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Hitler's Capital

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After four years' service In the Navy, JAMES S. PLAUT has resumed his duties as Director of the Institute of Modern Art, Boston. In 1943 he served as the Senior U.S. Naval Interrogation Officer in Northwest African waters, charged with the special interrogation of German U-boat crews. From November, 1944, to April, 1946, he was Director of the Art Looting Investigation Unit, OSS, and in this capacity he was directly responsible for recovering the works of art which had been looted by Rosenberg, Goring, and Hitler and hidden in Germany. The story of the retrieving and collecting of these masterpieces he will describe in this and the following issue. Twice decorated, he was retired to inactive duty as Lieutenant Commander in April, 1946.

by James S. Plaut

1

GÖRING, who considered himself a man from the Renaissance, needed rich possessions to dramatize his personality. Hitler's absorption with art, however, centered in his elaborate plans for the Austrian town in Linz, in the region where he was born. He envisaged Linz as the future seat of the new German *Kultur*, and lavished all his limited pictorial talent and architectural training on a vast project which would realize this ambition. Personal resentment toward the cosmopolitan milieu of Vienna, which symbolized the unhappy struggle of his formative years, burned as strongly within the Führer as the sentimental hankering after the places of his boyhood. He was determined that Linz should supplant Vienna as the Austrian capital, and that its new prominence should cement the Austro-German bond so vital to the salutary growth of National Socialism.

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Return to **Flashback**:

Until he was caught up in the maelstrom of a world war, Hitler devoted a disproportionate amount of time and energy, for a chief of state, to the plans for Linz, personally creating the architectural scheme for an imposing array of public buildings, and setting the formula

Swiss Banks, Nazi
Plunder

for an art collection which was to specialize heavily in his beloved, mawkish German school of the nineteenth century. His private library, discovered by the American Army deep in Austria, contained scores of completed architectural renderings for the Linz project, of which the Führer-museum was to be a single edifice related to the whole, comprising a great library (with an initial quota of 250,000 volumes), a theater, and a separate collection of armor. German painting of the nineteenth century was to be assembled in such quantity that, should the need arise for a separate building to house the monumental collection, it could be integrated successfully with the master plan.

The Führer-museum, with a colonnaded façade about 500 feet long, the design paralleling that of the great Haus für Deutsche Kunst already erected in Munich, would stand on the site of the present Linz railroad station, which was to be moved four kilometers to the south. Roderich Fick, the official architect, made his drawings entirely from Hitler's personal prescriptions.

A bound volume of 75 pages, entitled *The Future Economic Status of the City of Linz*, also found in Hitler's library, spells out his dream for a modern industrial metropolis, with a greatly increased population and all the attributes with which lavish expenditure and city planning could endow the capital of his empire. The study was prepared at his direction by the Economic and Research Section, Oberdonau Department of the Interior.

Either through an early presentiment of guilt or as a tactical measure, Hitler ordered the Linz project, with all its ramifications, to be treated as a government secret. The idea that loot, as in the plans for Göring's Carinhall, was fundamental in the formation of the Linz Collection because clear to the project's personnel as early as October, 1939, when Dr. Hans Posse, Director of the *Sonderauftrag* (Special Commission), presented to Martin Bormann, for Hitler's approval, a list of 182 pictures which he had selected for Linz from the confiscated collections of the Viennese branch of the Rothschild family. In July, 1940, Posse was able to list 324 paintings already acquired for Linz, and every one of the 182 confiscated works previously recommended figured in the list.

On November 25, 1939, traveling under orders issued by Bormann, Posse arrived in Poland to examine for their interest to Linz the repositories of looted Polish art

established at Warsaw and Cracow by Dr. Hans Frank's General Government. Three weeks later, he recommended formally to the Reich Chancellery that the world-famous Leonardo, Raphael, and Rembrandt paintings from the Czartoryski Collection be reserved for Linz. Though it was official doctrine that all Polish art works, in churches, museums, and private hands, were eligible for confiscation, the policy called also for the retention of the booty in Poland. Hence, few Polish-owned masterpieces found their way into Germany. (The great Veit Stoss altar from Cracow, which was shipped to Nuremberg in a specially constructed van, and the lovely Bellotto paintings from Warsaw were notable exceptions.)

The chaotic internal situations wrought by subsequent military events has left undetermined the fate of much of the Polish treasure. The Czartoryski paintings desired by Posse never came to Linz, but they were recovered, as well as a group of 30 Dürer drawings which were at one time kept at the Führerhauptquartier in Berlin. These were the only notable "benefice" from Poland.

