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## ESTATES IN SLAVONIA AFTER WORLD WAR II<sup>1,2</sup> CONFISCATION OF THE PROPERTY OF SLAVONIAN NOBILITY AFTER WORLD WAR II<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** *In the first decades of the 20th century, several large estates existed in Slavonia, belonging to noble families and operating under their administration, or parts of these estates were leased to business entities that utilized them. Some large estates covered vast areas of forest and agricultural land, yielding significant income.*

*There were also several smaller economic entities that contributed considerably to the economic prosperity of Slavonia.*

*After World War II, all these estates were taken from their previous owners and transferred to state ownership. In this process, court proceedings were conducted, and among other penalties, the mandatory confiscation of all property was imposed.*

*The main accusation against the owners of these economic entities was the alleged collaboration with the enemy, although they had only been conducting their regular economic activities during World War II. Using examples of individual*

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*Slavonian noble families, we will illustrate how this process took place in everyday court practice. Due to these developments, Osijek emerged in the first decades of the 20th century as a strong economic centre, housing some of the most significant business entities.*

*Archival sources from the State Archives in Osijek contain documents from several archival collections that provide insight into the court proceedings conducted after World War II. These documents show that property was confiscated from individuals and their families who held high positions in the regime of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) and collaborated with the German army. However, property was also confiscated from many families whose only crime was the continued operation of their factories, workshops, and agricultural estates during the war.*

*The archival material used in writing this paper is primarily from the following archival collections: the District Court of Osijek, the County Court of Osijek, and the Court for the Protection of the National Honour of Croats and Serbs in Croatia. Gaps in the court proceedings materials were supplemented with data from other archival collections stored in the State Archives in Osijek.*

*It is particularly notable that lawsuits for “collaboration with the occupier” were filed not only against Germans and Croats who owned large estates, factories, or workshops but also against Serbs and Jews whose factories and crafts continued to operate during World War II. Ironically, such proceedings were also initiated against Jews who were sent to concentration camps during the war, where they perished. Their factories and workshops were nationalized by the NDH authorities and sold to others or handed over to commissioners for management. However, as the authorities after World War II did not recognize any agreements or contracts made during the NDH period, they filed charges of “collaboration with the occupier” against the previous owners, who had been imprisoned or killed by those authorities.*

*In all of these proceedings, in addition to other penalties, the confiscation of all property was imposed. Sentences ranged from death and imprisonment to a negligible number of sentences involving the loss of national honour or short-term suspended sentences, which were always combined with the confiscation of all property, which in some cases was vast.*

*This archival material became especially relevant when the return of confiscated property began in Croatia.*

**Keywords:** *confiscation, collaboration with the occupier, World War II, nationalization, court proceedings.*

In the late 19th and the early 20th century, Osijek was a strong economic centre. Numerous economic entities operated in the city, holding prominent po-

sitions in the business life of both Croatia and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, employing a large number of workers. Some of these entities, such as the Drava Match Factory and the Osijek Foundry and Machine Factory, achieved significant success abroad and held leading positions in their respective industries. In addition to these large enterprises, Osijek was home to numerous smaller factories, workshops, and a large number of crafts. The city was also an important trade centre, located near the Monarchy's border and well-connected by rail and river routes. All of this contributed to Osijek's economy and favourable business climate.<sup>4</sup>

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, most owners adapted to the new reality, and many of these facilities continued operating in the Kingdom of SHS (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), later during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and even during the Independent State of Croatia (NDH).

Immediately after the end of World War II, significant changes occurred in the economic life and ownership structure of business entities in Osijek and Slavonia. In the early decades of the 20th century, a significant number, if not the majority, of business entities in the city were owned by Jews and Germans, and after the war, many of the former owners of factories, crafts, and agricultural land no longer resided in Osijek. A large number of Germans left their estates and, following the withdrawal of the German army, abandoned these areas, while many Jews perished in concentration camps.<sup>5</sup>

The new authorities could not allow economic entities to remain inactive and sought to resolve the situation in accordance with their new ideology. Hostility toward private ownership and the punishment of those who collaborated with the previous regime led to a series of judicial and administrative proceedings, drastically altering the ownership structure of economic entities in Slavonia and Croatia. This marked the end of continuity with the previous system, and new forms of ownership were established, which would remain in place for the next 50 years.

