

Leon Blum's Bechstein

Upon his return from Buchenwald, Leon Blum, whose piano was looted during the war, writes a letter to Emile Terroine who was in charge of the Looted Returns Department.

“Sir, I received Friday morning the letter addressed to 17, rue de Vaugirard, through which you invited me to retrieve the Bechstein piano currently stored at the Palais de Tokyo, tomorrow morning. For one, it was impossible to organize the pick up during this three day Holiday weekend. Secondly, I do not have any of the documents you requested, having heard of them for the first time, hence making it impossible to gather them.

I have never had in my hands the invoice for this piano which was a wedding gift. The name of the tuner is totally unknown and I cannot see how I might be able to find it. The building guardian (“concierge”) actually in residence at 25 qui de Bourbon arrived after my furniture was removed by the occupying forces – the removal being perfectly clear. I no longer have the insurance papers, all my personal documents having disappeared.

Please accept my sincere regards, “

Leon Blum

From Wikipedia:

André Léon Blum (9 April 1872 – 30 March 1950) was a French socialist politician and three-time [Prime Minister](#).

As a Jew, he was heavily influenced by the [Dreyfus affair](#) of the late 19th century. He was a disciple of French Socialist leader [Jean Jaurès](#) and after Jaurès' assassination in 1914, became his successor. As Prime Minister in a [Popular Front](#) government of the left 1936–37, he provided a series of major economic reforms. Blum declared neutrality in the [Spanish Civil War](#) (1936–39) to avoid the civil conflict spilling over into France itself. Once out of office in 1938, he denounced the appeasement of Germany.

When Germany [defeated France](#) in 1940, he became a staunch opponent of [Vichy France](#). Tried by the Vichy government on trumped-up charges, he was imprisoned in the [Buchenwald](#) concentration camp. After the war, he resumed a transitional leadership role in French politics, helping to bring about the [French Fourth Republic](#), until his death in 1950.