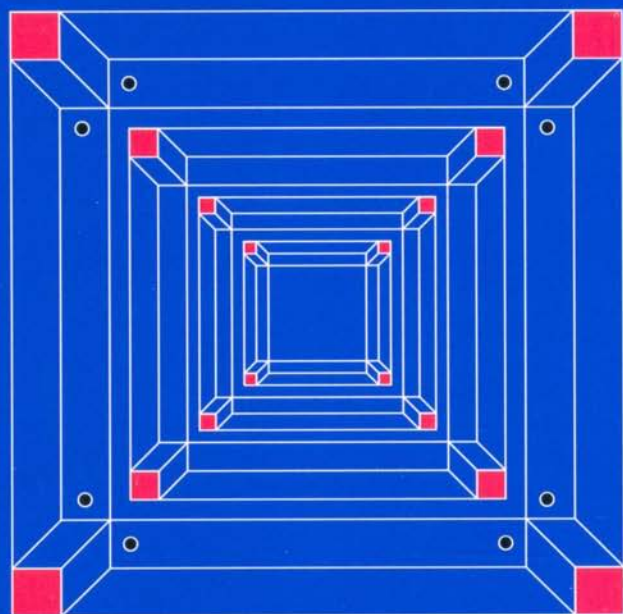


**1945**

**A BREAK  
WITH THE PAST**



**1945 – A BREAK WITH THE PAST**  
**A History**  
**of Central European Countries**  
**at the End of World War Two**

**1945 – PRELOM S PRETEKLOSTJO**  
**Zgodovina srednjeevropskih držav**  
**ob koncu druge svetovne vojne**

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Zdenko Čepič\*

*The War is Over. What Now?  
A Reflection on the End of World War Two*

The end of the war. The fighting is over, it is peacetime. The weapons fell silent, but the peace that came all over the world was actually a time of great unrest – a time of excitement, desire to act, to eradicate the consequences of the war, physical as well as spiritual, as soon as possible. Everyone yearned for life to get back to what was normal for peacetime as quickly as it could. The unrest, brought about by the end of the war, was a consequence of overall excitement, since many questions, conflicts and changes were caused by the war, and they all needed solving. It looked like the world as it existed until then and the relations between countries and allies of that time would change, and so would also individual countries themselves. Governments, political systems and borders would be altered. The end of the war undoubtedly drove a wedge between the old and the new. It brought about a transformation of attitudes and realities. However, the changes took various forms, occurred in different areas and were not equally intense. They varied from country to country.

In Slovenia, World War Two officially ended on the same day as in the rest of Europe – on 9 May 1945. In the morning of that day, partisan units marched into Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia. Even the day before combat took place in the outskirts of the city, since by defending Ljubljana the Germans and the members of the Slovenian Home Guard wanted to ensure the possibility of retreating to Austria in the north. To the Western allies! Partisans came to Ljubljana as messengers of a new era. The people, having secretly prepared for the reception for several days, making national flags with a red star in the middle, awaited them eagerly. With sincere enthusiasm! On that morning *Jutro*, the daily newspaper of the Slovenian liberal political camp, which kept opposing the resistance against the occupiers throughout the war because of its political opposition to the leadership of the resistance, was published for the last time. This was one of the indicators that the old was giving way to the new. However, despite the fact that the arrival of the partisans to Ljubljana signified the end of the old political world, represented by this newspaper, the *Jutro* newspaper hailed their arrival with the following words: *"We have weathered a terrible storm, and Ljubljana, desecrated by countless villains, also suffered terribly;*

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*but nevertheless it is overjoyed, enchanting and reborn, to proudly greet the Slovenian heroes and brothers who brought us freedom. (...) Ljubljana, the love of heaven and happiness... This is your day, the day of everyone alive. Rejoice, sing, and salute the army, government and homeland. And, above all – freedom."*

These words for the liberators of Ljubljana emphasize the concepts, which to a great extent define the dividing line between the old and the new. In the Slovenian example this especially holds for the army, which liberated the country, for the Slovenian partisan army and the government. Namely, the government was the expression of the new concept of homeland. The characteristics of the state became more prominent, and the People's Government of Slovenia (which arrived to Ljubljana the next day) was one of the clearest indicators of this new quality. It was a symbolic expression of the new situation in Slovenia. Among other related words, published in the newspaper which served as a means of propaganda for the invaders until the very end of the war, freedom was mentioned frequently. And righteously so. As the war ended, freedom only just started for the Slovenian nation. National freedom – the freedom of a nation. In April 1941 this nation was occupied by three invading armies, who divided its territory and condemned it to disappearance. And freedom – the freedom of the nation – obviously also meant a lot to those who politically and ideologically opposed the movement which fought for this freedom.

On the day when partisans marched into Ljubljana, World War Two ended in Europe. It was a war without a second name, like World War I, which is also referred to as the Great War. However, by almost all standards, World War Two was the largest military conflict in history. It was a war fought throughout the world – approximately 96% of the population at the time participated in it, 61 countries were involved, and military operations took place in more than a fifth of Earth's surface. But it was also a completely European war. It broke out in Europe and spread around the globe. 9 May – the day when the capitulation of Germany, the country chiefly responsible for the war, entered into force, is usually thought of as the day when World War Two ended. In the Far East military operations continued until the capitulation of Japan on 2 September 1945. Japan only agreed to capitulate after nuclear bombs were dropped on two of its cities. In Europe, despite the signed German capitulation, in reality the weapons fell silent as late as on 15 May 1945 in the Slovenian territory. On that day a short but tough battle took place between the Yugoslav partisans (at that time already the formal army of the Yugoslav state) and the retreating and fleeing German units and their collaborators.

World War Two cannot be seen as an incident with only one interpretation, for too many forces were involved in it. Winston Churchill's characterisation of this war, when he said it was unnecessary, was definitely very befitting, at least from the point of view of the world he represented. Namely, when he characterised this war as such in the preface to his monumental work *The Second*

World War, he already knew what its consequences were for the country he led and which was among the victors. It was the end of the old and the beginning of the new for the British Empire. Great Britain turned into a second-class world power, while the United States and the Soviet Union became superpowers. World War Two was not only a turning point for Great Britain – it was the beginning of a new era for the whole world. Including Central Europe.

World War Two is usually described as a worldwide, global war, total, all-embracing, involving and affecting most of the population. Not only soldiers, but also civilians. Especially in the occupied countries. World War Two was primarily about conquest, which is otherwise characteristic of wars throughout history. But it was also a political war and a war of ideologies, a "war of the mind", as Joseph Goebbels, responsible for the Nazi propaganda, characterised it. World War Two was also a war for the preservation of the political acquisitions of democracy, threatened by totalitarianism built on national exclusivism and the praising of a single nation, which supposedly had the "right" to a worldwide empire. Besides conquest, evident from the invasions and occupations of states, resistance against the occupiers in these states was also characteristic of World War Two. Resistance movements were very different in size and efficiency, especially as far as military efficiency goes. But what they had in common was that the political left wing, especially communists, had an important if not decisive role in these movements (except in Poland). Despite the resistance movements being left-wing, they did not attempt to establish a revolutionary rule anywhere except in Yugoslavia, Albania and Greece. In Yugoslavia, the resistance movement evolved into a liberation movement with clear political goals of replacing the pre-war government. The Yugoslav resistance movement, having a role of a liberation movement, succeeded in doing that; the decisive factor for this success was the military power and success of the Yugoslav partisans, as well as the fact that the Western allies agreed to their goals, although gritting their teeth. Collaboration with the occupiers was also characteristic of World War Two. A new kind of collaborators, referred to as the quislings, came to light as a consequence of the occupation. The reasons for collaborating with the occupiers and the forms of collaboration differed from country to country. The differences between the forms of collaboration were as vast as the differences between resistance movements, their actions and their goals. In many occupied states, collaboration went well beyond the usual cooperation, set out by the international legislation in the so-called Hague Convention. This especially held true for Yugoslavia to a great extent, or for parts of the Yugoslav state under various occupiers. Collaboration acquired the characteristics of betraying the state and national interests.

Despite the fact that this was a world war, engulfing all continents, it was first and foremost a European war – a war for Europe, taking place in Europe. It was a fight between the countries which were victims of the German and Italian policy of invasion and territorial conquest, and the countries pursuing the crea-



tion of the so-called New Europe according to their own image (the totalitarian form of government and the Nazi attitude towards all other nations).

World War Two in Europe actually started and ended in the territory, geographically as well as politically referred to as Central Europe. The war that started in this territory and then spread over the whole of Europe was thus also highly significant for this territory. To a great extent, the causes of the relations, manifesting themselves after the war as the "Cold War", originated in Central Europe – the question of Trieste, Austria and Germany. All of these were consequences of World War Two, its beginnings and its character. There is extensive interdependence between the war, its nature, progress, consequences and post-war development in the individual countries. All the events in World War Two, and all of its phenomena actually reached their peak in Central Europe – from territorial conquest, ethnocide, genocide and collaboration to various forms of resistance. All of this influenced not only wartime events, but also post-war development.

The true end of the war in Europe, when the weapons fell silent and when military operations and armed conflicts came to an end, took place in Slovenia. Six days after Germany capitulated. The reasons why the war here did not end when it ended in the rest of Europe, can be found in the events during World War Two in the Yugoslav state, where the phenomena, characteristic of World War Two in Europe, were perhaps most prominent: occupation, resistance, collaboration. The reason for the continuation of armed conflicts in the territory of Yugoslavia and on the border between Yugoslavia and Austria, even after the German capitulation has already entered into force, was the fact that collaborators of all kinds and nationalities preferred some of the victorious military allies to the others. They wanted to surrender to the Western allies, some of them convinced that they would soon become their cooperators – collaborators on the basis of ideological and political differences, corroding the wartime alliance. This already pointed out the antagonisms of the world after World War Two, which surfaced soon after the fighting was over. Trieste was the first.

The historical development of nations and states in Central Europe had many common aspects. But at the same time there were also many differences. Histories of these nations and their states are comparable up to a point, in regard to the formation of the nations as well as their attitudes and values they hold towards their languages and cultures as the foundations for their realisation and confirmation as nations. But at the same time they also differ, despite many common points and similarities in the political and economic development, which were consequences of the historical development of each nation and state. Differences also came to light during World War Two. Including many essential differences, stemming from different international legal situations in the time of war.

The countries of Central Europe did not see the division between the old and the new in the same manner, because their situations during the war varied as

far as their relations to other countries and nations were concerned, and thus they experienced World War Two differently. Some of them – Germany (Austria, which was incorporated into the German Third Reich "voluntarily" in 1938, has to be taken into account here, and the role of the Austrian Nazis in the occupied countries, for example Slovenia, also has to be underlined), Italy, Hungary, Slovakia and also the so-called Independent State of Croatia – were members of the Axis and the invaders or occupiers. In accordance with the will of the Nazi Germany and the fascist Italy, Slovakia and Croatia were independent in a way (probably understood from the viewpoint of their previous legal status). Croatia or Croatians had a double position in the war. On one hand Croatia was an independent state, recognised by the Axis, while on the other hand national liberation struggle took place there as well as in the other parts of Yugoslavia, with common leadership and the common goal of restoring the Yugoslav state, based on new legal and organisational foundations. The third kind of Central European countries were the occupied states, where the invaders carried out their occupation policy of denationalisation and violence, which had many characteristics of a genocide. These (Central European) countries were Slovenia (as a part of the pre-war Yugoslavia, just like Croatia), the Czech territory and Poland.

