

# Correlations Between Social and National Mobility in Carniola

**Miha PREINFALK**

*Senior Research Fellow, PhD, Milko Kos Historical Institute, Ljubljana*

E-mail: [mpreinfalk@zrc-sazu.si](mailto:mpreinfalk@zrc-sazu.si)

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**Abstract:** The article provides a brief overview of the position of the nobility in Slovenia. First, it focuses on the connection between the nobility and historiography, which from the mid-19th century was increasingly burdened by the national struggles of the past. The findings show that until the mid-19th century the nobility was strongly integrated into Slovenian society, including through the use of the Slovene language, but was then forced into a national definition, and as a rule (with few exceptions) chose to take the German side. More than a change in ethnic identity, a change in social identity was relevant in the early modern period. The new nobility tried as much as possible to adopt and take on a manner of behaviour that suited to their new status. This especially meant the purchase of landed property and forming kinship ties with other noble families. The article concludes with a brief overview of the fate of the nobility in Slovenia after 1918.

**Keywords:** Nobility, Slovenian territory, national struggles, historiography, ethnicity, social mobility

**Rezumat:** Articolul oferă o scurtă prezentare a situației nobilimii în Slovenia. În primul rând, se concentrează asupra legăturii dintre nobilime și istoriografie, care de la mijlocul secolului al XIX-lea a fost din ce în ce mai mult marcată de luptele naționale ale trecutului. Concluziile arată că, până la jumătatea secolului al XIX-lea, nobilimea a fost puternic integrată în societatea slovenă, inclusiv prin utilizarea limbii slovene, dar apoi a fost forțată să se definească la nivel național și, de regulă (cu câteva excepții), a optat pentru o identitate germană. Mai mult decât o schimbare a identității etnice, o schimbare a identității sociale a fost de asemenea relevantă în perioada modernă timpurie. Noua nobilime a încercat pe cât posibil

să adopte și să preia un mod de comportament adecvat noului lor statut. Acest lucru a însemnat în special achiziționarea de proprietăți funciare și formarea de legături de rudenie cu alte familii nobile. Articolul se încheie cu o scurtă trecere în revistă a sorții nobilimii din Slovenia după 1918.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** Nobilime, Slovenia, mișcare națională, istoriografie, etnie, mobilitate socială

### Introduction

Carniola became part of the Habsburg possessions *de jure* in 1282 and *de facto* in 1335 and remained so until the end of 1918, forming together with Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia the so-called Inner Austria. Its largest cities were Ljubljana (Laibach), which was its capital, Kranj (Krainburg), Novo mesto (Rudolfswerth) and Škofja Loka (Bischofslack). Among all the Habsburg lands, Carniola had the largest share of Slovene population. In fact, it was the only one in which Slovenes dominated. Slovenes also lived in other parts of Inner Austria, such as southern Styria, southern Carinthia, and the countryside of Gorizia. Elsewhere they were heavily mixed with the German- or Italian-speaking population.

Nevertheless, the society in Carniola was no different from the society in other lands. The Carniolan society comprised various strata, with the nobles and affluent burghers occupying the upper echelons. Below them were the townspeople and farmers, who held the status of subjects until the land release in 1848.

Proportionally, the nobles in the Carniolan society were a minority, as their numbers were limited to a few dozen families. Although detailed quantitative research on the historical society in Slovenia has not yet been carried out, we can speak of per mille in terms of nobility. According to some data, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, only 0.5% of the Carniolan population belonged to the nobility, and most of the nobles were concentrated in Ljubljana, where they made up about 3% of the urban population.<sup>1</sup> The number of nobles in Carniolan society experienced a gradual increase, particularly in the nineteenth century, as elevations to noble status became more frequent. These elevations were often tied to a specific period of service in the army or the

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<sup>1</sup> Marko Štuhec, "Der krainische Adel in der Zeit von Almanachs Tätigkeit in Krain," in *Almanach and Painting in The Second Half of the 17th Century in Carniola*, Barbara Murovec, Matej Klemenčič, Mateja Breščak (eds.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2006), 109; Vlado Valenčič, "O gospodarski strukturi ljubljanskega prebivalstva v začetku 18. stoletja" [On the economic structure of the population in Ljubljana in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], *Kronika* 5, no. 1 (1957): 8.

receipt of appropriate decorations, such as the Order of the Iron Crown or the Order of Leopold. However, even with this expansion, the nobility never exceeded a few percent of the population.<sup>2</sup>

In Carniola, however, the question of the nobility was somewhat distinctive, within which the social and national aspects were mixed; this issue spread after the disintegration of the Habsburg Monarchy to the entire Slovene territory within the framework of the new Yugoslav state. In fact, the connection between nobility and Slovenes, or rather the lack of it has been stirring the spirits since the appearance of national frictions in the nineteenth century, namely after 1848, when the claim that Slovenes did not have their own nobility was incorporated in the political discourse. From a strictly formal-legal point of view, this is true. The Slovenes did not have a sovereign Slovene ruler surrounded by a nobility that would define itself as Slovene. The rulers of almost the entire Slovene territory were continuously Habsburgs, from the end of the Middle Ages (also Prekmurje from 1526 and Venetian Istrian and Venetian Slovenian from 1797), and the nobility defined themselves either as belonging to the Habsburgs and to the Holy Roman Empire or by provincial affiliation – Carniolan, Styrian, Carinthian, Gorizian, etc.<sup>3</sup>

One of the main questions posed by the present discussion revolved around the connection between the Slovene national idea, which was part of the modern discourse, and the nobility, which was a relic of the past. Is the phrase “Slovene nobility” justified or not? The antagonism, manifested in the Slovene territory between the nobility and the Slovene national idea, offers a specific answer to the question of what the connection between the ethnic and the social identity or between the ethnic and the social mobility was.

As we will see below, there were a good number of Slovenes among the members of the former Habsburg nobility, who “hid” under German names after being elevated to nobility. What was the reason for this and what were the consequences of this practice? Furthermore, the discussion will try to shed light, at least to some extent, on the relationship between the old, feudal nobility and the new nobles, while

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<sup>2</sup> Hannes Stekl, “Der erbländische Adel,” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918, Band IX, Soziale Strukturen, 1. Teil, Teilband 2*, Ulrike Harmat (ed.) (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), 951–1013; Arno Kerschbaumer, *Nobilitierungen unter Regentschaft Kaiser Karl I. / IV. Károly király (1916–1921)* (Graz: Selbstverlag, 2016), 10–48.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Štih, “Srednjeveško plemstvo in slovensko zgodovinopisje” [Medieval nobility and Slovene historiography], in *Melikov zbornik. Slovenci v zgodovini in njihovi srednjeevropski sosedje*, Vincenc Rajšp (ed.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2001), 61–72; Miha Preinfalk, “Zgodovinopisje na Slovenskem in njegov odnos do plemstva” [Historiography in Slovenia in its relations to nobility], *Zgodovinski časopis* 58, no. 3/4 (2004): 507–516.

also touching on the question of why individuals actually applied for the noble status or what the gained advantages were.

### **Brief overview of the research on nobility in Slovenia<sup>4</sup>**

The research on the nobility in Slovenia has a peculiar evolution. Until the end of the First World War, it followed the established patterns of research which shared a degree of similarity to the one in other parts of the Habsburg Monarchy, although with certain specifics, which, to a certain extent, were even mutually exclusive.

Since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the national conflicts also made their way into historiography. This led particular authors of Slovene orientation and those who wrote in Slovenian to refrain from discussing the nobility, which largely (but not entirely!) formed part of the German camp. Instead, they committed to other – for the lack of a better term – more Slovene topics. The focus of research was shifted to the citizenry, the history of cities (their emergence, rights, development, mayors, and city administration), art and architecture, industry, and so forth. Articles on the nobility in historiographical publications were increasingly becoming an exception rather than the rule. For example, the German periodical *Mitteilungen des Musealvereines für Krain* dedicated about one-third or one-quarter of space to contributions that discussed, in one way or another, the life and work of the nobility, whereas Slovene periodical publications had by the end of the First World War featured articles on this topic only occasionally.

However, in parallel with the introduction of the Slovenian language into historiography and in congruence with the awakening Slovene and German national ideas, the first attempts were also made to discuss the nobility in the Slovene territory as Slovene. Slovene historians started to Slovenize personal names of noblemen and translate their “family names” with the use of Slovene toponyms (thus, Johann Auersperg became Ivan Turjaški, Johann Josef Egkh-Hungerspach was renamed Ivan Jožef Brdsko-Vogrski, and count Friedrich of Cilli was converted in *Celjska kronika* into Mirko Celjski). In this way, historians aimed to demonstrate that although the nobility might have been culturally part of the Germanic world, it was closely affiliated and, in some segments, completely fused with the Slovene environment, in which it lived and worked.

