Received: 2020-07-15 DOI 10.19233/AH.2022.09

FROM THE HABSBURG TO THE KARAĐORĐEVIĆ DYNASTY. THE POSITION OF CROATIAN AND SLOVENIAN NOBILITY IN THE YUGOSLAV STATE

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ABSTRACT

The article compares the position of nobility in Slovenia, Croatia and Slavonia before and after the Great War. The focus is on the transition to the Yugoslav state. The new regime treated the nobility as adversaries in political, social and national respect; noble titles were abolished and landed estates diminished by the land reform. Even though it cherished personal and family ties, the aforementioned nobility did not organise itself in associations, like their counterparts in Austria.

Keywords: Slovenia, Croatia, Slavonia, nobility, 19th and 20th century

DAGLI ASBURGO AI KARADJORDJEVIC. LA POSIZIONE DELLA NOBILTÀ CROATA E SLOVENA NELLO STATO JUGOSLAVO

SINTESI

L'articolo mette a confronto la posizione della nobiltà in Slovenia, Croazia e Slavonia prima e dopo la Grande Guerra. Il tema è incentrato sulla fase di passaggio allo stato jugoslavo. Il nuovo governo considerava i nobili – dal punto di vista politico, sociale e nazionale – come suoi avversari; i titoli nobiliari furono aboliti e i possedimenti terrieri ridotti tramite la riforma agraria. Anche se nutriva legami personali e familiari, la suddetta nobiltà non si organizzò in alcuna associazione, come fece d'altro canto la nobiltà in Austria.

Parole chiave: Slovenia, Croazia, Slavonia, nobiltà, Ottocento, Novecento

INTRODUCTION[1]

The transition of nobility from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav state has not yet been thoroughly researched. Some data can only be found in the literature dealing with the Yugoslav land reform or individual noble families. Therefore, the aim of this article is to analyse and compare in broad lines the fate of the nobility in Slovenia and Croatia and Slavonia[2] after 1918.

The end of the First World War brought about major changes: the collapse of big empires and the foundation of new national states, new boundaries in Europe and the world, political sway of the Entente and the emergence of a new world power – the USA. This period was also marked by further development of democratisation, women's and labour movement, just to mention some major trends. In this changed world, there was hardly room for the old elites, or more precisely, for those who did not want to or could not adapt.

GENERAL CONTEXT

The fall of the Habsburg Monarchy was a heavy blow for its nobility since the loss of the sovereign turned it into a limited group unable to fill its ranks with new members. Nobility, which had for centuries been under the Habsburg sovereignty, suddenly found itself in a radically changed position. In each of the new successor states of Austria-Hungary, there were specific circumstances forcing the nobility to cope with them. However, there was a major common denominator concerning the nobility - namely the fact that sooner or later the noble titles were abolished. In the Republic of Austria they were forbidden and their use was sanctioned according to the law of 3 April 1919, which annihilated not just the Habsburg laws but the nobility and its titles as well. Those who did not abide by this law could be fined with 20.000 crowns or sentenced to six months in prison (Wiesflecker, 2010, 209; Walterskirchen, 1999, 35–37; Stekl, 2004, 103–106). Noble titles were abolished also in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Germany. Yet, they were preserved in Hungary under the regime of Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya, and were abolished only after the Second World War (Edelmayer, 2018, 73; Stekl, 2004, 112).

The first, short-termed, Yugoslav state did not regulate the issue of noble titles. The Presidency of the National Council (*Narodno vijeće*) of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs forbade on 22 November 1918 just the use of some forms of address (»visokorodni« and »blagorodni«) in written communication. (Perovšek, 1998, 168–169). Further steps were taken in the newly founded Kingdom od Serbs, Croats

1 This research emerged as part of a project funded by the Croatian Science Foundation Nr. 5974, *The Transition of Croatian Elites from the Habsburg Monarchy to the Yugoslav State,* led by Iskra Iveljić.

2 The Croatian lands developed differently in their territorial administration but also in their social development. They belonged to different parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, civil Croatia and Slavonia to the Hungarian, Istria and Dalmatia to the Austrian part, with a unique Military Border existing until 1881. Because of this, the focus is on the nobility of Croatia and Slavonia.

and Slovenes. Its government decided on 22 December 1918 to extend civil and constitutional rights of the Kingdom of Serbia to the whole territory of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and on 6 January 1919 regent Alexander issued a manifesto that confirmed this decision, adding that „all feudal privileges were abolished".[3] The so called St. Vitus Day Constitution (*Vidovdanski ustav*) of 28 June 1921 stated in the second chapter (called fundamental citizen's rights and obligations), article 4: citizenship is one and the same in the whole Kingdom. All citizens are equal before the law. All citizens enjoy the same protection of the authorities. Nobility, titles or any privileges based on one's birth are not acknowledged (Škrubej, 2010, 301; Preinfalk, 2019, 251–266).

The former Habsburg noblemen, who decided to stay in the new state, lost not just their titles, but their overall elite position as well, since the Yugoslav regime treated them in general as adversaries in political, social and national respect. The new state was a monarchy without its own nobility, it was a kingdom of a totally different kind than a composite and multinational Habsburg Monarchy. One should also bear in mind that the new state was dominantly agrarian, facing landowners with competition and that the land reform targeted big noble landowners. The reform was launched in 1919 yet it was not completed until 1931, thus sharpening the fronts between landowners and peasants.[4] Even though the land reform encompassed the whole new state, there were substantial differences among individual regions. Whereas in Slovenia local peasants obtained the expropriated land (Granda, 1980, 200–212; Janša Zorn, 1979, 117–126), in Croatia the regime also settled war veterans or their widows and colonists from underdeveloped regions outside of Croatia, making the situation harder for the landowners. The reform eventually diminished the size of big estates, turning forests and vineyards into their most lucrative parts. As a result of the pressure from the West[5] and the economic depression, the regime took on to completing the land reform in an attempt to preserve the landed estates, especially the ones in Slavonia, which were rich in woodlands. However, by the beginning of 1930s many noble landowners were driven to the verge of existence.

THE NOBILITY IN SLOVENIA

Ever since the late Middle Ages, almost all of the area inhabited by Slovenes was divided into different territories which, some sooner and some later, came under the Habsburg rule. Apart from representing the majority population in Carniola, Slovenes also predominated in southern parts of Carinthia and Styria, as well as in eastern parts of the County of Gorizia. Prekmurje belonged to the Kingdom

3 The original term is „staleški" (Šišić, 1920, 291, 298).

4 It encompassed all fideikommiss and estates larger than 100 yokes (1 yoke=5754,65 square meters) (Šimončić-Bobetko,1997a, 130–131).

5 The Thurn und Taxis family filed a suit with the International Tribunal in the Hague and won the case, obtaining a large reparation (Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997a, 71, 74–77).

of Hungary, which after 1526 fell under the Habsburg rule as well. Coastal towns, all (except Trieste) under the Venetian administration from the thirteenth century onwards, had a predominantly Italian population, whereas Slovenes inhabited the hinterlands. Due to this "administrative" separation, a long time had to pass before the idea of a single people would take root among the Slovenes; the national awakening finally made its first humble steps in the second half of the eighteenth century and it did not come into full swing until after 1848.[6]

Although something similar may be said for the nobility that lived in the "Slovenian" territories or provinces, the comparison cannot be drawn without reservations. Rather than develop some kind of national identity, the nobility in the southern Habsburg provinces declared itself as Habsburg nobility or as the nobility of the Holy Roman Empire, or it based its identity on its regional affiliation (with Carniola, Carinthia, Styria, Gorizia, etc.).[7] This represents a notable difference from some other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, e.g. Croatia and Bohemia, which were independent kingdoms in the Middle Ages and were as such incorporated into the common Habsburg "state". As the nobility in these kingdoms could draw from their medieval origins, during the formation of national movements this enabled—at least a certain part of its members—to start declaring themselves nationally (as e.g. Croatian or Czech nobility) as well.

Therefore, whereas one may rightly speak of the Croatian or Czech nobility, the syntagm "Slovenian nobility" is problematic on several levels. The connection between the Slovenes and the nobility has caused controversy ever since the emergence of national tensions in the nineteenth century. A constant feature underlying this kind of discourse, which rose to prominence especially after 1848, is the assertion that the Slovenes had no nobility of their own.[8] From a strictly legalistic point of view, this is correct. As already mentioned, the Slovenes indeed had no sovereign Slovenian ruler surrounded by a self-declared Slovenian nobility. From the Middle Ages onwards, the territory of what is now Slovenia remained under the Habsburg rule, with the nobility divided into (and identifying itself with) different provinces.