Due to different situations of various nations and countries in the time of World War Two, the historical events during and after the war varied. This had an influence on the nature and forms of antifascism and collaboration in the Central European countries, resulting in different forms of resistance movements in individual states and the relations between them, as well as in the differences and common points of the collaboration phenomena in these states. Differences, caused by the situations in the individual countries and their status during World War Two, could also be seen in the post-war development, and they manifested themselves in the relations between the victorious and the losing sides, attitude to the liberators, attitude to the German minority and the question of the borders. Regardless of the degree of revolutionary attitude and clashes between classes, the question to what degree the old would be reinstated and to what degree society would be transformed was of essential importance. In what way and to what extent will a line be drawn between the old and the new? What changes occurred and in what way were they achieved in the individual Central European countries after World War Two?

Different roles and situations of various nations and countries during World War Two had a great influence on the events in these states immediately after the war and also later. By all means there is obvious interdependence between wartime events, the character and the progress of the war, as well as its consequences in the individual countries. The most obvious case is Germany, which caused the war and bore the consequences until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in the end of the 1980s and the reunification of the two German countries, created because of World War Two events. Yugoslavia was also an example of this

– during the war, revolution took place and the government was changed, and that had consequences for the post-war events in Yugoslavia.

The end of World War Two was a turning point for the whole world. As the war ended, the old pre-war world disappeared. Symbolically as well as in reality. Not only in Yugoslavia, where revolutionary changes took place during the war, but also elsewhere. The end of the war already brought about all of the phenomena, characteristic of the post-war world: the changes of borders and territories, relocation of population, introduction of new political situations and systems. After the war, all of this took place more or less under the influence of the relations, characteristic of the Cold War, since the "Iron Curtain" ran exactly through the geographical region of Central Europe. In Central Europe, the consequences of the Cold War in its initial period were among the most evident in the world.

Due to the differences in the situations of individual countries during the war, the end of the war and the liberation were also understood differently from country to country. That is especially evident now, after the fall of the Berlin Wall – time and space are often disregarded when evaluating the historical events during World War Two and in the period immediately after the war. History is seen and discussed merely from the political viewpoint. Without paying any attention to historical facts and circumstances.

There were many consequences, influencing the post-war events in the individual countries. Mostly they were political and territorial. The political changes represented the true changes from the old to the new in many aspects. They also involved social changes, essentially transforming societies, which was especially true of the countries led by the communists. Namely, as the war ended, new political relations formed in Central Europe, influenced especially by the Soviet Union with its army, liberating (conquering) certain countries. Here, as well as in Yugoslavia, where a change of government was carried out during the war (political revolution), also accepted and recognised by the Western allies, the national became class-oriented; or, adherence to class started having a decisive role, even though it was "masked" with the political system of the so-called people's democracy. In Yugoslavia, of which Slovenia was a constituent part, a system of people's democracy was officially established; but in fact, in regard to the power and the role of communists in the political life, "Bolshevism" or "sovietisation" was introduced, since all the power was in their hands. The rise to power during the war and seizing the power in the post-war period allowed the Yugoslav communists to carry out changes of the economy (changing ownership through nationalisation) and the society in a fairly "easy-going" and swift manner. In other countries, liberated by the Soviet army, the "revolutionary" eradication of the old and the establishing of the new was a bit slower and formally concluded in the beginning of 1948 with the introduction of openly communist authorities.

In Yugoslavia, the changes of the situation and role of the church as a fairly strong political factor before the war can be counted among political transformations, brought about by World War Two and its conclusion. With the constitutional separation of church and state, the possibilities for clericalism of any church ended. In the case of Slovenia and Croatia, this affected the Roman Catholic Church, which resisted this separation and the intervention in its property most resolutely among all churches. For the Roman Catholic Church, the constitutional separation from the state and its authorities (from the possibility of intervening in the political life) was a serious defeat. Namely, it lost its role of a political force, and with the agrarian reform it also lost its role of a material subject. However, it became the most organised and most critical opposition of the authorities, which the authorities answered with repression and also the severance of diplomatic relations with Vatican in the beginning of 1950s.

Territorial consequences were very important, sometimes representing a decisive turning point. Namely, the borders of several countries were changed. Some questions of borders or territories remained open and were being solved slowly for a number of years, which did not only cause crises in the relations between the countries competing for the same territory: these territorial issues resulted in major crises around the world, in conflicts between the political and military blocs created after the war, thus increasing the possibility of a war between them. The question of Trieste – would it belong to Yugoslavia or Italy? – was one of these issues, representing one of the critical conflicts between the former allies already in May 1945, immediately after the end of the war. At that time, Trieste represented a true "catalyst" for World War Three. It was the first of the public and obvious manifestations of the division of the world into blocs, and it is not a coincidence that Winston Churchill, referring to the division of the world after World War Two with the expression "the Iron Curtain", saw it as one of the borderlines. And the Trieste crisis actually lasted, more or less openly, for ten years. But the question of Trieste was not the only issue relating to territorial changes in Central Europe after the war. The most drastic change of the borders took place between Poland and Germany, as the border moved westwards into the German territory. There were also open territorial issues between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, and between Czechoslovakia and Poland. All territorial and border changes were also related to the relocations of the population.

The division of the world into blocs and the Cold War, stemming from this division, can also be counted among the consequences of World War Two. Actually all Central European countries remained in the "Soviet sphere of influence", behind the Iron Curtain, which divided Europe. And after World War Two this fact influenced the development of countries in this region. Essential questions of international or inter-bloc relations, defining the concept of the Cold War (at least in the first two decades after the war), took place in the region we refer to as Central Europe: the Trieste question, the German question

including the Berlin Wall, the question of Austria, as well as resistance against the Soviet presence and the Soviet political and economic system in the Central European countries.

The loss of life was among the most obvious and most personal consequences of World War Two. The losses in Yugoslavia, and not only there, became a factor for the external and internal political aspirations of countries. Soon the loss of life in the war and because of the war became the means for proving the contribution of countries and nations to the struggle against Nazis and fascists. The dead among the defeated were simply forgotten. The Yugoslav numbers, describing the losses among Yugoslav citizens, illustrate how the dead served political or international goals after the war. On the basis of rough calculations and political decisions, the estimate of 1.700.000 dead Yugoslav citizens was already established as soon as in 1946, for the purpose of pointing out the role of the Yugoslav liberation movement at a peace conference. This placed Yugoslavia in the third place according to wartime losses, following the Soviet Union and Poland. Among the victorious states, of course, for none of the victors cared about the losses of the losers. For "internal" purposes – the intention of making Croatia feel guilty about the Independent State of Croatia and the Ustashe ethnocide policy – as many as 700.000 of these victims were supposedly killed or died in the Jasenovac concentration camp. Several decades later, the research and calculations proved these numbers were inaccurate and exaggerated. But the dead are still being counted, still for various, especially political, purposes.

The loss of life in World War Two, often referred to as the victims of the war, was connected to the war, its progress and its genocide character, as well as to the post-war retribution. The World War Two death toll should include people who lost their lives due to national, religious or other reasons, and also the victims of post-war retaliation. Mass executions of all kinds of collaborators were especially characteristic of the Yugoslav state. Most of these massacres, carried out by the Yugoslav military units without any judicial proceedings, investigations or verdicts, took place in the Slovenian territory. The victims included Slovenians (most of them members of the Slovenian Home Guard or the so-called Slovenian National Army, which the collaborating Slovenian military units transformed and renamed themselves into after the British military authorities turned them over to the Yugoslav army from the territories of the pre-war Austria, where these units had fled to from the partisans) as well as Croatians (members of the Independent State of Croatia's armed forces and also civilians, retreating with them to the Austrian Carinthia region, from where they were then extradited back to Yugoslavia by the British military authorities) and also members of the Serbian and Montenegrin Chetnik military units. Members of the German minority (most of them collaborated with the occupiers) and the so-called class opponents were also among the victims of the post-war executions in Yugoslavia. The German minority did not take on the role of the victim

only in Yugoslavia (as collectively responsible for the horrors, caused by the German invaders in the occupied states), but in other Central and Southeast European countries as well, for example in Czechoslovakia with the so-called Beneš Decrees. These decrees involved the property of the Germans from the Sudetenland, not their lives directly. The same holds for Yugoslavia and its so-called AVNOJ Decisions – the decree by means of which the Presidency of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia) as the legislative body transferred the property of the German Reich, its citizens and the people of German nationality to the Yugoslav state in the end of November 1944, except for those who were members of the Yugoslav liberation movement, citizens of neutral states or those who did not collaborate with the occupiers during the occupation. However, many "Yugoslav" Germans, who failed to flee together with the German military units, were executed or exiled from Yugoslavia after the war.

This undoubtedly dishonourable (even villainous) retribution against wartime collaborators in Yugoslavia was kept completely quiet in Slovenia since the end of the war until the mid-1980s, when the process of political democratisation began. The so-called executions were not discussed in public. The graves of the victims of these massacres were unknown, wiped from the official memory. Not even their numbers are known. In Slovenia and Croatia, after these countries attained independence, the victims of post-war massacres of wartime collaborators became an important political topic. The dead became the political means of altering the assessment of World War Two in Slovenia; a large part of the discussions and evaluations of World War Two in Slovenia and Croatia in fact always focuses on the collaborators, executed after the war. In the recent years, systematic uncovering of these graves and grave sites as well as exhumations of the remains started in Slovenia, where immediately after the end of the war most of the victims of the post-war vengeance, carried out by the new authorities, were executed and buried. Due to the fact that there are over 500 of these grave sites in Slovenia, Slovenia is the "murderous epicentre" according to some historians; these sites are now being discovered and exhumed, also with the help of historians, and efforts are being made to establish the identity and the number of the people buried there. In the territory of Slovenia, the number of graves and grave sites of those killed after the war is truly high, since most of the post-war retribution of the victors against the losing side in World War Two took place in the Slovenian territory; however, it has to be taken into account that the reason for this is the geographical location of Slovenia, which is adjacent to Austria and Italy, where many armies fled to over the Slovenian territory from the Yugoslav partisans. Furthermore, the British, to whom most of the Yugoslav collaborators had surrendered, especially those from Slovenia and Croatia, extradited these collaborators to Slovenia as a part of the Yugoslav state. And in the territory of Slovenia they were executed because of their collaboration with the occupiers. While evaluating the reasons why so many grave

sites of the victims of post-war massacres are located in Slovenia, these facts should be taken into account. Above all, the exhumation of these graves, containing the remains of collaborators killed while fleeing the country as well as those executed in the post-war massacres, represents a kind of a "final settlement" of World War Two. Unfortunately, the piety involved in these exhumations is lost due to political aspects.

The loss of life in World War Two and because of World War Two (victims of post-war retribution) in Slovenia is not only used by the current politics; it is also the subject of a systematic scientific historiographic studies. At the Institute for Contemporary History in Ljubljana, historiographic research has been systematically carried out for almost a decade, determining the names of Slovenian victims, killed during World War Two and immediately after it (until the end of 1945). Not only does this research determine the number of Slovenians who died in World War Two (approximately 96.000), it also establishes the cause of death and whether they were killed as civilians or soldiers, partisans, members of various collaborating formations or as soldiers, mobilised by the occupiers. Those individuals who lost their lives during or after the war because of this war, in a way also became historical subjects.

