

How it happened that I bought paintings in France for Dr. Voss
the commissioner for the Fuhrer museum in Linz

As an Anti-Nazi I lost my position as Director of the Kunstverein in Hamburg in the year 1933 and opened in 1934 in Hamburg an art-gallery. I arranged modern exhibitions, lectures and art-evenings on my premises. As Hamburg was more democratic than other cities, it was possible to keep my art gallery, up to the war, as an isle of free thought.

I was sent to Paris on the endorsements of former colleagues, the Directors of great museums. This I liked very much, because on account of the bombs and the always increasing Nazi-terror, I could not keep my art gallery any longer. There was furthermore the danger that I, as quarter Jew, should have been forced to work for the "Organization Todt." I had to decide between the war or work for the museums. I was an officer in the First World War; on account of me having Jewish blood I could not become an officer in the Hitler-Army (Nurnberger Gesetze) as it was not permitted for such people to become superiors. On the other hand, there evidently was no intention of degrading me and so I had permanent leave from the Army.

After my home and shop in Hamburg were destroyed by bombs, I moved my family to my mother's house in Dresden (1942) where I also spent much time. When Dr. Voss, after the death of Dr. Posse, was appointed as successor to the Directorship of the Museum in Dresden and as commissioner for the Fuhrermuseum in Linz, I was called by Dr. Voss to help him with the buying of paintings in Paris. Mr. Haberstock (fallen out with Prof. Voss) who up to that time had the monopoly, withdrew from his job. Prof. Voss kept besides me, as I have reason to believe, several other men from the Dorotheum in Vienna, a Mr. Schmidt, who lives near Lake Constance and a Dr. Goepel. I had the impression, that Prof. Voss liked to work with me because we were of the same political opinion. Voss was, as far as I know, never a party-member, he assured me of that often and was a fanatic opponent of the regime. As I heard Dr. Posse himself, proposed in his testament Dr. Voss as his successor, Dr. V. being an international authority on Italian art and like himself a pupil of Bode.

How the picture-transactions for the Fuhrer museum were handled.

The superior authority for Dr. Voss was, as far as I know, because I did not have closer insights, the office of Reichsleiter Bormann. Payments were made from the Reichskanzlei over the Bankhaus Schickler, Delbruck in Berlin. My bills were made out to Prof Voss, Commissioner for the Museum Linz. I have never seen nor

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spoken to any superior officials of Dr. Voss, nor ever written to them. Maybe it is of interest to note, that neither Dr. Goppel, who bought mostly in Holland for Dr. Voss, or Dr. Reimer, chief assistant of Voss, were members of the party, as I was assured from many sides. The purchases in Paris were perfectly normal. I had given to me the photos of paintings and mostly Dr. Voss bought them without having seen them, entirely on the strength of my descriptions. Any force whatsoever was not used. If Dr. Voss thought the pictures too expensive, he did not buy them.

The Fuhrer bought, as I was told, for his private purposes still many pictures through Mrs. Almas Dietrich, the Photographer Hoffmann and others, which Prof. Voss did not see in France. For these purchases there existed no laid out plan, while Prof. Voss wished to have a museum collection put on a scientific and historic base. The payment of the paintings was done with the permission of the Devisenstelle over the clearing. I have never bought a picture, which was not offered voluntarily to me. If paintings were pointed out to me as not for sale, I did not even ask for the price. I did not need to do so as I had enough offers.

How it was with pictures from Jewish collections

As I heard, the Jewish owned art treasures in France were seized by a law, but which I have never seen with my eyes. I know that the German Ambassador used a Baroque. Writing desk, which came from the Rothschild collection. I also saw marvellous French drawings from the 18th century in the rooms of the German Embassy, which were said to come from the same source. It was told to me, that there existed in Paris a palace in which the Jewish art possessions were collected and where they were divided among the different officials. I never went to this building. They told me that a certain Mr. Lohse, who was acting for Goring, was the chief of this house. I avoided meeting this man and met him only once in an exhibition without my intention. I always avoided to meet high Nazi-Officials in Paris. I was only once to a large reception in the embassy together with hundreds of people. There was rumor that the Gestapo bought under pressure, paintings from private or dealers, which I heard very often, but I never could prove it or even get reliable information, as I otherwise should have gone after such an accusation and would have informed Prof. Voss privately. I did notice indeed that I was not shown many pictures, which were reserved for other dealers.

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* I have stated that I was not shown many pictures, which were reserved for other dealers. 37.145