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<sup>4</sup> This topic is more thoroughly described (with an extended list of literature) in Preinfalk, “Der Adel in Krain zwischen Slowenen und Deutschen,” in *Habsburgischer Adel. Zwischen Nation – Nationalismus – Nationalsozialismus (1870–1938/1935)*, Marija Wakounig, Václav Horčíčka, Jan Zupanič (eds.) (Wien – Hamburg: New Academic Press, 2021), 239–245.

After 1918, when the Slovene area became part of the new Yugoslav state, the research interest of Slovene historiography in the (Habsburg) nobility decreased even more. Social marginalization of the nobility after 1918, which swept across all successor states of Austria-Hungary, is also reflected in the interwar historiography. The historiographical periodicals of that time (*Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje* [Journal of History and Ethnography] (since 1904), *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* [Newsletter of the Museum Society of Slovenia], *Kronika slovenskih mest* [Chronicle of Slovene towns], etc.) focused primarily on the economic activities and everyday life of the citizenry and rural population. The main research topics were to cover the “genuine” Slovene history or the history of the Slovenes, and also the history of other Yugoslav nations, which now formed a new state together with the Slovenes. Articles on the former German or Austrian nobility as well as their lives and work were becoming increasingly sporadic.

After the Second World War, the new communist government delivered a final blow to the nobility by driving them to exile or internment and by destroying or nationalizing their property. Slovene postwar historiography corresponded to the spirit of the new times as well. However, it should be emphasized that the almost complete disappearance of the nobility from the Slovene postwar historiography was not so much a reflection of the postwar political orientation in Slovenia as it was a continuation of the process that was ignited in Slovene society and hence its historiography by the national conflicts at the end of the nineteenth century. The difference between the prewar and postwar periods in historiography is in that historiographical works or articles on the nobility were no longer merely sporadic – they had disappeared altogether. The positive role of the nobility and its influence on the development of the Slovene territories were forgotten, and the ideologically motivated emphasis was placed solely on the nobility’s non-Slovene descent and exploitative status. The historiography of the first postwar decades portrayed the nobility in the Slovene territory as a “necessary evil”, as something that ought to be mentioned in passing but not studied in detail.

Notable changes occurred after 1982, when the leading Slovene historians concluded at their twenty-first gathering in Celje (Cilli) that the existing image of Slovene history required corrections and that it should also include the nobility.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Štih, “Srednjeveško plemstvo,” 61–72.

However, the first substantial change in studying the nobility took place only a decade later. The years leading up to the turn of the century witnessed the emergence of works that discussed the nobility as a whole.<sup>6</sup> The trend continued with an increasing number of historians devoting their attention to the social aspects of the nobility, their culture and everyday life, and partly also to their genealogies or family connections. We must note that research on the nobility primarily focused on earlier periods, whereas the history of the nobility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries still received a very poor coverage. Occasional discussions shed light on the position of the nobility within the framework of national struggles<sup>7</sup> or economic developments, and no substantial analytical and synthetic research was conducted on the nobility as such. A major white area is especially represented by the period after 1918. The fate of the former nobility after the First World War was primarily the focus of the research conducted by Austrian historians,<sup>8</sup> while the destiny of the remnants of the Habsburg nobility in Yugoslavia has largely remained unresearched until now. A few historical studies touched upon the former nobility as well, e.g., studies on the agrarian reform,<sup>9</sup> but a more systematic approach towards the nobility's formal and legal status, everyday life, and (un)changed identity in Yugoslavia has only been undertaken in recent years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> E.g., Maja Žvanut, *Od viteza do gospoda* [From a knight to a seigneur] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1994); Marko Štuhec, *Rdeča postelja, ščurki in solze vdove Prešeren (plemiški zapuščinski inventarji 17. stoletja kot zgodovinski vir)* [Red bed, cockroaches and tears of Prešeren's widow (noble probate inventories from the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a historical source)] (Ljubljana: Škuc, Znanstveni inštitut Filozofske fakultete, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Dragan Matić, *Nemci v Ljubljani: 1861–1918* [Germans in Ljubljana] (Ljubljana: Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> E.g., Stekl, "Österreichs Adel im 20. Jahrhundert," in *Adel und Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Ernst Bruckmüller, Franz Eder, Andrea Schnöller (eds.) (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 101–139; Peter Wiesflecker, "'Das ist jetzt unsere Ordnung!' Der innerösterreichischer Adel zwischen 1918 und 1945," in *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark*, Sonderdruck, CI. Jahrgang, Gerhard Pferschy, Elisabeth Schöggel-Ernst, Karl Spreitzhofer (eds.) (Graz: Historische Landeskommission für Steiermark, 2010), 195–246.

<sup>9</sup> Stane Granda, "Razpad posesti knezov Auerspergov na Kranjskem" [Downfall of the estate of the Princes of Auersperg in Carniola], *Kronika* 28, no. 3 (1980): 200–212.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., Preinfalk, "Habsburško plemstvo in leto 1918," [The Habsburg nobility and the year 1918] in *Slovenski prelom 1918*, Aleš Gabrič (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2019), 251–266; Mira Miladinović Zalaznik, "Nepartizanski odpor proti okupatorju na Slovenskem: primer plemiške družine Maasburg in sorodnikov," [The non-partisan resistance against the occupier in Slovenia: the case of the Maasburg family and their relatives] in *Annales: anali za istrske in mediteranske študije* 29, no. 4 (2019): 645–660.

### **Ethnic mobility – can we speak of Slovene nobility?**

One of the foundations for the antagonisms between Slovenes and nobility was laid by historian Josip Apih (1853–1911). In his article entitled *Plemstvo in narodni razvoj* [Nobility and national development], which he published in the newspaper *Ljubljanski zvon* [Ljubljana bell] in 1887, he argued that Slovenes were only farmers, and that all the other classes in Slovenia had always been foreigners, especially Germans. According to him, this did not only apply to the nobility, but also to the bourgeoisie. As a Slovene character, Apih acknowledged only the nobility from the time of independent Carantania: “That there is no nobility in our country today is, unfortunately, only too well known; it is also certain that we had our nobility, as long as the nation enjoyed freedom, before subjugation by the Germans and Hungarians. Of course, this nobility was not destroyed and wandered away suddenly; it lasted at least a little longer; then it was buried by the diluvium of foreignness, and thus inflicted a terrible wound on the whole nation.”<sup>11</sup>

The lion’s share of the perception over the nobility in Slovenia as a (German) foreigner was also influenced by the fact that practically all written communication took place in German, and most of this material was created in aristocratic circles as bearers of social and cultural development. In particular, this view has been established since the nineteenth century, when the use of language became a tool for expressing one’s nationality.<sup>12</sup>

If, on the one hand, it is true that the “Slovene nobility” did not exist as such (at least in the legal sense of the word), on the other hand, the assertion that there were no nobles among the Slovenes is by no means true. Detailed research of individual noble families in Slovenia revealed a good number of those who could be defined as Slovene. The distorted image was created due to the custom that individuals often changed their name when they were elevated to noble status or replaced the original (Slovene) name with new aristocratic predicates.

Leaving aside the question of when we can talk about Slovenes in the national sense as we understand them today, a more in-depth examination of individual noble families in the area defined as Slovene consistently reveals a substantial number that can be accurately described as Slovene. For this purpose, their Slovene surname is almost the only

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<sup>11</sup> Josip Apih, “Plemstvo in narodni razvoj,” [Nobility and national development] *Ljubljanski zvon* 7, no. 3 (1887): 171–172. Slovene original: *Da plemstva dandanes pri nas ni, to je znano, žal, znano le preveč; isto tako gotovo je, da smo imeli svoje plemstvo, dokler je narod užival svobodo, pred podjarmljenjem po Nemcih in Madjarih. Seveda ni bilo to plemstvo uničeno in potujčeno hipoma; prebilo je vsaj po nekoliko še nekaj časa; potlej pa ga je zasul diluvij tujstva in s tem vsekal narodni celoti strašno rano.*

<sup>12</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 33.

indicator, but for the period in question, it is a strong enough proof that such noble families came from the Slovene ethnic environment. At the same time, research has shown that such families, even before being elevated to noble status, and almost without exception after that, either began to write their surname in German (or Italian) or completely changed it.