In regard to the consequences of World War Two or the changes that the end of this war caused in the individual countries, the evaluation of the war and its consequences varies among different "national" historiographies. Every nation or its national historiography bases its evaluations and explanations of World War Two on its own experience, viewpoints and assessments. These assessments, regardless of historical facts, are frequently influenced by the "current" politics, political systems or ruling governments and their attitudes towards the past, and they need and use history for their own purposes. New interpretations of history are being formed, which do not have much in common with the otherwise normal and necessary process of scientific revision in historiography. In Slovenia, controversial debates about the character of war, resistance and collaboration are taking place. In fact, we have witnessed attempts to depreciate and "criminalise" resistance and to vindicate (even glorify!) collaboration – due to anti-communist character. The intention of these "revisionists" is to present the actual losers as moral and political winners of World War Two in the light of new political circumstances after the fall of the Berlin Wall or communism, while criminalising the actual winners on the basis of their ideology or world view.

The end of World War Two is also understood and interpreted in different ways today. What it meant for the nations and what it meant for individuals. What it brought to the community and what significance it had for the individuals. These interpretations do not only vary from country to country, they also vary within individual countries. For example in Slovenia. The interpretation what the end of the war meant, who the actual winner was, is based on different kinds of understanding and appreciation of the character of the war, from occu-

pation to resistance and collaboration. For some people today, collaboration is a more important value than the struggle for national liberation. For the same reasons that people decided to collaborate with the occupiers during the war – because the struggle against the occupiers was organised and led by communists. Thus the entire fight against the occupiers is today first and foremost interpreted as a revolution. As something intolerable, immoral. It is not understood as a historical fact, which has to be discussed by historiography; it is seen as a political category.

On the other hand, in Croatia, for example, the "lamenting" of the lost statehood, represented by the Independent State of Croatia (NDH), keeps surfacing in the interpretations of the end of the war. This state is only represented as an expression of Croatian patriotism and sovereignty, while its "regime" is not frequently mentioned, and the policy of this regime and its activities are completely overlooked. Its genocidal character is kept quiet. Apart from "lamenting" the lost statehood, the victims of the Croatian nation after the defeat of NDH are also mentioned in the discussions about the end of the war. These are the victims of the post-war massacres and the suffering during the so-called Way of the Cross – the suffering of the members of NDH armed forces, extradited to Yugoslavia by the Allies in the first months after the war. Now certain interpretations keep appearing that this Croatian Way of the Cross did not start with the members of NDH armed forces being turned over to the units of the Yugoslav Army (especially to the units consisting mostly of Serbs), that in fact this Way of the Cross had already began earlier, in the end of 1944, when partisans started conquering or liberating parts of NDH. So partisans are presented as "conquerors" of the Independent State of Croatia. At the same time the quality and degree of its independence or dependence on the German Reich and its armies are being ignored. It is not mentioned that NDH was in fact a formation established in accordance with the will of the Nazi Germany, the fascist Italy and Adolf Hitler himself.

The end of the war, after Germany surrendered and the weapons fell quiet, is also understood and presented through different concepts. As peace, following the war, and as victory (this concept is more widely accepted in the territories which experienced both military defeat and occupation; there the end of the war and the defeat of the occupiers is righteously understood as liberation). National liberation.

The victorious side had a different attitude to the end of the war than the losers. Even within single nations and states. Namely, the end of the war and the defeat of the main European occupier also spelled defeat for collaborators. The same goes for Slovenia. The end of the war brought military, political and also ideological defeat to those Slovenians who cooperated with the occupier. Thus the liberation of homeland did not mean freedom for them, like it did for the majority of their fellow citizens. They left their country together with the occupier in order to preserve personal freedom and their lives.



Regardless of how anybody describes and understands the end of the war – for most people it meant victory against those who had started it and who had used all available means to achieve their military goals. Thus, for the occupied and oppressed nations and countries, the end of the war certainly meant liberation. However, the understanding of what freedom was differed between those who resisted the occupiers, rose up for their national freedom and fought a liberation war, and those who were content with the amount of freedom that the occupiers let them have. But even for these people, liberation of their occupied homelands meant freedom for their nations. Differences in the understanding of freedom, political freedom and freedom of entrepreneurship arose between individuals. In Yugoslavia, political monism with many elements of totalitarianism was introduced after the war, based on the Leninist guidelines of undertaking a so-called proletarian revolution. The freedom of certain individuals, especially those who represented the former authorities and those who were more prosperous, was certainly seen differently by the new authorities. Thus the end of the war brought many changes for them.

The perception of freedom also differed between the victors, who had been military allies until then. They also understood the freedom of individuals in different ways. Liberation of the world from the clutches of Nazism and fascism as forms of utter totalitarianism did not simultaneously mean liberation from all forms of totalitarianism. Totalitarianism manifested itself in new forms. As a communist rule under the pretence of the so-called people's democracy in all these countries (least of all in Yugoslavia): democracy, controlled by the communist authorities in the name of the people. In Yugoslavia, due to the revolutionary rise to power during the war, the communists took over as soon as the war ended (in half of the Yugoslav territory already before it formally ended), while in the Central European countries, liberated by the Soviet army, the total communist takeover lasted a while longer. But even there the end of the war meant an important dividing line between the old and the new. However, in the countries divided among the allies, who established their own authority in "their" respective parts, freedom took on a special form. For many German soldiers the end of the war meant the loss of their freedom (as much of it as they as soldiers ever had before), since they became prisoners of war. According to the estimates, as many as a million of them lost their lives in the allied – American and French – prison camps, which were improvised and opened quickly after World War Two. They died because of hunger and neglect. For a long time these "other losses", as they were referred to in the documents, were unknown and have not been mentioned for a long time after the war, until as late as 1990s. Soon after the war, the fate of the German prisoners of war also became the means for "settling the score" among the former allies, who became ideological and military opponents after the war. The West wanted to unload all responsibility for the victims among the German prisoners onto the Soviet Union. That was one of the manifestations of the end of the war.

The perception of this conclusion – who won, who lost, who became free and who did not – is today even more clearly reflected in the interpretations of the end of the war perhaps not only in Slovenia, but also in other countries, which suffered a similar fate during World War Two. This is not only true of the countries which "liberated" themselves after the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also for countries with a long tradition of parliamentary democracy, for example Italy. In many countries the questions of resistance, collaboration and various perceptions and interpretations of these phenomena are also open.

However, in Slovenia those who interpret World War Two only as a "communist revolution" and a civil war (disregarding the fact that this revolution took place during the occupation and that one of the sides involved in the civil war was collaborating with the invaders) keep forgetting the occupation, the authorities of the invading armies, and their "policy" towards the Slovenian nation; therefore these people do not see liberation from the occupiers as the attainment of national freedom – they understand it as freedom only for those who sided with the liberation movement. Thus the concept of freedom is regarded as actual lack of freedom, and despite its relevance for the liberty of the entire nation, in contrast with the occupation and ethnocidal nature of the German occupier, it has a political and ideological dimension. However, we cannot ignore the fact that, due to the change of government which took place during the war, the end of the war and the national liberation meant a radical change for many people, especially for collaborators or supporters of the occupiers. Their freedom diminished. In many cases also personal freedom, since the new authorities imprisoned them, and also the freedom of property. In general, property was one of the means of the authorities interfering with the freedom of individuals. Confiscation of property was a form of punishment for the actual collaborators, as well as for those framed by the government. Many people suffered more because of the state interfering with their property and confiscating it than because of the loss of political freedom, which had not been worth much even before the war (despite the multiparty system, but with a dominant state regime party).

What meant freedom for some was not seen as freedom by others. Namely, the lack of freedom that some people perceived had social or class reasons. In Yugoslavia, where the changing of the government as the basic condition for the class revolution was taking place at the same time as the war against the occupiers, the aspect of class had a very important role, which was also confirmed after the war. Because the new authorities were convinced that collaboration was also based on class reasons, they dealt with the class aspect of the revolutionary process by persecuting those who owned significant private property and who in any way cooperated with the occupiers during the war. This was the so-called patriotic nationalisation. The basic means of achieving this was expropriation. The authorities disguised the class reasons for interfering with property as national reasons, and the confiscations were mostly a supplementary

punishment for wartime collaboration. In this way the new authorities did not only limit or confiscate property, which was nationalised and managed by the communist government; this was also the way of taking away or restricting drastically the political rights of the pre-war policy makers, including church – the Roman Catholic Church (the dominant church in Slovenia and Croatia) as well as the Orthodox Church. The change of the government came to pass and the revolution succeeded. The old gave way to the new.

Despite the fact that in this way the personal and political freedom of many people, as well as the freedom of property as the basis for their social, economic and political situation, was limited, with the end of the war and the defeat of the occupier they also achieved national liberation. As the war ended and when the enemy was defeated, everyone in the occupied countries achieved national liberation. Even those who were content with the amount of "freedom" given to them by the occupiers during the occupation.

Regardless of the differences in the understanding of the concept of liberty, everyone looked forward to the end of the war. Even Germans in Germany (there were some exceptions, but they were a minority and they did not often voice their opinion publicly), which is shown by various documentary films about the allied advance into Germany with the images of the people, enthusiastic or at least relieved that the horrors of the war are over, greeting the soldiers. Greeting Anglo-Americans, of course, for the "liberation" of Germany from the east had a different image – one of terror and violence against civilians, especially women. Their liberation meant bondage.

World War Two and its conclusion meant the end of the pre-war situation and the onset of something new all around the world. Including Central European countries. Here the changes were awesome and long-term. Perhaps the transformation or the consequences of World War Two were most profound in this area. This has yet to be dealt with, and the answers should be based on the cooperation of Central European historians. The anniversary of the end of World War Two, celebrated by the nations, living in this territory as nearby or distant neighbours "since forever", was one of better opportunities for this cooperation to begin. Especially now that all these countries (with the exception of Croatia) have been brought together within the European Union. By coincidence European Union was established on the same day as World War Two officially ended in Europe – 9 May.

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The anniversary of the end of World War Two in Europe (from the European perspective it is usually forgotten that the war on the Pacific and the Far East lasted until the capitulation of Japan on 2 September 1945) was a convenient

opportunity for us historians to once again focus on the end of the war<sup>1</sup> and its consequences, and to ask ourselves to what degree this meant the division between the old and the new in the countries belonging to the geographical, political and spiritual concept of Central Europe.

In the year when the world celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War Two, much was said and written about it, also by historians at numerous scientific meetings. Thus the Institute for Contemporary History from Ljubljana, as the central Slovenian scientific and research institution for the exploration of contemporary and recent history, prepared a scientific conference "*1945 – A Break Between the Old and the New: The End of the World War Two in the History of Central European Countries*" as a contribution of Slovenian historiography on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War Two.<sup>2</sup> The conference took place in Ljubljana on 29 and 30 September 2005 and it was attended by historians from nine Central European states: from Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, Croatia, the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The historical circumstances of the progress and the conclusion of World War Two differed between various Central European countries, and that is why the basic questions, which historiography attempts to answer today, are different. At this conference of historians from Central European countries, the participants focused mostly on the political circumstances surrounding the end of World War Two, which represented the essential dividing line between the old and the new in the individual countries. This is an issue which Slovenian historiography refers to as "the takeover of power", representing a very diverse subject and involving many issues from the actual political preparations for the takeover to the organisation and functioning of the authorities and the opposition. The changes of the borders were among the more prominent topics as one of the characteristics of World War Two or its consequences (the territorial conquests of Germany, Italy and their "satellite states" during the war should not be forgotten). Especially in Central Europe, where after the war several cri-

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<sup>1</sup> Slovenian historians have already held several scientific conferences about the end of World War Two. In 1975 a scientific consultation took place, on the basis of which the collection of papers *Osvoboditev Slovenije 1945 [The Liberation of Slovenia 1945]* (Ljubljana 1977); in 1985, the fourth round table of the Yugoslav and British historians *Konec druge svetovne vojne v Jugoslaviji: zbornik referatov in razprav [The End of World War Two in Yugoslavia: collection of papers and discussions]* was organised (Ljubljana 1986); and an international scientific discussion *Slovenija v letu 1945 : zbornik referatov [Slovenia in 1945 : a collection of papers]* (Ljubljana 1996) took place in 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Co-organised by the *Central European Initiative* (CEI), the regional intergovernmental forum for the co-operation of Central, Southeast and East European countries, registered in Trieste, with the purpose of economic and cultural co-operation among member states. The conference was also financially supported by the *Javna agencija za raziskovalno delo Republike Slovenije* (Slovenian Research Agency) and the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia*.

sis areas shaped the relations between the countries and blocs. The so-called victims of war are a special manifestation of the consequences of World War Two – those who died during the war because of it, and those who died because of the war after it had ended.