After the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and up until the beginning of World War II, several large estates existed in Slavonia, continuing their operations during the war, which provided the new authorities with an excuse for their confiscation.

These estates included large plots of arable land, forests, vineyards, pastures, and numerous economic facilities—mills, brick factories, hemp mills, and others. They also included many residential houses, castles, outbuildings, and movable property located within them.

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<sup>4</sup> Gardaš, Miro, *Austro-Hungarian Monarchy – a Prison of Nations or something better*, 6th International Scientific Symposium *Economy of Eastern Croatia – Vision and Growth*, Osijek, 2017, p. 417

<sup>5</sup> Gardaš, Miro, Gavran, Ana, *Confiscation of the Property of The Jews in Osijek after World War II*, Proceedings of the 16th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development – The Legal Challenges of Modern World, Split, 2016, pp. 244-252

Large estates in Slavonia began to be established as early as the 18th century, following the liberation from Ottoman rule. Some estates were granted by the court for military merits, while others were simply purchased.

Intensive production was organized on these estates in various sectors, bringing significant financial profits to their owners. In addition to traditional agricultural methods, some large landowners introduced new methods on their estates, improving cultivation techniques and increasing yields. Some of these landowners left a broader mark through their work and became renowned authors on specific topics.<sup>6</sup>

Some of these estates were truly vast, covering hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland, pastures, or forests, and belonged to some of the most prominent Croatian and European noble families. Others were much smaller, belonging to lower-ranking nobility, and consisted of only a hundred or so acres of land.<sup>7</sup>

Owners of these smaller estates often did not manage or work the land themselves but leased it out in whole or in part, collecting rent. Very often, these owners did not even live in Osijek or Slavonia but resided throughout Croatia or even abroad.

Some of these estates became exemplary operations, bringing significant wealth to their owners or lessees, while new production and cultivation methods were gradually introduced to the surrounding population, improving living standards and promoting the use of modern livestock breeding and land cultivation techniques in Slavonia.

In the 19th century, some estates introduced early forms of manufacturing, craft and industrial production, such as silk production and glassmaking, thereby bringing numerous new technologies to the region, which significantly increased productivity.

Some large estates were highly diversified in their activities, and they maintained well-organized administrative systems that enabled the smooth functioning of these expansive properties. Their operations generated a large amount of archival material, so the archival collections of the Valpovo and Vukovar estates are among the larger collections housed in the State Archives in Osijek.<sup>8</sup>

Significant changes in the status and operations of these estates occurred in 1848 with the abolition of serfdom and the introduction of a civil system. At that time, former serfs became the owners of the urbanium land they had cultivated, while the large landowners retained ownership of allodial land, as well as land

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<sup>6</sup> e.g. Ivan Kapistran Adamović in 1774 drafted the “Regulamentum ...” or the economic ordinance on the ways of managing a feudal estate. Greta Turković illustrated the famous ampegraphic atlas, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Peres, Zsuzsanna, Gardaš, Miro, Roškar, Jelena, *Manors in Baranja in the 18th and 19th centuries, Law-Regions-Development, Pécs-Osijek*, 2013, p. 215

<sup>8</sup> See *Vodič kroz arhivske fondove i zbirke Državnog arhiva u Osijeku, Našičko vlastelinstvo*, HR-DAOS-475, and especially *Valpovačko vlastelinstvo*, HR-DAOS-476, [dao.hr/indeks.php/gradivo-u-arhivu/vodic-kroz-arhivske-fondove-i-zbirke](http://dao.hr/indeks.php/gradivo-u-arhivu/vodic-kroz-arhivske-fondove-i-zbirke)

that had previously been considered communal, such as shared pastures and forests. The majority of peasants, having been serfs up until then, lacked the money to purchase part of this formerly communal land and gradually became day labourers for their former feudal lords.

A significant portion of these large estates continued to operate even after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, during the time of the Kingdom of SHS and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, performing their economic functions until World War II. Some of these estates modernized, introducing new forms of business, steam engines, and electricity, and building local railway networks, thus becoming truly respectable business entities generating substantial income.

With agrarian reform after the end of World War I, a significant portion of the land that previously belonged to large estates was taken away, making their previous agricultural function questionable. Therefore, some large estates reoriented towards a capitalist economy, i.e., the production of raw materials and industrial products. Local railway networks, power plants, sawmills, steam mills, brickyards, etc., were built on them.

