

SECRET NAZI

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22 Consular Aids Flee

By Freight Elevator

By PAUL A. CONLIN

Twenty-two ranking Nazi diplomats in the United States and their official German news agency spokesman retreated in something of a rout from newsmen and photographers late yesterday via a service exit and freight elevators at the Mayflower Hotel.

They executed their coup—or rout—at the hostelry's North Room, where they had been closeted in a secret luncheon conference with Herr Hans Thomsen, charge d'affaires of the German Embassy.

Ordered by Berlin

Presumably, it was Dr. Thomsen who directed the strategy, or retreat. It was he, on orders from Berlin, who summoned to the capital the ranking German consuls from the leading cities of the United States.

The luncheon was scheduled to get under way at 1:45 p.m. At 1:30, reporters sought Dr. Thomsen, who has been spokesman for the embassy since the departure of Ambassador Hans Dieckhoff almost a year ago.

An attache, who refused to be identified, barred the door with the announcement Dr. Thomsen "is in conference and cannot be disturbed."

Dodge Political Queries

The arriving consular officials were more affable.

On a pledge of secrecy for the informants, they furnished a copy of the guest list, but parried all inquiries of political nature. They let it be known, however, that the fate of some 400 members of the scuttled German liner Columbus was a paramount subject for discussion.

The luxury cruiser was scuttled 400 miles off Cape May, N. J., about a month ago. Since then survivors have been held at Ellis Island, N. Y. Plans to return crew members of military age via Pacific ports and Siberia were learned in New York several days ago.

Photographers Barred

A written request to Dr. Thomsen placed in his hands by a head-waiter brought the curt response:

"There will be no pictures and no publicity on this meeting."

Almost immediately, the doors to the north room were bolted and protective curtains were hung over the glass panes. After an hour the unidentified attache reappeared.

"Where have the German consular officers gone?" he was asked.

"I guess they went out—on their feet," was the answer as he whirled a revolving door in the faces of his inquisitors.

A waiter later revealed:

"Zey sneak out ze zervice door, zen opp ze freight el'vator."

The cream of Reichsfuehrer Hitler's consular representatives in the United States was among the score who departed thus.

Herr Herbert Scholz—he once cut a social swath in the Capital when he was first secretary of the embassy—was at the conference as consul general for Boston.

Likewise Capt. Fritz Wiedemann, Adolph Hitler's World War superior and now the handsome consul general for Germany at San Francisco, who flew here yesterday from the West Coast.

Kurt Sell, Washington representative of the German News Bureau, partook of the Thomsen hospitality but asserted:

"I can't say a thing. I'm only a newspaperman myself, you know."

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