The goal of the conference was that Central European historians would focus, in a scientific historiographical manner, on the common historical events on one hand, and on the specific and individual development of certain countries, on the other hand. How and to what a degree World War Two influenced the post-war events in these countries; what changes World War Two caused in the individual countries and how significant these changes were; and where these changes manifested themselves most obviously – these were the questions that the historians from the aforementioned Central European countries attempted to answer.

The following contributions attest to how historians dealt with these questions, how they presented their work, and what they saw as the most important issues concerning the transformation from the old to the new, caused by World War Two in their respective countries. At the same time these contributions also show which issues are being focused on in the individual states when dealing with the history of the consequences of World War Two. In the following publication we include the contributions of all those participants of the conference who wrote them. Only one of the participants, Professor Dr. Brunello Mantelli from the University of Turin, has unfortunately not prepared his contribution for the publication. At the conference he presented his work on Austria and the Austrians, who played their role in the Greater Germany, and on the "Austrian post-war legend" about them being the first victims of Hitler's appetite for conquest. This is one of the questions without a simple and one-sided answer, and thus Dr. Mantelli entitled his contribution *Ambiguities in the Case of Austria*. However, the question of Austria, its position and role, especially the role of Austrians in World War Two, is also significant for our own history – namely, for the creation of the Slovenian political or national ideal of the united Slovenia, related to the aspirations for the changing of the border between Yugoslavia/Slovenia and Austria as it was drawn after World War I.

The articles are organised in regard to their contents – foreign policy, revolutionary changes of governments, the questions of borders, the issues concerning the victims of the war, and the individual segments of the political and scientific life during the war, as they manifested themselves after the war.

Although the conference took place in the Slovenian and English language, we shall publish the contributions only in English with abstracts in Slovenian. The cause for such a decision is financial, as usual (the costs of translating and printing). Due to organisational reasons the publication is a bit late, and we apologise to the authors, especially those who sent their articles in a timely fashion in accordance with what we agreed on. However, in the end we can resort to the old saying: better late than never!

*Povzetek**Vojna je končana. In potem?  
Premišljanje o koncu druge svetovne vojne*

Za konec druge svetovne vojne v evropskem prostoru štejemo običajno 9. maj 1945. Takrat se je končala vojna tudi v Sloveniji. Zjutraj tistega dne so v Ljubljano vkorakale partizanske enote. Nastopil je mir. Vendar je bil ta mir, ki se zavaljal po svetu, ko je utihnilo orožje v resnici velik nemir. Družbeni in politični. Konec vojne je sicer pomenil konec vojaških spopadov in operacij, je pa pomenil tudi, da so bila odprta mnoga vprašanja, razmerja in spremembe, ki so bile posledica vojne in vse to je zahtevalo rešitve. Kazalo je na spreminjanje dotedanega sveta, dotedanjih odnosov med državami, med dotedanjimi vojnimi zavezniki, pa tudi na spreminjanja v državah samih. Spreminjale so se oblasti, politični sistemi, meje in ozemlja. S koncem vojne je nedvomno nastopil prelom med starim in novim. Stari, predvojni svet se je poslovil. Simbolično in dejansko. Prevrat je bil stvaren in v pogledih. Bil je v različnih oblikah, na različnih področjih in različno intenziven. Različen od države do države.

Druga svetovna vojna in njen konec je povsod po svetu pomenil večji ali manjši prelom s predvojnimi stanjem in začetek novega. Posledic vojne, ki so vplivale na povojno dogajanje v posameznih državah, je bilo več. Bile so predvsem politične in ozemeljske. Prav politične so v mnogočem predstavljale pravi prelom med starim in novim. Z njimi so bile povezane socialne spremembe, ki so družbo bistveno predrugačile, kar je veljalo zlasti v državah, v katerih so imeli odločilno besedo komunisti. Značaj preloma pa so imele tudi ozemeljske spremembe. Nekatera mejna oziroma ozemeljska vprašanja so bila odprta in so se reševala počasi še vrsto let po koncu vojne. Ozemeljska vprašanja so bila pogojevalec večjih kriz v svetu, kriz med politično-vojaškimi blokoma, ki sta nastala po vojni. Med posledice druge svetovne vojne je namreč treba uvrstiti tudi blokovsko delitev sveta in t. i. hladno vojno, ki je iz tega izhajala.

Kljub dejstvu da je bila to svetovna vojna in je zajela vse celine, pa je bila v prvi vrsti evropska vojna – vojna v Evropi in za Evropo. Šlo je za boj med državami, ki so bile žrtve nemške in italijanske napadalne oziroma ozemeljsko osvajalne politike, in državami, ki so želele v Evropi po svoji podobi (totalitarnemu načinu oblasti in nacističnem pogledu na druge narode) ustvariti t. i. Novo Evropo. Druga svetovna vojna v Evropi se je dejansko začela in tudi končala na ozemlju, ki ga geografsko in tudi politično označujemo kot Srednjo Evropo. Vojna, ki se je začela na ozemlju Srednje Evrope in se nato razširila po vsej Evropi, je imela tako tudi poglobilne posledice na tem ozemlju. V prostoru srednje Evrope se je dejansko zgostilo vse dogajanje druge svetovne vojne in vse njene pojavne oblike, od ozemeljskih prisvajanj, etnocidnih in genocidnih pojavov, kolaboracije do različni oblik odpornišтва. To vse je imelo posledice

ne le v dogajanjih v času vojne, ampak tudi za povojni razvoj. Med vojno, njenim značajem, potekom in posledicami ter povojnim razvojem v posameznih državah je velika soodvisnost. Zaradi razlik v položaju posameznih narodov in držav v času druge svetovne vojne je bilo zgodovinsko dogajanje v času druge svetovne vojne in po njej različno.

Glede na posledice druge svetovne vojne oziroma kakšen prelom je konec vojne povzročil v posamezni državi, je tudi vrednotenje vojne in posledic pri različnih "nacionalnih" zgodovinopisjih različno. Vsak narod oziroma njegovo nacionalno zgodovinopisje izhaja glede doživljanje druge svetovne vojne in razlage le-te iz svojih izkušenj, svojih pogledov in svojih ocen. Mnogokrat bolj s političnim značajem kot izhajajoč iz zgodovinskih dejstev. Ta pa se namreč različno vrednotijo in razlagajo, glede na politično situacijo v neki državi.

Dušan Nećak\*

*From Monopolar to Bipolar World:  
Key Issues of the Classic Cold War<sup>1</sup>*

The following question periodically comes up among circles of historians: should the end of World War Two, or more specifically 1945, be viewed as a break that would be respected by historians in their periodization of history? At first glance, it would appear that the historical continuity of certain key processes was not interrupted mid-century: for example, the momentum and development that man put into motion with the industrial revolution and the rapid development of technology continued. Nor can we imagine cultural life after 1945 without the cultural life that preceded the war. Moreover, the spiritual understanding of the era and even of the catastrophic war that consumed it did not undergo a sufficiently fundamental change to cause us to discuss a break in continuity. The only factors that might successfully convince opponents of the argument that the end of World War Two represents an important historical rupture belong in the fields of politics and ideology. And yet all ideologies, social systems, and political structures after the war were also present before the war and indeed could be traced all the way back to the nineteenth century. All the political and ideological currents in both West and East that animated the post-war world, that caused sparks to fly, and in their interdependence caused each other to engage in an ongoing tug-of-war, have roots, historically speaking, in the European political consciousness triggered by the French Revolution. And, as we know, the French Revolution itself did not come out of thin air but

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<sup>1</sup> This article emerged on the basis of the following literature: Dušan Nećak, Božo Repe: *Oris sodobne obče in slovenske zgodovine* [Outline of Contemporary General and Slovenian History], Ljubljana 2003; Dušan Nećak: *Sodobna zgodovina – obča : izbrana poglavja* [Contemporary History – General: Selected Chapters], Ljubljana 2003; Dušan Nećak: *Hallsteinova doktrina in Jugoslavija : Tito med Zvezno republiko Nemčijo in Nemško demokratično republiko* [The Hallstein Doctrine and Yugoslavia: Tito between FDR and GDR], Ljubljana 2002; Dušan Nećak: *Sovjetsko-jugoslovanski odnosi v luči madžarskih dogodkov leta 1956* [Soviet-Yugoslav Relations in the Light of Events in Hungary in 1956]. In: *Zgodovinski časopis*, 2002, št. 1–2, str. 185–197; Metod Mikuž: *Svet po vojni 1945–1957* [The Post-War World], Ljubljana 1983; Erich Hobsbawm: *Čas skrajnosti : svetovna zgodovina 1914–1991* [The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century : 1914–1991], Ljubljana 2000. Interested readers can acquaint themselves with the above mentioned books and additional literature and sources.



was itself the consequence of earlier events. It could not have occurred, for example, without the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

Nevertheless, all of these caveats are not sufficient to change my conviction that the end of World War Two, 1945, represented a break in human life and thus in human history. To understand this point of view, it is necessary to distinguish large historical currents that flow through the centuries and belong to what might be called the development of humanity, from smaller currents and breaks that characterize smaller historical periods and thus may represent the end or beginning of new historical eras. The European Middle Ages, for example, had its roots in antiquity and emerged from antiquity, and yet the fall of the Roman Empire was the end of antiquity and the beginning of feudalism. The year 1945 could be viewed in a similar manner: as the end of World War Two, and as a specific point in history that marked a decisive turn in the development of human history.

The end of World War Two brought about not only the military and political destruction of Nazism and Fascism, but also a fundamental transformation in the distribution of power and the world order. The most important characteristic of the new world order as a direct consequence of the end of the war resided in two crucial facts: the first that Europe had passed the zenith of its global dominance, and the second that the world had shifted from being politically monolithic or monopolar to a phase of political bipolarity.

Until 1945, Europe was the absolute centre of the world. World War One had caused the world and Europe to be rearranged once again. After that war, Great Britain and France became the two dominant great powers, the United States retreated into the politics of isolation and political events in the world continued to be negotiated within the framework of internal European political events. It appeared as if all the threads of history still flowed from Europe and influenced the rest of the world; it seemed that countries outside Europe, especially colonies and dominions, continued to be drawn into the knots of European disagreements and wars; it also seemed that even the independent countries of the world could not escape the complications of European political (and particularly foreign political) disagreements. Even the most substantial of these countries, the United States of America, could not.

After World War Two, this picture fundamentally changed. The fate of Europe and the rest of the world was no longer decided by great European powers, but by one power outside of Europe (the United States), and by one with more than half of its territory and population extending from Europe into Asia (the Soviet Union). These two powers began their ascent after World War One. They did not share the same social system, as did France and Great Britain after World War One, yet paradoxically they left a wider and deeper imprint on Europe than either France or Great Britain did. Precisely because of their conflicting ideologies, both the United States and the Soviet Union began to expand after World War Two, their expansion being an effort by each to leave its mark

on its own part of the world and to create a zone of satellite countries. This created the basis for the so-called classic Cold War that lasted until the mid-nineteen-fifties and during which, among other things, the most important problems of Central Europe were addressed.