However, it is absolutely incorrect to maintain that the Slovenes had no nobility of their own. A more detailed research into individual noble families in the Slovenian territory revealed a good number of those that could be identified as Slovenian. The only orientation for historians to navigate through the early modern period is, of course, Slovenian family names, and even this reference point may sometimes prove misleading. After being granted the status of nobility, families would often change their names, or they would substitute their original Slovenian names with the newly obtained noble predicates.

6 For a general view of the Slovene history cf. e. g. Štih & Simoniti, 2009.

7 Although the nobility in the southern part of the Habsburg Empire was divided among various provinces, there were no significant differences among them, as their internal development was based on the same principles. Such development was, not least, also supported by the Habsburgs themselves, who united these provinces into the so-called Inner Austria (Štih & Simoniti, 2009, 153–156).

8 Cf. e. g. Apih, 1887, 171–172; cf. also: Štih, 2001, 61–72; Preinfalk, 2004, 507–516.

General findings indicate that the nobility in the territory of present-day Slovenia took on at least an outward German appearance or, in other words, that non-Germans assumed German identity upon ennoblement. While there were many reasons for this, they all shared one thing in common: pragmatism. The fact is that German culture dominated at (imperial, territorial princely, etc.) courts and that the nobility did whatever it could to integrate and homogenise itself, outwardly also by changing originally Slovenian family names.[9] This was therefore, first and foremost, the mechanism of conforming to the majority.

Fig. 1: Josef Emanuel Count Barbo (1825–1879) (private collection of the Barbo-Waxenstein family).

Yet in spite of the above, one can observe that in the early modern period a high proportion of the nobility, at least in Carniola (and partly also in other Slovenian provinces), originated from the Slovenian milieu. This is attested by not only their names but also the fact that most of the nobility mastered the Slovenian language (Žvanut, 1994, 32–35; Štuhec, 2009, 255–278). Nevertheless, it is impossible to speak of an established Slovenian identity among the nobility in the territory of present-day Slovenia. The few noblemen that supported the Slovenian national awakening, such as Baron Sigmund Zois (1747–1819) and his circle,[10] were most commonly exceptions that proved the rule.

The feelings of national belonging became, also among the nobility, more pronounced in the nineteenth century. It is widely considered that most of the old feudal nobility opted for the German side, even though they insisted on their transnationality and generally refused to take sides in political battles, just as they would take no part in the Slovenian national and cultural awakening.[11] One of the few noblemen who was not only very sympathetic to the Slovenian people but who also declared himself as a Slovene was Count Josef Emanuel Barbo-Waxenstein (1825–1879), who advocated for the use of the Slovenian language in Vienna and supported Slovenian cultural institutions.[12] A much more mosaic-like national composition was exhibited by the new noblemen, who had risen from the ranks of the officialdom or the army.

9 For examples of changing of Slovene names into German ones cf. e. g. Vrhovec, 1898, 66, cf. 2; *Slovenski list,* 6. 1. 1900, 5, »Plava kri na Kranjskem«.

10 There is an extensive literature on Sigmund Zois. One of the latest and most thorough: Vidmar, 2010.

11 E. g. Grdina, 2006, 241–256. Compare also: Matić, 2002, passim, where it is evident the it was the lower (and younger) nobility that was involved in national struggles.

12 Preinfalk, 2016, 14. Cf. also the introduction by Janko Tavzes to Barbo, 1935.

One's national affiliation or self-determination reflected in many ways, for example, through the selection of a German or Slovenian noble predicate, through the selection of the script used in writing down the family name (Gaj's Latin alphabet, the Bohorič alphabet, or the German orthography), as well as through the selection of the family coat of arms. Despite their differences, however, they all championed the emperor and supported the monarchy—numerous examples reveal that declaring national identity was not necessarily mutually exclusive with loyalty to the monarchy and the Habsburgs.[13]

Leaving aside their national or, better, ethnic origins and the question whether nobles participated (or not) in all aspects of noble life, what the nobility as a whole also shared in common was that over centuries it had been slowly losing its special privileges (thus including its actual power and social influence) and after 1848 went down the path of social degradation and biological erosion. A growing number of male members of the old nobility were becoming more inclined to leading a single life, rendering the biological reproduction of their social stratum impossible. By increasingly marrying representatives of the middle class, noblewomen renounced their social status and assumed that of their spouse. The second half of the nineteenth century presented the nobility with an especially formidable challenge in social, economic, as well as national terms, one that only a few had the knowledge and capacity to overcome.

The economic stagnation of the noble society also reflected in the loss of castles and manors (typical noble residences) or their passing into non-noble hands. Whereas at the beginning of the nineteenth century (and practically until 1848), every non-noble owner of an estate considered it essential to request for the earliest possible elevation to at least the rank of knighthood,[14] the situation was all but completely reversed thereafter: the castles were mainly in the hands of the middle class, even peasants, and if the owners happened to be noble, ownership would change quickly and often, every few years on average.[15]

The nineteenth century, and especially its second half, brought the entire noble society of the Habsburg Monarchy into an interesting, even contradictory situation. If on the one hand, one can observe a constant decline in the nobil-

13 For such examples see e. g.: Rugále & Preinfalk, 2010; 2012; Preinfalk, 2017.

14 Thus, the Carniolan Provincial Estates required the rank of knighthood from Johann Paul von Jenkensfeld, when he bought the seigniory of Mirna in Lower Carniola in 1755, or from the physician Natalis Pagliarucci, when he became the owner of the seigniory of Khislstein in Kranj (ÖStA, AVFHKA, Adelsakte, Hofadelsakt von Jenko, Johann Paul, 19. IV. 1762; Hofadelsakt von Pagliarucci, Natalis, 28. III. 1809; see also: Rugále & Preinfalk, 2010, 135–143; Preinfalk, 2013, 73–76). A similar example in Styria was Franz Anton Protasi, who requested the rank of knighthood after he bought the seigniory of Planina near Sevnica in 1770 (ÖStA, AVFHKA, Adelsakte, Adelsakt von Protasi, Franz Anton, 3. VIII. 1770; StLA, Altes Landrecht, box 28, Prucker(gg)–Prunerstein).

15 See, for example: Smole, 1982, passim; Jakič, 1999, passim.

ity's significance and power,[16] on the other hand, it is impossible to ignore its numerical growth. As statistical data show, most elevations to nobility in all the centuries under the Habsburgs took place precisely during the rules of the emperors Francis Joseph and Charles. One can even speak of an inflation of noble titles. They were most often conferred on officials and military officers (including their descendants, since nobility was hereditary), who would nevertheless continue to lead a middle-class style of living (Stekl, 2010). Although some of them, as already mentioned, decided to buy castles from impoverished members of the old nobility, the abolition of feudalism after 1848 rendered it impossible for them to become classic (feudal) lords. Besides, most new nobles did not have sufficient property to integrate themselves into highest social sphere. Nevertheless, they tried to emulate all the postulates of nobility, the most important of which was loyalty to the sovereign and the (Catholic) Church. All of these conclusions also apply to the Slovenian territory.

The major turning point in the development of the nobility was 1918, which formally marked its end. The fall of the monarchy spelled the abolition of the last privileges that distinguished the nobility from the rest of the population. From then on, all people—noble and non-noble alike—were formally recognised as equal. This naturally led to the identity crisis in that part of the population that based its identity on belonging to the nobility, whereby tradition played the most decisive role. If the noble identity of a family or an individual was strong and long-lasting enough, no measure of the new government could undermine it. This held especially true for the old, well-established, conditionally speaking, feudal families. The Auersperg or Herberstein family names were still held in high regard and distinction, no matter if they were preceded by count, prince, or some other noble title. By contrast, members of the new nobility established themselves through administrative or military careers. In this social stratum, a strong sense of noble identity could never develop, and it was often lost in subsequent generations.[17]

In the Habsburg Monarchy, the nobility as a whole possessed a relatively homogeneous status (even though it was inherently very heterogeneous). After the disin-

16 With his absolutist aspirations, the sovereign had from the end of Middle Ages onwards endeavoured to limit the power of the nobility as much as possible. One of the peaks of this antagonism were the Reformation, in which the nobility took the leading role, and then the Counter-Reformation, where the scales tipped in favour of the sovereign or, rather, the provincial prince. New blows to the nobility were dealt by the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. The middle class joined the struggle as well, whose growing power and influence was increasingly relegating the nobility to the background. The Revolution of 1848, also called the Bourgeois Revolution, led to the almost complete abolition of privileges based on the medieval feudal order. After that year, the only right that the nobility still enjoyed was the right to use noble titles and coats of arms (see the discussions of Hannes Stekl, collected in the miscellany *Adel und Bürgertum*). During the corporate state period, the nobility had the right to take part in political decision-making within the Provincial Estates, where it sat on the second bench (at some places also on the third), and after 1848 or, rather, 1861, within the Provincial Assembly, where most members of the old feudal nobility formed the great landowners' curia and the members of the new nobility were also elected to other (rural or urban) curiae.

