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The Demands of the People of the County of Požega in 1848

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The Time of putting together and submitting the Wishes and Demands of the people of the County of Požega

The national movement in the county of Požega intensively developed from March to the middle of May 1848, when revolutionary movements calmed down. That is exactly when the preparations for the assembly of the Croatian parliament began. However, the political situation was still difficult and complex, especially after General Ivan Hrabowsky (on 9th May 1848) had been appointed Commissioner in Croatia and Slavonia with the task of dismissing the Ban (the governor of Croatia, appointed by the King) Josip Jelačić, and restoring peace and order which had supposedly disturbed been with the development of the national movement.

When, in the middle of May, the situation calmed down, the town of Požega and the county of Požega decisively opposed Hrabowsky's intentions. By protecting national interests and cooperating with Ban Jelačić, they prevented the arrival of Hrabowsky in the county of Požega, and in this way also prevented the realization of the wish of the Hungarian government and its supporters in Slavonia, to widen their influence

The election of representatives for the town of Požega and the county of Požega for the Sabor (the Croatian parliament) was successful. On 26th May 1848, the lawyer Svetozar Kušević, and Ivan Martinić, the mayor and captain were elected as representatives of the town of Požega. The election for representatives of the county of Požega were held on 23rd and 26th May in each district. The following MP's were elected: Josip Bunjik, Miroslav Kraljević, Đuro Stručić, Josip

¹ Povijesni arhiv Požege (The historical archive of the town of Požega; abbreviation: PAP), The Magistrate of the town of Požega (abb.: MGP), S. (abb. for acts) 1848, SV. (abb. for filenumber) 1089.

Žuvić, Petar Maljevac, Miroslav Spun, Slavoljub Mračić, Tomo Milanković and Vasilije Zdelar, as representatives of the county of Požega, Dimitrije Lončarević as the representative of the Orthodox diocese in Pakrac, and the priest Franjo Matijašević, who represented the districts of Pakrac and Daruvar.²

At the same time as the elections for the Croatian parliament took place, the people of the county of Požega expressed their wishes and demands and put them together in a document with the same name. It was the expression of the wishes of peasants, as well as of other social classes, that the Croatian parliament was supposed to take care of. In the State Archive of Croatia, among other parliamentary documents there are documents containing the wishes and demands of the people from the western part of the county of Požega, as well as the document called »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega« (Zelje i zahtivanja naroda Zupanie Požeške)?

The wishes and demands of the individual towns or villages are identical in many parts, with specific problems that are characteristic for the separate places. All together, these individual wishes and demands were the basis for the combined »Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«, and they were also a supplement to that document for discussion in the Croatian parliament. It would be very useful to publish that document unabridged and in its original version, and in that way show its importance, because it was the most distinguished agrarian program realized during the national movement in Croatia in 1848.

Important Characteristics of the Requests, Wishes and Demands

The requests and wishes of the Pakrac district were sent to the Croatian parliament on 23rd May 1848. The district of Pakrac emphasized the bad situation for craftsmen who were the core of the population. Beside that, they claimed that the district could gain some profit from selling brandy and wine and they ask to be allowed to do so throughout the year.

A number of other documents give us a picture of the conditions and life of the tradesmen in the districts of Daruvar and Pakrac. The masters that were guild-members in Daruvar emphasize that, »(...) we live with difficulty from our work, and many times we cannot even give bread to our children«.4

² Their mandates were confirmed on 5th June, but not all of them were named in the register of the representatives of the Croatian parliament that was published in the Parliament Newspaper from 8th June 1848, nr. 3.

³ Slavko Gavrilović, »Agrarno-socijalna zbivanja u Požeškoj županiji 1848-1849«, *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Novom Sadu* V (The Yearbook of the Philosophical Faculty in Novi Sad; Novi Sad, 1960.) pp. 37-38. He gives only the incomplete text of »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«.

⁴ Hrvatski državni arhiv u Zagrebu (the State Archive in Zagreb; abb.: HDA), Požeška županija (the county of Požega; abb.: PŽ), S. 1848, SV. CDXLIX, Daruvar, 7th May 1848.