The only possible alternative to American-Soviet dominance and decision-making would have been Great Britain, but it soon became clear that it was a mere satellite of the United States and far too weak economically to be an equal partner. This is why 1945, in the scope of world history, signifies the moment when European global dominance ended. It signifies the beginning of the end of European patronage, which for many of its subjects and their peoples had been a form of servitude. After 1945, these countries came directly or indirectly into spheres of influence and authority outside of Europe. This remains one of the most convincing arguments for the claim that 1945 represents an important historical break.

In addition to this fundamental turn in global historical development, a number of other processes began after 1945 that to a great degree defined the long post-war decades and present a series of additional proofs supporting the claim that 1945 represents a decisive break in world history. At the same time that the European countries, previously great powers, declined, the historical period of classic imperialist colonialism came to an end. We could make the argument that decolonization began with the end of World War Two in 1945. If classic imperialist colonialism reached its peak after World War One, the period after the second global war characterized by a world that had become a stage for anti-colonial striving. To a great degree, these sentiments had been shaped during the war itself; after the war, they were supported and guided by socialist and communist movements. The European colonial powers, weakened by the war, were incapable of stopping the rising wave of anti-colonialism. Decolonization started a new hitherto unknown process. It set in motion a process that created the so-called 'third world' or, as these countries called themselves 'the non-aligned movement.' At the same time, a parallel process began. The struggle for political domination over former colonies created new forms of colonization, forms that did not have physical occupation or annexation of territory as their goal, but instead political, technological and ideological domination by the leading powers of one of the two emerging camps: neo-colonialism.

The creation of a bipolar post-war world was conditioned by the political and military ascent of the Soviet Union. After World War Two, the Soviet Union became a global power, something it emphatically was not during the inter-war years. This became clear at the Potsdam Conference, if not before, where the Soviet Union played one of the most important roles and established the starting point from which it would manage in the coming years to significantly increase its influence in the countries that had been liberated/occupied by the Soviet Union in the closing chapters of the war. On the other side, the United States experienced an even steeper ascent. Not only had the United States

emerged from its political isolation during World War Two, but winning the war confirmed the conviction that the American way of life was the only way of life. Immediately after the war, America took up the mantle of 'the protector of democracy' or, as it has often been characterized in the media, as 'the world's policeman'. This was not only out of principle; economic reasons also played an important role. As proof of this, one statistic says it all: during the war, European countries owed the United States some 4 billion dollars; after the war, this debt grew to 11.5 billion dollars.

Immediately after the war, the Soviet Union set about implementing policies such that by 1952 all the European countries that had been under its direct influence – where the Red Army had been present – became communist countries, i.e. countries with people's democracy (Yugoslavia on November 29, 1945, Albania on January 11, 1946, Bulgaria September 15, 1946, Romania December 31, 1947, Czechoslovakia May 9, 1948, Hungary August 17, 1949, and Poland on July 22, 1952). The United States pursued an actively anti-communist policy based on the military-political containment of the Soviet Union. During the presidency of Harry S. Truman (1945–1953), and specifically in 1947, America articulated its global strategic relationship toward the Soviet Union and other socialist states. This strategy was called the Truman Doctrine (March 12, 1947) and ten years later it would be supplemented by the Eisenhower Doctrine which covered military aid to countries attacked by communist countries. American policy aimed to use any means necessary to protect western democratic countries, especially those in Europe, from the communist menace, and the Truman Doctrine was the first important military-political tool formulated for that purpose. Another equally important element used in the pursuit of this policy was the Marshall Plan (June 5, 1947, George C. Marshall, American Secretary of State from 1947–1949) with which the United States offered economic aid to all countries harmed by World War Two. When the Soviet Union and its bloc (Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia had formed a delegation in Paris to negotiate for aid under Marshall Plan aid when the *nyet* from Moscow arrived) declined 'imperialist' assistance, the United States began to provide economic/financial support that would eventually amount to approximately 13 billion dollars to Western European countries and in particular the west-occupied zone of Germany. It is precisely this level of financial aid that was responsible for the later economic miracle in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as well as for the stabilization of Great Britain and the gradual recovery of its economy.

The Soviet Union countered the American policy with the establishment of an information bureau of the communist and worker's party (Kominform and Informbiro). The opening conference for this organization took place from September 22 to 27, 1947 in Sklarska Poremba, Poland and was attended by all the East European communist parties (from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union) as well as by the communist parties of Italy and France. Informbiro was intended to be a replace-

ment for Komintern, which had been discontinued in 1943. Its purpose was to create the 'golden unity' of the eastern bloc under the protection of the Soviet Union, or in other words to squelch any thoughts of individual Eastern European countries taking their own 'independent path to socialism'. The clearest example of this tactic was Stalin's dealings with Yugoslavia in 1948 (the so-called Informbiro conflict) that was meant to be exemplary and thus to eliminate any attempt to deviate from the Soviet model or flee outright from the Soviet camp. The fundamental goal of the Soviet Union was the export of communist revolution.

The bipolar world and Europe itself was not only divided along political-ideological lines but also had a well-known physical line of demarcation that Winston Churchill had dubbed the Iron Curtain. The military power of both camps was considered substantial and equal enough that neither of the two dared to begin a global war in an effort to dominate the entire world.

It is said that war is the continuation of politics with other means. International politics and the division of power after World War Two, the period known as the Cold War, was the continuation of war with other means. It was also the consequence of the bipolar division of the world. By definition, the Cold War was a condition of 'neither war nor peace', the content of which was an ongoing political, and at times military, confrontation between the two post-war superpowers i.e. the Soviet Union and the United States and their respective blocs. As a historical category, the Cold War denoted the relationship between fundamentally opposed social-political, economic and military systems in a period where other substantial transformations had taken place in the international community. The Cold War was a period during which two distinct blocs existed. It was also a process that took on various forms and was conducted with varying intensity until 1989/1990. Nevertheless, the historical period of the Cold War is generally divided into two parts: the first from 1945 to 1959, and the second from 1959 to 1990. The first represents the historical period that emerged directly from World War Two and its immediate aftermath – we could call this the classic Cold War. The second was a period that no longer had direct links to World War Two and its consequences, but rather was the direct result of post-war political conditions around the world.

In the time of the classic Cold War, there were three fundamental problems in Central Europe that needed to be resolved: the German question, the Austrian question, and the Trieste question. These problems were felt most acutely immediately after the war and their resolution would determine to a great degree the political development of Central Europe. All three issues were the subject of much debate because they would determine the conditions of the bipolar world, in particular conditions along the border of the Iron Curtain. All three issues were eventually resolved by compromise which became the characteristic tactic for the resolution of the hottest post-war problems. The fate of other important Central European countries, such as Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, had been decided by the presence of the Red Army that lasted until 1952 and caused

these countries to automatically fall into the East, that is into the communist part of the bipolar world. The importance of these countries in terms of determining the shape and development of Central Europe was therefore minimal, at least on the level of dictating relations between East and West. Of course, the end of the war had an influence on all countries adjacent to the Iron Curtain, but in terms of political, ideological, military and ethnic-national issues, the most crucial decisions were made during the resolution of the three most important issue of the classic Cold War period in Europe.

### **The German Question**

In the period after World War Two, the blocs were in no way united on how to deal with European and global issues. Both the East and West wanted Germany to follow their specific model. The western allies wanted a united Germany that would be capable of meeting the obligations of the peace. The Soviet Union wanted a divided Germany that would never again be able to threaten its security. It was not possible to solve this dilemma through military means, but it was also not possible to negotiate a conclusive peace treaty until this dilemma was solved. All negotiations seemed to lead down a dead-end street. Therefore, each side solved the German question in its own way and throughout this period both sides pretended that its main goal was a united Germany.

It should be noted that even the three principle western allies did not share the same views regarding the fate of West Germany. France, similar to the Soviet Union and as a consequence of historical experience, did not want a strong and united Germany. Nevertheless, on January 1, 1947, it joined the American and British occupation forces in the so-called Bizone (dual zone), which became the basis for the economic and eventually the political unification of Germany. In this zone, Germans themselves conducted their economic affairs, a situation of which the Soviets emphatically disapproved. When the western occupation authorities introduced a reformed West German currency in June 20, 1948, the Soviets imposed a blockade on Berlin. This was the first Berlin crisis. It lasted thirteen months and West Berlin only survived because of the airlift with which the western allies supplied the city.

The two German states – the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) which came into being on May 23, 1949 and the German Democratic Republic (DDR) which came into being on October 7, 1949 – became the main protagonists of the Cold War, the ongoing tension between the two blocs inevitably flowing through them. The United States and its allies did not want to give up on the idea of Germany as a large state that could have, based on its relationships with its allies, an important position in the western world. The West could make use of such a German state in its potential for dealings with the East. For this reason, the United States increased the autonomy and sovereignty of the West German entity, one of the most crucial steps in its evolving policy. The General

Contract was signed on May 26, 1952 and provided the basis for the annulment of the occupied status of West Germany. West Germany, along with West Berlin, gained limited sovereignty and could begin the process of integration with western economic, military and political organizations. Two years later, the so-called Paris Protocols were signed from October 19 to 23, 1954, the next step toward full sovereignty of West Germany. The following year on May 5, 1955, the three western occupation commissioners formally annulled, based on the protocols, the occupation status of Germany, and that day was proclaimed the West German 'day of sovereignty'. The new country's sovereignty was confirmed on other occasions during that same year. Namely, on January 15, 1955, the Soviet Union finally proclaimed the end of war with Germany (most other involved countries had done the same in 1951). Finally, when NATO held its ministerial session from May 9 to 11, 1955, West Germany formally entered the western military pact which represented its final acceptance as a sovereign nation. Two years later in late March of 1957, West Germany would become one of the founding members of the newly-created western economic organization, the European Economic Community (EEC).

Ideological interests, security interests and, not least economic interests led the Soviet Union to become the principal carrier of the idea that the development of Germany must be controlled and above all that there should be no rush to reunite the German nation. For decades after its emergence in 1949, the western states, and particularly West Germany, did not recognize the East Germany as a legitimate representative of the German people. In 1955, West Germany promulgated the so-called Hallstein Doctrine whereby it automatically discontinued diplomatic relations with any country that recognized East Germany. It was first exercised on October 19, 1957 against Yugoslavia. As a result, the international activities of East Germany began to be increasingly concentrated in the East (for example, in 1950 it helped to resolve the Polish border question between the Oder and Nisse Rivers) and it largely functioned within the framework of the Soviet bloc (for example, the Council for Mutual Economic Aid established in 1949 – SEV, COMENCON-SEV). On July 25, 1954, the Soviet Union enhanced the sovereignty of East Germany, though not to a greater degree than the sovereignty of West Germany had been enhanced by the 'German treaty' in 1952. The Warsaw Pact was established between May 11 and 15, 1955 as a military counterbalance to NATO. East Germany was among the founding members and thus emerged the relationship and general conditions between the two German nations that would remain in place until the unification of the two German states in 1990.