Two months after the invasion of Holland, Posse established an office at The Hague, appearing there in the role of *Referent für Sonderfragen* (Adviser on "Special Questions"). Belgium and Holland proved to be fertile ground. Posse's informers and middlemen, supported actively by the Seyss-Inquart government, were able to tap rich sources through confiscation and "purchase." The richest acquisitions of Linz in the Netherlands was the major portion of the Mannheimer Collection (purchased in 1944 for 2,000,000 gulden less than the Dutch authorities asked, following a Seyss-Inquart threat to confiscate the whole as enemy property). It contained such treasures as Rembrandt's *Jewish Doctor*. The remainder of the collection was acquired subsequently in France, also by forced sale.

In France, the Linz interest was fostered carefully by the special task force of Alfred Rosenberg (the *Einsatzstab*). On November 18, 1940, in a Führerbefehl similar to the edicts issued after the conquest of Poland and Austria, Hitler proclaimed his right of disposition over all works of art confiscated in the occupied territories. From this moment on, Rosenberg worked formally in the Linz interest, except where Göring, as we have seen in "Loot for the Master Race" (September 1946), made his own selections in contradiction to the Hitler order. Göring, in fact, imposed his own schedule of priority on the French

seizures, establishing three arbitrary categories of confiscation (presumably for the record, since his own choices were never opposed): first, those works destined for Hitler and Linz; second, those for the Göring Collection at Carinhall; third, those desired "for purposes of the National Socialist Party."

The Führerbefehl required of all commanders of occupied territories that Dr. Posse be kept regularly informed of the progress of the confiscations, and stated that Posse was empowered to "make decisions in the Führer's behalf." On April 15, 1941, Posse addressed a formal request to the Reich Chancellery for the specific reiteration of his authority. Five days later, Martin Bormann directed him to review the "requirements" of the Führermuseum in terms of the nearly completed inventory of Einsatzstab Rosenberg confiscations. A general high-level directive was issued subsequently, emphasizing the Führer's right of first choice, apparently to allay confusion in the ranks of the Einsatzstab caused by Göring's insistent demands.

Of the 21,000 objects seized in France alone, Linz was to fall heir to all but the 700 for which Göring had spoken. There is no record of Posse's choices -- since final disposition of the material was to await the Nazi victory in Europe -- but there were outstanding prizes in the great French private collections to match the loot from Poland and Austria.

2

IT is worth emphasizing, with respect to the acquisitions for Linz, that the difference between loot and purchase was merely a technical one. Where works of art were held by the downtrodden Poles and Czechs, or by "non-Aryan" Dutch or French nationals, confiscation was the accepted method. This was in accordance with the Nazi doctrine of oppression. Where political expediency, as in the case of the "Italian ally" and the "worthy French opponent," called for good will toward the New Order, the velvet glove approach was used, with an unprecedented outlay of German funds as lure. Purchases of important items -- with German occupation currency wherever possible -- accompanied the wholesale seizures, and often were conducted by the same officials. Dealers and agents swarmed into Paris, many armed with special Linz certificates, which formalized their status and assured their precedence in the art grab bag.

A letter from Posse to Bormann, dated June 10, 1940,

expresses the official attitude toward purchases:

The special delegate for the safeguarding of art and cultural properties has just returned from Holland. He notified me today that there exists at the moment a particularly favorable opportunity to purchase valuable works of art from Dutch dealers and private owners *in German currency*. Even though a large number of important works have doubtless been removed recently from Holland, I believe that the trade still contains many objects which are desirable for the Fürher's collection, and which may be acquired without foreign exchange.

An account of 500,000 reichsmarks was opened for Posse's personal use at the Reichskreditbank in Paris in March, 1941, and a similar amount was deposited in his name at the German Embassy in Rome in the same month. By March 15, 1941, Posse was able to inform Bormann (whose connection with the Linz project was close throughout its history) that to date he had expanded 8,522,348 reichsmarks in the purchase of works of art for the "new museum at Linz-on-the-Danube." This figure did not include many of the major purchases which later brought staggering prices from Hitler's agents.

