



Information on data processing: Files of the Restitution Commission at the Provincial Court Salzburg

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Terms of reference

The *Rückstellungsakten* (“restitution files”) originated during the proceedings conducted pursuant to the *Drittes Rückstellungsgesetz* (“Third Restitution Act”) before the Provincial Court Salzburg. With the exception of the year 1959, the files are almost completely intact. In total, over 190 restitution proceedings relating to “aryanizations” were conducted before the Restitution Commission at the Provincial Court Salzburg. It must be noted that these are not 190 separate cases, as numerous aggrieved persons had to seek to recover their assets in various proceedings. Several proceedings were related to each other and ultimately conducted as joint restitution proceedings. This partially explains the lack of consecutive numbering of the restitution files. There are also cases (assets) which were dealt with before the Provincial Court Salzburg which lay beyond the provincial borders, as the place of residence of the adverse party to the restitution was decisive for the venue for the negotiations. This applied to 36 of the cases contained in this list. In around 700 proceedings before the Restitution Commission Salzburg, it was not “aryanizations” which were dealt with but predominantly assets seized by the National Socialists from the Catholic Church. Numerous proceedings concerned expropriations of property for public and military purposes, such as the construction of the “Reichsautobahn” or of military barracks.

The restitution files primarily contain correspondence between lawyers and the victims, minutes of hearings or negotiations, land register excerpts, court orders, documents on personal status, powers-of-attorney, requests to the court for measures of inquiry, valuations of various assets (mostly properties and companies), and interesting insights into juridical practises of the time.

The Salzburger Landesarchiv, as an institution safeguarding files of the Federal Province of Salzburg, took on the restitution files from the Provincial Court Salzburg in the 1980s.

For the General Settlement Fund, the files are a vital source of information for resolving questions of restitution in and around Salzburg.

Digitization

In 2002, the Salzburger Landesarchiv provided two digital lists, the contents of which partially overlapped, regarding the work of the Restitution Commission at the Salzburg Provincial Court 1947–1961. Both lists were compiled during the research carried out by the Austrian Historical Commission by Albert Lichtblau between 1999 and 2001. The files from 1959 are missing as, according to the Salzburger Landesarchiv, they could no longer be found after the transfer from the Provincial Court Salzburg. From 1949, the list was recorded (or copied) only in part by Lichtblau as [original quotation] “from now on, only ‘aryanization cases’ or cases which are otherwise interesting” were recorded; that means that from this time, the list contains primarily Jewish victims and selected groups such as political persecutees, Catholics or state associations and organizations. The Salzburger Landesarchiv has an exhaustive list of all restitution proceedings conducted between 1947 and 1961.

One of the lists took the form of a table and was ordered alphabetically according to the name of the aggrieved person. The information it contained was limited to the name of the victims, the file number, the name of the adverse party and references to the object of proceedings. In total it contained 178 entries. The other list was in the form of a word document which listed the cases before the Restitution Commission Salzburg, ordered according to box number and year, and the file number, name of the aggrieved person, adverse party and the object of the proceedings. The list contained over 510 entries, distributed between 39 boxes.

Processing the digitized data

In order to meet the requirements for processing applications using the Fund’s in-house database, the records were processed by the staff of the General Settlement Fund as follows: a record was created for each person, with “forename” and “surname” each being allocated a separate data entry field. In addition, the capitalization of the surnames was edited and the correct spelling was ascertained. Abbreviated forenames were written out in full and dubious spellings were corrected or alternative spellings were inserted in square brackets. The information on the object of proceedings and the size of the file were entered into the field “remarks”. References to adverse parties were not included at the request of the Salzburger Landesarchiv. “Date of birth” and “address” were mostly not available and could not be established in most cases. Errors which were clearly spelling mistakes were corrected. Abbreviated place names were written out in full and addresses were adapted to comply with the historical spellings. The formal processing standards conventionally developed by the project team were applied and the data entry fields were adapted according to the information available.

In summer 2013 the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism received a comprehensive list of files of the Restitution Commission at the Salzburg Provincial Court from the Salzburg Provincial Archives. The additional 441 records contained in this list were processed for the Findbuch using the aforementioned method and added to the records already published on Findbuch.