This situation was caused by the merchants of Daruvar who worked and lived under better conditions. While tradesmen could not own houses on the market place in order to sell their products better, the merchants were allowed to have their own stores on the market place and to sell products of all kinds in the town of Daruvar. That is why the tradesmen complained to the county of Požega and asked for protection, that is, that merchants should be banned from selling products of tradesmen.

The district of Pakrac sought a license to sell salt, to be able to realize a profit, as they had had that right until 1807. At that time the landed estate had got the license to sell salt and it rented that right to the Jews.⁶

These requests and wishes, as it is stated at the end of the document, consider the districts of Daruvar and Pakrac. One of the most important wishes of the market-town of Pakrac, was to have its own magistrate. They thought this would be realized, if the requested wishes and demands would be solved first.

The cause of the disputes between the district and the landed estates was the inferior position of the district in relation to the landed estates. The landed estates had the monopoly in the salt trade, and woods given to the district for exploitation were inaccessible, so the district was forced to buy lumber from the landed estates for cash. The district also asked for pasture lands, whilst arable land and meadows, that had belonged to poor families and families that had died out, were used by the landed estates. The district also claimed the right to profit from fairs, silk production and forced labour, which until then had gone to the landed estates. The inhabitants of the market-town of Pakrac were aware of the new political circumstances, and they wanted to use them to gain higher incomes and free trade. Moreover they wanted to abolish the feudal structure of society, which was represented by the landed estates. Slavoljub Mračić, although he was elected as the representative of the county of Požega for the district of Daruvar, did not protect the interests of the inhabitants of the market-town of Daruvar, but the rights of the landed estates and called the inhabitants »rebels that should be sent to court (court marshal - F. P.)«.8

The demands of the district of Doljani set out in ten articles and sent to Ban Jelačić, were drawn up on 28th May, in Daruvar. These demands were somewhat different from those of the districts of Pakrac and Daruvar. This document was dominated by agrarian demands that were important for the village of Doljani. These were: keeping rights tožirovina (to pasture cattle in the forests), demanding the rights to exploit the woods and pastures, and to exchange bad land in the hills for the right to work on better, rented land. The peasants were willing to pay

⁵ Ibid.

⁶HDA, Saborski spisi (Parliamentary acts; abb.: SS) 1848, SV. LXXVIII, no. 41.

⁷ Ibid.

^s HDA, PŽ, S. 1848, SV. CDLXII, no. 31.

⁹ HDA, SS. 1848, SV. LXXVIII, no. 74 and 75.

state-taxes, but they wanted to pay the same amount every year, and they wanted the sum of five guilders that was given to the priest for funerals to be lowered. They also wanted to lower other obligations to the Church. They demanded an increase in the communal village land, as well as the possibility of building mills on their territory as they had before.¹⁰

In addition to all this we should mention the people's demands sent to Slavoljub Mračić, '' the representative of the district of Daruvar, in the name of eight villages: Daruvar gornji, Daruvar donji, Biela, Borki, Brestovac, Končanica, Pakrani i Verbovecz. The wishes of the people from these villages were significantly greater than the wishes of the people from Doljani and the market-towns of Daruvar and Pakrac, but many requests from the earlier "Wishes and Demands" were included in this document. However, we should emphasize the distinct wish of the peasants to become free from the absolute rule of the squire and to be totally equal to him in all rights and obligations. Maltreatment and abuse by the squire, forced the peasants to include numerous problems in their demands, in an attempt to improve their position.

On 1st June, the village of Bastaji in the district of Daruvar, sent requests to the Ban and the Sabor. They want to separate the woods, fields, vineyards, meadows and pastures from the landed estate, to be able to freely enjoy what they had. The estate of the village of Bastaji had 32 homesteads, and they were forced to work and pay taxes to the county and the squire. They asked that, when the land was divided, they should be given all 32 homesteads, so that »everybody could be free on his own land to build, sell drinks, run mills, etc. «12 The peasants emphasized that they were not asking for »any special charters or privileges. «13 They insisted on what they had created by their own work, and demanded that the fields they had newly cleared and for which they paid rent every year, should be joined to their estates. They demanded that the squire should give them back the ruined, but very old, Church of St. Anna, with the entrance and the surrounding area, that was owned by nine districts; so they could repair it.14 The small and dispersed peasant fields on the landed estate created many difficulties for the peasants and enabled the squire to abuse them. For this reason the demand that, when the land was divided, the peasants should be given what was theirs and for what they had paid taxes, was emphasized in all »Wishes and Demands«, although the squire in many cases took the best land.