Göring's collecting was the more passionate and dramatic; Hitler's, with all the advantages and ramifications of an official government enterprise, the more effective. His agents outnumbered Göring's, the funds at their disposal were inexhaustible, and there was no counterpart in the Göring entourage of the high-powered Special Linz Commission. Moreover, Hitler, as the Number One man, always held an ace in the hole. Only in rare instances were fat prizes in controversy. Göring occasionally prevailed by virtue of personal intercession; in the main, however, he considered it part of wisdom to withdraw from negotiations if the Linz interests were involved. This was evident in the case of the celebrated Memling *Portrait of a Man*, owned by Prince Corsini of Florence. Göring's agent, Walter Andreas Hofer, bid high for the picture, but was waved off by Prince Philipp of Hessen, who acquired it for Linz at a price stated to have been between five and six million lire.

Göring appears also to have wished to remain the Fürher's good graces by means of periodic "gifts" to Linz. With considerable fanfare, he made a personal selection of 53 masterpieces confiscated from the Rothschild Collections in Paris by the Einsatzstab Rosenberg and sent them in his own train to Munich for addition to the holdings of the

Führermuseum. In 1945, he saved himself possible embarrassment by turning over the principal Linz deposit (rather than to his own place of safekeeping) the group of 17 paintings and 4 priceless bronzes from the Naples Museum which had been seized by the Hermann Göring Panzer Division out of a convoy carrying these Italian national treasures from Monte Cassino to the Vatican in 1943, and presented by the Divisions to Göring at Carinhall.

3

AUTHORITY for the Linz undertaking stemmed from the highest level of the Reich Chancellery. Directly under Hitler and Bormann were Reichsminister Lammers, President of the Reich Chancellery, and Dr. Helmut von Hummel, Special Assistant to Bormann. These officials formulated the directives governing confiscation and purchase, and were responsible directly for the administration and financing of the program. Von Hummel, a particularly vicious Nazi, may still be at large. His last official act was to order a case of confiscated gold coins brought to him at Berchtesgaden on May 1, 1945, after which he disappeared.

The Special Linz Commission, under Posse, boasted approximately twenty specialists -- curators of paintings, prints, coins, and armor, a librarian, an architect, an administrator, photographers, and restorers. Personnel remained attached to the Commission, with few exceptions, until its dissolution, and several of the Commission's experts have been used by the Allies in the recovery of the Hitler loot.

Posse died in December, 1942, of cancer. He is described as having worked fanatically to the very end. His funeral was a high state function, and attendance was obligatory for ranking Party dignitaries and museum officials. Goebbels read the eulogy. Posse had brought great knowledge and energy to his task. Director of the Dresden Gallery since 1913, he was once removed from office for supposed anti-Nazi sentiments, was later restored, and became the most powerful individual in the amassing of art treasures for the new Germany. For Linz alone, the records reveal that he acquired over 2500 objects in three years, exclusive of the thousands of confiscated works which remained unregistered at the end of the war and were potential Linz material.

His greatest coup, undeniably, was the "purchase" of the

famous Vermeer, *The Artist in His Studio*, from the Czernin family of Vienna in the autumn of 1940, under occult circumstances. One of Europe's greatest masterpieces, the Vermeer had been sought by collectors all over the world for many years, but the owners would not sell. (A Nazi art journal reproduced the painting on its cover in April, 1943, with the apocryphal information that Andrew Mellon had once offered \$6,000,000 for it.) Posse and Bormann appear to have tried to attach the Vermeer originally for nonpayment of taxes, but the Finance Ministry informed the Reich Chancellery that the Czernin brothers were not in arrears and that, therefore, the picture "could not be sold at auction." Suddenly and inexplicably, the asking price dropped from the fantastic figure to 1,650,000 reichsmarks, a ridiculously low amount in the inflated art market of the war. Posse was ordered to Vienna instantly, and what was obviously a forced sale of the painting was consummated with the Czernins through the intervention of Reichsleiter Baldur von Schirach.

Posse was responsible, also, for the addition of three Rembrandts to the Linz Collection (at a cost of 3,900,000 marks), the Watteau *La Danse* from Potsdam, the Corsini Memling portrait, and the Rubens *Ganymede*, which was wangled away from Vienna as a "gift" in exchange for some confiscated porcelains.

Posse was succeeded in April, 1943, by Hermann Voss, Director of the Wiesbaden Gallery, who assumed the Dresden portfolio as well as the Linz directorship. Far less energetic and capable than his predecessor, he was nevertheless caught squarely in the flow of loot. With the pattern already established and the machinery smoothly in motion, Voss, a weakly scholar, simply went along.

