichè tradotto in Francia, debba essere consegnato alle Autorità italiane, sole competenti a procedere nei suoi confronti.

Sono convinto che Ella, caro Ammiraglio, vorrà

2870

- 1° - in base alle norme di diritto internazionale consuetudinario il potere punitivo delle Autorità di occupazione nei riguardi dei cittadini dello Stato occupato si riferisce a fatti compiuti durante l'occupazione ed aventi carattere di pericolosità per la sicurezza delle forze occupanti, prescindendo da fatti anteriori ed estranei all'occupazione stessa;
- 2° - ai termini delle condizioni d'armistizio fra l'Italia e le Nazioni Unite, l'esercizio dei diritti di Potenza occupante è attribuito al Comandante in Capo alleato e non appartiene separatamente alle forze armate francesi;
- 3° - nelle province restituite all'Amministrazione italiana la facoltà delle Forze Armate Alleate di procedere ad arresti può esercitarsi solo nei confronti di persone che abbiano commesso atti o delitti in danno delle stesse Forze Armate alleate;
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2870

Sono convinto che Ella, caro Ammiraglio, vorrà condividere tale punto di vista e vorrà di conseguenza compiacersi impartire all'Autorità Alleata competente urgenti istruzioni nel

./.

Ministero degli Affari Esteri

- 3 -

senso più sopra indicato.

Nel pregarla di volermi far conoscere il seguito che Ella avrà ritenuto dare alla questione, La prego di voler gradire, caro Ammiraglio, i sensi della mia cordiale amicizia.

8 MAR 1943

R. Fumey

3A

2A

AC SEC HQ ALCON

21 FEB 46 1100

AFHQ

1306

CONFIDENTIAL

2A
PARA ONE PD SUBJECT IS VENTURA PD
PARA TWO PD YOUR CABLE FOX KRAY SIX ZERO EIGHT ZERO FIVE ON ONE FIVE FEBRUARY NINETEEN PD
PARA THREE PD ARRESTED BY CO MR AT PADOVA ON ONE THREE AUGUST ONE NINE FOUR FIVE PD
BELIEVED PD ON BAIL PENDING PROCEEDINGS BY ITALIAN AUTHORITIES PD

2670

ROUTINE

SECURITY DIVISION

Altho Capt.

G.J. LORAN
CWO. USA
Asst. Adjutant

7542

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT : VENTURA Eugenio

CONFIDENTIAL

HQ Allied Commission

Copy to : JAG, MTOUSA

CHQ CLF

16443/A-3

22 May 46

Reference your AG/14318/PS of 2 Apr 46.

1. It is suggested that the following points may be made the basis of a reply to the Italian Government.
2. The earliest record held here on this subject is a copy of a letter from the French Ministry of Education to the French Ministry of Justice, dated 8 Sep 45. This shows that the Italian office in charge of recovering works of art made enquiries which resulted in the discovery on 12 Aug 45 of 9 French Impressioniste paintings, which VENTURA admitted having acquired in 1942, on behalf of GOERING.
3. By whom VENTURA's arrest was then authorised is not known, but as far as can be ascertained, he was placed in custody on or about 12 August 45.
4. It is observed that the above information was passed to the Ministry of Education by the French Delegate to the Advisory Council for ITALY. It hardly seems feasible, therefore, that the Italian Government was in complete ignorance of what was taking place, especially since the investigations which led to the arrest (and possibly the arrest itself) were in the hands of an Italian Government Department.
5. On 6 Feb 46, the French Ministry of Justice affirmed their wish for VENTURA to be kept in arrest.
6. However, it seems that soon after his arrest in August, he was released on bail pending the initiation of charges of collaboration at the suit of the Italian Government. The next step was the circulation of his name on a JAG, MTOUSA, 'Wanted List' at the request of the French War Crimes Liaison office at AFHQ.
7. VENTURA was located at FLORENCE on 4 Mar 46, whereupon he was at once interrogated by the French War Crimes Liaison Officer, at whose request he was once more placed in custody by the British authorities. At the request of the French Government he was released from hospital custody on or about the 23 Mar 46.
8. We are informed that on his release, the Italian authorities assured the French Embassy that VENTURA would be tried immediately on charges of collaboration, from which it is inferred that he is of Italian nationality. Up to the present there has been no indication of the preferment of such charges.

Reference your AG/14318/ES of 2 Apr 46.