The demands, requests and wishes of the peasants in the districts of Pakrac and Daruvar show the diverse abuse by the landed estates, suffered by peasants. The landed estates charged penalties for cattle found on their land, regardless of whether any damage had been done or not, while the squire could pasture his cat-

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., no. 75.

¹² HDA, SS - 1848, SV - LXXVIII, no. 73.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

tie on the fields of peasants without any compensation. The squire proclaimed restricted areas only over forests rich with acorn and charged the peasants for the use of these woods. He forbade the pasturing of animals in the woods even to those peasants who had their houses in these woods. The peasants complained that they had to pay in advance for the preparation of lumber for military barracks in the county. If the county needed preparation of some amount of building material, bricks, lime or timber, the squire would demand the same amount to be prepared for him. The squire took land from the peasants, where he built houses for his clerks, and the peasants had to keep paying taxes for the same land. Peasants had to built fences around the lands the landed estates were renting, with no compensation. The squire gave pastures to soldiers from the Croatian Military Frontier, and because of that the peasants were left without pasture for their cattle. He also took from peasants vineyards, mills, etc.15 The peasants hoped that the Croatian parliament and Ban Jelačić would fulfill their demands, and therefore had not initiated any rebellious actions. They asked the representatives of their districts to submit their wishes, first to the county of Požega, and then to the Sabor. That is why the demands of the peasants of the districts of Pakrac and Daruvar were included in the text of »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«, 16 that was submitted to the Croatian parliament on 27th June 1848. 17 The demands of the districts of Pakrac and Daruvar were supplemented as proof material to »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«.18

In »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«, the peasants demanded that they get sufficient woods and pastures without compensation, that the *žirovina* should not be restricted to eight weeks, that all newly cleared land ought to be given back to the peasants as well as *sessional* land (the land on which peasants lived and worked), that mills should be freely built in their waters, that forced labour had to be abolished, and that all *iura regalia* (the royal rights) »should be general for everybody through the whole year.«¹⁹

Conclusions of the Parliamentary Board in solving the Wishes and Demands

The board of 30 representatives, with Herman Bužan as chairman, never met in full. Jaroslav Sidak thinks that »non-attendance of the most prominent members of this board could be explained by their work in other boards, but one other possibility, that should also be considered, is that they thought other political

¹⁵ Ibid., no. 25.

¹⁶These »Wishes and Demands«, were signed by J. Bunjik, and the district judges that were elected as county representatives for the Croatian parliament.

¹⁷HDA, SS. 1848, SV. LXXVIII, no. 19.

¹⁸ Ibid., no. 74, 75 and 73.

¹⁹ See: »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«

questions, or maybe the problem of the new constitution for the Croatian Military Frontier, more important than problems of feudal law.« 20

Although the problems of feudal law were, in general, solved, 21 the discussion in the Sabor on this problem still showed a number of difficulties that occurred in the application of these solutions. Data on the sessions of the board for solving problems of feudal law are scarce, because **there are no records of the board sessions, where different ideas must have been opposed.** That makes it impossible to gain insight into the work of the board as well as into the situation surrounding this question before it was put on the parliamentary agenda.

Among the acts of the Sabor, there is a record of the board session of 28th June 1848. The chairman was H. Bužan and the following members of the board were present: Tito Babić (the county of Varaždin), Tomislav Cuculić (the market-town of Vrbovsko), and Miroslav Spun (the county of Požega). Apart from these members of the board, Ivan Kraišić, Antun Vidaković, Imbro Furlić (the county of Virovitica), N. Petrović (the county of Srijem) and two recording secretaries were also present. The agenda of the session was "The difficulties and wishes of the people" submitted to parliament.²³

»The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega« were also discussed, 24 and the board made a number of concrete conclusions. The articles of The Wishes and Demands 25 were discussed separately and each had its own conclusion. The conclusions clearly show that the demands of the people of the county of Požega were mostly supported. The conclusions of the board were stated in the same order as The Wishes and Demands«.