During the time of the Independent State of Croatia, these large estates also continued to perform economic functions and brought income to their owners. Some of the large estate owners held prominent positions in the state apparatus of the Independent State of Croatia, which provided the communist authorities after World War II with an excuse for their confiscation.

In other cases, the only guilt of the large estate owners was that they normally carried out their economic activities during World War II, and for this, they were characterized as collaborators with the enemy and held accountable under several laws that sanctioned collaboration with the enemy.

After the end of World War II, the newly established communist authorities recognized the value of the existing property, industrial facilities, and, of course, large estates. Private ownership, wealthy individuals, and rent collection were institutions that did not fit into the ideology and worldview of the new authorities. However, the existing assets represented enormous value, which certainly needed to be brought under control, so the most opportune solution was to confiscate such property.<sup>9</sup>

In the surge of the newly established authorities, all industrial facilities in Osijek and Slavonia were confiscated, along with a large number of luxury houses, rural settlements, hotels, mills, large areas of agricultural land, entire large estates, livestock, agricultural machinery, paintings, furniture, and much more. In

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<sup>9</sup> Gardaš, Miro, Vrbošić, Josip, *Konfiskation von Firmen in Osijek nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, *Institutions of Legal History with special regard to the culture and history*, Bratislava-Pécs, 2011, p. 105

this way, a complete change in the ownership structure of industrial and craft facilities in Osijek and Slavonia was carried out.<sup>10</sup>

The animosity of the new authorities towards the previous owners was so great that pillowcases, underwear, and similar items were confiscated for the benefit of the state.<sup>11</sup>

Due to such actions, many prominent Slavonian families left their homes in fear for their safety and sought a new homeland.

One of the prominent figures in the state, who was at the head of the then “Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia,” (AVNOJ) was the lawyer Dr. Ivan Ribar. Thus, the confiscation of property was cloaked in the legal guise of the Act on Confiscation and the Execution of Confiscation, which was passed on 9 June 1945.

However, the provisions of this Act were not sufficient to encompass the broadest circle of people whose property the new authorities intended to confiscate, so in addition to this Act, several other legal regulations were enacted, allowing a wide circle of people to be declared guilty and their property confiscated. This includes the Law on Criminal Acts Against the People and the State from 25 August 1945<sup>12</sup>, and the Decision on the Protection of National Honour of Croats and Serbs in Croatia from 24 April 1945.<sup>13</sup>

There was also a wide circle of people who, during World War II, according to the new authorities, had “done nothing wrong,” but who owned significant land complexes that also needed to be expropriated in some way. The provisions of the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act were applied to them.<sup>14</sup>

The basic idea of this Act was that the land belongs to those who cultivate it, so a land maximum of 20 to 35 hectares was set, and everything above that was taken away.<sup>15</sup>

From the confiscated land, a land fund for agrarian reform and colonization was formed, from which land was allocated to a wide circle of people: the farmers who owned no land or owned insufficient land and who were members of partisan squads, the National Liberation Army and Partisan Squads of Yugoslavia, and the Yugoslav Army, war invalids of the liberation war as well as invalids from previous wars (1912-1918 and April 1941), families and orphans of fallen fighters of the liberation war, and families of victims of fascist terror.

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<sup>10</sup> Gardaš, Miro, Legal actions against Craftsmen in Osijek after the End of World War II, International conference *Gospodarstvo istočne Hrvatske – vizija i razvoj*, Osijek, 2016, pp. 31-41

<sup>11</sup> DAO-HR-136., Okružni sud Osijek, K-239/45.

<sup>12</sup> Zakon o krivičnim djelima protiv naroda i države, *The Official Journal of DFJ*, no. 618/45.

<sup>13</sup> Odluka o zaštiti nacionalne časti Hrvata i Srba u Hrvatskoj, “*Vijesnik*”- *glasilo JNOF-a Hrvatske*, of 28 June 1945

<sup>14</sup> Zakon o agrarnoj reformi i kolonizaciji – ZRK, *The Official Journal of DFJ*, no. 64/45.

<sup>15</sup> ZRK, Article 1

This fund also included the land of citizens of the German Reich as well as the land of persons of German nationality that was confiscated based on the AV-NOJ decision of 21 November 1944, as well as the land of national enemies and other persons that was confiscated based on court verdicts.