### **The Austrian Question**

The resolution to the Austrian question came almost on the same day in 1955 as the resolution to the German question, the former being an essential compo-

ment of the latter. Similar to Berlin, post-war Vienna was run by 'four men in a jeep'. Like Germany, Austria had been divided into four occupation zones. The western and eastern alliances each claimed that Austria belonged in its sphere of interest. Because of this, negotiations for the treaty establishing the final status of an independent and democratic Austrian state lasted nearly ten years. The Soviet Union used the potential solution of this problem as a bargaining chip in the resolution of the Trieste question. On May 15, 1955, the Treaty for the Establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria (known as the Austria State Treaty) was signed at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna.<sup>2</sup> With this treaty, Austria was re-established within its January 1, 1938 borders. Formally, it belonged to neither the American nor the Soviet sphere of influence. On October 26, 1955, the day the last occupation soldier left Austria, it declared 'permanent neutrality.'

A condition of Austria's new status as a sovereign and neutral state, was that it agrees to Article 7 of the Austria State Treaty by which Austria committed to protecting its Slovenian and Croatian minorities. In November 1955, Yugoslavia cosigned the same document, also committing it to protect the same two minorities within its country and to retract all territorial demands on Austria.

### **The Trieste Question**

Trieste became a burning crisis point in large part because of its strategic position. It was the most southern point on the emerging Iron Curtain and the port nearest to the heart of Europe. After World War Two, Yugoslavia recovered most of the Slovenian ethnic territory lost after World War One and now lobbied for the annexation of Trieste to its hinterland. In accordance with the Yugoslav plan, Trieste would have the status of a free port under international control, but this solution did not suit the western allies. The allies had hoped that a compromise solution would be found in the negotiations for the peace treaty with Italy (signed February 10, 1947 in Paris and becoming valid on September 15, 1947). The result was the establishment of the Free Territory of Trieste. The western allies had authority in the territory of Zone A (Trieste and its environs), Yugoslavia in Zone B (the Istrian peninsula along with the Koper and Buje municipalities). The Free Territory of Trieste should have had its own governor but because of the increasing tensions between the blocs and within

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<sup>2</sup> It should have been called the Treaty on Austria since it was effectively imposed on Austria by the allies. Formally, Austria was not allowed to directly participate in its own emergence as a state and was given the opportunity to accept the conditions that assured its future independence. For more about this, see Dušan Nećak: *Zgodovinski pogled na državno pogodbo o ponovni vzpostavitvi neodvisne in demokratične Avstrije (ADP)* [A Historical Glance at the Treaty Re-establishing an Independent and Democratic Austria (ADP)]. In: Javna uprava, 2005, no. 2/3, pp. 263–268, and Dušan Nećak: *Slovenci v drugi avstrijski republiki* [Slovenians in the Secodn Austrian Republic], Ljubljana 1983.

their camps (specifically the conflict between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union), the Free Territory never really functioned properly. To the contrary, disagreements arising around the status of Trieste brought Yugoslavia to the edge of military engagement with the West. The issue was solved at least temporarily following direct negotiations between the western allies, Italy, and Yugoslavia. A Memorandum of Understanding, according to which Trieste and its surroundings (zone A) were annexed to Italy, and the Koper and Buje municipalities were annexed to Yugoslavia, was signed in London on October 5, 1954.

Italy viewed this division as a demarcation line; that is as a temporary arrangement. Only in 1975 was the issue permanently resolved with the signing of the Osimo Agreements. At that point, the demarcation line at last changed into an actual border between Yugoslavia and Italy; before 1975 it had been one of the most open borders in Europe and certainly between two countries with radically different social systems.

At least two of the above-mentioned issues facing Europe in the post-war period – the German and Trieste questions – were of a serious enough nature that they might have sparked a third global conflict. The solution of these two open issues in the mid-nineteen-fifties was actually the result of a stalemate between the two blocs accompanied by a good deal of sabre-rattling. Events resolving the Austrian question were similar though not as dramatic. It was not possible to unify Germany according to either a Soviet or American model. Austria did not become a satellite of one or the other ideological political option, but instead remained neutral. Yugoslav demands for the correction of its western border could not be entirely rejected despite the country's ideological orientation, and ultimately Yugoslavia got a good deal of the territory it was demanding, though not the symbolically most important part: the city of Trieste. What became clear was that after World War Two, the affairs of the world would be resolved by the superpowers and that the resolution of such affairs would have little to do with notions of justice, truth, or reason, but above all would be guided by global strategic interests. If it wasn't possible to arrive at a straightforward solution, tactics of compromise would be employed.

However, this did not mean that the superpowers sought compromise solutions within their own camps. The Soviet Union, in particular, did not. In the same period that the three Central European questions that emerged as a direct consequence of World War Two were peacefully resolved, bloody conflicts took place in the heart of the Soviet bloc that had as their goal violent homogenization, specifically in Poland and in Hungary in 1956. Similar events had taken place in East Germany several years before. These events all took place after Stalin's death, that is during the period defined as de-Stalinization, a time supposedly characterized by the relaxation of the hard Bolshevik style of communism.

After Stalin's death in March 1953, a thaw was felt not only in the Soviet Union but also in the countries under wider Soviet influence. De-Stalinization proceeded in a number of Soviet satellite countries and, though it was often dif-



difficult and bloody, it generally led them on the path from international communism to national communism. After a period of great agitation, such a process took place in Poland in 1956 and during the same period Romania began to follow an even harder line of national communism in its foreign policy.<sup>3</sup> In East Germany, reformist efforts expressed in massive demonstrations in East Berlin and other large cities in the country were violently suppressed in June 1953.

But it was Hungary that experienced the worst. Events in Hungary, and also in Poland, decisively and violently preserved the so-called 'golden unity' of the eastern bloc. What happened in these countries discouraged the de-Stalinization process of others, Czechoslovakia being the most noteworthy case.

### **The Polish Crisis**

After Stalin's death and in particular after the verbal renunciation of Stalinism in the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (February 14 to 25, 1956), the countries in the eastern socialist bloc began, more or less intensively, the process of the thaw. Not only did they launch a massive overthrow of the party leadership, but they also began the process of rehabilitating the dead and living victims of Stalinism. Among the more important steps of the thaw was the disbanding of the Information Bureau of the communist party (Informbiro and Kominform) that took place on April 18, 1956. In Poland, where Informbiro had actually been founded, the process went even deeper. Specifically, the Polish government in exile, the non-communist *Armia Krajowa* (or home army), was rehabilitated. This was the same army that in Polish national memory remained most vivid as a victim of the Warsaw Uprising in August 1944, the army which the Red Army left to perish though they could have come to its aid.

During this period, a process of democratization began within the Polish socialist system. Wladislaw Gomulka, the reform 'nationalist communist', was released from prison. Substantial reforms took place within the Polish government and the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. In the economic sector, workers' salaries were increased. Nevertheless, conditions in the eastern bloc, Poland included, were extremely bad and this material improvement was not viewed as sufficient. The population of these countries, and the workers in particular, saw in these reforms the real possibility for real improvement of their general conditions and for political democratization. In Poland, this led to a massive uprising of workers in the industrial city of Poznań on January 28 and 29, 1956, the rallying cry of which was the demand for higher pay. When a delegation returned from Warsaw carrying the message that these demands had been rejected, the workers took to the streets, attacking a number of public

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<sup>3</sup> In Romania, the regime of Nicolae Ceausescu, who became the General Secretary of the ruling communist party in 1965, became one of the cruelest in the eastern bloc. This would cost Ceausescu his life when the changes of 1989 arrived.

buildings, among them the security bureau. The authorities responded with force, both police and military. After two days of unrest on the streets of Poznań, fifty-three people were dead and more than three-hundred wounded.

Yet the process of democratization, though slowed and in a barely perceptible form, could no longer be stopped, especially not in Poland and Hungary. Several of the protestors were brought before the court in Poznań, in particular those accused of being organizers of the uprising, so-called 'adventurists and agents provocateurs'. But the punishment was relatively mild. The most visible steps in the direction of de-Stalinization were the measures taken at the plenary session of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party that began on October 19, 1956. In terms of the future development of Poland, the session's most important act was the rehabilitation of the recently released Władysław Gomułka and his induction into the Central Committee along with several other very visible Polish communists from his circle. At the same time, a number of measures were debated and adopted involving the quicker democratization and decentralization of the country as well as the lifting of censorship. The public was informed of these measures, and the government and a number of incompetent ministers were strongly criticized.

The debate at the plenary session of the Polish Communist Party set the red light blinking in Moscow. Already on the night between October 19 and 20, a Soviet delegation headed by Khrushchev himself arrived in Warsaw. Three Soviet marshals in the delegation served to instill fear. Allegedly, a Stalinist group in the Central Committee (led by Marshal Rokovskiy a former Soviet marshal and since 1949 the top commander of the Polish Army) invited the delegation to Warsaw. Khrushchev wanted to prevent the Central Committee from rehabilitating Gomułka but achieved nothing. He returned to Moscow, leaving his marshals in Warsaw.

It became clear from Gomułka's speech at the plenary session that he was heading toward a communist orientation similar to that taken by Yugoslav President Tito. After dedicating much of his speech to the poor economic situation in Poland and to a criticism of the ruling government, he tackled international political themes. He emphasized that the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party represented a historical break away from the path of violence, corruption, and subservience. He was impressed by the self-initiative of the factory workers and underlined the importance of a variety of paths to socialism. He also condemned the cult of personality. He saw the only way forward as the democratization of the country and its society, albeit within a socialist system.

Moscow used press outlets to criticize the situation in Poland. The Polish media had been enthusiastic about the beginning of the transition to a new socialism. They called it "the October spring". On October 29, the plenum voted in new leadership for the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the secretariat. They removed the Stalinist core, retired Marshal Rokovskiy, and passed a reso-

lution that emphasized the strengthening of parliament, the elevation of living standards, and advocacy of privately-owned businesses and stores. The example of the Soviet Union was mentioned, though hardly prominently. A new government took power in order to put the new policies into motion. In a moment of political pragmatism, the new government wisely decided not to challenge 'big brother' too much and, despite it all, continually emphasized the importance of the relationship to the Soviet Union.

Gomulka, along with the policies announced at the eighth party congress of the Central Committee and Poland's new political orientation, exerted a strong influence on events in Hungary which had begun to move in the same direction as Poland. But by October 23, 1956, a violent backlash had already begun in Hungary and columns of Soviet soldiers were heading toward Poland. In order to avoid simultaneous conflicts in two such important countries in the Soviet bloc, Khrushchev made a call to Gomulka, confirmed the new Polish policies, and called off the troops in their advance to Warsaw. Thus Poland was saved from 'friendly intervention' and did not suffer the same fate that Hungary did the same year and Czechoslovakia would in 1968. The Polish October spring survived for a while. The Poznań demonstrators were called in from the streets. Cardinal Wyszyński was returned from the internment camp where he had been held since 1953 and became the Polish primate.

Given political developments in Poland, it was no surprise that, when Gomulka first traveled outside the eastern bloc, he paid a visit to Belgrade to see his main political model. He certainly could not have imagined that the visit of the Polish delegation to Yugoslavia would have such long-term consequences for the host country and for its relationships to East Germany.

### **The Hungarian Crisis**

In addition to domestic political and party developments in Yugoslavia, the events that took place in Hungary in the fall of 1956 and not least Yugoslavia's role in them, placed a heavy burden on Soviet-Yugoslav relations and later, during the time of the Kádár regime, on Hungarian-Yugoslav relations. The resulting distrust on both sides had an indisputably direct and negative influence on the rapprochement between Yugoslavia and East Germany. The events in Hungary, and especially Tito's comments on the Soviet military intervention in Hungary (particularly in his Pula speech on November 11, 1956), cast a shadow on both bilateral and inter-party relations for a long time to come. Immediately after the speech, an extensive correspondence began between the Soviet and Yugoslav communist parties regarding these issues, and the highest Soviet party and national functionaries continually reproached Tito and Yugoslavia for hypocritical behavior that harmed the socialist cause.