A few examples from the Early Modern Period can be cited in this respect. Adjunct in Carniola's professional bookkeeping, Lovrenc (Laurenz) Bulovec changed his surname to Wollwiz in 1696, when he was elevated to nobility,<sup>13</sup> half a century before Nikolaj (Nikolaus) Hvalica, a court master or house teacher (Hofmeister) at Prince Johann Ferdinand Porcia's and Count Johann Andreas Auersperg's house, signed himself as Qualiz(z)a (ennnobled in 1642).<sup>14</sup> When choosing a predicate that complemented the original surname, the most common option was that the nobleman (of Slovene descent) derived the predicate from his Slovene surname by simply adding a (usually German) suffix to the surname or the first syllable. Thus, e.g., court procurator in Ljubljana Janez Nikolaj (Johann Nikolaus) Knez (originally from Kranj) in 1706 decided on the predicate Knesenhoff;<sup>15</sup> Janez Pavel (Johann Paul) Jenko, first a customs officer in Novo mesto and later a castle owner in Mirna (Neudegg) in Lower Carniola, became knight of Jenkensfeld in 1773;<sup>16</sup> his namesake (and probably also a native of Škofja Loka) Janez Jakob (Johann Jakob) Jenko, a merchant and town councillor, upgraded his surname to Jenkensheim in 1749.<sup>17</sup> Andrej (Andreas) Premrov, the owner of the Vipava (Vippach) seigneurie, became knight of Premerstein in 1783,<sup>18</sup> while three decades earlier (namely, in 1754), his neighbours from Goče near Vipava, brothers Janez (Johann) and Franc (Franz) Šivic, were elevated to nobility with the predicate Schivizhoffen.<sup>19</sup> Among the provincial officials we can mention

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<sup>13</sup> AT ÖStA [Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Wien], AVA [Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv/Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv], Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Bullowicz, Lorenz, 4. I. 1696.

<sup>14</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Qualiza, Niclas, 3. III. 1642. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 17. stoletje. 1. del: Od Billichgrätzov do Zanettijev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 17th century. Vol. 1: From Billichgrätz to Zanetti] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2014), 116–120.

<sup>15</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Khneß, Johann Nicolaus, 12. V. 1706.

<sup>16</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenko, Johann Paul, 19. IV. 1762; Hofadelsakte von Jenčo, Johann Paul, 26. IV. 1773; see also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 18. stoletje. 1. del: Od Andriolija do Zorna* [Noble families in Slovenia, 18th century. Vol. 1: From Andrioli to Zorn] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2013), 73–76.

<sup>17</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenkho, Johann Jacob, 13. XII. 1749. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 76–82.

<sup>18</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Premrau, Andreas, 18. IX. 1783. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 100–114.

<sup>19</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Schiviz, Johann u. Franz, 28. IX. 1754. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 18. stoletje*, 143–154.



the customs officer and postmaster in Vipavski Križ (Heiligenkreuz) Janez Baltazar (Johann Balthasar) Nemec, who was ennobled as Nemizhoffen in 1633,<sup>20</sup> or Mihael Jožef (Michael Josef) Valič, provincial councillor in Carniola, who added the predicate Wallensperg to his surname in 1699.<sup>21</sup> This category would also include the medical doctor and Carniolan provincial physicist Franc Ksaver (Franz Xaver) Zalokar, from 1733 ennobled as Sallenstein,<sup>22</sup> while Gašper Ignac (Kaspar Ignaz) Vertič who in 1760 became the noble of Wertefeld, was an artillery captain, that is, a military officer.<sup>23</sup>

If we draw a line under the above examples, we can see that simply considering the official surnames of individual noble families shows us a rather distorted picture of their ethnicity or at least their ethnic origin. At first glance, most of the noble families living in the Slovene territory really give the impression of being foreigners, as their surnames sound non-Slovenian. However, if we dig a little deeper into their history, we quickly come across their completely Slovene roots.

This finding is not new, as we encounter it already at the end of the nineteenth century, but it has been more or less forgotten. If, on the one hand, the aforementioned Apih “denationalized” all the nobility in Slovenia or at least denied its Slovene character, on the other hand, historians and other researchers soon began to correctly establish that Slovenes often hid behind “German” nobility. Thus, in his article on the Ljubljana city hospital in 1898, historian Ivan Vrhovec (1853–1902) wrote: “The wealthy citizens were almost entirely drawn to nobility and alienated from the aspirations of the bourgeoisie. A great loss in national terms! The ennobled citizens translated their names into German and adopted these translations as noble predicates.”<sup>24</sup>

Two years later, an unknown author came to a similar conclusion, publishing in the newspaper *Slovenski list* [Slovene gazette] an article entitled *Plava kri na Kranjskem* [Blue blood in Carniola]:

“Among the Carniolan nobles, there are many who bear German names and believe that they were born by mother Germania, but their ancestors were of purely Slovene blood

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<sup>20</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Nemiz, Johann Balthasar, 20. VIII. 1633.

<sup>21</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Wallich, Michael Joseph, 31. VIII. 1699.

<sup>22</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Sallocher, Franz Xaver, 6. IV. 1735.

<sup>23</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Werttich, Caspar Ignaz, 1. III. 1760.

<sup>24</sup> Ivan Vrhovec, “Meščanski špital,” [Ljubljana city hospital] *Letopis Slovenske matice za leto 1898* 12, 3 (1898): 66. Slovene original: *Obogatelega meščana je skoraj vsakega potegnilo plemstvo nase ter ga odtujilo težnjam meščanskega stanu. V narodnem oziru velika izguba! Oplemeničeni meščani so svoja imena prelagali na nemški jezik ter te prestave privzemali kot plemenitaške predikate.*

with beautiful local names. When they were ennobled by the emperors, they were 'graciously allowed' to adopt a German surname, and usually the new nobles asked the emperor for this grace so that they could renounce their original Slovene name and call themselves only with a noble German name. Thus, they became Germans from Slovenes..."<sup>25</sup>

At this point, however, we must emphasize the fact that despite the ethnic fluidity of the new nobility, national or ethnic affiliation did not play a significant role until the end of the eighteenth century or even until 1848, as the provincial consciousness was at the forefront. This also applies to the nobility, which was already basically international or supranational.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, the choice of a German predicate and the gradual abandonment of the Slovene names did not have a national component, but a social one. As the cultural image of the nobility in Slovenia was predominantly German, the newly elevated nobles integrated into the existing noble society more quickly and successfully by adopting this culture, which was to some extent symbolized by the change of family name. However, after 1848, the insistence on the Slovene name or its replacement with a German one was increasingly a reflection of the otherwise national affiliation or definition of a noble individual and his family.

In addition to the originally Slovene surname, one of the indicators of the Slovene character of the nobility in Carniola is also the general use of (colloquial) Slovene among the nobles in the (early) Modern Period. A lot of evidence regarding this kind of practice is known, from letters or correspondence<sup>26</sup> to various fragments that can be found in the historical sources. Numerous probate inventories thus reveal that the Carniolan nobles owned (and probably also read) the Slovene translation of the Bible by Jurij Dalmatin from 1583,<sup>27</sup> and in last wills of

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<sup>25</sup> Plava kri na Kranjskem. *Slovenski list*, 6 January 1900, 5 ([www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-AFPBSUNN](http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:spr-AFPBSUNN), 17.3.2021). Slovene original: *Med kranjskimi plemenitniki jih je mnogo, ki nosijo nemška imena in menijo, da jih je rodila mati Germanija, a njihovi predniki so bili čisto slovenske krvi z lepimi domačimi imeni. Ko so bili od cesarjev poplemeničeni, se jim je 'milostno dovolilo', da so si smeli privzeti nemški priimek, in navadno so novi plemiči prosili cesarja še to milost, da so smeli odbacniti svoje prvotno slovensko ime in imenovati se samo s plemiškim nemškim imenom. Tako so postali iz Slovencev Nemci...*

<sup>26</sup> The most famous is undoubtedly the Slovene correspondence between Esther Maximiliana Baroness Coraduzzi from Koča Vas (Hallerstein) and her daughter Maria Izabela Baroness Marenzi from Trieste from the end of the seventeenth century (Pavle Merku, *Slovenska plemiška pisma družin Marenzi - Coraduzzi s konca 17. stoletja* [Slovene noble letters of the Marenzi and Coraduzzi families from the end of the 17th century] (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 35.

noble people we often come across Slovene forms of personal names.<sup>28</sup> The Slavist Jurij Japelj (1744–1807) also teaches us about the prevalence of Slovene among the Carniolan nobility in an apology for Slovene, which he wrote in 1799 for the Carniolan and Carinthian provincial governor Franz Josef, Count Wurmbrand. In addition to the reasons why Slovene (Carniolan) is the most suitable language for learning and understanding other Slavic languages, he wrote, among other things: “Therefore, the practice should be introduced in general, which has always been valid within the nobility of Trieste and Carniola, that children should learn their language from Slovene maids at a tender youth and thus become bilingual.”<sup>29</sup> The first Archbishop of Gorizia, Karl Michael, Count of Attems (1711–1774), for example, also knew Slovene well enough to be able to preach in this language.<sup>30</sup> And when Johann Joseph De Grazia wrote in 1779 to his twelve-year-old nephew Athanasius, who was studying in the Hungarian Buda, he asked him how he was doing with his “Carniolan” (*lingua Cragniolina*), and laid it on his heart to practice it so that he will not forget it.<sup>31</sup>