In this way, a large number of settlers from Lika and Kordun came to Slavonia and Baranja, and they received land and houses and thus significantly changed the demographic situation.

In the years following World War II, there were several judicial and state bodies in Osijek that tried people who violated the provisions of the above-mentioned regulations; the District Court of Osijek, the District People's Court of Osijek, the Military Court of the Osijek Military Area, and especially the Court for the Protection of National Honour of Croats and Serbs in Croatia for the districts of Osijek and Virovitica-Osijek.<sup>16</sup>

The activities of these bodies have resulted in a significant amount of archival material that can provide us with a clear insight into their operations and individual cases of confiscation and nationalization of property, including large estates. This material is in fairly good condition and is preserved in the State Archives in Osijek, and its condition allows for scientific and professional research.<sup>17</sup>

Based on the Act on Confiscation and the Execution of Confiscation, Article 2, point 2, in addition to the courts, the confiscation penalty could also be imposed by the authorized administrative authority. The same Act further stipulates in Article 30 that "Everywhere where there is property of the German Reich and its citizens or property of persons of German nationality..., the decision on confiscation is made by a district commission of three persons appointed by the District People's Commission, and in a city that has the rank of a district or county, a similar commission appointed by the City People's Commission."

An identical Commission existed in Osijek and also imposed confiscation penalties, so when studying the confiscation of property after World War II, it is necessary to take into account the archival material of the City People's Commission of Osijek, which is also preserved in the State Archives in Osijek.

Valuable information on confiscations can also be found in the fund "City Commission for Agrarian Reform and Colonization," and this group of materials should certainly be consulted during further research.<sup>18</sup>

One of the key provisions on the basis of which confiscations were carried out was the "Decision on the Protection of the National Honour of Croats and Serbs in

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<sup>16</sup> Arhivski fondovi i zbirke u SFRJ – Hrvatska", Beograd 1984., sections on the Historical Archives in Osijek, p. 176.

<sup>17</sup> Gardaš, Miro, Salapić, Josip, Petrašević, Tunjica, Sudski postupci pred sudovima za zaštitu nacionalne časti s posebnim osvrtom na Sud za zaštitu nacionalne časti Hrvata i Srba u Hrvatskoj za okrug Osijek – Virovitica, Istražne radnje i pomoćna sredstva u sudskim postupcima kroz povijest, Osijek, 2010., str. 87.

<sup>18</sup> Ova komisija je osnovana temeljem odredbi Zakona o agrarnoj reformi i kolonizaciji

Croatia,” dated 24 April 1945. According to Article 2, point 1, a crime or offense in the sense of this decision was considered to be any collaboration with the occupiers or their helpers. Forms of such collaboration included: political, propaganda, cultural, artistic, economic, administrative, and other cooperation with the occupier and domestic traitors. Furthermore, the same Article in paragraph 7 stipulates that a crime or offense is also considered to be “voluntary economic assistance to the occupiers and their helpers, especially placing one’s economic enterprise at the service of the occupier, significant work in an economic organization or enterprise that benefits the occupier, and performing supplies on behalf of the occupier.”

The consequences for such acts are prescribed in Article 3 of the same Decision, which states: “Acts under this decision will be punished by: a) loss of national honour, b) forced labour, c) partial or complete confiscation of property or a monetary fine, or d) expulsion.

The penalty of loss of national honour consisted of exclusion from public life, loss of the right to public functions, and loss of all civil rights. The accused could be simultaneously punished with multiple penalties.

The new authorities quickly recognized the importance of property confiscation and the enormous economic potential that lay in that property, so very quickly, on 9 June 1945, they enacted the “Act on Confiscation of Property and the Execution of Confiscation.” In Article 1, this Act provides a definition of confiscation: “Confiscation of property is the forced seizure without compensation in favour of the state of the entire property (complete confiscation) or a precisely determined part of the property (partial confiscation) that is personal property or a personal share in joint property with other persons.” Article 5 of the same Act further stipulates that “all things of the convicted person are subject to confiscation, regardless of whether they are in his possession or have been removed from their original place with the intention of thwarting or obstructing the confiscation. Property subject to confiscation cannot be transferred by inheritance or any other legal basis to the ownership of other persons.”

