



# Press Release

Number

## **The Second Recommendation of the Advisory Commission for the Return of Cultural Property Seized as a Result of Nazi Persecution**

Berlin / Magdeburg, Germany. 25<sup>th</sup> January 2007. The German Advisory Commission for the Return of Cultural Property Seized as a Result of Nazi Persecution, Especially Jewish Property, made its second recommendation today in Berlin.

During a meeting at the Representation of the German Land of Saxony-Anhalt, which was chaired by Professor Dr Jutta Limbach, the Commission decided on the following recommendation:

In the light of the clearly expressed will of the collector Dr Hans Sachs, the Commission recommends that the collection remain in the German Historical Museum.

Dr Hans Sachs, an art collector from Berlin, had always considered his activities as a collector to be a public service. At the beginning of the 1970s he referred to the remaining part of his unique poster collection in a German publication, stating that: "I am sure that West and East Germany will know the importance of protecting and guarding their treasure."

As early as 1966, Hans Sachs wrote to a West German friend and expressed that he considered his material claims to have been settled with the court compensation settlement from 1961. This settlement awarded him what he called an "extremely respectable" total amount of 225,000 Deutschmark, which had been confirmed by several expert opinions from independent specialists. Indeed, as Sachs also explained, the intangible, moral loss could never be compensated. He additionally stated his desire to assist with the maintenance and indexing of the collection.

The Advisory Commission expects the German Historical Museum to fully acknowledge Hans Sachs' achievements as a collector and pioneer of the history of poster art and commercial graphic art. This involves the indexing, maintenance and exhibition of the artwork as part of the museum's responsibility in terms of conservation. The posters should be presented as part of the "Hans Sachs Collection", documented in a general catalogue and clearly marked with their origin and history. This solution also corresponds with the intentions of the son and heir, Peter Sachs, who does not want this unique collection to be forgotten.

ADDRESS

Dorotheenstrasse 84  
10117 Berlin, Germany

POSTAL ADDRESS

11044 Berlin, Germany

TEL + 49 (0)1888 272 3281

FAX + 49 (0)1888 272 3259

[Pressestelle-bkm@bpa.bund.de](mailto:Pressestelle-bkm@bpa.bund.de)

[www.kulturstaatsminister.de](http://www.kulturstaatsminister.de)

[www.bundesregierung.de](http://www.bundesregierung.de)



Number of  
Page 2 of 3

The recommendation is based on the following facts:

Between 1896 and 1938, the dentist Dr Hans Sachs (1881-1974) successfully amassed a unique collection of 12,500 posters and 18,000 smaller pieces of graphic art. As a result of the National Socialist persecution of the Jews, Sachs was forced to leave Germany with his wife Felicia Sachs (1903-1998) and his son Peter in 1938. Nevertheless, before they fled the country, the collection was seized by the Gestapo, the Secret State Police. At first, after 1945, Hans Sachs assumed that the collection had been lost for good and therefore lodged compensation claims in accordance with the then applicable right to compensation. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1961, he received a compensation settlement of 225,000 Deutschmark from the Federal Republic of Germany. In 1966, Hans Sachs discovered that parts of his collection were located at the Zeughaus Unter den Linden, the 'Old Arsenal' in Berlin, Germany. This building is now home to the German Historical Museum, which currently contains approx. 4000 posters from the original collection. In July 2006, Peter Sachs requested that the objects be registered in the Internet database of the Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste (*Coordination Office for Lost Cultural Assets*) at [www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de).

Peter Sachs has lodged a claim for the restitution of the collection, stating that it contains Nazi-looted art that has to be returned in accordance with the Washington Principles of 1998 and the Joint Declaration of 1999.

The German Historical Museum rejects this claim, arguing that it does not involve cultural property that remained hidden because Hans Sachs himself was aware of the location of the collection from 1966 onwards but lodged no claim for restitution.

The parties were unable to come to an agreement and therefore decided to present the case to the Advisory Commission.

The main task of the Advisory Commission is to act as a mediator in disputes between the current owners of cultural property and the former owners or their heirs, if both sides of the dispute are in favour of this. The Commission can then provide a morally justified recommendation to resolve the conflict. The members of the Commission include: the retired German President, Dr Richard von Weizsäcker, the former President of the German Federal Parliament, Professor Dr Rita Süßmuth, the former President of the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany, Professor Dr Jutta Limbach, the art historian Professor Dr Thomas Gaehtgens, the



Number of  
Page 3 of 3

philosopher Professor Dr Günther Patzig, the philosopher of law Professor Dr Dr Dietmar von der Pfordten, the historian Professor Dr Reinhard Rürup and the philosopher Professor Dr Ursula Wolf.

The Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste (*Coordination Office for Lost Cultural Assets*) ([www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de)) in Magdeburg, Germany, is the administrative office of the Commission and a port of call for claimants.

Contact: Koordinierungsstelle für Kulturgutverluste, Turmschanzenstrasse 32, 39114 Magdeburg, Germany. Dr Michael Franz, telephone: +49 (0) 391 567 3891, fax: +49 (0) 391 567 3899, e-mail: [michael.franz@mk.sachsen-anhalt.de](mailto:michael.franz@mk.sachsen-anhalt.de), [www.lostart.de](http://www.lostart.de)