1. It is suggested that the following points may be made the basis of a reply to the Italian Government.
2. The earliest record held here on this subject is a copy of a letter from the French Ministry of Education to the French Ministry of Justice, dated 8 Sep 45. This shows that the Italian office in charge of recovering works of art made enquiries which resulted in the discovery on 12 Aug 45 of 9 French Impressionist paintings, which VENTURA admitted having acquired in 1942, on behalf of GOERING.
3. By whom VENTURA's arrest was then authorized is not known, but as far as can be ascertained, he was placed in custody on or about 12 August 45.
4. It is observed that the above information was passed to the Ministry of Education by the French Delegate to the Advisory Council for ITALY. It hardly seems feasible, therefore, that the Italian Government was in complete ignorance of what was taking place, especially since the investigations which led to the arrest (and possibly the arrest itself) were in the hands of an Italian Government Department.
5. On 6 Feb 46, the French Ministry of Justice affirmed their wish for VENTURA to be kept in arrest.
6. However, it seems that soon after his arrest in August, he was released on bail pending the initiation of charges of collaboration at the suit of the Italian Government. The next step was the circulation of his name on a JAG, MTOUSA, 'Wanted List' at the request of the French War Crimes Liaison office at AFHQ.
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8. We are informed that on his release, the Italian authorities assured the French Embassy that VENTURA would be tried immediately on charges of collaboration, from which it is inferred that he is of Italian nationality. Up to the present there has been no indication of the preferment of such charges. On the contrary, in fact, the tendency on the part of both French and Italians appears to be to ignore the blatant collaboration to which all available evidence points.
9. It is regretted that we have no further information on this matter, and we suggest that it might be more profitably pursued with the French and Italian authorities. The Theatre Judge Advocate, MTOUSA, has supplied all the information in his possession and it is incorporated in this letter. It is, however, suggested that you approach him if you require further information.

CONFIDENTIAL

J. Nansen

Brigadier,
DAG.

/m

INCOMING MESSAGE

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

Originator's Reference: FX 60805

Date/Time of Origin: 1515594

Message Centre No: C/9374

Date Time Rec'd: FEB 16 0930

Precedence: ROUTINE

FROM: AFHQ ALCOM-ROME AFHQ (CASEHQA) FRMA 'A' BRANCH CLF.

TO : HQ BTA- HQ 13 CORPS-ALCOM-BESINO-DISTHREE

THREE JAG NAPLES

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL:

SUBJECT IS VENTURA. FRENCH NATIONALITY. APPOINTED BY GOERING TO BUY WORKS OF ART
 ORIGINALLY ARRESTED IN FLORENCE IN AUGUST 45 ON ORDERS OF BRITISH OFFICER NOW BELIEVED
 IN BRITISH CUSTODY. SIGNAL URGENTLY THIS HQ INFORMATION LOCATION

AC DIST

ACTION: LEGAL

INFO : CHIEF COMMISSIONER

FILE

SKELETON

ACTION**CONFIDENTIAL**HEADQUARTERS
16 FEB 1946

2672

LEGAL SUBCOMMITTEE

CLO

DCLO

Chief Counsel

CJO

Legal Section

CLERKS

Red 16/1/46

Precedence: ROUTINE

FROM: AFHQ ALCOM FOME AFHQ (CASERTA) FRMA 'A' BRANCH C&F.

TO : HQ BTA HQ 13 CORPS ALCOM ETSINO-DISTREE

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CONFIDENTIAL

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FILE

SKELETON

ACTION

CONFIDENTIAL

LEGAL SUBCOMMISS	
CLO	
DCLO	
Chief Couns	
CJO	
Litigation Section	
CLERKS	

Red 16/2/46

RECEIVED
16 FEB 1946

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C-C-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

JBWP/ps

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED COMMISSION

APO 394

Subcommission for Monuments Fine Arts & Archives
(Tel. 489081, ext 442 & 254; 478480)

20909/25/A/MFAA

13 September 1945

SUBJECT: French Impressionist Pictures Recovered
at FLORENCE.

TO : VP, Civil Affairs Section.

1. On July 20 1945 the MFAA Subcommission received notification from Control Commission, Germany, that the well-known Florentine art-dealer, EUGENIO VENTURA, was believed to be in possession of three pictures of French origin by Monet, Sisley, and Renoir, which had been seized in 1940 by the notorious German ROSENBERG organisation. This information was passed to Dr SIVIERO, head of the Italian Office for Recovery of Works of Art. Dr SIVIERO acted with great promptness and energy. VENTURA at first denied all knowledge, but after a series of protests and evasions produced from their cache in the convent of S. Marco at FLORENCE, the missing pictures, together with six other magnificent examples of French impressionist paintings and a certain number of Italian works of art. These were immediately sequestered by the police and VENTURA gaoled, pending enquiry. A list of the French pictures is appended, and to date it is known that seven of the nine pictures were taken by the Germans from Jewish collections in France.