The conclusion of the first article of »The Wishes and Demands« was that the lesser royal rights would be solved. That is why they insisted that the people had enough rights to exploit the woods and pastures, and concerning firewood that had not been free until then, they were still advised to settle the issue with the squire. The fourth conclusion stated that the question of compensation for feudal law relations would be solved. For this reason the fifth conclusion stated that uninhabited villages were to be kept by those who paid the feudal law taxes for them, while those that were kept or rented by the squire were to remain in the squire's possession. The land and meadows that were included in the uninhabited villages were joined to the village estate. As far as the running and building of mills was concerned (article 6), the board proposed to the Sabor a draft of a law on these questions. The request for the abolishment of motičarina (forced labour) was solved as follows: forced labour on feudal and sessional land was to cease, but as

²⁰ Jaroslav Šidak, »Seljačko pitanje u hrvatskoj politici 1848«,//Ć 2 (1963.) p. 19.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ HDA, SS. 1948, SV. LXXVIII, no. 361.

²⁴ Ibid., no. 19.

^{25 »}The Wishes and Demands« consist of 14 articles, while S. Gavrilović states only 13. See Gavrilović, »Agrarno-socijalna zbivanja«, pp. 37-38

far as the other lands were concerned, it still had to be given. The eighth conclusion stated that everybody could freely trade in salt and that no tax had to be paid for keeping a shop. The ninth conclusion, considering the demands that the evaluation and confiscation of newly cleared lands, plum orchards and vineyards, should stop, was that such demands were an insult to the squires, and therefore the board could not support the ninth article.²⁴

As far as the financing of priests and teachers was concerned, nothing was solved and the requests were passed to the Department of Education. The board also approved of the need to make Slavonia equal to Croatia, regarding the people's rights, the tax system and the army. They also accepted that only Croats should be allowed to perform civil services, while Hungarians should be banned from this service on the territory of Slavonia and Croatia. The request for the return of guns that had been confiscated was passed to the Department of Defense.²⁷

These conclusions show that the board almost completely accepted and supported »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega«. Perhaps the discussion was short because they knew that each of the questions would be discussed in parliament, or maybe, because of the small number of members that were present, any larger discussion was impossible. The presence of Miroslav Spun could also contribute to the board's attitude, although we do not have any proof of this. Spun could have given authentic explanations of »The Wishes and Demands« which were also signed by him, and it is not impossible that he was also one of its creators, or at least among the people who were aware of this document and the undivided attitude concerning the demands regarding the county of Požega where he was county clerk.

The board also discussed the suggestion made by the market-town of Pakrac and the free royal town of Požega. The conclusion was that the market-town of Pakrac would have lesser royal rights. They were allowed to sell wine and brandy throughout the year, as well as to trade in salt, while, regarding the woods and their exploitation, the board decided that this isssue should be solved by the Department of Internal Affairs. The members of the board also asked the Department of Internal Affairs to solve the problem of lands, for example meadows, that had been taken over by the squire, proposing that they should be returned. At the same time the pašarina (the right of the peasants to pasture their cattle on the squire's pastures) was increased. The same was decided in the case of the mills. It was also decided that the profit from fairs should go to the district, while the question of silk production was submitted to the Department of Internal Affairs. The district was also allowed to trade on the market place. The board did not discuss the request of the district of Pakrac where they asked if they could organize their own magistrate, but passed it on to the Department of Internal Affairs.

HDA, SS. 1848, SV. LXXVIII, no. 361/19.

Ibid.

Ibid., the number of the lists is 375, and of the conclusions 41.