17 On the destiny of new noble families, cf. especially: Rugále & Preinfalk, 2012; Preinfalk, 2017.

tegration of the monarchy, however, the development of the nobility in individual successor states went in different directions. In the late autumn of 1918, the Austrian nobility, including that in the Slovenian territory, which had previously looked to Vienna as its centre, found itself in new state and national frameworks. To obtain a clear picture of the nobility in the territory of present-day Slovenia, one needs to compare it to the nobility that remained in the newly established Republic of German-Austria. The differences are significant and visible. First, in Austria, the national issue was understandably not given much prominence, because the nobility, having for the most part already declared itself as German in the monarchy, did not differ from the majority population in terms of nationality. Much more pronounced were tensions among the social strata. The nobility could not easily accept its abolition, and the majority population, in fear of revisionist attempts, viewed it with distrust. In the desire to carry on with their former way of living, nobles formed themselves into a special corporate organisation, called the Catholic Association of Austrian Nobles (*Vereinigung katholischer Edelleute in Österreich*). Founded before the First World War, the organisation ceased its operations until it was revived in 1922. Its main goal was to enable further existence and activities of the Austrian nobility. Still in 1936, the association counted more than 2500 members, especially from the high nobility. They mainly engaged in charitable pursuits, supporting each other, ensuring scholarships for their peers, as well as promoting genealogical studies on noble families and the Catholic way of life. They preferred to not involve in politics, except indirectly after 1934, when a few noblemen assumed leadership functions in the so-called Austrian corporate state: Kurt von Schuschnigg, Prince Alois Schönburg-Hartenstein, Count Botho Coreth (Stekl, 2004, 106–110; Walterskirchen, 1999, 43–44).

The Austrian nobility rejected both communism and Nazism, but largely embraced Fascist-like corporate ideology (*Austrofaschismus*). It emphasised Austrian patriotism and close relations with the Catholic Church. In this spirit, Austria transformed itself in the second half of the 1930s into a corporate state (*Ständestaat*), in which the nobility again started to assume leadership roles. There were even intensive talks with Archduke Otto, whom many regarded as the future Austrian monarch or at least as chancellor. However, these developments were brought to an end in 1938, when Hitler annexed Austria to the Third Reich, dissolved the corporate state, and sent numerous Austrian political actors to concentration camps; among them also Austria's last chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg (Stekl, 2004, 118–120; Walterskirchen, 1999, 50–54).

After the end of the First World War and the disintegration of the great monarchy, the nobility experienced not only political decline but also severe financial hardships. Noble status was associated with pursuing a certain lifestyle, including a fine external appearance. It was already before the war that such a lifestyle posed a challenge for the administrative and military nobility, which was (except for industrialists or Jewish bankers) usually not very wealthy. During and after the war, however, the rapidly growing inflation and the looming economic crisis rendered living according to noble rules completely impossible. The Catholic Association of Austrian Nobles appealed to its members to follow the example of German associations and financially support

their impoverished peers. At the same time, it fostered a stronger spirit of the nobility by encouraging its members to meet their daily needs by using the services of noble entrepreneurs. For this purpose, the book series *Wiener genealogisches Taschenbuch* was circulated between 1926 and 1937, containing current genealogical data on noble families of the so-called second society in Austria.[18] For individual family members, the volumes also provided information regarding their professions, making the search easier for other noblemen. In the last volumes of the above-mentioned genealogical collection, this information was expanded with announcements made by noblemen offering their entrepreneurial services: among them were, for example, medical doctors, lawyers, retail merchants, painters, publishers etc. (Wiesflecker, 2010, 223).

A comparison of the situations in Austria and Slovenia reveals quite a number of differences. After the territory of present-day Slovenia became part of the newly established Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the nobility did not organise itself into a special noble corporation. Although its members still mainly socialised among themselves, they did so on personal, informal level. As in Austria, they confined themselves to their estates and formed relatively closed-off circles in Slovenian society. For example, when Count Herward Auersperg, the Lord of the Turjak Castle, died in 1925, his funeral was attended only by noblemen from Carniola and Lower Styria.[19] In a similar vein, only family members and local nobles were invited to celebrate the silver wedding anniversary of Baron and Baroness Wambolt at Hmeljnik in 1930 (Potočnik, 1994, 18).

Founding itself in a spasm, the nobility in the Slovenian territory fell into a state of complete passivity. Its members did not appear in public, let alone held public offices, nor did they engage in politics, culture, or science. They primarily concerned themselves with managing their family estates, which were now threatened by the agrarian reform.

In Yugoslavia, the agrarian reform was a particularly burning issue. Whereas in Austria, noble estates remained more or less untouched (including *fidei comissum*), the situation in the Yugoslav kingdom was much more polarised. Although the agrarian reform already started in 1919, the procedures were long and some (e.g. those related to the Princes of Auersperg) dragged on through nearly the entire interwar period (cf. Granda, 1980, 200–220). Strikingly, it was even in the face of this situation that the nobility failed to close ranks and act as a single injured party, and instead left every single individual to fight for himself or herself.[20]

18 The "second society", or "die zweite Gesellschaft", was a term used to denote the new nobility, hence, the nobility that originated from the administrative, military, industrial, or artistic milieu. This term related to the "first society", or "die erste Gesellschaft", which designated the old feudal or high aristocracy (Winkelhofer, 2009, 23).

19 Baron Ludwig Lazarini of Boštanj, who came to the funeral with his wife and son, counted around forty representatives of the relatives and acquaintances from the Auersperg circle, either noble or non-noble owners of manors. (Kosler, Galle…) (ZAL LJU, 340, 3; (cf. Granda, 1980, 200–220) also: Preinfalk, 2005, 136).

20 Count Roberto Barbo-Waxenstein wrote about this in his novel *The White Bullet*. On the nobility's and estate owners' failure to organise, cf. Barbo, 1935, 87–88.

Even though the nobility could not lead the same life as it did before 1918, nobles still strove to carry on in its old ways. Habits based on centuries-old traditions could not simply vanish overnight. They still lived in their countryside mansions and/or city palaces, they still visited one another and socialised hunting, which had always been considered an activity of the nobles. Due to tighter financial means, they understandably had to give up extravagances, such as long travels abroad or maintaining several residences (the Auerspergs of Turjak, for example, were compelled to sell their palace in Ljubljana in 1927; Wiesflecker, 2010, 224), but the main features of the noble everyday life remained the same. A glimpse into how these changes unfolded in the territory of present-day Slovenia is provided in the memoirs of Baron Philipp Wambolt (1918–2007), whose family lived at the Hmeljnik Castle until the Second World War. In 1931, Wambolt, a teenager at the time, and his siblings visited the Auerspergs at Turjak for two days. He summed up his memories into a short story, in which he described a few typical scenes, such as family lunch in the dining room decorated with portraits of ancestors, playing in the castle building and telling stories from the family tradition, as well as visiting other close relatives, e.g. the two countesses of Auersperg at the Bokalce Manor (Preinfalk, 2020, 551–563).

Apart from everyday life, educational styles, too, continued to follow the old patterns typical of the aristocracy. As the young Philipp Wambolt recounts, although the children at Turjak and Hmeljnik received similar upbringing, there were significant differences among them. On the one hand, the Wambolts (even more so than the Auerspergs) formed part of the highest circles of nobility, which abided by strict rules of education. Philipp's mother was Countess Harrach and his grandmother Princess Lobkowitz—the families of both women possessed immediate property in the Holy Roman Empire and enjoyed the status of the so-called mediatised families from the Napoleonic times onwards.[21] Both families were the elite of the elite, and considered proper upbringing since birth as one of the cornerstones of their existence. Hard education was the very element that distinguished the nobility from what it viewed to be the "effeminate" middle class.[22]

Although officially abolished, noble titles did not completely fall out of use. Nobles themselves used them in their communication, and their titles were to some extent also recognised by the local community. Thus, for example, letters addressed to nobles were regularly equipped with corresponding noble titles, and parish registers almost always indicated noble titles next to a nobleman's name. The use of noble titles in parish registers was very much dependent on the parish priest in charge. Whereas, for instance, the title count/countess regularly appeared in records on the christenings and weddings of the Auerspergs of Turjak until the Second World War, no indication of noble titles can be found in reference to the Auerspergs of Soteska, although as members of the princely line (princes and princesses) they ranked higher

21 On mediatised families, cf., for example: Preinfalk, 2005, 25–26 (with literature listed therein).
22 On noble education, cf.: Winkelhofer, 2009, 11–33.

on the noble hierarchical scale.[23] When Baron Lazarini had the daughter Marlene in 1936 in Krško, the parish priest omitted the baronial titles; however, when the baron had a son four years later, the priest used appropriate titles for him and his godparents.[24]

To some extent, noble titles continued to appear in official documents until the period after the Second World War. The records of the confiscation commission for 1945 and 1946 still stated noble titles next to the names of the members of the former (especially high) nobility. Thus, the property was not confiscated from some Herward Auersperg or Robert Barbo, but from Count Auersperg and Count Barbo. The same holds for other noblemen, for example, Baron Codelli, the Barons of Lazarini, etc.[25] Quite possibly, the noble titles in these cases were not a gesture of courtesy, but rather a way to justify the confiscation of the noble (i.e. German, feudal, foreign, enemy) property.