However, we cannot speak of a widespread Slovene identity among the nobility on this basis. Slovene had, above all, a useful value for them – its value corresponded to its utility as the language they acquired during childhood and used it to communicate with their surroundings.<sup>32</sup> However, Slovene did not have a deeper significance at that time, as it would later during the period of national awakening. But even then, the nobles in Carniola generally did not recognize the potential and challenge posed by the new social conditions. Namely, we know only individual cases when nobles from the late eighteenth century onwards showed their support for the Slovene national awakening and encouraged the

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<sup>28</sup> Jernej (Bartholomew) Valvasor, the father of the famous polyhistor Janez Vajkard (Johann Weikhard), in his will in 1639 named his daughter Elizabeth with the Slovene diminutive Lizika (Boris Golec, *Valvasorji. Med vzponom, Slavo in zatonom* [The Valvasor family. From the rise to the Glory and decline] (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2015), 197). For the polyhistor himself it is believed that, while writing *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola* [Die Ehre des Herzogthums Krain], he thought in Slovene and translated it into German (Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 32).

<sup>29</sup> Joža Glonar, “Japelj, Jurij,” in *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi249855/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi249855/) (17.3.2021). Slovene original: *Zato se naj splošno uvede praksa, ki velja že od nekdaj v tržaškem in kranjskem plemstvu, da se naj otroci že v nežni mladosti od slovenskih služkinj naučijo njih jezika in postanejo tako dvojezični.*

<sup>30</sup> Karel Mihael Attems, *Slovenske pridige* (za prvo objavo pripravila in s spremnimi besedili opremila Lojzka Bratuž) [Slovene sermons (edited by Lojzka Bratuž)] (Trieste: Založništvo tržaškega tiska, 1993); Lojzka Bratuž, “Slovenščina v goriških plemiških rodbinah,” [The Slovene among the noble families in Gorizia] in *Koledar za leto 2001* (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva družba, 2000), 70–71.

<sup>31</sup> Bratuž, “Slovenščina,” 71–72.

<sup>32</sup> Žvanut, *Od viteza*, 33.

development of the Slovene language and culture. In this context, the famous Baron Žiga (Sigmund) Zois (1747–1819) and his circle, from which the leading Slovene awakeners of that time emerged, e.g., poet Valentin Vodnik, Slavist Jernej Kopitar, or Bible translator Jurij Japelj, should definitely be mentioned in the first place. Furthermore, in this context, we must mention Johann Nepomuk, Count Edling, who supported education in Slovene,<sup>33</sup> or Johann Jakob, Count Gaisruck, who was one of the supporters of the writer and historian Anton Tomaž Linhart – the latter dedicated the second part of his book *Attempt to the History of Carniola and Other Lands of Southern Slavs* to him.<sup>34</sup> An interesting but known only from the literature is the case of Count Alexander Auersperg (1770–1818), father of the poet Anastasius Grün, who supposedly had banners with the Slovene inscription “*Ljubimo cesarja dobriga Slovinci*” [We Slovenes should love the good emperor] hanged from the windows of his Ljubljana palace when the French left Carniola in 1813.<sup>35</sup> Josef Kalasanz, Baron Erberg (1771–1843), who collaborated with many members of the Slovene national awakening (gathered especially in the Zois circle), also showed his sympathy for the Slovene cultural movement, but did not actively participate in it.<sup>36</sup>

A little more tangible is the affection for the Slovene cause in Richard Count Ursini-Blagaj (1786–1858). He was held in high esteem by the local population in Polhov Gradec (Billichgraz) and was, after the abolition of feudalism in 1848, elected their first mayor, which was not an isolated case in Slovenia. From the position of mayor, he allegedly strongly advocated the official use of Slovene, which, like most of the Carniolan nobility, he probably mastered from childhood, but learned the Slovene grammar rules only in adulthood.<sup>37</sup> According to some information, his Slavophilism even went so far that, during the visit of the

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<sup>33</sup> Francè Kidrič, “Edling von Laussenbach, Janez Nepomuk Jakob,” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi178715/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi178715/). (17.3.2021).

<sup>34</sup> France Koblar, “Linhart, Anton Tomaž (1756–1795)”. *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi330432/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi330432/). (17.3.2021).

<sup>35</sup> Breda Požar, *Anastasius Grün in Slovenci* [Anastasius Grün and Slovenes] (Maribor: Založba Obzorja, 1970), 17; Igor Grdina, “Anastazij Zelenec ter slovenska in nemška (literarno) zgodovinska stvarnost,” [Anastasius Grün and Slovene and German (literary) historical reality] in *Med dolžnostjo spomina in razkošjem pozabe* [Between the duty of memory and luxury of oblivion], Igor Grdina (ed.) (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2006), 255. It is interesting that later his son Anton Alexander (1806–1876) was one of the leading and prominent Germans in Carniola, who, due to his glorification of Germanism at the expense of Slovenes, repeatedly came into conflict with some Slovene intellectuals and politicians.

<sup>36</sup> Kidrič, “Erberg, Jožef Kalasanc, baron (1771–1843),” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi182495/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi182495/). (17.3.2021).

<sup>37</sup> *Novice, gospodarske, obrtniške in narodne* 29, no. 39 (1871): 318. [www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:doc-AXZUHASE](http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:doc-AXZUHASE) (17.3.2021).

Emperor Francis Joseph to Ljubljana (probably in 1855), he hung lanterns on the windows of his apartment with the inscription in Slovene *Slava mu!* [Glory to him!]. When the imperial deputy reproached that to him, Blagaj allegedly replied: "Your Excellency, I am a Slav."<sup>38</sup>

Thus, if we draw the line – was there a Slovene nobility or merely the nobility in Slovenia? We can use the term "Slovene nobility", but only if we take into account the criterion of territorial affiliation. As stated in the introduction, Carniola and part of Styria, Carinthia and Gorizia were comprised by the territory of today's Slovenia. The nobility in these lands, although at first glance of Germanic character, closely, almost organically intertwined with the Slovene population. Therefore, when studying Slovene history, i.e., the history of a certain territory (taking into account the fact that the phrase "history of Slovenes" has long been surpassed) and all the phenomena that took place in this territory, it is necessary to include atypical Slovene phenomena, hence also the nobility. From this point of view, the former nobility in Slovenia can also be conditionally described as the Slovene nobility.

### **Social identity – there are many paths towards the peak**

For the nobility of the Early Modern Period, another form of identity was more important than the ethnic identity – the social one. This did not so much concern the old, so-called "ancient nobility" (*Uradel*), whose beginnings date back to the Middle Ages and are indeterminate. This form of identity or rather changes within it were more obvious in younger, ennobled families, which German historiography calls *Briefadel*, i.e. "nobility of the letter", as the beginning of their noble status was determined by a noble letter or noble diploma granted by the sovereign. Their self-awareness of the position in society gradually changed or was completely redefined.

When an individual, usually of bourgeois origin, received a certificate of ennoblement, he generally began to live in accordance with the new status. This also meant a change in his social identity. The new nobleman tried to adopt as much as possible the way of behaving consistent to the new status, abandoned old habits, and lived according to the other members of the nobility. This, among others, also meant that he ceased his former bourgeois activities, such as trade and crafts, and directed his capital to the purchase of landed property. The pursuit of a profession was not in accordance with the aristocratic ideal; the nobleman

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<sup>38</sup> Rudolf Andrejka, "Rihard grof Blagaj," [Count Rihard Blagaj]. *Planinski vestnik* 40, 5 (1940): 6–13, 9.

was supposed to live on the land rent and not on the work of his hands. Thus, the ennobled became real feudal lords and real nobles, which included concluding marriage agreements with other nobles.

