Image not found or type unknown

Collection Agencies A and B – Claims Files, Equity Files and Sale Files, Ordinance on the Notification of Seized Property (VEAV) and Vienna Restitution Files are Online

10 Nov 2017

To coincide with the event “Restitution in Austria. From the Collection Agencies to the Arbitration Panel”, over 50,000 new records were published on the website of the Findbuch for Victims of National Socialism (www.findbuch.at). Now that this data has been entered into the Findbuch database, it is available to researchers and an interested public, making it possible to trace the history of restitution in Vienna – albeit not quite seamlessly – for the first 20 years after the war.

Collection Agencies A and B, claims files, equity files and sales files

Collection Agencies A and B were established as a direct consequence of Article 26 (2) of the Austrian State Treaty of 15 May 1955 “On the Restoration of an Independent and Democratic Austria”. In this treaty, Austria undertook to transfer assets, rights and interests that were eligible for restitution but had remained unclaimed or “heirless” to so-called receiving organizations. Collection Agencies A and B were established in Vienna immediately upon enactment of the Auffangorganisationengesetz (“Receiving Organizations Act”) of 1957. Once this measure had been carried out, all of the Collection Agencies’ indices and files were handed over to the Austrian State Archives, where they form part of the holdings of the Hilfsfonds (“Assistance Fund”), which are publicly accessible.

Over the course of the past few years, the copy of the claims files, equity files and sales files index that was produced by General Settlement Fund staff in 2002 has been amended and supplemented, and a revised list of all aggrieved persons and applicants in the equity-based proceedings was produced. Together with the data on the so-called “negative files”, which has already been entered into the database, the Findbuch now offers a comprehensive portrayal of the Collection Agencies’ property-based work.

Collection Agencies A and B, claims files, equity files and sales files

The majority of the new records involved holdings of the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna:

Ordinance on the Notification of Seized Property (VEAV)

The aim of the Ordinance on the Notification of Seized Property, effective as of 15 September 1946, was to create a record of the assets that had been seized between 1938 and 1945. The notifications were made using forms filled out by beneficiaries or administrators of assets that had been acquired within the scope of coerced transactions (compulsory notification). Aggrieved owners could voluntarily give notice of their property losses.

The Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna took on both the indices and the files on the implementation of the Ordinance on the Notification of Seized Property. All aggrieved persons named in the “Notifications of Seized Property” were recorded using the copies of the VEAV indices on aggrieved persons and “aryanizers” and organized by district. In many cases either a ruling by the Restitution Commission pursuant to the Third Restitution Act or a restitution decision by the Financial Directorate pursuant to the First or Second Restitution Act was enclosed with the notifications. As the original documentation regarding proceedings held in Vienna in accordance with the Third Restitution Act in the years 1947 to 1955 and 1957 no longer exists, the VEAV holding is, along with the land register, the most important source of information on restitutions during this period.

Files of the Restitution Commission at the Provincial Court for Civil Matters Vienna

In addition to the VEAV files, the records regarding the files of the Restitution Commission at the Provincial Court for Civil Matters Vienna for the years 1956 and 1958 to 1965, held at the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna, were edited and entered into the database. Only isolated files from the preceding years still exist. These are also held at the archive.

This Findbuch has now made it possible for the first time to comprehensively search several archives and diverse file holdings for people, companies or addresses. The Findbuch currently offers over 202,000 records and it is being continually expanded. As such, it is one of the most comprehensive collections of information on property seizure during the Nazi era and restitution and compensation measures after 1945 on the territory of the Republic of Austria.

Feedback on the Findbuch:

“The Austrian State Archives are proud to have been able to contribute to the realization of this crucial and long-overdue project by providing fundamental historical source material.”
University lecturer Dr. Wolfgang Maderthaner, General Director of the Austrian State Archives

“It goes without saying that we at the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna were willing to support the National Fund to the best of our ability in its development of the Findbuch. As an archive, we consider it one of our most important tasks to ensure the traceability of administrative procedures and political decisions for subsequent generations. The purpose of our work could hardly be better documented than in this superb research project involving authentic sources and information for those who suffered persecution and aggrievement under the Nazi regime.”
Dr. Brigitte Rigele MAS, Director of the Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna

© National Fund of the Republic Austria for Victims of National Socialism