The emergence of new nation states, in which the population was more ethnically homogenous than in the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, also gave rise to the question of national belonging among the nobility. This issue was particularly acute in the Slovenian area. On the one hand, the local nobility had never declared itself as Slovenian (either considering itself as German or fostering the cult of supranationalism or internationalism). And on the other hand, the Slovenian political, cultural, historical, and national discourse pushed the nobility out of Slovenian society as foreigners, non-Slovenes who had no place in Slovenian national society or history.[26]

After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the nobility found different ways to cope with the new situation. Those who did not want to live in the new Slavic state left immediately after the war. This held especially true for the members of the lower nobility who were mostly German-oriented and who had no estates in the Slovenian territory to keep them there. For national reasons, a few members of the old nobility left as well. Unlike his cousins at Turjak, for instance, Count Erwin Auersperg (1889–1973), the Lord of the Manor of Ig, decided to emigrate after he sold his estate already in the summer of 1918. In retrospect, he wrote the following about it: "Due to the overthrow in 1918, I lost the greater part of my property, because after I sold my estate in what is now Yugoslavia—just before the overthrow—I was not quick enough to buy another in the German-speaking territory".[27] Some noble families left later, for reasons mostly to do with complications caused by the agrarian reform. Thus, for instance, Baron Friedrich Rechbach

23 NŠAL, Prepisi matičnih knjig, Turjak, R. 1835–1964, 28, 39, 42; Prepisi matičnih knjig, župnija Soteska, 1835–1964, 114, 116, 120.

24 NŠAL, Prepisi matičnih knjig, župnija Krško, 1916–1964, 3, 125.

25 ZAL LJU, 469, 3, 160/45 (Codelli); 22, 29/46 (Barbo); 21, 1730/45, 1731/45 (Lazarini); 1, 7/45 (Auersperg).

26 For example: Apih, 1887, 171–172; cf. also: Štih, 2001, 61–72; Preinfalk, 2004, 507–516.

27 Erwin Auersperg, Lebenslauf, s. d. (a document in the author's possession): "Durch den Umsturz des Jahres 1918 verlor ich den grössten Teil meines Vermögens, da es mir nicht rasch genug gelungen war, nach Verkauf meines im heutigen Jugoslavien gelegenen Besitzes – knapp vor dem Umsturz – ein anderes Gut in einer deutschsprachigen Gegend zu erwerben."

sold his Krumperk Castle in 1928 and moved to Austria; his example was soon followed by Baron Michelangelo Zois, who auctioned his Brdo Castle near Kranj in early 1929 and created a new home in Austria as well (Smole, 1982, 247; Preinfalk, 2003, 39).

In contrast, many old noble families that held more or less extensive landed property decided to stay. These were above all members of those families that had been here for more than several hundred years and considered this territory to be their homeland. Some even received Yugoslav citizenship, undoubtedly more for pragmatic reasons than loyalty to the new state (the Counts of Auersperg, the Codellis, a few Herbersteins), whereas others retained their Austrian citizenship (the Princes of Auersperg). The Carinthian family of Thurn-Valsassina chose a particularly unorthodox manoeuvre, with its family branch based in (Yugoslav) Ravne taking Austrian citizenship and the family branch in (Austrian) Bleiburg obtaining Yugoslav citizenship (Preinfalk, 2008, 261).

Further attesting the nobility's accommodation to the new Slovenian reality is that many noble children started to attend Slovenian schools. Karl Auersperg of Turjak (1920–2004) remembered how his older brothers attended the Jesuit high school in Kalksburg near Vienna, whereas he as the youngest child was enrolled in the primary school in Turjak and later to the St. Stanislav's Institution in Šentvid and the secondary school in Ljubljana (Auersperger, 1999, 31). Several years younger Livia Barbo (1927–2018) lived with her mother's family Codelli in Kodeljevo after her parents' divorce and recounted her mother's pragmatic decision, once she reached her school age: "Now that we are staying here, you will just have to attend a Slovenian school", and enrolled her only daughter to St. Ursula's monastery school for girls in Ljubljana.[28]

To some degree, the nobility that remained in the Slovenian territory therefore acquiesced, at least outwardly, to the new reality, even though some were intimately quite averse, if not downright hostile towards both the new state and the Slovenes in general. The idea promoted by Count Anton Alexander Auersperg (Anastasius Grün) (1806–1876)—namely, that Slovenian culture could only develop by leaning on German culture and that the unification of the South Slavs was inappropriate and unacceptable (Grdina, 2009, 58–65) —was widespread and very persistent among Carniolan Germans. It echoed, for example, in a letter that Heinrich von Schollmayer-Lichtenberg (1860–1930), the Lord of the Manor of Koča Vas near Lož, wrote to Baron Ludwig Lazarini (1849–1930), the Lord of the Manor of Boštanj, in March 1926, precisely fifty years after Auersperg's death. In the letter, Schollmayer-Lichtenberg commented on the Slovenian regesta of documents from the Boštanj archives, which the Slovenian priest and historian Anton Koblar (1854–1928) published already in 1899, and expressed his indignation as follows: "Dean Koblar's publication of the German documents from the Boštanj archives in Slovenian regesta serves no other purpose than indulging the vanity of the Slovenes: this small nation of a million

28 Oral source: Livia Barbo-Waxenstein (1927–2018).

is abandoning the German language, to which it owes everything, and it prefers to conduct science in its own language, making publications accessible to less than a million readers, whereas German is mastered by more than eighty million speakers; however, this gratifies the national chauvinism, which also drove the Slovenes into the arms of the Serbs, who are now bent on erasing the Slovenian language from this world. In their burning desire, the Slovenes have therefore jumped out of the frying pan into the fire, they will vanish in the Balkan culture, and they will need centuries before they rise to the cultural level to which the Germans have elevated them. With such thoughts I can reconcile with anything!"[29]

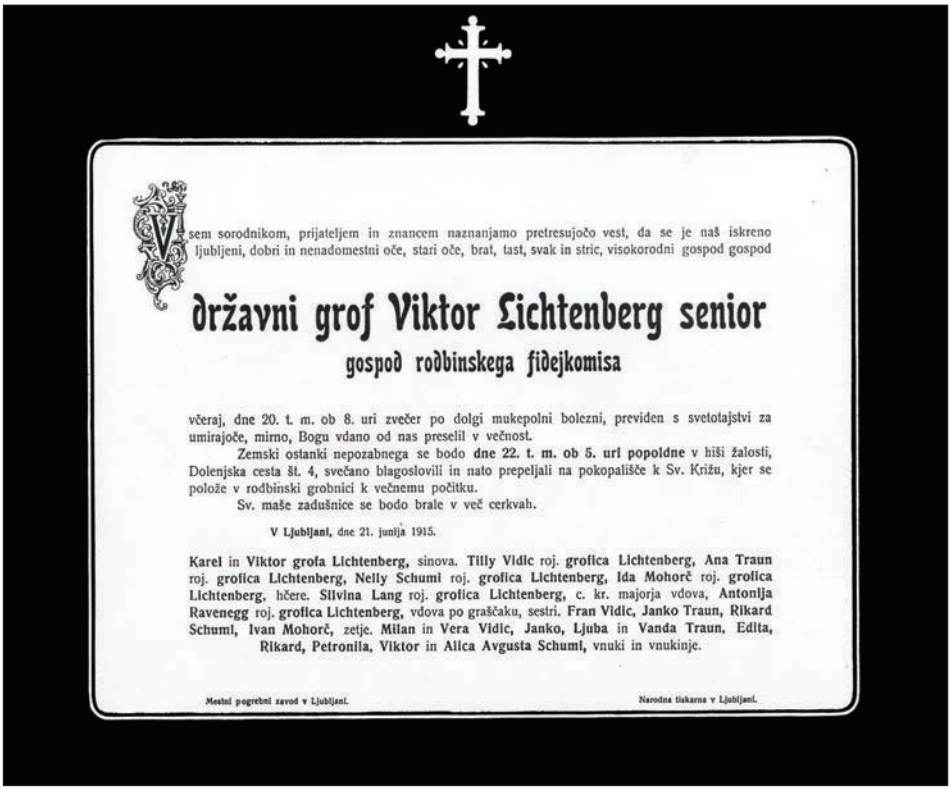
Similar anti-Slovenian sentiments were also expressed by Baron Hans Kometer (1850–1925) of Pukštajn near Dravograd. When he paid a visit to Mr and Mrs Jirku at the Hartenštajn Manor near Slovenj Gradec, where they had moved immediately after the First World War, he said among other things: "Now we must stick together. Austrians, I mean. Otherwise we will have the Slovenian lowlife walk all over us." (Stridsberg, 1971, 92).[30]

