

Ref No SAIC/14
19 May 45

S E C R E T

SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER
APO 758

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:Auth: OG, 7th Army:
:Init: p. h. :
:Date: 19 May 1945 :
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FRENCH WORKS OF ART OBTAINED BY
FORMER REICHSMARSCHALL HERMANN GOERING

(Cf Questionnaire A C of S, G-5, Seventh Army, 10 May 1945)

Rating: C-3

Date of Information: See Text

Interrogator: A.2.

1. PREAMBLE

Although he has been depicted in many news reports as being half mad, GOERING gives the impression of being a highly intelligent and cunning man, with charming manners and a certain knowledge of art. He is very talkative, and once he has started to develop a favorite theme he can hardly be stopped.

He insists that he has no desire to conceal anything about the works of art which he has obtained in foreign countries. He explains his tremendous accumulation of treasures by claiming to be a great lover of artistic works, and by stating that it was his intention to transform CARINHALL into a National Museum. He says, "ICH BIN NUN MAL EIN RENAISSANCETYP" ("After all, I'm a Renaissance type"). GOERING also states that the low prices of jewelry and works of art in the occupied countries provided an incentive to buy them wholesale. He adds that he was astounded by the cheapness of diamonds at CARTIER's in PARIS in 1940. From 1942 onwards, the prices of antiques and artistic works rose enormously, and he had to exercise all his cleverness and every ruse in order to avoid being "stung" by the dealers.

Source states that in addition to the treasures which he bought, others were sent to him as gifts by Party members and units of the GAF, and that he also exchanged articles with dealers and other collectors, as a stamp collector swaps stamps. He claims that only about one percent of his collection comes from France.

2. FRENCH WORKS OF ART IN GOERING'S COLLECTION

GOERING states that no works of art were taken away from the French National Museums. He claims to have been very helpful to the directors of the French Museum in providing safe repositories for their treasures in specially constructed air raid shelters. He states that he exchanged two statues and a couple of paintings for one wooden statuette and one painting which he was very fond of at the LOUVRE. The negotiations, he states, were long and difficult, but there was no exercise of pressure on his part.

The Jewish properties were exhibited in the SALLE DES JEUX DE PAUME, under the supervision of French and German officials. The most valuable of these were sent, on HITLER's orders, to the Royal Castles of NEU-SCHWANSTEIN and HOHENSCHWANGAU, Bavaria, to the shelters of the FUEHRERBAUTEN in MUNICH and of the REICHSCHANCELLORY in BERLIN, and to OBERSALZBERG. Their ultimate destination was the new National Museum at LINZ. Although he admits that some of these treasures were sent elsewhere, GOERING pretends to have no knowledge of their whereabouts.

The remaining works of art exhibited at the SALLE DES JEUX DE PAUME were sold at public auction. PW bought some paintings, statues, antique furniture, and GOBELIN tapestries. In these deals GOERING was advised by a French expert, a Museum official, and his bids never exceeded the evaluation set by this advisor. The only jewelry which he bought was antique. French and German antique dealers were also authorized to take part in these auctions. PW claims that the FUEHRER demanded photographs of all works of art bought by other amateurs, and that the latter often had to turn over their purchases to HITLER's representative, for eventual shipment to the LINZ Museum.

GOERING states that he bought certain items direct from dealers in Paris, like any private collector. Also, he occasionally made purchases from chateaux and private collections through an intermediary.

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3. CONDITION OF THE COLLECTION

Source states that two specialists were responsible for the care of the works of art in his collection, and that all items were in an excellent state of preservation at the time of their evacuation to Southern Germany (See next section).

4. REPOSITORIES OF THE FRENCH WORKS OF ART

There was not sufficient time to evacuate GOERING's entire collection when the Russian advance menaced CARINHALL. A number of GOBELIN tapestries (no French ones) and a certain amount of furniture (Louis XV and Louis XVI) which came from the SALLE DES JEUX DE PAUME had to be left behind.

The most precious collections were sent to BERCHTESGADEN, by RR. At the time of PW's arrest there by the SS, 23 April 45, these treasures were loaded on freight cars which were inside the unfinished tunnel of the BERCHTESGADEN RR station, and on some other cars which stood on the tracks of the RR line from BERCHTESGADEN to KOENIGSEE. (Note: This information has since been confirmed.) Before his arrest GOERING had time to give orders for the security of these freight cars. Nevertheless he was informed that some of the guards attached to him (GESTAPO and SD men) had started to plunder the cars, as well as his villa at OBERSALZBERG, under pretext of putting them in greater safety. Source believes, however, that all the valuable works of art which he obtained from the SALLE DES JEUX DE PAUME can be located and returned.

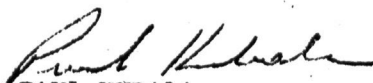
Following the interrogation source made a written statement pledging his cooperation in the recovery of these art treasures (See Appendix). He also gave the following additional locations where some other works of art acquired at the JEUX DE PAUME might be found:

- a) A certain number of GOBELINS at the BURG VELDENSTEIN near NEUHAUS on the PEG-NITZ (RR line from NUREMBERG to BAYREUTH).
- b) A certain number of GOBELINS in the air raid shelters of the LUFTWAFFE War Academy at WILDPARK-WERDER, near POTSDAM.
- c) One painting called the "Madonna of MEMLING" at PW's wife's present dwelling at ZELL am SEE. (This painting was returned by PW to G-5, Seventh Army, through this unit.)

GOERING claims to have had nothing to do with any French works of art or valuables other than those mentioned in this report.

19 May 1945.

SEVENTH ARMY INTERROGATION CENTER


PAUL KUBALA,
Maj, MI,
Commanding.

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APPENDIX

AUGSBURG, 18 May 1945.

I hereby declare:

- 1) That I am ready to return art treasures (exhibited in JEUX DE PAUME) which I acquired and bought at auctions of requisitioned property.
- 2) That I will do my utmost to find out about the location of these articles and that I will give all the pertinent information possible.
- 3) That the greater part of these articles and of my total property of art treasures are packed in several freight cars in BERCHTESGADEN. The storing of these articles in air raid shelters did not occur because of my imprisonment by HITLER the day after my arrival there.
- 4) That I informed the French liaison officer in charge about several other places where there could be some less important works of art.
- 5) That I am convinced that a conference with my former art custodian HOFER in the presence of Allied officers will lead to a speedy and extensive clarification of all questions.

/s/ HERMANN GOERING
REICHSMARSCHALL

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