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LIECHTENSTEINS REPAIR FAMILY TOMB IN VRANOV U BRNA



Sovereign Prince Hans-Adam II visited the family tomb in Vranov u Brna, which the Princely Foundation had repaired at its own cost - 54 mio. CZK (foto: Brněnský Deník)

On 7 November, Sovereign Prince Hans-Adam II visited the family tomb in Vranov u Brna, which the Princely Foundation had repaired at its own cost, and took part in a requiem for his ancestors in the Church of the Assumption. The tomb has been owned by the state since 1945. Together with the

neighbouring Convent of the Minims, it is one of the most valuable historical buildings and Marian pilgrimage site in Moravia. The Liechtenstein tomb is fascinating in many ways. It is, for example, a rarity in Europe in that it is the only interment site for the rulers of a state which is located within

the territory of a different state. 14 Sovereign Princes of Liechtenstein are interred here, from Karl I (1569-1627) to Franz I (1853-1938), along with 48 members of their closest family.



View of the renovated interior of the Liechtenstein tomb where 62 family members are interred, including 14 heads of the Principality of Liechtenstein

The aisleless pilgrimage Church of the Assumption in Vranov u Brna was founded in 1617 by the owner of the Požorice u Brna estate, Maximilian of Liechtenstein (1578-1643) and his wife, Catherine Šemberová of Boskovice and Černá Hora, both of whom are buried here. The newer section of the family tomb was built in 1818-1821 under the reign of Sovereign Prince and Field Marshal Johann I Joseph of Liechtenstein (1760-1836), an important military leader and diplomat during the Napoleonic Wars.

YOU ASKED: HOW MANY LIECHTENSTEIN CITIZENS DID THE POSTWAR CONFISCATIONS AFFECT?

In 1945, the property of 38 citizens of the Principality of Liechtenstein was confiscated, eight of whom were members of the Liechtenstein Family. According to recent Czechoslovak and Liechtenstein archival research, this was a clear abuse of the Beneš Decrees.



Prince Franz Joseph II of Liechtenstein with his wife, Princess Georgina



H. S. H. Prince Hans-Adam II, his wife H. S. H. Princess Maria and H. S. H. Maria-Pia Kothbauer Princess of Liechtenstein ambassador of Liechtenstein in the Czech Republic (left)

In 1945, the Liechtensteins' tomb was confiscated. The ingeniously constructed and maintained system of ventilation and water protection was damaged in the 1970s and 1980s by the inappropriate concreting of the area around the church, which resulted in moisture getting into the tomb. This damaged not just the structure of the tomb itself, but also the catafalques and wooden coffins.

Although the tomb is not the property of the Liechtensteins, Sovereign Prince Hans-Adam II decided to pay for its repair using the family foundation's money at a cost of over 54 million crowns. The renovation took place in 2013-2015. It involved heating being incorporated in the tomb columns, which will maintain the temperature needed there. The tomb has not been and will not be opened to the public, except for special events.

In February 1945, Czechoslovakia restored diplomatic relations with Switzerland, which until 15 March 1939 had represented Liechtenstein in Prague, but it did not restore relations with Liechtenstein. The Liechtenstein government was receiving signals that there was a danger of its citizens' property being confiscated, in particular that of the House of Liechtenstein. As such, Swiss Consul General, Albert Huber, warned the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 June 1945 that this would represent an action taken against the head of an independent state.

At the time, the Ministry was aware of the foreign policy risks, in particular that confiscation of property without compensation 'might arouse an incorrect and distorted impression of the situation here' in Switzerland and the West. In the end, the property of the Sovereign Prince Franz Joseph II and a further 7 family members, plus 30 citizens, was confiscated on the basis of the Decrees of the President of the Republic.

Liechtenstein's Prince also objected to being quite deliberately termed a 'person of German nationality' within the meaning of Section 2 of Decree no. 12/1945 Coll., and also that never in any census in the decisive period

subsequent to 1929 had he ever declared himself to be of German nationality, and he had further never been a member of any political party or formation which associated citizens of German nationality. Most members of the Liechtenstein Family were not in Czechoslovakia during the census period, including Prince Franz Joseph II.

The Prince responded to the introduction of national administration and the threat of subsequent property confiscation through his legal representative in Prague, JUDr. Emil Sobička. Professor JUDr. František Weyr (co-author of the Czechoslovak Constitution and rector of Masaryk University) subsequently prepared a legal opinion for him in 1945 and 1947 which completely rejected confiscation as breaching the law in force at the time.