Given the above, the distrust between the nobility and the Slovenes or, rather, the new Yugoslav authorities was still deep-seated. Regardless of being Yugoslav citizens, nobles were regarded as foreigners in the new state, and the government also treated them as such (Wiesflecker, 2010, 204). The situation was slightly different in Gorizia, which belonged to Italy after the First World War. There the former Habsburg nobility quickly accepted the reality and, at least outwardly, expressed their favourable disposition towards the Italian kingdom—also, among other things, by requesting Italy's recognition of their noble titles. The Friuli line of the Princes of Porcia did so already in 1908 and the rest after 1918 (e.g. Coronini, Attems, Strassoldo, etc.; Wiesflecker, 2010, 205).

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the nobility tried to integrate into the Slovenian milieu. One sign of such affiliation was the use of Slovenised names. Before 1918, using the Slovenian form of one's personal name (e.g. in obituaries) was to some extent a sign of identifying with the Slovenes. Thus, before 1918, one can hardly find

29 ZAL LJU, 340, 22, a letter of Heinrich v. Schollmayer-Lichtenberg to baron Ludwig Lazarini, 10. 3. 1926: "Dass Dechant Koblar die deutschen Urkunden aus Weissenstein in slovenischen Regesten erschienen liess, ist eine Concession an die Eitelkeit der Slovenen: dieses kleine Millionen-Völkchen meidet die deutsche Sprache, der sie Alles zu verdanken hat und arbeitet wissenschaftlich lieber in ihrer Sprache, wodurch ihre Publikationen kaum einer schwachen Milion Lesern zugänglich ist, während über 80 Millionen Menschen die deutsche Sprache beherrschen, aber dem nationalen Chauvinismus ist Genüge geleistet, welcher die Slovenen auch den Serben in die Arme getrieben hat, die nun daran arbeiten, die slovenische Sprache aus der Welt zu schaffen; die Slovenen sind also über eigenes, brennendes Verlangen aus dem Regen in die Traufe gekommen, werden in der Balkan-Kultur untergehen und Jahrhunderte brauchen, um wieder jene Kulturstufe zu erreichen, auf welche sie das Deutschtum gehoben hatte. Solche Gedanken versöhnen mich mit Manchem!"

30 Gusti Stridsberg (1892–1978) was the Lady of the Hartenštajn Manor near Slovenj Gradec. As a daughter of Ferdinand Mayer, a director and an imperial councillor, she spent her childhood in Vienna. During the First World War, she married Bernhard Jirku, a physician of Czech descent, and after 1918 moved to the Hartenštajn Manor. There she kept company with other lords and ladies of manors from Carinthia and Styria who remained in the Yugoslav state after 1918.



Vsem sorodnikom, prijateljem in znancem naznanjamo pretresujočo vest, da se je naš iskreno ljubljeni, dobri in nenadomestni oče, stari oče, brat, tast, svak in stric, visokorodni gospod gospod

državni grof Viktor Lichtenberg senior

gospod rodbinskega fidejkomisa

včeraj, dne 20. t. m. ob 8. uri zvečer po dolgi mukepolni bolezni, previden s svetotajstvi za umirajoče, mirno, Bogu vdano od nas preselil v večnost.

Zemski ostanki nepozabnega se bodo **dne 22. t. m. ob 5. uri popoldne** v hiši žalosti, Dolenjska cesta št. 4, svečano blagoslovili in nato prepeljali na pokopališče k Sv. Križu, kjer se polože v rodbinski grobnici k večnemu počitku.

Sv. maše zadušnice se bodo brale v več cerkvah.

V Ljubljani, dne 21. junija 1915.

Karel in **Viktor grofa Lichtenberg,** sinova. **Tilly Vidic** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg, Ana Traun** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg, Nelly Schumi** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg, Ida Mohorč** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg,** hčere. **Silvina Lang** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg,** c. kr. majorja vdova, **Antonija Ravenegg** roj. **grofica Lichtenberg,** vdova po graščaku, sestri. **Fran Vidic, Janko Traun, Rikard Schumi, Ivan Mohorč,** zetje. **Milan** in **Vera Vidic, Janko, Ljuba** in **Vanda Traun, Edita, Rikard, Petronila, Viktor** in **Alica Avgusta Schumi,** vnuki in vnukinje.

Mestni pogrebni zavod v Ljubljani. Narodna tiskarna v Ljubljani.

Fig. 2: Slovenian noble obituary from 1915 (private collection of the Barbo-Waxenstein family).

any noble obituary in the Slovenian language (unlike Hungarian, Czech, and Croatian). The only exception was the new nobility with a prominent Slovenian orientation (e.g. the families Bleiweis, Šuklje, etc.), whereas only a few old families decided to do so. One such example was the family of Count Viktor Lichtenberg, which published both German and Slovenian obituaries for its deceased members—in 1907 for Viktor's son Franc, in 1910 for his wife Frančiška (née Belč), and in 1915 for Viktor himself. After 1918, Slovenian noble obituaries were no longer an exception, but rather a rule: while it continued to publish German obituaries, the nobility always issued Slovenian versions as well, indicating all personal names in Slovenian form (ZAL LJU, 340, 27–36; ARS AS, 1084).

Whereas the nobility's national identity was of marginal importance in the inter-war period, it became increasingly prominent after the end of the Second World War. Although the new administration did not recognise the former nobility as a separate category of population (except that, as already mentioned, it consistently attached noble titles to their names), it nevertheless declared all of them as Germans or persons

of German nationality, and on this basis confiscated their property and expelled them from Yugoslavia. In complaints filed against these decisions, the injured parties either invoked their Austrian rather than German nationality or simply maintained that they were Slovenes. The sister of Count Erwin Auersperg, the Lord of the Manor of Ig, Countess Elsa Auersperg, who was evicted in 1918, thus wrote: "I am a Yugoslav citizen of German nationality from the family of Auersperg, an old family line that has lived in Carniola or, rather, Slovenia for 600 years" (ZAL LJU, 469, 1 31/45). Similar arguments were also used by Marie Cocron, née Polz von Ruttersheim: "I am not a German citizen, nor a German in the sense as perceived by AVNOJ […] I am an Austrian citizen […]" (ZAL LJU, 469, 3, 145/45) and Countess Pachta, Marie Felicitas née von Pongratz from Polzela, who invoked her Austrian citizenship and Slovenian ethnicity: "Nor am I a German by nationality but a Slovene […] my parents and grandparents, too, were of Slovenian and Croatian descent, respectively" (ZAL LJU, 469, 21, 1754/45). None of their complainants were successful, and they were all forced to leave the homeland of their ancestors.

Today, there is hardly any nobility left in Slovenia or, in other words, there is absolutely no trace of the former noble identity to be detected among its rare representatives. Whereas members of the high or old nobility (still from the times of the Holy Roman Empire) amount to a mere handful, many members of younger noble families from the nineteenth century (the Austrian nobility) felt ashamed of their noble status in the new Yugoslav state and deliberately pushed it to oblivion. For this reason, their descendants no longer foster noble identity today, albeit aware of it. Compared to other successor states of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Slovenia seems to have been most thoroughly purged of its former nobility.