Ibid., no. 44.

fairs.³⁰ The demand of the town of Požega that Jews should be removed from the town was opposed by the board, and the board concluded that such a request was contrary to the principles of freedom and therefore it was refused.³¹

Aleksije Jelačić³² and Jaroslav Šidak³³ rightly emphasize that in the most important questions, the demands of the peasants, coincide with the demands of market-towns and towns. These issues were vineyard taxes and lesser royal rights. As far as the peasants were concerned, the questions concerning feudal law were solved and that solution was applied in practice.³⁴

Conclusion

The requests, wishes and demands of individual villages, groups of villages and districts in the county of Požega, were drawn up in the period between 23rd May and 1st June 1848. That was the time of the election of parlamentary representatives and the accepting of instructions those representatives had to follow during the session of the Croatian Sabor. Somewhat later, on 27th June 1848, the Sabor was presented with »The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega« set out in 14 articles. The request for fulfilling »The Wishes and Demands«, in a sense meant the carrying out of land reform. The peasants expected a positive answer to their »Wishes and Demands«, and therefore, were relatively peaceful in rural areas of the country while the Sabor was in session.

The parliamentary board for solving the questions regarding feudal law was responsible for solving feudal relations. On 28th June 1848, this board discussed "The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega". The articles of "The Wishes and Demands" were individually discussed and each had its separate conclusion. The board supported the first eight articles. The ninth article was not supported because it considered the evaluation and confiscation of newly cleared lands, plum orchards and vineyards from the squire. The demand in the tenth article that considered the financing of priests and teachers was not solved, but transferred to the Department of Education. The conclusions show that the board almost completely accepted and supported "The Wishes and Demands of the People of the County of Požega". The demands of the district of Pakrac were only partially supported and the demand of the town of Požega, for Jews to be removed from the town, was refused.

In the most important questions, the demands of the peasants coincided with the demands of the market-town and the town of Požega, only a small difference appears in the solving of questions regarding feudal law. This was best confirmed

³⁰ Ibid., no. 41/1.

³¹ Ibid., no. 44

³² Aleksije Jelačić, »Narodne tegobe i tužbe u Banskoj Hrvatskoj 1848«, *Narodne starine* 16 (1930.) p. 64.

³³ Šidak, »Seljačko pitanje«, pp. 15-16.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 19.

in the discussion on these matters in the Croatian parliament, where Josip Žurić stood out with his radical representation of the demands of the peasants. His views were closest to the wishes of the peasants, but they were not accepted by parliament. The Sabor did not reply to »The Wishes and Demands« in the way the people wanted. The conclusions showed that royal rights were not fully accessible to everyone, the problem of the exploitation of woods and žirovima was only partially solved, and the question of the return of lands was not discussed. This again led to discontent in rural areas of the country and to restlessness and a passive resistance of peasants in the county of Požega, in the autumn and winter of 1848.