The Foreign Ministry's legal analysis of 7 November 1945 considered the expropriation of the Princely Family's property without compensation as unsustainable and assumed that Czechoslovakia would have to pay the Liechtensteins financial compensation. The preserved Czechoslovak authorities' documents make it clear that they were aware of the illegal nature of the approach, and that the Foreign and Finance ministries were anticipating payment of compensation to Liechtenstein citizens. But this was categorically rejected by the Communist-controlled Interior and Agriculture ministries.

The Supreme Administrative Court was ready to cancel all confiscations of Liechtenstein citizens' property as being illegal. Communist Agricultural Minister, J Ďuriš, as such managed to postpone its public hearing 'indefinitely'.

In the end, however, following internal legal analyses by the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, in February 1948 the Czechoslovak authorities came to the conclusion that in fact it would be necessary to pay compensation to the Liechtenstein citizens. The only question was how much the compensation would be. The Communist coup, however,

prevented this from occurring. As such, it was no surprise that the court, now made up of judges loyal to Communism, rejected Prince Franz Joseph II's claim in a private session in Bratislava on 21 November 1951.

The illegal confiscation of the property of Liechtenstein's citizens was the cause of diplomatic relations between Prague and Vaduz being severed for over 64 years, until September 2009. Neither of the two states broke off diplomatic relations in the formal sense, however. Liechtenstein did not recognise the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and never broke off diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia.

It is rather paradoxical that the property of Swiss citizens of German nationality was not confiscated (Czechoslovakia's Interior Ministry issued a regulation to this effect in summer 1945), and it was also meant to act in a benevolent fashion to citizens of the restored Austrian republic. And yet Austrians were of German nationality, were citizens of the Third Reich during the Second World War, and its men fought in its armed forces. After the nationalisation of property subsequent to 1948, citizens of Austria were given financial compensation during the 1960s and 1970s on the basis of an agreement between the two countries.

One of the citizens of Liechtenstein who suffered the greatest property loss was Baron Alexander von Königswart. This Jewish entrepreneur owned the Šebetov castle and manor north of Brno. He acquired Liechtenstein citizenship during the 1930s, and as a result he survived the Second World War, even though the occupying forces and Gestapo made his life difficult. As a citizen of a neutral state, however, they had to give him special consideration (although he had to move out of the castle and his property was put into forced administration). Following liberation, his Liechtenstein citizenship resulted in his property being confiscated and his having to move to Austria.

Tab. List of Liechtenstein citizens whose property was confiscated in 1945 in Czechoslovakia

	Name	Notes
1	Baroness Hedwig von Berg un Wurmbrand-Stuppach	grounds, Šahy, Drienová, 2.900 ha
2	Dr. Albert Bloch	bank assets
3	Ida Brändle	stake in hotel <i>Zlatý lev</i> in Karlovy Vary
4	Marie de Charmant	20% of share in refinery Šurany
5	Pierre de Charmant	common assets with point 4
6	Baroness Antonia von Falz-Fein	jewelry, bank deposit in Nové Mesto nad Váhom
7	Maria von Frankl	50% stake in castle and grounds, Velké Šarovce
8	Gertrud Hartmann	50% stake in Josef Hilpert Glasperlenfabrik, Nová Ves nad Nisou
9	Dorothea vo Janotta	castle Štěmlovce, bank assets, silver
10	Baron Johann Alexander von Königswarter	castle and grounds Šebetov, 4.000 ha, bank assets, jewelry
11	Prince Alois of Liechtensteinu	castle and farmhouse Velké Losiny, 5.800 ha, shares
12	Prince Franz Josef II of Liechtenstein	cca 69.000 ha, castles Lednice, Valtice etc., shares, bank assets, art works, 10 companies and stakes in 26 companies
13	Prince Friedrich of Liechtenstein	shares
14	Princess Irma of Liechtenstein	shares

	Name	Notes
15	Prince Emanuel of Liechtenstein	together with brother Johann - castle and farmhouse Nové Zámky (Zahrádky), 2.000 ha
16	Prince Johann of Liechtenstein	together with point 15
17	Princess Ludmila of Liechtenstein	grounds in Mělníku-Pšovka, Hoštejn, Čížová, cca 5.300 ha
18	Princess Olga of Liechtenstein	grounds, buildings in Vambersk, shares, bank assets
19	Franziska Näscher	building in Opava
20	Dr. Hans Nissl	together in point 21, apartment building in České Budějovice, shares
21	Renate Nissl	together with point 20
22	Alfred Nitsche	together with points 23 and 24, house in Karlovy Vary, farmhouse in Horní Slavkov, razor blades factory
23	Melanie Nitsche	together with points 22 a 24
24	Günter Nitsche	together with points 22 a 23
25	Harriet Nottebohm	shares, together with point 26
26	Hermann Nottebohm	together with point 25
27	Baroness Marie von Reitzes-Marienwert	stake in refinery, Nitra
28	Adolf Risch	trade with coal and wood, Piešťany
29	Gertrud Schädler	shares
30	Stefanie Marianne Schädler	shares
31	Albin Seemann	property in Bratislava, savings book
32	Peter Seemann	together with point 31
33	Minka Strauss	stake in farmhouse Štrkovec, Šoporňa, 828 ha
34	Olga Tomala	bonds, shares
35	Anton Wanger	shares, Škoda car
36	Antonie Weiss	bank assets in Jablonec nad Nisou
37	Count Ferdinand of Wilczek	stakes in mining companies, Ostrava
38	Countess Mignon of Wurmbrand-Stumpach	together with point 1

