



Information on data processing: Property notices of the Property Transaction Office

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Terms of reference

The *Vermögensanmeldungen* (“property notices”) are held at the Austrian State Archives/Archives of the Republic as part of the files of the *Vermögensverkehrsstelle* (“Property Transaction Office”). They were created as a result of the *Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden* (“Ordinance on the Registration of Jewish Property”) of 26 April 1938 (German Reich Law Gazette 1938 I p. 414, Austrian Law Gazette 102/1938). This Ordinance forced all persons who were deemed Jewish according to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 (German Reich Law Gazette 1935 I p. 1146, Austrian Law Gazette 150/1938) to individually register their domestic and foreign assets and those of their relatives living in the same household, valuing them as at 27 April 1938.

The property notices which were filed after the *Anschluss* of Austria to Germany in March 1938 were dealt with by the Property Transaction Office, newly established at the Ministry for the Economy and Labor in Vienna. The form to be filled out for the property notice consisted of four pages and was based on the questionnaire for the *Reichsfluchtsteuer* (“Reich Flight Tax”). In addition to personal information such as name, date of birth, address, profession and marital status, the “race” and religious affiliation also had to be given. A detailed list of available assets as per 27 April 1938 had to be given (real estate, businesses/companies/factories, bonds, mortgage and loan claims, insurance policies and personal valuables). Any debts had to be stated on the last page.

Despite possible false information and undervaluations which were, as a rule, made under duress, these files served the General Settlement Fund as a basis for determining the value of personal assets at the outset of the state-organized looting of the Austria’s Jewish population in March and April 1938. As such, the significance of the property notices for processing the applications to the General Settlement Fund may not be underestimated.

Digitization

In 2001, the Austrian State Archives provided the General Settlement Fund with the reference work by Hubert Steiner and Christian Kucsera *Recht als Unrecht, Quellen zur wirtschaftlichen Entrechtung der Wiener Juden durch die NS-Vermögensverkehrsstelle* (Austrian State Archives 1993) in digital form. From 2007, staff of the Israeli Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, began to make a new record of the property notices by capturing them on microfilm, providing the General Settlement Fund with a digital list.

The two lists only contain the surnames and forenames, date of birth and file number. For the *Findbuch*, this data was recorded in an excel table and checked for discrepancies. If names were spelt differently or dates of birth did not tally, this information was compared with the data in the phonetic *Nameskartei zu den Vermögensanmeldungen* “Index of property notices according to surname” of the former Property Transaction Office, situated in the basement of the Austrian State Archives, or the original file was obtained.

In some cases, surnames are spelt differently within a property notice; sometimes the signatures on the last page do not correspond to the stated name. In the *Findbuch*, the spelling on page one of the form containing personal information has been adopted.

The file series “property notices” at the Austrian State Archives is numbered through to file no. 47,800, albeit with occasional gaps. From this number up to file no. 66,600 the omissions become bigger. Moreover, experience has shown that the property notices with file numbers over 60,000 can be considered little more than fragments; this means that the property notice is often not accompanied by a form, but is rather a compilation of official letters and/or personal correspondence (often revealing no specific indications as to the person’s identity). The property notices are held at the Austrian State Archives in numerical order in 386 boxes.

Processing the digitized data

When the files were microfilmed by the Israeli Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem, property notices were found which are not contained in the finding aid *Recht als Unrecht* (Austrian State Archives 1993). The General Settlement Fund incorporated this additional information into its existing records.

Obvious spelling mistakes were corrected. The formal processing standards conventionally developed by the project team were applied and the data entry fields were adapted according to the information available.

Despite the checks carried out with the assistance of the “Index of property notices according to surname” from the former Property Transaction Office, discrepancies were still discovered in spellings and dates of birth during random checks carried out when comparing the index of names and the original files. In such cases, the spelling in the original file was generally adopted. In isolated cases, two or more property notices with different numbers were able to be attributed to one person. As a rule, these were property notices with a number over 60,000.

If the detailed view of the *Findbuch* contains the comment “no file available”, this means that the file either could not be found, i.e. is “lost”, or was filed incorrectly and could not be found for this reason.

In total, the Findbuch contains over 49,200 records in the file series property notices.