THE NOBILITY IN CROATIA AND SLAVONIA

Civil Croatia and Slavonia was a part of Hungary, yet it had its autonomy. The traditional autonomy[31] originated at the beginning of the 11th century when Croatian Kingdom entered the union with the Kingdom of Hungary. Even though this autonomy was often differently interpreted from the Croatian and the Hungarian side, ranging from *regna socia* (allied kingdoms) to *partes adnexae* (annexed parts i.e. countries) or even *partes subiectae* (subordinate parts), the Croatian viceroy (the *Ban*) and the Croatian Diet (*Sabor*) were its major warrants. After the onset of dualism in 1867, modern Croatian autonomy within the lands of St. Stephen's Crown was guaranteed by the Croatian-Hungarian Settlement of 1868.[32]

The nobility in Croatia and Slavonia was until 1848 a dominant part of *natio politica* enjoying privileges and rights such as tax exemption, representation at the Sabor and the counties (*županije,* territorial-administrative units), which were *uni-*

31 The traditional autonomy, the so called municipal rights, did not encompass Slavonia.

32 The Croatian government and Sabor were since 1868 in charge of internal affairs, justice, religion and education.

versitas nobilium, guaranteeing the representation of lesser and regional nobility. The social and ethnic structure of Croatian and Slavonian nobility differed; whereas the latter could boast of big landed estates and high percentage of magnates (barons, counts and one princely family), in civil Croatia lesser nobility with small estates prevailed. In contrast to Croatia, the nobility in Slavonia was to a large extent of non-Croatian origin. These differences stemmed from the geographical characteristics of Slavonia with a lot of fertile land, but also from its specific history. It had been a part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of the 17th century, and after its liberation, the Vienna centre could sell or donate large estates to wealthy and influential nobility of various ethnic origin.

In the 19th century nobility was faced with two important processes: national integration and modernisation. After the revolution of 1848/49 nobility was deprived of its traditional privileges and a portion of its land farmed by peasants, as was the case in the whole Habsburg Monarchy. Even though there were some noblemen who accepted liberal ideas and the necessity of modernisation, majority of them was rather conservative, accepting only inevitable changes.

By the late 19th century the position of nobility changed further due to the rise of the middle class, especially businessmen, who sometimes bought landed estates. A part of the middle-class elite was ennobled and it imitated elements of noblemen's culture (hunting, riding, maintaining stables and dog studs, luxurious palaces, private education, loyal household servants, the life as country gentlemen at least during the so called *Sommerfrische*). At the same time the differentiation among the ranks of noblemen themselves occured. New members of aristocracy were recruited from non-noble meritocracy or from members of lesser nobility who rose through administrative functions, military career or economic activities. Among the latter were also some Jews, among all categories the Serbs.[33] The advance of mass politics, aimed at lower layers of society, presented a new blow to the influence of the old elite. However, until 1918 nobility still constituted political, economic and cultural elite. Its elite layer – the magnates, enjoyed even after 1848–49 the right to be personally represented at the Croatian Sabor, regardless of the elections, just as was the case in Hungary.

The beginning of the Croatian national movement in the1830s posed a major challenge to multicultural and supranational aristocracy. It eventually divided the nobility along national and political lines, in pro-Croatian, pro-Austrian and pro-Hungarian nobility. The first two options were often combined, especially during dualistic era, when Hungary was seen as a major political enemy by majority of Croatian politicians (Gross, 1978–1979, 123–149). Contrary to the Bohemian lands and Hungary, Croatian nobility did not found its own party or emerge as the

33 Examples of new aristocracy are: nobleman Nikola Tomašić, influential politician and the Ban (1910–1912); Antun Mihalović, nobleman coming form a Serbian Orthodox family that converted to Catholicism in 1763. Mihalović was the last Croatian Ban (1917–1919). Examples of meritocracy: barons Turković and barons Gutmann, mentioned later in the text.

leader of the national movement[34] and modernisation. However, aristocracy still cherished its multicultural side, and the economic difficulties it faced made its way of life to one of the pillars of its identity in modern times. It should also be stressed that despite their differences, noblemen were still connected through family ties, economic interests, identity and tradition throughout the whole Monarchy and beyond it.

Fig. 3: Stubički Golubovec, western drawing-room, photographed by barons Steeb in the interwar period, Kajkaviana, Donja Stubica (Collection of Kajkavian archival material).

The transition to the new Yugoslav state faced the nobility with many challenges: violence, the problem of citizenship, the partition of its estates to several new states, the land reform, the agrarian chararacter of the new state, in one word with the loss of its elite position. Nobility developed different strategies of survival, depending on its social and economic status, political and national orientation, but often on quite personal choices. The major difference lay between old and new aristocracy and between aristocracy and lesser noblemen. The latter had been pauperised much before 1918, barely making both ends meet on their small holdings, or more often, moving to towns and living a middle-class existence. They were less cosmopolitan and multicultural than aristocracy and their networks were thus less influential and usually limited to Croatia or the neighbouring lands (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegowina). In one word, they were even before 1918 left with only their coat of arms and title, and after the War they were deprived of them as well. This made them eager to adapt, a prominent example is Janko Bedeković Kobilički, the chief of the Zagreb police (1925–1926, 1929–1937), notorious for his repressive methods (Janjatović, 2002, 265; Dobrivojević, 2006, 122). On the other hand, aristocrats had much to fight for: their big estates, habitus, supranational networks, elite position, their whole way of life. Not few of them were faced with post-war violence; their estates

34 Some noblemen participated in the national movement from its very beginning, but the social structure of the leading group, with middle-class members playing a vital role, was more heterogeneous than in Hungary.

and property including relevant art collections[35] had been looted or their castles and manors set afire by local peasants or the Green Cadres,[36] eager to offer a new socio-political order in the countryside. In late October and November 1918, their activities became indistinguishable from a wave of violence against supporters of the old regime (officials, landlords...) and „the others" - the Jews. These disturbances were particularly severe in Croatia, Slavonia, Galicia and western Slovakia (Beneš, 2017; Banac, 1992). Most vulnerable were noble landlords of foreign origin or the ones enjoying the reputation of the „enemy of the people", but there were fatal incidents when members of nobility were physically attacked or murdered out of vengeance or sheer brutality.[37] Situation in Slavonia was better, since there were estates owned by the Serbs and the Orthodox Church, and the coming of the Serbian army improved the situation even if there were violent incidents after its arrival. Some aristocrats had land in several new states, with different regimes. For example, besides their land in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the counts Drašković had estates in Austria and Hungary,[38] the princes Odescalchi in Czechoslovakia and the counts Khuen-Héderváry in Hungary. Many noblemen had bonds of foreign companies and banks, or even worse, the state bonds of Austria-Hungary, which made them financially vulnerable.

However, even aristocrats were in somewhat different positions pursuing thus different strategies. In general, the nobility of domestic origin or the one enjoying the reputation of being pro-Croatian or pro-Yugoslav before 1918 fared better. Noblemen who cherished widespread social connections, cooperated politically and economically with the middle class, supported patriotic and national associations and institutions, and who had non-noble family ties and good relationship to the local community were still respected. They were often even addressed as noblemen. As expected, new aristocracy i.e. meritocracy, was much more adaptable than the old one. Prominent examples are the Turkovićs and the Gutmanns. The Turković family, originally middle-class merchants who bought a big landed estate Kutjevo in 1882, were ennobled as barons (with the predicate Kutjevački)

35 In March 1919, peasants set afire the castle in Bajnski Dvori near Varaždin, in order to prevent the return of the owner Samuel Festetics, who had fled to Austria. A valuable art collection, including the works by Rembrandt, was destroyed. In 1921, Festetics, the Austrian citizen, asked the Austrian Foreign Office for help, since Bajnski Dvori were expropriated without any reparation, guaranteed by the Treaty of Saint Germain (Kolar, 2003–2004, 20–21).

36 The castle Novi Dvori near Klanjec in Hrvatsko Zagorje was on 1 November 1918 attacked by peasants. Men were followed by women, who loaded looted goods onto cars or into baskets. The raid lasted until 4 November, resulting in 6 dead peasants and the damage of a million crowns (Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997a, 177).

37 Baroness Marija Adamović was murdered in Slatinski Drenovac by a soldier returning from Russia. The victim was known for her charity work.