Under interrogation, Voss boasted that he had purchased over 3000 paintings for Linz in 1943 and 1944, at a total cost of 150,000 marks. The figure was probably embroidered substantially by his vanity (the official Linz records place his numerical "contribution" much lower), but that he was fully as active as Posse in swelling the total is clear. Voss admitted that the majority of the objects acquired in his regime were nineteenth-century German paintings of secondary importance. Nevertheless, there are several beacons marking his devious course.

One of the most involved, and ugliest, swindles in France was the confiscation of the celebrated Schloss Collection by the Vichy government in 1943 -- in concert with the

German occupation authorities. This was the only major instance of official French collaboration in the transfer to the Germans of valuable art properties. Formally, the negotiation was classified as a voluntary sale. The Vichy government was to pay the Schloss family 18,500,000 francs for 49 masterpieces of Dutch painting desired for the Louvre; the German government was to pay 50,000,000 francs for the 262 pictures desired for Linz; the remaining 21 paintings were to revert to the family. In essence, however, the affair was bald confiscation. Vichy never paid its debt; the German funds were placed at the disposal of the Vichy Commission for Jewish affairs and the 21 paintings were sold for personal gain by one Lefranc, the official negotiator appointed by Vichy. Not a sou reached the Schloss family.

Voss struck a second dirty blow in forcing the sale of the French portion of the Mannheimer Collection in 1944. The two great Rembrandt canvases, *Landscape* and *Portrait of Titus*, purchased from the French wine merchant Étienne Nicolas for 3,000,000 marks (60,000,000 francs), and the Mendelssohn Rembrandt, for 900,000 marks, were acquired through Haberstock, the Number One Nazi dealer, in the interim between Posse's demise and Voss's succession.

4

THE Linz program was a bonanza for a large group of favored German art dealers. Karl Haberstock, in Hitler's good graces from 1936 on, was clever enough to accept no commission on his major acquisitions for Linz. He was able to reap a fortune, however, by transacting a tremendous volume of normal business for Linz and the Reich Chancellery, exacting normal profits on a percentage basis. Haberstock not only had his German agents everywhere -- a Luftwaffe major stationed in Paris, a Viennese refugee in the South of France, and German dealers in Holland and Switzerland -- but an intricate and highly efficient network of collaborationists in the occupied countries. Haberstock's correspondence divulges the names of *seventy-five* persons in France alone who dealt with him during the war.

Frau Maria Dietrich was the most prolific dealer of the Nazi group. She sold 270 paintings to Hitler, 80 to Linz, and purchased over 300 in Paris between 1940 and 1944 for Party officials (20 to Bormann) and German museums. She met Hitler through his photographer Heinrich Hoffman (as did Eva Braun, who had worked as his

model), in 1938. In that year, Dietrich's income jumped from 47,000 to 483,000 marks. During the war, she made between 300,000 and 570,000 marks a year, and netted 616,470 marks on sales to Linz. She was close to Hitler until 1944, and is said to have fretted constantly over the possible deterioration of her position with the Führer. Her connoisseurship was notoriously faulty; and, as the figures imply, she went in for quantity rather than quality.

Many other agents profited handsomely from their Linz connections, among them Prince Philipp of Hessen, descendant of the Emperor Frederick III of Prussia and of Queen Victoria. Frankfurt and Oxford educated, he took pride both in his knowledge of the arts (he had worked briefly in the Berlin Print Room) and his architectural prowess. Hessen settled in Italy in 1922, became an active Fascist, and married Princess Mafalda, second daughter of King Victor Emmanuel. As President of Hesse-Nassau and an SA Gruppenführer, he campaigned strenuously in Italy for Nazism. When, during the war, he became Posse's principal agent in Italy, the Linz project took on a veneer of aristocratic elegance which facilitated important purchases from the Italian nobility.

The end of the road for Philipp of Hessen was most sordid. Princess Mafalda, in one of the more vicious incidents of the Nazi debacle, was seized abruptly by the Gestapo and thrown, reputedly, into a concentration camp brothel, where she was killed during an Allied air raid. Hessen is said not to have lifted a finger to save his wife. He is now in Allied custody.

Kajetan Mühlmann was the most implacable Nazi in the group of looters held for American interrogation during the summer 1945. A hard man, of cold Prussian mien and iron nerves, he shamed his colleagues with a consistent exhibition of arrogant defiance toward his captors; well after V-E Day, he made two bold, if unsuccessful, attempts to escape.