What exactly were the events that occurred on the fateful days between October 21 and November 11, 1956?

In Hungary, the process of de-Stalinization also swept away the old party leadership. On July 18 of that year, Matyas Rakosi, the first secretary of the Hungarian Workers' Party stepped down because of "age, sickness, excesses in the cult of personality, and the breaching of the socialist legal order." He was replaced by Ernő Gerő. This followed the general trend of de-Stalinization in Eastern Europe in terms of spreading democratization, strengthening the role of parliament, and rehabilitating communists imprisoned during Stalinism. Janos Kádár, who had been imprisoned because of his so-called "Titoism" was released from prison as was Imre Nagy, the most important figure in the 1956 Hungarian uprising.

The democratizing possibilities of de-Stalinization were first felt by university students who organized large demonstrations in Szeged in which some 3,000 students participated. Together with students from Budapest and Pecs, they made demands for freedom of the press, an end to the death penalty, human rights, better living conditions, and university autonomy. In solidarity with their Polish colleagues, they demanded that Imre Nagy be returned to the position of president of the government and leader of the communist party. The demonstrations begun by students continued. On the night between October 23 and 24, a crowd of 100,000 demonstrators pulled down a statue of Stalin and removed red stars. The demands of the demonstrators expanded to include the reorganization of the economy and respect for old Hungarian national symbols (in particular, the coat-of-arms).

In the early morning of October 24, Budapest Radio aired a statement of a minister in the National Council: namely, that the uprising was being conducted by reactionary and anti-revolutionary elements that were attacking public buildings and security forces. Nevertheless, the minister respected their demands and said that both Kádár and Nagy had been inducted into the Central Committee, but Gerő would remain first secretary. Nagy was named Prime Minister; the serving Prime Minister Hegadüs was named Deputy Prime Minister.

This announcement did not calm the situation. The movement begun by the students only intensified, and Gerő and Hegadüs turned to the Soviet government for help. Unaware of this, Nagy called on the demonstrators to surrender at six in the evening of October 24 but the Soviet military already arrived by afternoon. This was the first Soviet intervention that put down with military force Hungarian desires for democratic reforms and more violence followed.

By October 25, the resistance of the uprising was broken. Gerő stepped down and Janos Kádár took his place. Like Nagy, he immediately called on the population, and particularly the young, not to support the uprising, that the problem with the Soviet Union would be resolved on the basis of equality. Nevertheless, in certain cities the uprising continued and on October 26 others joined the original participants: communists, malcontents, and right-wing elements. They demanded that the leaders of the uprising should become part of

the government, that Hungary leave the Warsaw Pact, amnesty for all prisoners, retreat of the Soviet soldiers, and a public trial against the Minister of War, Farkas. The result of their demands was a massive number of dead. Imre Nagy called in vain for the insurgents to lay down their arms, saying that he would personally negotiate with the Soviet Union for the withdrawal of their troops from Hungary. But his calls fell on deaf ears and the bloodshed continued.

The following day, though half of Hungary remained in the hands of the uprising, Nagy established a national coalition. In order to calm passions and the Soviet Union, he announced publicly that the uprising in Hungary was not anti-revolutionary but a democratic movement. He promised the disbandment of the secret police and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. He advocated a law increasing salaries and pensions, promised to raise living standards, build housing, improve student conditions etc. He ordered the Hungarian Army to cease fire and shoot only when attacked. He established a national guard.

The Security Council of the United Nations responded to events in Hungary following an extraordinary session on October 28. The Hungarian government had put in a protest to the UN General Secretary, claiming that these were internal political matters and any action by the Security Council would be a violation of Hungary's sovereignty. Nevertheless the session was held and there was only one item on the agenda – the situation in Hungary. All delegates, including the Yugoslav delegate (albeit with the notable exception of the Soviet delegate) condemned the Soviet intervention. The Soviet government claimed that their soldiers were only in Hungary at the request of the government to help in the struggle against fascism. Therefore it was not surprising that Soviet politicians insisted that the army would leave Hungary only when order had been imposed.

The following days were crucial for Hungary's future development. But this was not because the Yugoslav President Tito responded to events in neighboring Hungary with a letter on October 29 to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Communist Party. In the letter, he expressed a certain sympathy regarding the demands of the population but called for the end to the bloodshed and the defense of socialism. Essentially, the government of Imre Nagy began to accept the demands of the uprising. Once again, he called on the people to lay down their arms in order that the Soviet troops would keep its promise of leaving twenty-four hours after the last insurgent group had capitulated. On October 30, an announcement was made that the Soviet troops would in fact be withdrawing from Budapest the following day which, with few exceptions, in fact happened. The most crucial or indeed fateful event was the announcement made by President Nagy on October 31. First he emphasized that no further meddling in the internal events of Hungary would be tolerated and that the 'Hegadüs-Gerö gang' that had called in the Soviet troops and proclaimed a state of siege had been removed. Then he continued: "Today we will begin to debate Hungary's withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact and the withdrawal of all Soviet forces from the country. Hungary will become a neutral core in Central Europe, but it will

be necessary to turn to foreign countries for material assistance. We have submitted a letter to the Soviet government requesting the immediate engagement of a ministerial delegation to negotiate the withdrawal of all Soviet forces."

Nagy was the rooster that crowed too early. He overestimated his own position and poorly judged the moment in Soviet politics, underestimating the determination of the Soviet Union. On the night between October 31 and November 1, Budapest was quiet, but it was the calm before the storm. The events had already claimed roughly 15,000 dead and wounded on the Hungarian side and 2,500 on the Soviet side.

The second Soviet intervention began on November 1, 1956. Soviet forces surrounded Budapest and all of the airports. They claimed this was necessary to evacuate the wounded. The Hungarian Army received a strict order not to use their arms. On the same day, Nagy formally announced Hungary's neutrality and its withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact. He notified the UN that new Soviet troops were arriving and requested the assistance of western powers in defending Hungarian neutrality. The following day the Hungarian government submitted three documents to the Soviet Union. In them was the demand that the Soviet Union recognize Hungarian neutrality, the notification of withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact, and the demand for all Soviet troops to leave Hungary. In Budapest itself, communist leaders were rounded up and executed without trial.

Prior to launching a general attack on Budapest, the Soviet Union started a series of secret diplomatic talks with government leaders of the communist camp: with the Poles, Czechs, Romanians, Chinese, and with Yugoslavia as well. Two of the highest functionaries of the Soviet party, Nikita Khrushchev and Georgy Malenkov (until September 1953 the Prime Minister of the government), flew to Brioni on the night between November 2 and 3 to meet with President Tito. It might have seemed that the visit was both proof of renewed Soviet trust in the Yugoslav leadership and a test to see if Tito had truly returned to the communist camp and recognized the leadership of the Soviet Union over it. But in fact the delegation only came to inform the Yugoslav leadership about the intentions of the Soviet Union in Hungary, that is of the Soviet plan to establish a new government under János Kádár and of the military intervention of Soviet troops that would ensure the effectiveness of the new government. The Soviet delegation left Brioni convinced that they had received consent for their plans from the Yugoslav side.<sup>4</sup> When Edvard Kardelj at the federal parliament session on November 1 and President Tito in his Pula speech on November 11 condemned the Soviet intervention in Hungary, relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslav took a dramatic turn for the worse, coming close to the chill between 1948 and 1953. The Soviet leadership accused Tito and the Yugoslav leadership of disloyalty, particularly in light of the fact

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<sup>4</sup> SAMPO BArchiv, DY 30/3641, SED ZK – Büro Walter Ulbricht, Pismo CK KPbSZ, CK ZKJ, 10. 1. 1957, str. 1/2.

that Tito spoke publicly, and claimed that Yugoslavia was actively interfering in Hungarian events. However from the more extensive correspondence that took place at the time between the central committees of the two communist parties, it is clear that the Yugoslav party leadership actually supported the establishment of the new government since they believed that socialism was under threat in Hungary. Nevertheless, the opinion was expressed that the Soviet military intervention must not be the most important prop to the new government. The Yugoslav leadership believed that the consequences of the October outburst of dissatisfaction in Hungary would have to be addressed by Hungarians alone, that is by their own revolutionary government. It also claimed that the uprising included anti-socialist political currents – and indeed it reproached Imre Nagy for his anti-communism and for allowing the execution of communists by leaders of the uprising.

The Red Army attack on Budapest began on the morning of November 4, despite the fact that the UN Security Council which met the same day opposed the attack. The passing of a resolution to this effect was prevented by the Soviet veto. The attack was massive. Some data indicates that the Soviet Union used fifteen percent of its armored divisions. Events that day unfolded quickly. At eight in the morning of November 4, the legitimate government of Imre Nagy received an ultimatum, demanding that it step down or the Red Army would begin to bombard Budapest. Cardinal Mindszenty took shelter at the American Embassy, Premier Nagy at the Yugoslav. At one o'clock in the afternoon, Radio Moscow announced that the Hungarian counter-revolution was crushed and a government had been formed under János Kádár. The government of Imre Nagy had been dissolved and all 'honorable patriots' had resigned from it. Kádár's government had asked the Soviet commander for assistance in serving the needs of "the people and the working class." But the Hungarian uprising was far from defeated on the afternoon of November 4. In addition to a general strike that was called that day, four independent radio stations were still broadcasting Hungarian events and the uprising itself persisted in a number of larger industrial centers (Csepel, Pecs). As late as November 11, even Kádár had to admit that peace in the country – which is to say in Budapest and most of the hinterland – had been established only a few days later. He promised a number of reforms that on the symbolic-national level would advance parliamentary democracy: a government of national unity that would include all the parties that derived their ideology from people's democracy, members of the various parties would be allowed to hold public office, the secret police would be dissolved, the Hungarian coat-of-arms of the national hero Lajos Kossuth from 1848 would replace the red star, the Hungarian national holiday would be March 15, the symbolic date of the 1848 revolution, Hungarian soldiers would wear traditional rather than Soviet uniforms. Many promises, but none were ever delivered.

In accordance with the unwritten rule that the two superpowers would not interfere in each other's internal affairs, western countries did not intervene in

events in East Germany, Poland or Hungary. Nor would they intervene in 1968 in Czechoslovakia. It was not in their interest to do so.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Od monopolarnega k bipolarnemu svetu. O ključnih problemih "klasične hladne vojne"*

Konec druge svetovne vojne ni prinesel le vojaškega in političnega zloma nacizma in fašizma, temveč je v temeljih spremenil razmerje sil in ureditve na svetu. Najpomembnejši značilnosti nove ureditve sveta, kot neposredni posledici konca druge svetovne vojne, sta zagotovo dejstva, da je Evropa prešla zenit svoje pomembnosti in da je svet iz politične monolitnosti prešel v fazo politične bipolarnosti. Prav zaradi teh dveh značilnosti moremo trditi, da pomeni letnica 1945 pomembno zgodovinsko prelomnico, ki jo moramo upoštevati pri periodizaciji najnovejše zgodovine.

Do leta 1945 je bila Evropa središče sveta. Najpomembnejši velesili sta bili Velika Britanija in Francija. Politično dogajanje v svetu je bilo pogojeno z notranje evropskim političnim dogajanjem. Videti je bilo, kot da vse niti zgodovine, ki še vedno potekajo iz Evrope, vplivajo na svet; videti je bilo, kot da so izven evropske države še vedno zapletene v klopčič evropskih nemirov in vojn, zlasti kolonije in dominioni, a videti je bilo tudi, kot da svobodne države po svetu ne morejo uiti godlji evropske politike in zunanje političnih nesoglasij na evropski celini, niti največje ne npr. ZDA.