Source: *Pramen: Geiger Peter, Knoz Tomáš, Fučíková Eliška, Horák Ondřej, Horel Catherine, Kräftner Johann, Winkelbauer Thomas, Županič Jan, Česko-lichtenštejnské vztahy v dějinách a současnosti, Souhrnná zpráva česko-lichtenštejnské komise historiků, Matice moravská, Brno 2014, str. 144-146*

DOUBLE TAX TREATY FORUM AT VŠE PRAGUE

Prague, 16 October 2015: The University of Economics in Prague (VŠE) has held the **Double Tax Treaty Forum**. It looked at the issue of treaties to prevent double taxation, the taxation of international bodies and so-called tax havens.



Also participating in the forum were representatives of the Principality of Liechtenstein: its Ambassador in the Czech Republic J J Maria-Pia Kothbauer Princess of Liechtenstein, Simon Tribelhorn President of the Liechtenstein Bankers Association, and Irene Salvi of Liechtenstein's Fiscal Authority. The DDT Forum at VŠE Prague attracted almost a hundred experts in state administration (The Czech Ministry of Finance, Financial Directorship), academia, tax advisors and law offices.

Liechtenstein was showcased as one of the first countries to have fully implemented the new OECD requirements in the tax field, including automatic data exchange from 2016. The treaty preventing double taxation between the Czech Republic and Liechtenstein was concluded last October.

LEICHTENSTEIN ONE OF THE LARGEST DONORS AND PROVIDERS OF AID TO REFUGEES

Prague, 25 October 2015: Although Liechtenstein is a country just 160 km² in area with just 37 000 citizens (who enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world), it provides generous international aid and also assists refugees. Besides the government and municipalities, the Princely Family of Liechtenstein, the Liechtenstein Red Cross and other organisations, as well as individual citizens in the Principality also provide aid.



Liechtenstein's modern refugee centre also provides playgrounds and toys for children

In recent years, the Principality has provided asylum to an average of around 100 refugees (see table). Were the Czech Republic to provide the same assistance, with a population 270 times larger it would have to provide asylum to 27 000 refugees each year. Liechtenstein's government and citizens consider it their duty to help refugees.



Refugee camp in Liechtenstein, 1945

In its contemporary history, Liechtenstein has experienced three large influxes of refugees, to whom it has provided and provides assistance: 1945, the 1990s and 2015.



Border crossing from Switzerland to Liechtenstein, 1945

The first large influx of refugees arrived at the end of the Second World War and triggered the establishment of Liechtenstein's Red Cross, whose 70th anniversary we celebrate this year, being founded on 30 April 1945 on the initiative of Princess Gina, wife of Sovereign Prince Franz Joseph II. On 1 May 1945, 1 100 refugees were registered in the Principality, and this figure grew quickly to 7 000 in a country which at the time had a population of 12 000. Over the course of the Second World War, around 400 refugees found asylum in the Principality, around half of whom were of Jewish origin.

LIECHTENSTEINISCHES ROTES KREUZ

The second large influx occurred in the 1990s as a result of the collapse of Yugoslavia. Liechtenstein easily managed to provide asylum to 700 refugees.

The third influx is the current refugee crisis. By the end of August 2015, 96 refugees had applied for asylum, none of which were refused in the first round of vetting. So far, 25 refugees from Syria have acquired asylum in Liechtenstein. Their stay in the Principality will cost the state budget 800 000 Swiss francs annually. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aurelia Frick, has said that this sum could be used to secure schooling for 5 000 pupils in Syria. It is gratifying that individual citizens of Liechtenstein are also providing assistance to refugees.

The reigning House of Liechtenstein is also providing substantial assistance to refugees, and not just financially. The family's foundation, Stiftung Liechtenstein, has secured accommodation and further care for 40 refugees at its own cost in Wilfersdorf in Lower Austria. This number may increase. The Liechtensteins own the local castle and surrounding agricultural land, and the renowned vineyards