Mühlmann served two masters -- Göring and the Linz Commission -- with effective detachment. He shared with Baron Kurt von Behr, Director of the Einsatzstab Rosenberg in Paris, the odious distinction of top looter. It may be said of Mühlmann and von Behr that they actually enjoyed their work, so relentless and uncompromising was their spoliation of the occupied countries. Mühlmann had been identified prominently with the Nazi surge from the period of the Austrian occupation, when he served as

Secretary of State for Austria under the Anschluss government. In 1939 he went into Poland with Hans Frank's General Government to take charge officially of the "safeguarding" of Polish art treasures. On May 15, 1940, immediately following the surrender of Holland, he arrived in the Hague and established the Dienststelle Mühlmann, which became -- under the Seyss-Inquart occupation regime -- the central agency for all matters concerning Dutch and Belgian art properties.

Mühlmann thus controlled Poland and the Netherlands as von Behr did France, with direct access to a substantial proportion of the national wealth. From his Dutch confiscations, 100 paintings were selected for Linz. He aided Posse also by following the market and recommending collections for sale -- under duress. He was responsible for the confiscation of the three great storehouses of Northern European art, the Jaffe, Lugt, and Mannheimer Collections, and his hand was in divers other affairs of equal ignominy, if lesser importance.

Like other Linz and Göring agents, Mühlmann did very well for himself, sending confiscated works surreptitiously to Munich and Vienna, where they were placed at auction in his interest. Linz itself acquired 8 paintings unwittingly through this channel. He enjoyed one further distinction, that of being the only official in the Nazi looting machine to hold high rank in the SS. His future, therefore, will be determined largely by the findings of the Nuremberg tribunal.

Completing the Hitler art clique was "Professor" Heinrich Hoffmann, early Party member (No. 58) and confidant of the Führer. Hoffmann's influence waned sharply after 1941 (a fact attributable to Bormann's contempt for him). When taken into American custody in 1945, he had become a shattered nonentity, a sodden alcoholic. Earlier, he had been Hitler's chief adviser in art matters and had made a considerable fortune -- apart from his gainful position as the official Party photographer -- in building up the Reich Chancellery's collection of nineteenth-century German painting. He held no official post in the Linz project but, for a brief period, was an effective middleman between the Commission and certain German dealers, especially Frau Dietrich. A letter from Posse to Bormann dated January, 1941, implies that Hoffmann had acted as intermediary in many of the early negotiations in Holland. To his American interrogators, it seemed inconceivable that Hoffmann could ever have held so imposing a position at

the Nazi court.

5

IN 1943, with the war turning against Hitler, and with the exploitation of the occupied countries virtually complete, the tempo of Nazi plunder slackened. Incalculable riches had been secured and were now pouring into Germany. The material purchased for Linz was being received and registered at Munich, in the Führerbau, one of the group of colossal buildings erected by the Nazi's to "dignify" the Party capital. The more valuable loot, however, was being stored in safe places far removed from the urban centers.

These repositories, for the most part, were situated in thick forests or inaccessible mountain fastnesses. For the Einsatzstab Rosenberg alone, six great estates were requisitioned, and the loot -- brought in by the trainload -- was deposited there from 1941 on. (A document of July, 1944, records 29 separate shipments into the Reich during the period between April, 1941, and December 1943.) The fabulous castle of Neuschwanstein, jutting crag-like from the lower reaches of the Bavarian Alps, held the booty from France. An island monastery in the middle of the Chiemsee, the enchanting lake which lies midway between Munich and Salzburg; a former royal Austrian summer residence in the hills of the Salzkammergut; the hunting lodge of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg in South Bavaria, isolated magnificently in a huge game preserve -- these were secondary caches, illustrating the diversity of the sites chosen.

Not by the widest stretch of the imagination would any of the repositories have been subjected to air attack. First, their very isolation and their natural camouflage enhanced their immunity. Second, they were in themselves "cultural monuments" and would have been ignored by Allied bombers. Yet hysteria in the Reich Chancellery had become so intense by the end of 1943 that Hitler ordered a wholesale evacuation of the repositories in favor of a still safer refuge. In February, 1944, with the snow blanketing the country, truck convoys began to move south with their precious cargo, in the direction of Linz itself. Just east of Salzburg, however, they turned off and began to climb laboriously into the mountainous region of the Upper Danube. Their destination was a fourteenth-century salt mine, high above the picturesque village of Alt Aussee.