The third legal regulation that addressed the issue of property confiscation is the “Law on Criminal Acts Against the People and the State,” dated 25 August 1945. This Act, in Article 10, stipulates that “Persons who economically collaborate with the enemy or occupier during the war, i.e., who place their industrial, commercial, transport, or other enterprises or their professional skills at the disposal of the enemy for production purposes, or who themselves produce items that strengthen the economic power and war potential of the enemy, or whose collaboration with the enemy includes particularly severe forms of exploitation and pressure on workers with the help of the occupier’s authorities, will be punished by imprisonment with forced labour for up to 10 years and confiscation of property.”

The network of legal regulations established for the seizure of property was organized in such a way that few could remain unpunished. If a company or



craftsman normally conducted their business during the war, the provisions of one of the mentioned laws or regulations were necessarily applied to them, and in addition to other penalties (imprisonment or loss of national honour), they were almost always sentenced to confiscation of all property.

And if someone owned land larger than a certain maximum, and did not “collaborate with the occupier,” they fell under the provisions of the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act.

To more vividly support the above claims, we will present several characteristic examples of property confiscation from Slavonian landowners after World War II. We believe that the most information can be provided by the court files through which the confiscation of the Pejačević and Normann estates was carried out, which are kept in the State Archives in Osijek.

We will also present a case of the nationalization of land belonging to a noble family that was not accused of collaborating with the occupier. No penalties were imposed on its members, but according to the new legal provisions, they had too much land and were not direct producers, so the provisions of the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act were applied to them, and their land was taken away.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE ESTATE OF COUNT PEJAČEVIĆ IN NAŠICE:

The Pejačević family was among the most distinguished nobility in Croatia. In 1772, Maria Theresa granted them the title of count with the predicate *de veroczze* – of Virovitica. In 1841, they sold the Virovitica estate to the princes of Schaumburg-Lippe and since then predominantly resided in Našice, but retained the count’s predicate *de verocese*. The Pejačević family acquired large estates in the Virovitica County – Virovitica, Našice, Orahovica, Retfala, Podgorač, in the Srijem County – Mitrovica and Ruma, as well as estates in present-day Hungary, through military merits, purchases, or marital ties. Additionally, they owned numerous properties in Osijek, Zagreb, Budapest, Vienna, Munich, Pécs, Arad, Barcs, and others. Through marital ties, the Pejačević family connected with the most distinguished noble families throughout the Austrian Empire. The Pejačević family formed several branches: the Virovitica, Ruma-Retfala, and Našice branches. They purchased the Našice estate in 1732 and owned it until 1945. The Virovitica part of the estate was granted to them in 1749 or 1750 in exchange for part of their estates in the Mitrovica lordship, which were annexed to the Military Frontier.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Gardaš, Miro, Mušić, Boris, Gavranović, Igor, *Pravne osnove povrata imovine oduzete nakon Drugog svjetskog rata s osobitim osvrtom na povrat bivših veleposjeda u Slavoniji*, Pravni vjesnik 3-4, Osijek, 2007, pp. 159-166.

<sup>20</sup> Šćitaroci, Mladen, Šćitaroci, Bojana, *Dvorci i perivoji u Slavoniji od Zagreba do Iloka*, Zagreb, 1998, pp. 210-222

Some of them held high positions in the political and administrative life of Croatia. They were several times county prefects of various Slavonian counties, representatives in the Croatian Parliament, ministers, high military officers, and two members of this family held the position of Ban of Croatia.

The estate of Count Pejačević consisted of 18,532 acres of land, including forests, arable land, vineyards, and fishponds. The estate featured an industrial railway and various other industrial and craft facilities. The fishponds were leased to a consortium on 12 August 1943, which was established as “Našičko ribnjačarstvo d. d.”

The co-owners of this vast estate were P. P., a former envoy of the NDH in Spain, M. P., S. A., née P., G. B., née P., E. K., née P., G. P., and M. P., all of whom were outside the country with unknown residences in Austria and Hungary.

In addition to this estate, the Pejačević family owned the entire share capital of “Krndija d. d.”

While managing this vast estate, according to reports from the Public Prosecutor, they significantly collaborated economically with the enemy and were thus accused of economic collaboration with the enemy. Furthermore, P. P. was accused of being an envoy of the NDH in Spain, thus a political collaborator with the enemy and a war criminal.