Several dozens of such cases are known in central Slovene territory. Among the most famous are the Zois and Codelli families (initially merchants, but eventually full-blooded barons), but a lesser-known Wizenstein family can also be mentioned as one of the typical representatives of this practice. The first members of the Wiz family (also Wüz), who most likely came from the German lands, were first mentioned in Ljubljana in the second half of the sixteenth century. Undoubtedly, the most prominent among them was Marcus Wiz († 1654), who inherited a wine shop towards the end of the sixteenth century, and soon began to trade in wine and grain, thus gaining a large fortune. As a wealthy and respectable burgher, he became a member of the inner-city council and served in it as a senior city treasurer, being also repeatedly elected city judge and mayor. In 1630, Emperor Ferdinand II elevated him to a hereditary noble status and thus enabled the meteoric rise of the family. Marcus's older son Karl († 1672) took advantage of the new status, and, in 1635, he was appointed as a mining judge for Carniola and Gorizia. Then, in 1646, the emperor extended his family name Wiz with the predicate Wizenstein and improved his coat of arms. Two decades later, Karl rose a step higher in the noble society – he became a baron. During this time, he bought quite a few manors and castles. Thus, he went from being a merchant's son to a landowner and a member of the Carniolan provincial estates. Karl's descendants were already able to marry members of old and prominent Carniolan families, such as Counts Ursini-Blagaj and Hohenwart, but the family became extinct in the middle of the eighteenth century due to a lack of male descendants.<sup>39</sup>

However, access to this kind of social rise was not restricted to "foreigners" and immigrants. It was also a characteristic of many domestic, Slovene families. One of the most famous examples is the Slovene Oblak family from the town of Škofja Loka (Bischofslack). The beginning of its noble branch can be traced to Marko (Marcus) Oblak († 1709), whose ancestors originated from the rural surroundings of Škofja Loka. In the middle of the seventeenth century, Marko settled in the town, took up trading with iron and linen and bought a house in the town. In the 1680s, he was repeatedly elected as a town judge in Škofja Loka, which shows the great reputation he enjoyed with his townspeople. As town judge, he often had to deal with military accommodation in the

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<sup>39</sup> On the Wizenstein family, see Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 183–191.

town, and for several years he also took over the management of the town hospital. His reputation and great wealth enabled him to rise on the social ladder – in 1688 the peasant's son became a nobleman with the predicate "von Wolkenberg and Ziegelfeld". To the noble title also belonged the noble estate and the new nobleman Marko Oblak von Wolkenberg had enough resources to secure this as well. He bought several seigneuries and turned them into fideicommissum. Extensive possessions and family ties with other prominent Carniolan families enabled Marcus's grandson Franz Anton (1700–1764) to rise to the rank of baron in 1753. The original Slovene name Oblak had long since been lost, alluded to only by a cloud in the coat of arms of the Wolkenberg barons [*oblak* (Slovenian) = *die Wolke* (German)].<sup>40</sup>

In some other cases, the opposite applied – a burgher would buy a seignery inscribed in the provincial land registry (*Landtafel*), which would then enable him to become first a member of the provincial estates and consequently also of the nobility. It often happened that the provincial estates approved such a purchase "on credit", that is, they allowed the purchase, but the new owner had to promise to apply for a noble title. Such cases were more common especially from the second half of the eighteenth century, when the slow decline of the old, classical nobility had already begun, and land tenure could be obtained more easily.

A typical example of such a practice was Janez Pavel Jenko († 1791) from Škofja Loka. He was first the manager of the Otočec (Wördl) seignery for 12 years and then a bank customs officer in Novo mesto (Rudolfswerth) for ten years. In 1755, he bought the Mirna (Neudegg) seignery at auction together with Johann Ludwig Asch. This purchase was one of the main reasons why Jenko asked to be elevated to the nobility, and his request was also actively supported by the Carniolan estates. In this context, it is understandable that Jenko emphasized in his request that the seignery of Mirna before him already belonged to the nobles – first, to Count Lamberg and then to Baron Gall. Empress Maria Theresa granted his request and in 1762 Jenko became noble. Four years later, he bought his share from co-owner Asch and thus became the sole owner of Mirna seignery. Immediately after that he applied for an even higher noble rank – a knighthood with the predicate Jenkensfeld. This request was also granted by the Empress.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Oblackh v. Wolkenberg, Franz Johann Anton, 14. VIII. 1753. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 192–205.

<sup>41</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Jenko, Johann Paul, 19. IV. 1762; Hofadelsakte von Jenčo, Johann Paul, 26. IV. 1773; see also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 73–76.

In such cases, it would be difficult to argue that the commoners were forced to acquire noble status. Quite the opposite: for the most part, non-nobles aspired to noble status, and it was the acquisition of noble property that enabled or merely accelerated this process. In any case, we can say that the change of social identity began even before the formal change of social status, i.e., before the elevation to noble status. The ownership of the landed estate and the associated castle building were undoubtedly the catalyst for such changes.

Wealthy burghers who “decorated” themselves with noble titles were often not elevated to the nobility “from scratch”. This is especially true of merchants from the Italian area, who immigrated *en masse* to Carniola in the seventeenth century. Many of them were considered to have brought some form of noble status with them, but they usually did not use it when they arrived in the Habsburg lands – they either gave it up (at least temporarily and seemingly) because their bourgeois business (at least in earlier periods) was incompatible with the noble title, or it was initially not recognized by the ruler. It was only later, after having acquired a large fortune, purchased the property, and thus became landlords, that the ruler elevated them among the nobility of the Holy Roman Empire; in their diplomas of nobility there is often a formulation that the ruler confirms (!) to them their (old) noble title and coat of arms. In the middle of the seventeenth century, the descendants of Vincenzo Baz/Waz (originally from Bergamo), for example, tried to prove their old Italian noble status in the application for the Austrian noble title; the supposedly noble ancestors were also referred to by the above-mentioned doctor from Novo mesto, Franc Ksaver Zalokar. The Jabornegg family (actually Javornik) from Tržič (Neumarkt), granted with the predicate Altenfels in 1787, cultivated the tradition that they originated from the baronial Carinthian family Jabornegg von Gamseneck. Another case is Franc (Franz) Prešeren from Brezovica (near Ljubljana), who, in the middle of the nineteenth century, made every effort to prove his connection with the ennobled and by then considered extinct Preschern-Heldenfeldt family. After lengthy and highly dubious argumentation, this connection was finally confirmed to him in 1861, although today’s research shows that it was wrong.<sup>42</sup>

However, not all the ennobled burghers decided to pass among the feudal lords. They often refused to give up lucrative bourgeois activities, which inevitably led to conflicts with other townspeople. Thus,

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<sup>42</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Preschern, Johann Baptist, 10. VI. 1724; Hofadelsakte von Preschern, Franz, 9. III. 1861. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine*, 18. stoletje, 115–124.



they sat on two chairs: on the one hand, they continued to engage in bourgeois business, and on the other hand, as nobles, they did so in much more favourable conditions than other companions without *von* before the surname. Namely, they eschewed bourgeois duties such as paying certain taxes or the obligation of guardianship and trusteeship over other townspeople, and at the same time, they enjoyed all the benefits of the noble status.

Some, however, simply did not know or did not want to abandon previous patterns of behaviour and social action. Even generations after obtaining the noble title, they were still engaged in bourgeois affairs participated in the city self-government, and did not look for marriage partners among the nobility, but rather in other bourgeois families. In this case, we can only talk of ennobles *de jure* and not of real nobles.

We can take a look, for example, at the Zanetti family, who came to Carniola from Venice. One of its members, Antonio († 1691), who settled in the area of Škofja Loka as a merchant in the 1630s, ran a successful trade between Carniola and Venice. Other Škofja Loka merchants were not too enthusiastic about him and his family; they objected when Antonio's son Bartolomeo applied for the citizenship of Škofja Loka, but their opposition was unsuccessful. The dissatisfaction of the competitors did not stop the enterprising Zanettis. To make it easier and devote himself to his business unhindered, Antonio asked to be elevated to nobility. Noble status brought the nobleman, among other things, a change in jurisdiction – the ennobled townspeople were no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the city court, but of the noble court. Zanetti probably also counted on that. The emperor was well disposed to Zanetti's request, probably all the more so because the Zanetti's economic success also benefited to the imperial treasury – according to Zanetti's own words, 25,000 florins flowed into it from his purse every year. The emperor granted Antonio's request and in 1661 elevated him and all his descendants to the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>43</sup>

The described examples show that the reasons for acquiring a noble title in the Modern Age were not unequivocal. For some, elevation to noble status meant the ultimate goal of social rise, for others it was merely a means to achieve other goals.

An increasing number of noble families opens up the question of their coexistence with old families, which enjoyed a much greater reputation in the society due to their noble status acquired on the basis of knightly ideals. Therefore, for the latter, possible kinship with the

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<sup>43</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Zanetti, Anton, 19. IV. 1661. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 206–212.

“nobility of money” (might have) meant a kind of social degradation. The means that erased the boundaries between the various strata within the heterogeneous noble society was primarily money. The new nobility usually had it in abundance. The old one was usually in constant financial embarrassment. That is why old families often had to swallow their pride and adapt. Those who were not prepared to do so perished sooner or later. Pragmatism in marriage thus paid off for all: it allowed the newly ennobled to penetrate and anchor themselves in the social elite (which accelerated the shifts within their changing social identity), and to the old and established nobility such alliances brought financial injections and rejuvenation of family genetic material.