Few undertakings of the war were more painstaking or futile. The road to Aussee climbs over two high passes,

virtually unassailable in the dead of winter. With frantic determination to conceal the loot in the very earth of the last redoubt, tanks and even oxen were used where trucks failed to scale the slippery barrier. For thirteen months, through the winter and summer of 1944 and into the winter of 1945, the convoys limped over the mountains and left their cargo at the entrance to the mine.

The Steinberg mine is a labyrinth with a single outlet. A tunnel little more than six feet in height -- so that a tall man negotiates it with difficulty -- cuts two kilometers horizontally into the mountainside and, winding around, links a series of mammoth caverns, from which salt has been mined through the centuries. A miniature gasoline engine can proceed through the tunnel on narrow-gauge rails at snail's pace, hauling a tiny flat car. There is not other access to the mine's interior.

For "Dora" (code name of the secret deposit) workmen transformed these grotesque subterranean vaults into model storage rooms, fitted with clean wooden floors and specially constructed racks, dehumidification equipment, and modern lighting fixtures. Dora was surely the most fantastic manifestation of the last-ditch Nazi stand. Here, Hitler planned literally to go underground.

In 1944 and 1945, Dora received 6755 old master paintings, of which 5350 were destined for Linz, 230 drawings, 1039 prints, 95 tapestries, 68 sculptures, 43 cases of objects d'art, and innumerable pieces of furniture; in addition, 119 cases of books from Hitler's library in Berlin, and 237 cases of books for the Linz library. The last convoy arrived at the mine less than a month before V-E Day.

An appropriately dramatic postscript to Operation Dora was written by Gauleiter Eigruber, who, as administrator of the entire Oberdonau region, was the official ultimately responsible for the contents of the mine. In 1945, with his province wedged alarmingly between the Russians, advancing from the southwest, and the Americans, descending on him from the north, Eigruber ordered demolition charges set throughout the mine. Not merely the evidence of Berman plunder, but the priceless accumulation of Europe's treasure itself, was to be destroyed at the moment of Allied entry. Eigruber's orders were countermanded by the Reich Chancellery, but the advanced chaos of the situation permitted him to ignore headquarters, and he persisted in his fiendish plan. The

Gauleiter fled into the mountains before the American advance, taking with him a select SS bodyguard.

But the Austrian workmen, who had been given specific instructions for the demolition procedure and who had been threatened with a firing squad for noncompliance, simply filed out of the mine on hearing that the Americans were approaching. The destruction of some of Europe's greatest masterpieces was thus narrowly averted -- by the fundamental decency of a few simple men.

On entering the mine, the Americans found the world-famous van Eyck *Adoration* from Ghent, the Dirk Bouts alterpiece from Louvain, and the Michelangelo *Madonna* from Bruges -- among the greatest national treasures of Belgium; the paintings and sculpture from Naples via Monte Cassino seized by the Hermann Göring Division; and almost the entire Rothschild holdings from Paris and Vienna. Everywhere, throughout seven vast caverns, were the ominous demolition charges, armed and in place, yet the loot was unharmed.

Examination of Hitler's personal library prompted further speculation on a question which may never be answered -- the true state of the Führer's health at the end. Every word of correspondence read by Hitler in the closing war years came to him from a special oversized typewriter. The letters were an inch high. This startling evidence gives rise to the belief that the Führer, with all his other ills, must have been almost totally blind.

The process of restitution is going well. Alt Aussee, although the most important repository, was not the only one. The contents of the Göring Collection at Carinhall, for instance, were discovered in a cave at Berchtesgaden. In the work of tabulation, the Allies actually enumerated over four hundred places of safekeeping throughout Germany, not all of them, to be sure, containing loot. Operation Dora was reversed by the American Army and the mine has been emptied. From several "Central Collecting Points" in the American zone, the loot is being returned gradually to the countries of origin -- a laborious process involving painstaking research and careful handling.

Meanwhile, the major living culprits are in Allied custody, awaiting trial at the termination of the Nuremberg proceedings, and the liberated countries are taking action against those of their own nationals who helped the

Germans strip their lands.

The looting of Europe was not merely an official and expert operation designed to enrich the Nazi state and increase the prestige of Hitler and Göring. By contributing to the impoverishment of the occupied and satellite countries, and by exalting Germanic art (while banning all liberal work of the last hundred years), the looting machine remained within the framework of National Socialist philosophy. The failure of German arms must not blind us to the lasting implications of Hitler's attempt to corrupt the culture of Europe and to reduce all art to the Nazi formula.

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