By the verdict of the District People’s Court in Osijek, case number Kz-94/45, all the accused were found guilty. P. P. was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment with forced labour, while the other accused were sentenced to one and a half years of imprisonment with forced labour. Additionally, the confiscation of all the property of the accused was ordered, including “Krndija d. d.” and the fishponds, leading to the actual liquidation of “Našičko ribnjačarstvo d. d.”<sup>21</sup>

#### THE PRANDAU-NORMAN ESTATE IN VALPOVO:

The Valpovo estate was acquired by the noble Prandau family in 1721 when King Charles III granted it to Baron Peter II Anton Hilleprand von Prandau, a counsellor of the Court Chamber, for his numerous services. This grant was confirmed by Queen Maria Theresa in 1749. The Prandau family actively managed the estate, employing capable managers and constructing various economic buildings, bridges, roads, churches, and schools. They encouraged the settlement of craftsmen, the planting of mulberry trees for silk production, and established a brewery, among other ventures. They also took care of building schools in the villages on their estate, resulting in the construction of several schools in the Valpovo and Miholjac regions during their administration. They continued to support these schools by

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<sup>21</sup> DAO-HR-146., Okružno javno tužiteljstvo Osijek, report of 30 November 1945, box 47

providing free firewood, housing, or land for teachers. Additionally, they supported the construction of church buildings in Valpovo and the villages on their estate. The family was also instrumental in founding a theatre in Valpovo and sponsoring its activities, as well as music schools in Valpovo and Miholjac.

Members of this family were often donors to various cultural and scientific initiatives in the Virovitica County and throughout Croatia.<sup>22</sup> Upon taking possession of the estate, Baron Hillebrand von Prandau led a campaign against bandit gangs that caused significant problems on the estate. There were also several peasant uprisings on the estate, the most notable being the 1755 uprising, which affected almost all estates in Slavonia, including Valpovo and Našice. Following this, Maria Theresa issued the Feudal Law, which defined the relations between peasants and landowners.<sup>23</sup>

In the early period of the estate's operation, the main product was wheat, but later the focus shifted to forest exploitation. By the end of the 19th century, forest exploitation became the dominant activity of the estate, and this activity was leased to various companies for long-term periods.

Between 1722 and 1723, a castle was built, which was severely damaged in a fire in 1801. Its restoration took place from 1803 to 1816, after which it became one of the largest castles in Slavonia. After the death of the last male member of the Prandau family, the Miholjac part of the estate passed to the Mailath de Szekhely family, while the Valpovo part was inherited by Rudolf Normann von Ehrenfels, the grandson of the last Prandau.

After the war, according to the Public Prosecutor's report, the owner R. N. was outside the country, having left for Austria in 1943. As a German, he was a member of the Kulturbund. He was accused of providing products from his estate to the enemy, his mill grinding grain for the enemy army, his power plant being used by the enemy, and bricks from his brickyard being used to build bunkers and barracks for the Germans. Consequently, an indictment was filed against R. N.

By the verdict of the District People's Court in Osijek, case number Kz-260/45, R. N. was sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment with forced labour and 10 years of loss of civil rights. Additionally, the confiscation of all his property, including the entire estate with all its industrial facilities (power plant, mill, brickyard, etc.), was ordered.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Milan, Vrbanus, Doprinos vlastelinskih obitelji Hillebrand von Prandau i von Normann – Ehrenfels društvenom, gospodarskom i kulturnom razvoju Valpovačkog vlastelinstva od osnutka vlastelinstva do sredine 20. stoljeća, *Katalog izložbe Valpovački vlastelini Prandau – Normann*, Državni arhiv u Osijeku, Muzej Slavonije, Muzej likovnih umjetnosti Osijek, Muzej Valpovštine, Ustanova za kulturne djelatnosti Ante Evetović – Miroljub, Osijek – Valpovo, 2018

<sup>23</sup> Milan Vrbanus, Vlastelinstva u Hrvatskoj u 18. st., *Povijest Hrvata, 2 knjiga*, Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 2005, p. 256

<sup>24</sup> Milan Vrbanus, Vlastelinstva u Hrvatskoj u 18. stoljeću. p. 257.

## EXPROPRIATION OF THE BARTOLOVIĆ FAMILY PROPERTY:

The Bartolović family was a noble family based in the village of Tenja, near Osijek. They purchased the castle in Tenja and a significant amount of arable land in the surrounding area from the Adamović family in the second half of the 19th century.