One of the most famous examples in this respect was the Auersperg-Trillegg couple. In 1669, Count Wolf Engelbert Auersperg (1641–1709), a member of one of the oldest and most prominent noble families in Carniola, and Katharina Elisabetha Baroness Trilleg († 1724), whose family had only been ennobled two generations before, were married. The bride’s father, Georg Andreas Trillegg, died early († 1667). Both his son, Georg Andreas Jr. (1663–1701), and his daughter, Katharina Elisabetha, were after taken care of by their uncle Johann Friedrich Trillegg, who proved to be a good guardian: among other things, in 1674 he achieved the elevation to the rank of counts for himself and his nephew, and he also arranged eminent wedding parties for both of his protégés; family property played a decisive role in this.<sup>44</sup> Katharina Elisabetha, as mentioned, became the wife of Count Wolf Engelbert Auersperg in 1669, and her brother married Susanna Felicitas, Countess of Gallenberg, who also belonged to the top of the Carniolan elite. However, if the marriage of the newlywed Countess Auersperg was relatively happy and harmonious, the marriage of her brother, in which only one daughter was born, was the complete opposite. Georg Andreas Jr. and Susanna Felicitas soon became estranged, and their mutual dislike eventually grew into a real hatred, which ended in 1693 with a resounding divorce and an attempt to confiscate Trillegg’s property in favour of the Gallenbergs.<sup>45</sup>

If the marriage between Count Auersperg and the *parvenu* Trilleg was accepted in the then high society of Carniola without major objections (and undoubtedly the Trillegg-Gallenberg union would have been too, had there been no divorce scandal), there was much more opposition in some other cases. When Baron Marcus Anton III of

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<sup>44</sup> Preinfalk, *Auersperg. Geschichte einer europäischen Familie* (Graz: Leopold Stocker Verlag, 2006), 114–115. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 165–172.

<sup>45</sup> On the divorce, see Maja Žvanut, “Ločitev zakona pred tristo leti” [A divorce three hundred years ago], *Zgodovinski časopis* 50, no. 3 (1996): 343–356.

Billichgrätz (1713–1789) was looking for a spouse in the 1730s, he proposed initially to a certain Countess Lamberg, but this union failed because of his dispute with the future father-in-law over the marriage contract. His second choice was Maria Rosalia von Qualiza, who was from an otherwise rich, but, in the aristocratic tradition, a young noble family (the nobility was only granted to Rosalia's grandfather Nikolaj in 1642). This time, Marcus Anton's choice was opposed by his mother, Maria Eleonora, as the bride did not seem respectable enough. It is interesting that the same mother, by birth Countess Ursini Blagaj (the Blagajs belonged to the old and respectable families), had agreed to marry Marcus Anton II Billichgrätz (1673–1731), who was only the second generation of nobles (the nobility was granted only to his father Mark Anton I (1636–1693) in 1646). The wedding took place, despite the mother's opposition, and the rich bride Qualiza brought her fiancé Billichgrätz a huge dowry.<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, a few years later, their eldest daughter Johanna Baroness Billichgrätz (1737–1787), who caught an eye of Dismas, Count Barbo-Waxenstein (1737–1802), also had similar problems with the chosen one. The groom's father, Jobst Weikhard, Count Barbo, strongly opposed his son's choice for the same reasons that were relevant in the case of the bride's parents – the son's chosen one, although a baroness, was not respectable enough, as her family was granted the nobility for money, not for chivalrous merit. The father did his best to prevent the marriage, addressing both the provincial authorities and the empress Maria Theresa herself. The final decision was made by the church authorities – the apostolic nuncio finally allowed the marriage, and Count Dismas Barbo and Baroness Johanna Billichgrätz became “Carniolan proto-romantic love revolutionaries.”<sup>47</sup>

The society (or at least some individuals in it) was therefore not consistent in condemning all the deviations from the established rules. Some unequal relationships were considered acceptable or at least seemingly unproblematic, while others were not. That is why the social identity of the new, *parvenu* nobles was all the more important, as one could only count on full integration into the noble society by fully adopting the patterns and rules of aristocratic behaviour.

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<sup>46</sup> Dušan Kos, *Zgodovina morale. 1. del. Ljubezen in zakonska zveza na Slovenskem med srednjim vekom in meščansko dobo* [The history of the morality. Vol. 1. Love and marriage in Slovenia between the Middle Ages and bourgeoisie period] (Ljubljana: ZRC Publishing, ZRC SAZU, 2015), 254; Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 17. stoletje*, 13–14.

<sup>47</sup> Kos, *Zgodovina morale*, 253–269; Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 16. stoletje. 1. del: Od Barbov do Zetscherjev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 16th century. Vol. 1: From Barbo to Zetscher] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2016), 33.

Numerous examples of different practices, both in the national and social perspective, thus show that the nobility was far from homogeneous, but rather very diverse and stratified.

### **Nobility after 1848 – national antagonisms become strained**

If, until the mid-nineteenth century, the concord between different ethnic groups still prevailed in Slovenia, the situation deteriorated sharply after 1848. At that time, as the national frictions began to intensify, real fights took place between Slovenes and Germans, especially in Carniola, as well as in southern Styria and southern Carinthia, where enough Slovenes lived to be a suitable counterweight to the German population. This was also reflected in the fact that the Slovenes who joined the German camp Germanized their name and identified with the German culture. In Carniola, for example, one of the most famous examples was the curator of the Carniola Provincial Museum, Dragotin Dežman, who became Karl Deschmann after joining the German side.<sup>48</sup> In Lower Styria, the case of the leather-industry family Vošnjak from Šoštanj (Schönstein) was notorious, which split into the Slovene and German branches – the members of the first signed themselves in Slovene as Vošnjak, and the members of the second in German as Woschnagg.<sup>49</sup>

This development did not bypass even the nobility, which responded to the new situation in different ways. The old, basically still feudal nobility, as a rule, did not engage in national struggles, although it mostly showed affiliation with the German side. Extremely rare were the individuals from the ranks of the old nobility who sided with the Slovenes or even declared themselves Slovenes. If such cases did occur, they were generally limited only to individuals within one family. One of the most prominent examples in this sense was Josef Emanuel, Count Barbo-Waxenstein from Lower Carniola (1825–1879), who publicly declared himself a Slovene and a Slovene count at that. Nonetheless, this only lasted until his death, when his descendants returned to the German side.<sup>50</sup>

Gustav Count Thurn-Valsassina (1836–1888) from Radovljica (Radmannsdorf) was also a member of the old Austrian nobility representing Slovene interests. His pro-Slovene orientation was the result of the upbringing enabled to him by his father Vincenc (1790–1859). Namely, the latter provided the children with teachers who were not only

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<sup>48</sup> Avgust Pirjevec, "Karel Dežman," *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi172598/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi172598/) (17.3.2021).

<sup>49</sup> Miran Aplinc, *Vošnjaki: industrialci iz Šoštanja* [The Vošnjak family: industrials from Šoštanj] (Šoštanj: Zavod za kulturo, 2005).

<sup>50</sup> Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 16. stoletje*, 36.

Slovenes by birth, but also ardent national awakeners.<sup>51</sup> In the words of his compatriot and diplomat Josef Schwegel, Gustav Thurn “swung politically uncertainly between Germans and Slovenes,”<sup>52</sup> but the Slovene camp considered him its own, so the Carniolan Provincial Assembly published an obituary in Slovene at his death in 1888.<sup>53</sup>

Among the Slovene-defined or at least Slovene-friendly high nobles, worth-mentioning is also Baron Anton Zois (1808–1873), grandnephew of Žiga Zois, who supported Slovene national societies, like *Narodna čitalnica* [National reading society] and *Slovenska matica* [Slovene literary society]. When he died, the Slovene epitaph was composed for his tombstone by Janez Bleiweis (1808–1881), one of the most prominent leaders of the Slovene national movement.<sup>54</sup> In the County of Gorizia, two counts of Coronini supported the pro-Slavic side. The elder among them was Franz (1833–1901), who introduced the Slovene official language as the mayor of Šempeter and, as a state deputy, had a lot of credit for introducing the Slovene and Italian languages into secondary education in the County of Gorizia. Even more pro-Slovene was Alfred Coronini (1846–1910), who became involved in the political activity of Slovenes in the County of Gorizia and joined the political society “Sloga” [Unity], with whose help was then elected to the Vienna State and Gorizia Provincial Assemblies. As an MP, he supported the demands for public and equal use of the Slovene language, Slovene education, the economic rise of the Slovene countryside, and the regulation of transport connections, especially for the construction of the Vipava railway.<sup>55</sup>

Slightly more complicated was the picture for the new nobility, in which ethnic identity was strongly intertwined with social mobility. In order to identify as much as possible with the nobility or with higher society in general, within which German culture predominated (as already mentioned above), the newly ennobled usually completely transferred to the German side and adopted German culture and identity.