SAŽETAK

ZAHTIJEVANJA NARODA POŽEŠKE ŽUPANIJE 1848. GODINE

Intezitet narodnog pokreta 1848. godine u Požeškoj županiji slabi polovicom svibnja, kada započinju pripreme za održavanje izbora i sazivanje Hrvatskog sabora. Molbe, želje i zahtijevanja sela, skupina sela, općina, trgovišta i grada Požege sastavljene su potkraj svibnja i čine najizrazitiji agrarni program koji je ostvaren u vrijeme narodnog pokreta 1848. godine u Hrvatskoj. Istodobno grad Požega i Požeška županija onemogućavaju dolazak generala Ivana Hrabovyskog u Požešku županiju, čime jačaju pozicije bana Josipa Jelačića i Hrvatskog sabora u Slavoniji. Na izborima za Hrvatski sabor od 23. do 26. svibnja izabrani su zastupnici grada Požege i Požeške županije. Većina izabranih zastupnika su umjereni narodnjaci, ugledni suci i vodeće osobe u sedam županijskih kotareva, grada Požege te predstavnici pravoslavnog i katoličkog svećenstva. Želje i zahtijevanja pojedinih mjesta ili grupa sela i grada Požege u mnogim točkama su istovjetni, uz neke specifičnosti. Stoga su u cijelosti pojedinačna zahtijevanja poslužila kao predložak za sastavljanje »Želja i zahtivanja naroda Županje Požeške« u četrnaest točaka. Ova »Zahtivanja« upućena Hrvatskom saboru bila su zahtjev za provođenje agrarne reforme, a što je bio i stav hrvatske ljevice u zbivanjima 1848. godine. Time se željelo pomoći u prvom redu seljaštvu, ali i ostalim društvenim slojevima koji su ugroženi modernizacijom. Seljaci su očekivali da će njihova »Zahtivanja« biti povoljno riješena, stoga je u očekivanju zasjedanja Hrvatskog sabora i tijekom zasjedanja na selu zavladao relativni mir. Zastunici Požeške županije i grada Požege zalagali su se da što vjernije prenesu i objasne zahtjeve naroda Požeške županije. Uspješno su ih branili na sjednicama saborskih odbora i Hrvatskog sabora. Seljacima Požeške županije bilo je važno da dobiju dovoljno šume i paše bez ikakve naknade, da se žirovina ne ograničava, da im se vrate krčevine, da se ukine motičarina i da slobodno podižu vodenice. Zahtijevanja su činila sintezu želja obespravljenog seljaštva i modernizacijom ugrožene inteligencije i stoga u početku pokreta nastupaju zajednički. Saborski Odbor za rješavanje urbarijalnog pitanja, u kojem su djelovali i predstavnici Požeške županije, vodio je 28. lipnja raspravu o »Željama i zahtivanjima naroda Županie Požeške«. Sve su točke potanko razmotrene i donijet je za svaku poseban zaključak. Odbor je podržao prvih osam točaka, a devetu nije i to stoga jer se tražilo procienijvanje i oduzimanje krčevina. šlijvika i vinograda od vlastelina. Također nije bio riješen zahtjev, u desetoj točci, za oslobađanjem od plaćanja daća za svećenike i učitelje. Ipak se može zaključiti da su »Želje i zahtivanja« naroda Požeške županije podržani i prihvaćeni, dok zahtjev grada Požege, da se Židovi udalje iz grada, nije odobren. Važno je napomenuti da se u mnogome zahtjevi seljaka podudaraju sa zahtjevima trgovišta i grada Požege, a samo se manje razlike javljaju kod

rješavanja urbarijalnog pitanja, što je potvrdila i rasprava o ovim pitanjima u Hrvatskom saboru tijekom lipnja i srpnja 1848. godine. U saborskim raspravama ističe se svojom radikalnošću u zastupanju seljaka Požeške županije kotarski sudac Josip Žuvić (zastupa kotar Kutjevo). Njegova stajališta bila su najbliža željama seljaka, ali u Saboru nisu prihvaćena. J. Žuvić je tražio ispunjenje četvrte točke »Zahtivanja« i težište je stavio na žirovinu koja je za slavonsko selo bila životno pitanje jerje značila opstanak. Žuvić je uočio daje to bitno pitanje koje treba riješiti kako bi se sačuvao mir na slavonskom selu i kako bi se sačuvala cjelokupnost banske Slavonije, koja je bila ugrožena od Srba i Mađara. Stoga je Žuvić vrlo precizno i konkretno predložio »da se polovica sviju šuma glede porabe žirovine puku pusti«. Hrvatski sabor »Želje i zahtivanja« naroda Požeške županije nije ispunio onako kako je to narod tražio i želio. Zaključci Hrvatskog sabora pokazuju da kraljevštine nisu svima potpuno pristupačne, problem šuma i žirovine riješen je napola, pitanje vraćanja zemljišta nije postavljeno. U Hrvatskom saboru 1848. urbarijalno pitanje riješeno je kompromisno, što potvrđuje da je prevladalo umjereno shvaćanje za koje se izjasnila saborska većina i gotovo svi zastupnici Požeške županije. Tako su ostalajoš neka pitanja neriješena, što će izazvati nove sukobe i nemire ujesen i zimi 1848. godine, kada se pogoršavaju prilike u Požeškoj županiji i općenito na slavonskom selu, tijekom rata s Mađarskom.