The land was inherited by E. M. (née Bartolović), T. B., and A. B. During the 1930s and World War II, the heirs did not manage the property themselves but leased the land and enjoyed the rent, with two of them not living in Osijek at all.

According to the new authorities' assessments, none of them collaborated with the occupiers during the war, so they were not subject to property confiscation penalties.

However, because it was a large estate, they fell under the provisions of Article 3, paragraph a, of the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act. This provision stipulates that large estates, i.e., agricultural properties exceeding 25 to 45 hectares of arable land, if exploited through leasing or hired labour, are subject to expropriation.<sup>25</sup>

The Bartolović family's landholding significantly exceeded this limit, so the District Commission for Agrarian Reform and Colonization in Osijek decided on 17 July 1946 to expropriate it.<sup>26</sup>

The estate totalled 390 acres and 874 square fathoms of land of various categories. Of this, the vast majority, 330 acres and 380 square fathoms, belonged to the Bartolović family heirs, and the rest to E. S.

According to this decision, the entire estate of E. M. (née Bartolović), A. B., T. B., and E. S., registered in the land books of the municipality of Tenja, was expropriated and transferred to the ownership of the State, including all buildings, facilities, and inventory. The former owners had no right to any compensation.

## CONCLUSION

As we can see, the primary effort of the new communist authorities in Slavonia after World War II was to nationalize all economic entities. In this endeavour, they first targeted larger factories and industrial facilities, then began confiscating large estates, craft workshops, and even the private property of wealthier individuals.

Finding an excuse for such actions was not difficult. Numerous newly enacted legal regulations provided the authorities with the means to subject almost

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<sup>25</sup> ZRK, *The Official Journal of DFJ*, br. 64/45., Art. 3, Para. a

<sup>26</sup> No. 1541, access to the document provided thanks to the heir of the family, Boris Mušić, MSc, from Osijek

anyone to repressive measures. The main crime that allowed for the confiscation of property was “collaboration with the occupier” or “collaboration with the enemy.”

If it happened that someone who owned a larger area of land did not “collaborate with the enemy,” the provisions of the Agrarian Reform and Colonization Act were applied, according to which their land was taken away. Then, according to the basic slogan of the Act “the land belongs to those who cultivate it,” it was assigned to persons deemed deserving by the authorities.

Few could escape these provisions. If someone conducted their normal economic activities during World War II, they almost automatically fell under the definition of “collaboration with the occupier.” All this suggests that behind these actions of the new communist authorities were not ideological reasons (they were a convenient cover), but economic calculations and the seizure of well-established and profitable economic entities. There was also an intention to put these actions within legal frameworks.

In this way, the authorities rewarded individuals they considered suitable, significantly changing the demographic picture of these areas and completely altering the ownership structure of economic entities in Osijek and Slavonia, introducing new forms of ownership that would characterize the second half of the 20th century in these regions.

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## Велепоседи у Славонији после Другог светског рата Конфискација имовине славонског племства после Другог светског рата

**Сажетак:** Основни најор комунистичке власти у Славонији након Друге светске рата била је подршка свим привредним субјектима. Са њим намером, најпре су кренули са већим фабрикама и индустријским појонима, а затим су ојачали ојимање великих имања, занатских радионица, ња чак и приватне имовине имућнијих појединаца.

Није било тежко наћи изговор за такве постојеће. Низ новодонетих законских пројиса давао је моћност властодрцима да поново све поворну рересивним одредбама. Основни крмен који је омоћуио одузимање имовине био је „сарања са окупатром“ или „сарања са непријатељем“. Мало ко је моћао да избеће ове одредбе ако су током Друге светске рата обављали своје нормалне економске активности, њада су поново аутоматски појадали под дефиницију „сарање са окупатром“. Све ово даје наслућивати да ови постојећи нових комунистичких власти заправо нису имали никакве идеолошке разлоге (били су добродошао изговор), већ економску рачуницу и зајлену уходаних и профитабилних привредних субјеката.

У раду ћемо покушати да на неколико примера већих и мањих поседа, на основу архивске грађе похрањене у Државном архиву у Осиеку, прикажемо начине на које су вршене конфискације и експропријације.

**Кључне речи:** конфискација, велепоседи у Славонији, после Друге светске рата, национализација, сарања са непријатељем.

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