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<sup>51</sup> Granda, “Radovljica v letu 1848,” [Radovljica in 1848] in *Radovljiški zbornik 1995*, Jure Sinobad (ed.) (Radovljica: Občina Radovljica, 1995), 149–150.

<sup>52</sup> Josef Schwegel, *Na cesarjev ukaz. Spomini politika in diplomata* [At the Emperor's command. Memories of a politician and a diplomat], Franc Rozman (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2004), 131.

<sup>53</sup> Preinfalk, “Radovljica in grofje Thurn-Valsassina,” [Radovljica and the Counts Thurn-Valsassina] in *Anton Tomaž Linhart: jubilejna monografija ob 250-letnici rojstva*, Ivo Svetina (ed.) (Ljubljana: Slovenski gledališki muzej; Radovljica: Muzeji radovljiške občine, 2005), 520.

<sup>54</sup> Preinfalk, “Genealoška podoba rodbine Zois od 18. do 20. stoletja,” [Genealogical image of the Zois family between the 18th and the 20th centuries] *Kronika* 51, 1 (2003): 34, 45.

<sup>55</sup> Vojko Pavlin, “Coronini,” *Slovenska biografija*. [www.slovenska-biografija.si/rodbina/sbi1005500/](http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/rodbina/sbi1005500/) (17.3.2021).

Of course, this was not always the case. There are a few known cases when the new nobles still retained their Slovene character, e.g., the already mentioned Janez Bleiweis, Fran Šuklje (1849–1935), and Jožef Pogačnik (1866–1932), who were among the bearers of the Slovene national movement.

Already a cursory glance at the new nobility from Slovenia reveals a whole range of various orientations and combinations. Here lived Slovenes who supported the German side, Germans who supported the Slovene side, and of course Germans who firmly defended German cause, as well as Slovenes who were ardent nationalists.

We must note that the noble title could have had a strong political connotation. Many individuals, despite fulfilling the conditions, never applied for it. This resistance was mostly connected with the pro-Slovene or rather anti-Austrian national consciousness. For example, politician Josip Sernec (1844–1925), despite being granted the order of the Iron Crown III, which would have allowed him to ask for a hereditary noble title, never made an application, saying that “as a Slovene, I cannot and must not accept any gift from our hostile ministry and I do not allow myself to be silenced with it.”<sup>56</sup>

The national camp, to which some of the new noblemen belonged or with which they identified, expressed itself in several ways. Among the indicators were the form of the surname and the choice of expressing their noble predicate (German or Slovene), although in the complex national conditions of the last decades of the Habsburg Monarchy this was not always decisive. For example, the lawyer Andrej Lušin (1807–1879), who was closer to the German side, consistently signed himself as Luschin and, when elevated to the nobility in 1873, chose the German predicate Ebengreuth.<sup>57</sup> A slightly younger lawyer, Franc Kočevar (1833–1897), did the same. At first, he became enthusiastic about the “Slovene cause”, but he eventually realized that by sticking to it as a civil servant was not as fruitful as he imagined. Thus, he completely surrendered to the German cause, in which he also raised his children. When he was ennobled as the president of the provincial court in Ljubljana in 1895, he chose the German predicate Kondenheim, which he derived from his wife’s maiden surname Konda. Nevertheless, interestingly enough, he

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<sup>56</sup> Josip Sernec, *Spomini* [Memoires] (Ljubljana: Komisjska založba Tiskovne zadruga, 1927). Slovene original: *...da kot Slovenec ne morem in ne smem sprejeti od nam sovražnega ministrstva nobenega darila ter si ne dam ž njim mašiti ust.*

<sup>57</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Luschin, Andreas, 22. VI. 1873. See also Mariano Rugále, Miha Preinfalk, *Blagoslovljeni in prekleti. 2. del: Po sledih mlajših plemiških rodbin na Slovenskem* [The blessed and the cursed, Vol. 1: On the traces of younger noble families in Slovenia] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2012), 127–134.

always used the Slovene notation of his surname, i.e., Kočevar, and his descendants, who left the Slovene territory at the beginning of the twentieth century, adapted the surname to German only by omitting the caron over the letter č, but did not replace it by the German "tsch".<sup>58</sup>

The nobles who belonged to the Slovene camp also showed their affiliation by choosing the Slovene predicate. For example, Janez Bleiweis, one of the leaders of the Slovene national movement, became a knight "of Trsteniški" in the year of his death; patron Josip Gorup (1834–1912) "decorated" himself with the predicate Slavinski in 1903 (after his native village of Slavina); Jožef Tomše (1850–1937), chose the predicate Savskidol in 1907, which referred to a toponym in the village where he grew up.<sup>59</sup>

Whereas all Slovene surnames were usually written in the Bohorič alphabet before the introduction of Gaj's Latin alphabet, from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards the choice of the surname record could also have been an indicator of national orientation. Those who were closer to the German camp or lived in a predominantly German environment decided to write their Slovene surname in German (e.g., diplomat Jožef Schwegel) or insisted on the Bohorič alphabet (e.g., doctor Janez Žhuber or lawyer Jožef Žhisman). Others, more Slovene-oriented, consistently used Gaj's Latin alphabet and carons. Retired Colonel Jernej Aljančič (1853–1926) from Tržič, for example, in his request for elevation into nobility in 1917, emphasized that his surname was written down in the registry book with the Bohorič alphabet (i.e., Aljanzhizh), but demanded that the Gaj's Latin alphabet be used in the diploma of nobility (therefore, Aljančič), since he always signed exclusively in this way and was also registered under this form in military documents. Aljančič's Slovene orientation is also shown by his coat of arms, in which the Slovene national colours are used – blue, red and silver/white.<sup>60</sup> A similar reason can be found in the request for noble title of the retired Major Anton Gajšek from Slovenske Konjice in 1902; in addition to that, he also chose a Slovene predicate – Sotladol (after the river Sotla).<sup>61</sup> The carons in the surname are

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<sup>58</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Kočevar, Franz, 11. V. 1895. See also Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslooljeni in prekleti* 2, 78–83.

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslooljeni in prekleti. 1. del: Plemiške rodbine 19. in 20. stoletja na Slovenskem* [The blessed and the cursed, Vol. 1: Noble families of the 19th and the 20th centuries in Slovenia] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2010), 21–28, 70–77, 188–192.

<sup>60</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte für Aljančič Bartholomäus, 30. XI. 1917. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine na Slovenskem, 19. in 20. stoletje. 3. del: Od Aljančičev do Žolgerjev* [Noble families in Slovenia, 19th and 20th centuries, Vol. 3: From Aljančič to Žolger] (Ljubljana: Viharnik, 2017), 9–12.

<sup>61</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Gajšek, Anton, 29. IV. 1902. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 19. in 20. stoletje*, 75–78.

also used in the diplomas of nobility of some prominent and conscious Slovenes who were awarded the noble title by the emperor, e.g., Fran Šuklje, Josip Pogačnik, Anton Globočnik, Albert Levičnik, to name a few.

Even if the Slovene spelling of surnames was usually followed by Slovene noble predicates and the German forms of surnames were supplemented with German predicates, other combinations are also known. Some individuals wrote their surname in Slovene, but still chose a German predicate. In addition to the aforementioned Franc Kočevar-Kondenheim, two Austrian officers of Slovene descent can be mentioned, namely Jožef Kremžar from Ljubljana (1869–1927), who became noble of Felskampff,<sup>62</sup> or Jožef Supančič from Novo mesto (1850–1927), who was from 1897 noble of Kroisenau. Both of them proposed several predicates, all of which were German for Kremžar, whereas a Slovene one – *Domoljub* [patriot] was also found for Supančič.<sup>63</sup>

However, there is the well-known example of the Ljubljana physician Janez Zhuber (1790–1865), who always insisted on the use of Bohorič alphabet for his surname (and also all his descendants to this day) but at the same time chose the Slovene predicate Okrog. It is true that it was a microtoponym from the vicinity of his home village in Lower Carniola, but he could have also chosen a more German-sounding predicate.<sup>64</sup>

The described examples show that ethnicity and national definition were much more complicated than they seem at first glance or as the discourse in Slovenia in the past liked to simplify. However, we can conditionally conclude that the choice of Slovene predicate and Slovene surname spelling almost always emphasized belonging to the Slovene side, while the German orthography did not necessarily mean unconditional adherence to the Germans or apostasy from the Slovenes.

