



Slovenian resettlement and compensation - Carinthia and the index of the Deutsche Ansiedlungsgesellschaft ("German Settlement Society") – properties Carinthia

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Introductory comments

The following remarks pertain to two different yet historically and thematically related sources: firstly the files held in the Carinthian Provincial Archives, Slovenian resettlement and compensation (abv.: SuW) and, contained within, the documents of the German Settlement Society (abv.: DAG or D.A.G.) and the Deutsche Umsiedlungs-Treuhand-Gesellschaft ("German Resettlement Trust Society", abv.: DUT) in Carinthia between 1942 and 1945. In short, the focus of their work was properties which had been seized by the National Socialist regime. Secondly, they pertain to an index found in the Austrian State Archives on properties in Carinthia. This index contains information on the Republic of Austria's public administration of the assets of the DAG and DUT as German Property (Deutsches Eigentum) after 1945. While the file holdings SuW provides the substantive basis for research, the data in the index from the Austrian State Archives serve as a complimentary source of information although no directly related file holdings are available.

Origins of the holdings

Within the scope of the so called "policies of Germanization" which were aimed at "non-aryan" (in a National Socialist sense) ethnic groups and parts of the population, two different developmental processes can be traced regarding the Slovene ethnic group in Carinthia: On the one hand, measures of persecution and repression against the Slovene population commenced as early as March 1938, after the "Anschluss" of Austria to the German Reich. These were subsequently not only continually intensified by the Nazi regime but following the German attack on Yugoslavia in April 1941 the living conditions for the Slovene ethnic group reached crisis point as a result of the economic and cultural repression and the measures of persecution directed at the members of this ethnic group.

On the other hand, the German Reich (in line with the Nazi racial policies) concluded an agreement with Fascist Italy (in line with the "Italianization" of the territories awarded to Italy after the World War I) in October 1939 that encouraged the German speaking population in, among others South Tyrol and in the Kanaltal to take up the "option" of emigrating to the German Reich (or after the outbreak of World War II to the German occupied territories e.g. Poland).

The acts of repression reached their peak in April 1942 when, in a raid, over 1,000 Slovenes were driven out of their homes and agricultural properties. Over 900 of them were held at a transit camp in Ebenthal/Žrelec and were forced to transfer their movable and immovable property to the German Settlement Society. This was then generally retroactively confiscated pursuant to the Verordnung über die Einziehung volks- und staatsfeindlichen Vermögens im Lande Österreich ("Ordinance on the Confiscation of Assets Hostile to the Nation and State in the Country of Austria"). The Nazis subsequently deported the Slovenes to slave labor camps in Germany. The expulsions which continued in isolated cases until 1944 were not only intended to drive back the Slovene ethnic group but also to create space for settlements for people who fitted the Nazi racial ideals, e.g. the people of the Kanaltal who had decided to leave Italy.

After Germany's capitulation in May 1945 the provisional Carinthian provincial government ordered the annulment of all purchase and lease agreements concluded after the expulsion as well as the reassignment of seized assets to the Carinthian Slovenes who had been driven away. A Hofbegehnungskommission ("Farm Inspection Committee") was set up in order to determine material damages and to make compensation payments. The compensation awarded initially originated from the so called "South Carinthia Aid" which was disbursed either immediately before or after the entry into force of the Währungsschutzgesetz ("Currency Protection Act") of 1947, as a result of which a considerable devaluation of the buying power of the sums awarded was imposed on the recipients.

Pursuant to the tasks and division of tasks with which they were charged by, among others, the Nazi "Reich Commissar for the Strengthening of German Nationhood" (Heinrich Himmler), the German Settlement Society and German Resettlement Trust Society were commissioned with diverse but complimentary functions within the scope of the policies of Germanization: the German Settlement Society (Ostmark branch with headquarters in Vienna) had, via a local branch in Klagenfurt, been instructed to assume the agricultural properties, particularly in Slovene settlement areas, to value them, administer them in trust and to ensure their "interim cultivation" with the aim of passing the properties on to persons who were agreeable to the Nazis. The German Resettlement Trust Society, with headquarters in Berlin and a branch in Klagenfurt was to provide financial and legal support to the German speaking "resettlers" (for example from north Italian Kanaltal) regarding their settlement of the former Slovene farms.