38 Count Ivan Drašković participated in the delegation from Baranja (Baranya) which required its union with the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Drašković was therefore imprisoned in Hungary. His motive was by no means a Yugoslav orientation, but an attempt to prevent that his estates end up in different states.

in 1912 (Iveljić, in print). They modernised their estate, but were struck by the economic crisis, the agrarian competition in the new state and the land reform. They tried to make ends meet by founding a private bank in 1919, but during the depression the bank became insolvent, because 80% of its financial means was loaned to the Turković brothers, who were unable to settle their debts since Kutjevo was in the process of land reform (Lajnert, 2016, 223). Because of their Yugoslav orientation the Turkovićs enjoyed the support of the regime. They managed to change ownership of parts of their landed property, circumventing the land reform ordinances. When the authorities finally learned about it, they were not able to do much, because of the complex and unclear property relations on the Kutjevo estate (Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997b). After the Second World War the estate still had 5.077 yokes of vineyards, orchards, meadows and arable land, which were confiscated by the new regime (Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997b, 427). If the Turkovićs enjoyed the support of Yugoslav authorities, the Gutmanns did well even without it. They were middle-class entrepreneurs ennobled in 1869 („de Gelse“) who became barons (with the additional predicate „de Belišće“) in 1904. They bought a big landed estate in Slavonia from the Hilleprand von Prandau family, turning it into a huge timber industry complex in Belišće, with a workers' colony and its own railway (Volner, 2019). As Hungarian Jews they were disliked by the local community and the Yugoslav regime, yet they were cunning businessmen who used various means to protect their interests. By proving that the owners were of Czech and not of Hungarian origin and by moving the seat of their company from Vienna to Belišće, they avoided the nationalisation of their industry and railway. They used clientelistic and political ties to the Radical Party to protect their landed estate, and they transferred the ownership of a part of their land to joint stock companies under their control.[39]

In general, aristocrats considered to be of Yugoslav orientation were treated better by the regime, even in the process of land reform. The examples are Count Miroslav Kulmer the Younger and Count Josip Bombelles. The former came from a pro-Austrian and rather conservative family of Carinthian origin. As an aristocrat connected to domestic capital, who modernised his estate, Kulmer became in 1906 a member of the Croat-Serb Coalition.[40] After the Great War he joined the pro-regime Democratic Party, and in 1930 he became vice-governor of the National Bank of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, acquiring nicknames “citizen count” and “peasant count” (Iveljić, 2020). In the wartime Ustaša state he became the member of the Croatian State Sabor. His is an example of an aristocrat adapting to various regimes. Count Josip Bombelles presents an even more astonishing

39 Among those who helped them were noblemen like Antun Mihalović, whose daughter was married to Milan Antić, the minister of the Karađorđević Court (*ministar Dvora*) (Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997b, 297–299; Boban, 1974, 30).

40 He was the president of the First Croatian Savings bank (*Prva hrvatska štedionica*) and of the Croatian-Slavonian Agricultural Society (*Hrvatsko-slavonsko gospodarsko društvo)* (Kukić, 2013).

Fig. 4: Villa Nemo in Crikvenica, built in 1921 by baron Pavao Rauch (photo by Tea Rosić).

case. He was a descendant of a distinguished aristocratic family from Portugal, with one of his ancestors being Francis Joseph's private educator, and his father, Marko the Younger, was a hunting companion of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. Marko the Younger shared the Archduke's hatred of the Hungarian and Serbian political elites, acting as a liaison between the Archduke and his circle, and Croatian politicians (Rahten, 2008, 155). Josip Bombelles was described in a post-war official report[41] as an enthusiastic Yugoslav, yet his loyalty and treason were dangerously interwoven, for in the interwar period he was uncovered as a triple agent who met a tragic end in the Ustaša jail (Boban, 1974, 87, 130). On the opposite pole were aristocrats such as Baron Pavao Rauch, a former Ban (1908–1910), a tough conservative of anti-Serbian and anti-Yugoslav orientation. His landed estates in the Podravina region were among the first to be targeted by the land reform, and it was clear that the regime intentionally made things harder for Rauch. His own brother Geza enjoyed a more favourable treatment because he had not been so politically exposed (Iveljić, 2020; Iveljić, 2014).

41 HDA 78, Zemaljska vlada, Predsjedništvo, 6–14, No 18705/1921, box 1166.

Some aristocrats of non-Croatian origin refused to adapt and opted for non-Yugoslav (most often Austrian or Hungarian) citizenship,[42] hoping to be compensated for their property according to the Treaty of Saint Germain. Some gave up the fight later, sold their property and went abroad (Kolar-Dimitrijević, 1995). There were sometimes different strategies even in the same gender and family. The Weriand lineage of the Windisch-Graetz opted for Yugoslav citizenship, whereas the main lineage in Czechoslovakia opposed such an oportunistic attitude towards the new regime (Wakounig & Stekl, 1992). In an attempt to preserve his way of life Count Rudolf Normann-Ehrenfels bought in 1919 the estate of his brother Gustav, who left the country. Unfortunately, Rudolf's strategy turned fatal in the long run, since his daughter Maria Anna and her husband Lothar von Berks ended up in a work-camp in Valpovo in 1945, where Lothar died. The surviving family members went to Rothenthurn in Austria (Najcer Sabljak, 2012, 45, 122; Šimončić-Bobetko, 1997a, 202).

Aristocracy that remained in the Yugoslav state kept fighting for their castles and manors and estates, for their way of life. They were often still patrons of churches on their estates, and especially women were engaged in charity projects. They tried to preserve their wide-spread networks and aristocratic endogamy. The latter was difficult to maintain, since it had already been eroded in the late 19th century,[43] and it was more often abided by women than by men, which is understandable since noble women married to non-noblemen would formally lose their status (Iveljić, 2016). Aristocrats were desperate to keep up appearances, and with the weakening of their political and economic power, their way of life and culture became primary means of group identification inwards and outwards. Traditional aristocratic way of life characterised by tradition, history, honour, title and rank, genealogy, ceremonies, symbols, education, culture and art (Iveljić, 2018a) was important. Yet, the tradition was reinterpreted in a way that diminished the traits of nobility as a social group, putting an emphasis on its moral values. The nobility did not rely on social component and definition any more, but on culture and personal qualities. The new viewpoint stressed that its elite position was a result of personal qualities and refinement acquired and enticed through the long tradition of holding important functions, of its code of honour and the catalogue of virtues. Its education and supranational networks, important positions it held in all spheres from the military to economics, enabled it to a have a wide perspective and be socially responsible, to care for the greater

42 The citizenship was regulated by the peace treaties of Saint Germain and Trianon, the Treaty of Rapallo of 1920 and the law (*Zakon o državljanstvu*) of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of 1928. It was automatically obtained by individuals who had domicile status in any of the territories of Austria-Hungary prior to 1 January 1910. After that date they had to have a special permission of the State of Slovenes Croats and Serbs. Optants were among others individuals with domicile status in Austria-Hungary but differing from the majority of inhabitants according to race and language. They had to opt within 6 months (Metelko-Zgombić, 2011, 835–837).

43 Among Austrian aristocracy, especially the side lineages, the marriage out of love was on rise since the mid 19th century (Stekl, 2010, 962).

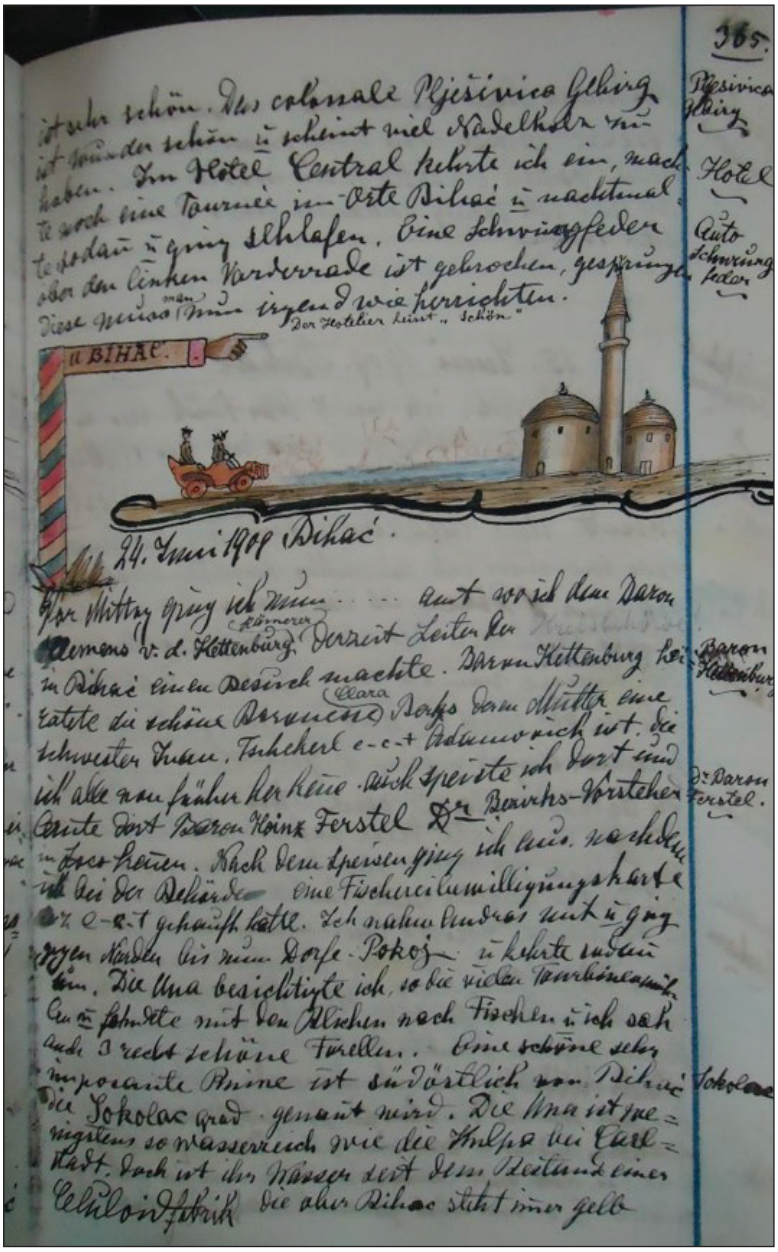


Fig. 5: Illustration from the hunting diary of count Stjepan Erdödy depicting his trip to Bihać in 1909 (HDA, Fond 712 Erdödy, Lovački dnevnik [Hunting diary], vol. 4).

