

PRESS RELEASE

New York, 22 March 2016

1933/2016: Justice Denied

*HOLOCAUST VICTIM'S FAMILY CHEATED BY
GERMAN LOOTED ART COMMISSION
TO KEEP PAINTING IN GERMANY*

OBSOLETE LIMBACH COMMISSION DENIES NAZI PERSECUTION OF PROMINENT
JEWISH ART COLLECTOR ALFRED FLECHTHEIM IN LAME DUCK SESSION
BEFORE SCHEDULED REFORM

DISTURBINGLY IMBALANCED VERDICTS IN FAVOR OF GERMAN MUSEUMS



The *German Advisory Board on Nazi Looted Art Claims* yesterday refused to provide justice to Holocaust victim's family in what German and international observers call a “flawed and arbitrary procedure”, allowing Germany to hold on to art, taken away from Alfred Flechtheim, The Nazi state's enemy No. 1 in the arts, in 1934.

Above: Nazi-propaganda caricature of Alfred Flechtheim in the Nazi magazine “*Illustrierter Beobachter*” (“*Illustrated Observer*”) of 7 January 1933, presenting Alfred Flechtheim (Right) as an archetypal Jewish monster with the same physical features that appear on the Jud Süß poster – deep facial wrinkles, large pointed ears, and a devious looking mouth – exaggerated here to characterize Flechtheim. By contrast, the Aryan man's (Left) steely gaze, straight nose, and determined mouth signify his racial integrity.

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(NY) Yesterday, the family of Alfred Flechtheim (1878-1937), receiving a negative response from the German Advisory Commission on the return of cultural property seized as a result of Nazi persecution, experienced what they call a second victimization by Germany – more than three weeks after they had withdrawn from the process because of procedural irregularities before and during a February 12, 2016 hearing of their case in Berlin!

But the Commission ignored the victims departure. In a move, unprecedented in modern German history, the panel, surprisingly came forward with a recommendation and, in doing so, abandoned, overnight, all and any rules and standards established by the Washington Principles on Holocaust Era Assets of 1998 to which Germany had subscribed. The Commission is already in hot water for its misconduct in responding to Nazi victims' claims.

“I am stunned. They punished us. I went to Berlin six weeks ago to present my case and hoped for justice to be served. Nearly half of the panel failed to show up, so there was no real hearing at all. We submitted further evidence two days later, which was not transmitted to the panel members by the secretariat,” said Dr. Michael Hulton, the grandnephew and heir of Alfred Flechtheim.

“Contrary to the German Joint Declaration, they used speculation as evidence and acted like a Court, instead a mediator. In case of doubt, the International Principles specifically put the burden of proof on the museum to show the painting wasn't sold under duress. We criticized their secretive behavior which falls way below the standards of an independent body, we criticized ex-parte communications by members of the panel with museum's representatives. Finally, we called for an investigation, which the German Federal government refused, so we withdrew from the flawed proceeding, considering to return after the Commission's reform, announced by Germany only two weeks ago.” he said.

Dr. Hulton added: “Like uncle Alfred and my father, I feel persecuted. The panel's decision of yesterday denies not only our well-founded claim for the return of looted art, but the fate of my uncle and of my close relatives, who suffered terribly from Nazi racial persecution and who lost everything after 1933. First their property, then their hopes and finally their lives! They just now set an example: don't criticize Germany on Holocaust issues!”

“There are a growing number of severe grievances regarding the revisionist tendencies in Germany today when it comes to Holocaust related claims, especially calling for the return of Nazi looted art. Irregularities and misconduct require international observation and investigation. Those who are responsible, have to resign. Every corrupted decision alters history,” said Markus Stoetzel and Mel Urbach, lawyers representing the family.

“Denying the Holocaust is against the law in Germany. Five recent denials by the German panel out of only eleven cases handled by them in thirteen years is impossible! The German way of dealing with looted art is tarnished. The international community is called upon to react immediately!”

The heirs of Alfred Flechtheim plan to continue their quest for justice.

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