Following Austria's liberation from Nazi rule in 1945, both the German Settlement Society and the German Resettlement Trust Society were put under public administration which meant that they were under Austrian control and administered by a trustee. As regards the German Settlement Society, from the time called "Public Administration of the German Settlement Society, branch office Vienna") the properties in Carinthia were

financially administered and legal represented (e.g. in restitution proceedings) by a branch in Klagenfurt.

Contents of the files

The file holdings SuW in the Carinthian Provincial Archives are, firstly, comprised of the so called Hofakten “farm files”, which provide information on the legal and financial aspects regarding the properties from the time of the confiscation and expulsion (mostly 1942) to the restitution proceedings and the settlement of compensation issues after the liberation of Austria. They comprise the administration files of the properties, initially assumed by the German Settlement Society, Klagenfurt branch or the German Resettlement Trust Society as the recorded owner in many cases. As such, as far as properties are concerned, the “farm files” cover the period of the Nazi measures of persecution from 1942 to 1945 and the “reassignments” and restitution proceedings after 1945.

Secondly, there are the so called Sachakten (“administrative files”) of the reparations department of the Office of the Carinthian Provincial Government. These files document the compensation payments paid within the scope of the “South Carinthia Aid” and the “Referendum Donation” of the Austrian Federal Government to mark the 30th anniversary of the referendum (1950) on the Slovene occupied territories remaining with Austria. The files regarding these compensation measures were opened between 1946 and 1952.

Informational content

The “farm files” can contain the following documents.

- Takeover protocol of the German Settlement Society: this contains a list of the properties seized and transferred to the DAG
- Valuation reports for the seized properties
- Copies from the land register
- Sale and lease agreements with the German Resettlement Trust Society
- Transfer protocols to the lessees
- Correspondence, statements of account and documents between the buyers or lessees of the properties and the German Settlement Society or the German Resettlement Trust Society
- Correspondence from the Office of the Carinthian Provincial Government pertaining to so called reassignment of properties and inventories
- Correspondence, protocols and copies of settlements and decisions of the Restitution Commissions pursuant to the Drittes Rückstellungsgesetz (“Third Restitution Act”)

The “administrative files” contain administrative documents from the period of the German Settlement Society’s power of disposition over the confiscated agricultural properties as well as documentation of the payments from the “Southern Carinthia Aid” and the “Referendum Donation” from 1945. The latter was only awarded if the recipient first waived the assertion of any further claims. The files contain barely any personal or biographical information on individuals.

Alternative sources of information

The subjects covered by the holdings Slowenenaussiedlung und Wiedergutmachung over the period of 1942 to 1959 (repression, persecution, deportation and seizure by the Nazis, through to compensation payments and the restitution legislation post 1945) demonstrate a wide variety of connections to other holdings in the Carinthian Provincial Archives. Those most worthy of mention are the victims’ welfare files and files of the Restitution Commission and Restoration Commission at the Provincial Court Klagenfurt.

Explanations and comments

The file numbers used in the list of properties of the German Settlement Society as a combination of the letter “K” with a number in the 500s and 600s for seized Slovene properties are consistent with the file numbers for the partial files of the German Settlement Society, insofar as they are available, in the holdings SuW (“farm files”). Objective cross-links of the file holdings SuW are gathered from the partial files of the German Settlement Society (or German Resettlement Trust Society) found in the “farm files” to file holdings of the German Settlement Society, Ostmark branch of the Austrian State Archives, which – usually – contain special files arranged according to municipality of district and, in a few cases, personalized files.

Information on data processing: Slovenian resettlement and compensation - Carinthia

Information on data processing: Registry of the German Settlement Society – Properties Carinthia

Carinthian Provincial Archives

Carinthian Provincial Archives

Record group: **LB – Landesbehörden** (“Provincial Authorities”)

Holdings: **Slovenian resettlement and compensation**

Signature: AT- KLA 491

Period: 1942 to 1959

Abbreviation for this type of file: SuW

Austrian State Archives

Austrian State Archives

Austrian State Archives/**Archives of the Republic**

Record group: **Entschädigungs- und Restitutionsangelegenheiten** (“Compensation and restitution matters”), 1938–1945

Holdings: **Bundesministerium für Finanzen und Vermögenssicherung** (“Federal Ministry of Finance and Property Control”)

File series: **German Settlement Society** (1946 to 1952; here 1946, 1947)

Abbreviation for this type of file: DAG (or D.A.G).