2. The history of their acquisition has been subject of full enquiry by Dr SIVIERO who has made a preliminary report to the Italian authorities and to this Subcommission. The salient features are that from 1941 to 1944 VENTURA was in close and continuous contact with Professor HOFER, agent for GOERING, and through him negotiated the exchange of the nine French paintings in return for eleven Italian works of art from VENTURA's own collection. A photographic copy of the receipt, signed by HOFER and specifying both sides of the deal, is in the hands of the Subcommission. The origin of these pictures was certainly known to VENTURA (it was in fact plainly marked in most cases ²⁸ the frame), and the fact of their acquisition was known to officials

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3. After consultation with the Director General of Fine Arts and with Monsieur Heurgon, cultural attaché of the French Embassy, it was agreed that, pending full enquiry and in view of number of local Florentine interests involved, the pictures should be stored in impartial hands, preferably in ROME. In reply to a

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formal suggestion to this effect the Minister of Public Instruction (Prot.No 1259 Div.III of 31 August) nominated the Superintendent of Galleries at ROME and gave instructions for the transfer. This arrangement was agreed to by the French Embassy.

4. In Florence however the proposed safe-custody was received with a flood of abuse. The Superintendent of Galleries and head of the Fine Arts Service for TUSCANY, Professor POGGI, wrote a violent article affirming that the pictures should remain at FLORENCE until the Italian pictures, passed in exchange to GOERING by VENTURA, were first recovered and restored to ITALY. The pictures have remained in FLORENCE and the Procuratore del Re has been prevailed upon locally to ban their removal. At the request of the Minister of Public Instruction a telegram was sent by the Minister of Justice requesting their release, so far without any effect/

5. Far more serious however in its implications is the intervention of Professor RAGGHIANI, Undersecretary of State for Fine Arts. RAGGHIANI, a Florentine politician and art-historian, has connections with the art-dealing world and actually employs as his secretary a close relative of Count CONTINI-BONACOSI, another important and unsavoury Florentine dealer, whose activities in relation to GOERING and other German collectors are at present under investigation. Ragghianti has done all in his power to suppress the whole affair, and has repeatedly demanded the dissolution of the office of Doctor SIVIERO, who has so ably unearthed the facts.

6. The position of the Allied Commission in the matter appears to this Subcommittee to be clear. The eventual restoration (or not) of these pictures is a matter for diplomatic settlement between the French and Italian governments; and the suppression of enquiry, however deplorable, is not a direct concern of the Allied Commission but a matter for the Italian Government itself to decide. Nevertheless it is felt that the Italian Government should be clearly and sharply informed of the deplorable effect on world-opinion of any such policy of suppression. Quite apart from any obligation created by the past work of the Monuments and Fine Arts Subcommittee, culminating recently in the restoration by the Allies to Florence of all the works of art removed by the Germans, there is the fact that numerous important works of art and libraries are still in Germany and Austria, awaiting restoration to Italy. The attitude of the Allies in this matter is bound to be deeply and unfavourably impressed by any suggestion that the Italian Government is unwilling to play a similar part in restoring to their rightful place works of art

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/s/ J.B. WARD PERKINS
/t/ J.B. WARD PERKINS
Lt. Col., R.A.
Director

EXTRACT

LEGIONE TERRITORIALE DEI CARABINIERI REALI DI FIRENZE
 Compagnia Interna di Firenze (Squadra Investigativa)

N.181/1 di rapporto SEGRETO Firenze, li 1° settembre 1945

RAPPORTO GIUDIZIARIO di denuncia di:

- 1°) VENTURA Eugenio fu Luigi e fu Adele Grangetti, nato a Roma il 28 dicembre 1887, domiciliato a Firenze- Via della Pescaia n.8, antiquario: FERMATO IL 13 AGOSTO 1945.
- 2°) PORZIO Donato fu Oreste e di Rossi Clorinda, nato a Caserta il 12 gennaio 1898, domiciliato a Firenze- Piazza Pitti n.7, dottore in scienze economiche e commerciali con studio in Via Tor-nabuoni n.5 : A PIEDE LIBERO

R E S P O N S A B I L I

= VENTURA, del reato di cui all'art 5 del D.L.13 27 luglio 1944, N.159, in relazione agli articoli 51-54 e 58 del C.P.M.; del reato di cui all'art.640 C.P.C. con le aggravanti del nn. 1 e 2 stesso articolo;

di violazione al Proclama N.2 del Governo Militare Alleato; di violazione alla legge sull'imposta generale sull'entrata (R.D.L. 19 giugno 1940, N.762 e successive modificazioni.

= PORZIO, del reato di cui all'art.640 C.P.C. con l'aggravante del n.1 stesso articolo e art. 61 - n.9 C.P.C. -

.....
 Le dichiarazioni del VENTURA presentando, con chiara evidenza, molte lacune sospette e l'intendimento, chiaramente manifestato, di procurarsi alibi ed ipotetiche testimonianze, inducevano i sottufficiali inquirenti, allo scopo di non aver intralcio alcuno nelle delicate e riservate indagini che stavano per essere iniziate, a procedere al fermo del VENTURA, sollecitando, in proposito, la convalida dell'ill.mo Sig. Procuratore del Regno, Comm. RO-TELLA, che veniva immediatamente accordata (V. allegato N.3).

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