An individual's national affiliation could also be expressed by choosing a coat of arms. If the applicant for the nobility chose the blue Carniolan eagle as his coat of arms, he was showing his national or provincial patriotism (e.g., businessman Josip Gorup, lawyer Anton Globočnik). The black eagle represented allegiance to the Habsburg monarchy (e.g., provincial school inspector Anton Klodič), while the most Slovene-oriented chose the linden motif as a symbol of Slovenes (e.g., major General Janez Lavrič, vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies

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<sup>62</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Kremžar, Josef, 22. X. 1918. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 19. in 20. stoletje*, 111–115.

<sup>63</sup> AT ÖStA, AVA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Supančič, Josef, 18. XII. 1897. See also Preinfalk, *Plemiške rodbine, 19. in 20. stoletje*, 209–212.

<sup>64</sup> AT ÖStA, AVHKA, Adelsakten, Hofadelsakte von Zhuber, Johann, 2. III. 1865. See also Rugále and Preinfalk, *Blagoslovljeni in prekleti 1*, 220–231.



Jožef Pogačnik) or even the white-blue-red combination (e.g., Janez Bleiweis, colonel Jernej Aljančič). In the nineteenth century, belonging to the Slovene side and devotion to the monarchy and the Habsburgs were not necessarily exclusive.

The complex relationship between the Austrian (German) nobility and the Slovenes was beautifully summarized by Robert Count Barbo-Waxenstein (1889–1977) in his semi-autobiographical novel *The White Ball* from the 1930s. He also mentioned his grandfather Josef Emanuel, Count Barbo, although he did not mention him by name:

“They [= the nobility], however, led only when their skin was in danger, such as during the Turkish invasions. Otherwise, they lived until the year 1848 luxuriously from peasant socage, and on top of that they became German national. Instead of representing the rural people, they prefer German towns, which foolishly imagined that they would Germanize the country. In this way, the nobility, of course, had to lose all confidence in the population. In the 1860s, there was only one who understood the situation correctly and stood up for the benefit of the Slovene people – more for his sense of justice than for his political instincts. As a result, however, his short-sighted peers visibly despised him. If they had followed his example, it would have been a completely different situation today with the Slovene people and the provincial nobility. And so, it seems to me, both are failing. In a hundred years, only the castle ruins will stand above the poor country and will testify to our former greatness, which we did not know how to use for our own good and for the good of the people, because we did not know how to merge with it in one.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Barbo-Waxenstein, *Bela krogla* [The white ball] (Ljubljana: Satura, 1935), 167. Slovene original: *Ono pa je vodilo samo takrat, če je bila njegova koža v nevarnosti, kakor na primer za časa turških vpadov. Drugače pa je živel do leta 48. razkošno od kmečke tlake, povrh pa je še postalo nemško nacionalno. Namesto da bi zastopalo podeželsko ljudstvo, je rajši nemška mesteca, ki so si bedasto domišljala, da bodo deželo ponemčila. Na ta način je moralo plemstvo seveda izgubiti v prebivalstvu sleherno zaupanje. Eden edini je v 60. letih pravilno spoznal položaj in se postavil manj po svojem političnem nagonu kakor po pravičnostnem čutu za korist slovenskega ljudstva. Zato so ga pa kratkovidni staležni tovariši vidno zaničevali. Če bi bili posnemali njegov primer, bi bilo danes s slovenskim ljudstvom in deželnim plemstvom čisto drugače. Tako pa, se mi zdi, prepadata oba. Čez sto let bodo stale samo še grajske razvaline nad siromašno deželo in bodo pričale o naši nekdanji veličini, ki je nismo znali uporabiti v svoje dobro in v dobro ljudstva, ker se nismo znali v svoji domišljavosti spojiti z njim v eno.*

This passage shows that in the Slovene territory the nobility was aware of the gap between itself and the majority Slovene population and recognized the missed opportunity in bringing the two sides closer.

Moreover, in the field of social identity, the second half of the nineteenth century brought great and fatal changes. In this respect, the nobility in Carniola or in Slovenia did not differ significantly from the nobility elsewhere in the Habsburg Monarchy. The nobility had long since set foot on the path of slow decline. Ever since the end of the Middle Ages, the ruler, in his absolutist aspirations, had tried to limit the power of the aristocratic corporation as much as possible. One of the highlights of this antagonism was the Reformation, in which the nobility took the lead, and the counter-Reformation, in which the scales shifted in favour of the ruler or provincial prince. Maria Theresa and Joseph II brought new blows to the nobility with their reforms. The bourgeoisie also contributed, pushing the nobility more and more into the background with its growing power and influence. The revolution of 1848, also called the bourgeois revolution, almost completely abolished aristocratic privileges, which were still based on the medieval feudal system. Afterwards, the nobility was left with only the right to use the noble title and coat of arms. At the same time, on almost all levels, the bourgeoisie began to assume high positions that had previously been reserved solely for the nobility.<sup>66</sup>

After 1848, the nobility entered the last stage of its decline – financial, social, political, and even demographical. The significant reduction of the former feudal estate and the abolition of feudal relations meant impoverishment for them: nobles increasingly decided to sell property and move out of castles, stepped into the background in society, became invisible, did not engage politically, except those who managed to retain a notable estate and represented it in the provincial assemblies; additionally, many nobles remained single and did not continue their lineage, while numerous noblewomen married burghers and merged with this environment. If, until the nineteenth century, the new nobles tried to imitate the old aristocratic society as much as possible and integrate into it, this was no longer the case. Many simply could not afford it financially, and many did not even want it; due to the inflation of elevations into the nobility, the old aristocratic, so-called first society (*die erste Gesellschaft*) rejected the new nobles, calling them “second society” (*die zweite Gesellschaft*), so that the gap between them was growing. The nobles thus largely retained their former way of life, their former identity,

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<sup>66</sup> See in particular the articles of Hannes Stekl collected in the book *Adel und Bürgertum in der Habsburgermonarchie 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Ernst Bruckmüller – Franz Eder – Andrea Schnöller (eds.) (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004).

but the differences between them and the bourgeoisie were almost no longer noticeable.<sup>67</sup>

### **Conclusion – the last 30 years of nobility in Slovenia**

Thus, if we draw a line under the turbulent events of the second half of the nineteenth century, we may conclude that the aforementioned period brought significant changes in the field of both ethnic and social identity of the nobility. This was a time of emergence and intensification of national antagonisms throughout the Habsburg monarchy, which was especially evident in ethnically mixed lands, as it was the case for the Inner Austrian lands. This development could not be avoided even by the nobility, although different strata of the nobility reacted distinctively. The old, basically feudal nobility, in principle, tried to avoid such divisions, emphasizing their supranationality,<sup>68</sup> but if they were forced to define themselves, they usually opted for the German side. The new nobility, who came from the ranks of officers or clerks, also predominantly belonged to the German camp. At least in Slovenia, the nobility mostly did not identify with the Slovene side and therefore became increasingly alienated from it. This proved fatal especially after both the world wars. After 1918, a large part of the lower nobility in particular emigrated from the new Yugoslav kingdom. Those who remained were mainly those aristocratic families who had lived there for centuries and considered this area to be their homeland. Most of them, despite the agrarian reform, still owned extensive holdings, which discouraged them from going abroad too. Although it was mostly defined as German and perceived as such by the surroundings, the nobility gradually approached and adapted to the Slovene environment, which was reflected in the public use of the Slovene language, enrolment of noble children in Slovene schools and, last, but not least, accepting of the Yugoslav citizenship.

Nevertheless, the (old) nobility still insisted on the old way of life, on the old identity, even after the First World War, when the titles of nobility were formally abolished. Despite the fact that the life of the nobility could not be the same as before 1918, the nobles still tried to live in the traditional spirit. Habits from centuries-old tradition could not disappear overnight. They still lived in country mansions and/or city palaces, and they still visited each other exclusively and socialized while hunting, which has always been considered a lordly activity. Of course, in accordance with the reduced financial resources, they had to give up

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Count Leopold Berchtold (1863–1942) when asked in 1909 whether he was German, Hungarian, or Czech, he replied that he was an aristocrat (Grdina, "Anastazij Zelenec," 247).

some expensive habits, such as long trips abroad or the maintenance of several dwellings, but the main features of the aristocratic everyday life remained.<sup>69</sup>

This development was brought to an end by the Second World War. The post-war communist authorities declared all members of the former nobility to be of German nationality, confiscated their property and, despite numerous complaints, expelled almost all of them from the country.<sup>70</sup> The Second World War and the period after it finally ended the nobility and the aristocratic life in Slovenia.

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<sup>69</sup> Wiesflecker, "Das ist jetzt unsere Ordnung!," 195–246.

<sup>70</sup> For more on that see Preinfalk, "The Second World War and the nobility in Slovenia," *Slovene studies: journal of the Society for Slovene Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2021): 3–23.