Fig. 6: Illustration from the hunting diary of Stjepan Erdödy showing his hunting list (HDA, Fond 712 Erdödy, Lovački dnevnik [Hunting diary], vol. 3).

good. In that respect noblemen were unique, differing from other „selfish" groups and individuals fighting solely for their particular interests. Furthermore, through experience and knowledge accumulated by many generations of their ancestors, they were used to coping with crises and problems. Aristocrats saw themselves as the ones who could connect all social layers from peasants and workers to the clergy and the middle class. Their tradition was re-interperted as dynamic, far from consisting just of privileges and charts, titles and odd ceremonies. However, it seems that aristocracy in Croatia and Slavonia did not publicly advocate new ideas that would define a role for the nobility in the modern era, such as the ideas of Prince Karl Anton Rohan on one side, and Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi on the other. Bohemian aristocrat Rohan represented post-Habsburg noblemen, aware that imperial nostalgia was out of place, yet utterly opposed to democratisation. They were intrigued by the fascist ideology that reinterpreted conservative values and energy combining them with corporatism. Rohan and his followers hoped for some kind of European union which would promote German interests, jeopardised by the Czechoslovakian state (Glassheim, 2005). On the other pole was the ideology of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi who was also eager to recast the role of the nobility in a liberal post-imperial order. He envisioned a hybrid nobility, truly modern aristocracy, that would emerge through

a natural breeding process he called social eugenics, which would combine traits of various previous types of nobility – urban and rural, conservative and liberal, political and intellectual, old and new (Glassheim, 2005). He envisioned a united Europe, but contrary to Rohan, the one based upon progress and cosmopolitanism (Coudenhove-Kalergi, 1938). Even though this topic needs to be thoroughly researched, it can be concluded that aristocrats in Croatia and Slavonia must have known of these ideas. It is certain of Rohan's ideology, since some of them were through family ties related to the members of Rohan's circle.[44]

Another topic that needs to be further researched is the participation of nobility in relevant institutions and associations. So far it may be concluded that noblemen were less visible in the public than before, probably also because they were trying to keep a low profile. This may be the reason why, like their counterparts in Slovenia but unlike the ones in Austria, they did not found a noblemen's organisation. Even though there were similarities between the Hungarian and Croatian nobility prior to 1918, their transition into new states was totally different. The Hungarian nobility was able to preserve not just its estates, but even its titles, which guaranteed them a unique position in Central Europe. The status of Hungarian nobility was challenged only briefly during Béla Kun's regime in 1919, keen on nationalising landed estates bigger than 100 hectars (Raptis, 2019, 204–206). However, admiral Miklós Horthy de Nagybánya defeated the revolutionary forces and became the regent of the Hungarian Kingdom. His conservative regime lasted until 1944, preserving until then the position of Hungarian nobility.[45]

Despite major problems (land reform, economic depression, ...) many noblemen were able to retain their status as landowners, yet on a smaller scale than before 1918. However, the communist regime established after the end of the Second World War put an end to this. Many noble families, deprived of their land, castles and manors, town palaces, their collections of art works, weapons, books and sometimes even family photographs, decided upon moving to the West, mostly to Austria, where they were near to their former homeland. Some families stayed after 1945, and a couple of them even managed to live in their manors, the most prominent example is probably the Hellenbach family living in their castle near Marija Bistrica in Hrvatsko Zagorje.[46] Many of those who had left still had connections with their old homeland, like barons Steeb, who regularly paid visits to Stubički Golubovec, and were still fluent in the local

44 Prince Alfons Clary-Aldringen was a prominent follower of Rohan. His wife was Countess Lidwina (Ludwina) Anna Maria Eltz, whose sister Maria Anna married Count Karl Heinrich Khuen-Belassi. Alfons's uncle, Manfred Alexander Robert, was married to Countess Franciska Pejačević Virovitička (de Veröcze) (Iveljić, 2018b).

45 Horthy was educated at the naval academy in Rijeka/Fiume. As the last commander of the Austro-Hungarian navy he was was charged in October 1918 with the transfer of the Austro-Hungarian fleet to the new State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs.

46 The Kaučićs (originally a Slovene family from Trieste) were able to keep the manor Gorica, and the Praunspergers their Podolje. Some members of the families Drašković and Kulmer, the Jelačićs, the Pejačevićs, etc. stayed in Croatia.

Kajkavian dialect. No wonder that the bells of the local church rang to mark the deaths of family members (Steeb, 2007, 125–134).

CONCLUSION

This short survey draws a comparison between nobility in Slovenia, and Croatia and Slavonia before and after the Great War. The major differences before 1918 lay in belonging to different halfs of Austria-Hungary, in Croatian political autonomy and the existence of domestic nobility and in the earlier onset of the Croatian national movement which attracted a part of the nobility right from the start. Similarities included multiculturalism, the characteristic way of life, aristocratic habitus and loyalty to the sovereign. However, the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy faced all the aforementioned nobility with the demanding transition into the Yugoslav state, during which it developed similar strategies of survival. However, noblemen in Slovenia, Croatia and Slavonia did not found their associations, like their counterparts in Austria, and they were far less present in the public than before the War. Yet, they cherished personal ties to their extended family and other noble families. In general, noblemen were treated by the new regime as adversaries, especially the ones of foreign origin or enjoying the reputation of „enemies of the people“. The latter were from the late 1918 until the beginning of 1919 often faced with violent outbreaks on their estates. Furthermore, nobility lost its sovereign, its titles, and the Yugoslav land reform deprived the aristocracy of a big portion of its landed estates. As a rule lesser nobility was forced to adapt, since it was pauperised much before 1918, but the aristocracy tried to keep up appearances and to preserve its way of life. However, even among its ranks there were different strategies. A part of aristocrats opted for non-Yugoslav citizenship and settled ouside of the Yugoslav state, and some chose to do so later, in the 1920s. Yet, a part of old and new aristocrats tried to adapt to the new circumstances, some of them even cherishing good relations with the new regime and thus enjoying a better treatment. Therefore, in spite of all difficulties, a substantial part of noblemen were able to retain their status as landowners until the end of the Second World War.

OD HABSBURŽANOV DO KARAĐORĐEVIĆEV. POLOŽAJ HRVAŠKEGA IN SLOVENSKEGA PLEMSTVA V JUGOSLOVANSKI DRŽAVI

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POVZETEK

Avtorja analizirata prehodno obdoboje, ki ga je doživljalo plemstvo v Sloveniji, na Hrvaškem in v Slavoniji v novo jugoslovansko državo po koncu prve svetovne vojne. Navkljub nekaterim večjim medsebojnim razlikam pred letom 1918, so se pripadniki omenjenega plemstva po razpadu habsburške monarhije znašli v podobnem položaju. Ogroženi so bili sami temelji plemiške družbe, saj je nova oblast imela plemiče za nasprotnike (zlasti tiste tujega porekla in tiste, ki se jih je držal sloves „sovražnikov ljudstva"), odpravila je plemiške nazive in s pomočjo agrarne reforme, ki se je začela leta 1919, občutno zmanjšala njihovo zemljiško posest. Obubožano nižje plemstvo in pa člani novega plemstva, meritokracije, so se precej lažje prilagodili novim družbenim in političnim razmeram. Stara, visoka aristokracija, ki je še vedno imela v lasti obsežnejšo posest, pa si je obupano prizadevala, da bi obdržala stari način življenja, posest, gradove in dvorce. Čeprav so gojili vezi znotraj lastne razširjene družine in stike z ostalimi plemiškimi družinami, se plemstvo v Sloveniji, na Hrvaškem in v Slavoniji med seboj ni povezalo. Ni ustanovilo nobenega stanovskega združenja, kot je to storilo npr. plemstvo v Avstriji, veliko manj se je pojavljalo v javnosti kot pred vojno. Kljub temu pa je mnogim od njih uspelo, da so vse do konca druge svetovne vojne obdržali vsaj del svoje nekdanje posesti.

Ključne besede: Slovenija, Hrvaška, Slavonija, plemstvo, 19. in 20. stoletje

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