Po drugi svetovni vojni pa se je ta podoba bistveno spremenila. O usodi Evropi, pa tudi sveta nista več odločali evropski velesili, temveč ena povsem izven evropska (ZDA), druga pa z več kot polovico ozemlja in prebivalstva segajoče iz Evrope v Azijo. Njun vzpon se je nakazoval že ves čas po prvi svetovni vojni. Toda ne samo to, da sta bili to deželi, ki nista imeli enakih družbenih sistemov, kot sta jih imeli Francija in Velika Britanija po prvi svetovni vojni. Ti dve državi sta dali Evropi dosti večji in globlji pečat, kot po prvi svetovni vojni Francija in Velika Britanija. Zaradi nasprotujočih si ideologij sta se državi takoj po vojni razšli, vsaka pa je dala svojemu delu sveta svojstven pečat. To je bila osnova za tako imenovano klasično hladno vojno, ki je trajala nekako do srede petdesetih let in v času katere so se med drugim reševali tudi najpomembnejši problemi Srednje Evrope.

V tem času je bilo treba rešiti tri najpomembnejše probleme Srednje Evrope, ki so se kot najbolj akutni pojavili tako po koncu druge svetovne vojne: nemško vprašanje, avstrijsko vprašanje in tržaško vprašanje. Osrednja pozornost posvečena tem vprašanjem, še posebej prvim dvema, ki so najbolj determinirali politični razvoj v Srednji Evropi. Vsa tri vprašanja so bila namreč predmet razprav



in odločanj v odnosih bipolarnega sveta ter ob "železni zavesi". Usoda drugih pomembnih srednjeevropskih držav, kot so Češkoslovaška, Madžarska in Poljska je bila odločena že z dejstvom, da so zaradi prisotnosti sovjetske RA, do leta 1951 postale komunistične in s tem prešle v vzhodni, komunistični del bipolarnega sveta. Njihov pomen za razvoj srednje Evrope je bil s tem zmanjšan na minimum oziroma na raven odnosov med vzhodom in zahodom.

Časovno bo predstavitev naslovne problematike segla do srede petdesetih let, ko se je kazalo, da so to trije problemi, povzročeni z drugo svetovno vojno, dokončno rešeni. Pokazalo pa se je, da je bila njihova rešitev potisnjena še kar nekaj desetletij v bodočnost.

Konec druge svetovno vojne je sicer vplival na vse države ob "železni zavesi", vendar je bilo politično, ideološko, vojaško in etnično-narodnostno dogajanje najpomembnejše prav pri naštetih treh najpomembnejših vprašanjih "klasične hladne vojne" v Evropi.

UDK 327.54 (437)"1945/1948"

*Slavomír Michálek*\**Czechoslovak Foreign Policy after World War Two.  
New Winds or Mere Dreams?*

The United States and the Soviet Union, the world's two new superpowers, became the decisive factors in post-World War Two development. Their relations influenced the polarization of Europe as a whole and were also reflected in the internal affairs of individual states. Traditional economic links had been ruptured by the war, by the German occupation of a substantial part of continental Europe, and finally by the defeat of the Axis powers. Part of Europe was liberated by the armies of the Soviet Union and part by the armies of the western Allies. External influences on the internal organizations of individual European states objectively diverged. The belief prevailed in newly liberated countries that all problems could be and must be solved in Washington or Moscow.

What were the ideas and goals of the two victorious superpowers in newly liberated Europe? The Soviet Union manoeuvred with remarkable effectiveness in postwar European politics, and yet its aims were relatively simply. The basic goal was to apply pressure on its partners in the anti-Hitler coalition to fulfil the various tenets of the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements, which the Soviet Union interpreted in its own way. This approach gradually paved the way toward the transition of Eastern European countries from a Soviet sphere of interest to a united bloc directed from the centre. This sphere of influence/bloc included the countries the Soviet army had passed through. Geographically, it was a belt of neighbouring states in central and southeast Europe.

The general strategic line of American foreign policy after World War Two emerged from a variety of factors. One of the fundamental features was its own territorial, political, and economic interests. As in the case of Soviet foreign policy, the aim was to fill the power vacuum in the world; this aim was officially justified by America's emergence as the provider of 'national security'. Consequently, the dominant feature of American foreign policy was the effort to organize postwar development according to its own ideas and to secure access to important raw materials, sources of energy, and markets for American products in developing world markets. In other words, we need not harbour any illusions about American foreign policy. Like the Soviet Union, it strived to

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satisfy its own superpower interests. It should be noted that the United States interpreted Soviet ideological expansion in Central Europe as unveiled expansion of political power and thus countered with its own strategy of containing communism within a certain set of frontiers.

What was the international position of Czechoslovakia after World War Two? What were the intentions and aims of its foreign policy and what were the real possibilities of realizing these aims? Czechoslovak and foreign historiographers have already adequately answered this and other related questions.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of a review of the available material, I incline to the view of the majority of authors, namely that the international position of Czechoslovakia in the postwar period was the most contradictory of all Central European countries. Although the basic treaty elements of Czechoslovak foreign policy included the December 1943 treaty with the Soviet Union, it was not the only significant document that determined the international context and future of the country. To the contrary, many serious international legal questions concerning both the past and future were addressed only after the war, and, as a result of this ongoing process, Czechoslovak diplomacy began to turn toward the western powers. However, the fact also remains that because of its past experience, the Czechoslovak Republic also looked to the Soviet Union, not only as its Slavic brother and chief liberator but also as the only effective barrier against a possible future threat from Germany. Indeed, this may have been the most important consideration in Czechoslovak foreign policy in the immediate postwar years.

Let us then accept the assumption that postwar Czechoslovakia had the most contradictory international position in the Central Europe, and explore the notion that the internal and external economic, cultural and commercial interests of the country nevertheless dictated an orientation toward the West. The political aspect is more complex. I maintain that Czechoslovakia belonged to Western Europe politically, but that resentment from the recent past, postwar admiration for Soviet military strength, and recent experience with Germany tilted the country toward the East in terms of its political orientation. One must also remember that Czechoslovakia did not operate in a vacuum, and from the beginning of the postwar period it was consistently pushed to the East.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on this problem, see: G. Lundestad: *American Non-Policy Toward Eastern Europe*. Oslo 1975; W. Diamond: *Czechoslovakia Between East and West*. London 1947; W. Ullmann: *The United States in Prague*. New York 1978; J. N. Stevens: *Czechoslovakia at the Crossroads*. New York 1985; D. Yergin: *Shattered Peace, the Origins of the Cold War and the National Security State 1945–1948*. New York 1978; J. Čierny: *Nová orientácia československej zahraničnej politiky v rokoch 1941–1948* [The New Orientation of Czechoslovak Foreign Policy in the Period 1941–1948]. Bratislava 1979; P. Petruš: *USA a studená vojna* [The USA and the Cold War]. Bratislava 1984; J. Šedivý: *KSČ a československá zahraničná politika* [The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and Czechoslovak Foreign Policy]. Praha 1961; J. Brouček: *Československá tragédie* [The Czechoslovak Tragedy]. New York 1953; K. Kaplan: *Pravda o Československu* [The Truth about Czechoslovakia]. Praha 1990.

The original ambition of Czechoslovakia in the postwar period was to situate itself somewhere in the middle, on the boundary between the two 'worlds'. This strategy was supported above all by Jan Masaryk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and by most Czechoslovak political figures of the time. Because of its advantageous geographical position, Czechoslovakia had the opportunity to represent a European element that could use the existence of two distinct spheres to its favour. The situation appeared unavoidable: not only was the developed West an important postwar factor, but it was also necessary to consider the role of the Soviet Union in Europe. However, little time was needed to realize that this Czechoslovak middle way, 'the policy of the bridge', could only succeed if cooperation within the anti-Hitler coalition continued after the war, but there was little likelihood of that after the defeat of their common enemy.

The postwar period in Czechoslovak foreign policy became a time when a number of political factors and pressures gradually took hold and finally culminated in the events of February 1948. The brief era of pluralist democracy in the Czechoslovak Republic was followed by the establishment of single party dictatorship (the Czechoslovak Communist Party) and the gradual deterioration of economic and moral freedom, as well as living standards. Czechoslovakia became a firm part of the Soviet eastern bloc and 'the policy of the bridge' was revealed as empty illusion.

If we study the period from 1945 to February 1948, during which Czechoslovakia was slowly incorporated, politically and economically, into the Soviet bloc, we can define Czechoslovak foreign policy, its efforts and the results of these efforts, into three brief but distinct phases.

The first phase is the immediate postwar period, or the development of the Czechoslovak Republic immediately after the end of the war. In this phase, the need to repair war damage to the economy played the dominant role. The UNRRA transfer of goods known as Lend-Lease continued, questions regarding the transfer of minorities were solved, and the simultaneous departure of the Soviet and American troops from Czechoslovak territory was successfully completed. Czechoslovakia participated in the birth of the United Nations in San Francisco, nationalized its industry, and attempted to procure American credits and reconstruction loans. On the other side, the so-called 'uranium agreement' was signed with the Soviet Union in October 1945, according to which 90% of uranium extracted in Czechoslovakia was promised to the Soviet Union. In September 1946, the Czechoslovak delegate to the Paris Peace Conference applauded a speech by Andrej Vyšinský on the enslavement of European nations in the form of dollar aid, and American 'economic imperialism' that sought to secure control of the region with dirty money.<sup>2</sup> This seemingly insignificant episode might well be called 'the most expensive applause in history'. American Secretary of

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<sup>2</sup> Státní ústřední archiv (SUA) [Central State Archives], Praha, fond MZV-VA 1945–1951, č.kr. 493, *Daily News*, October 18, 1946.

State J. Byrnes reacted by stopping payment on a 50 million dollar credit to Prague for the purchase of surplus American military supplies in Europe. Czechoslovakia received only 10 million dollars and negotiation for an additional 50 million dollar reconstruction loan was effectively ended. Thus Czechoslovakia lost access to some ninety million dollars. This was obviously a political decision on the part of the American administration: namely, that the United States would not support a country with a different view on American economic aid. Another source of ongoing difficulty in Czechoslovak-American bilateral relations was the unwillingness of the Czechs to resolve the issue of compensation for confiscated or nationalized American property with a value of 149 million dollars, a not insignificant sum.

However, there were also positive developments in Czechoslovak-American relations during this phase. For example, trade between the two countries increased. The Czechoslovak-American Declaration on Commercial Policy was signed on November 8, 1946 and can be counted as a Czechoslovak success. This declaration ended the 'treatyless' state between Czechoslovakia and America in the area of trade and economic relations. The original Czechoslovak-American commercial agreement had been signed in March 1938 but was unilaterally revoked by the American side in April 1939 after the break up of the Czechoslovak Republic. The most important article of the November 1946 declaration was the reciprocal granting of most favoured nation (MFN) status.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the best, almost textbook example of the success or failure of the Czechoslovak policy of being a bridge between East and West in the period from 1945 to 1948 had to do with the European Recovery Programme (ERP) formally established in 1947, which eventually became known as the Marshall Plan.

The economic and political aspects of American interests in Europe found form in the Marshall Plan – an effort to achieve primacy in the political arena, to penetrate European markets, and to decisively influence the European future. This plan was then supplemented by strategic aspects. Washington believed that the power vacuum after the defeat of Germany and its allies, and the weakening of Great Britain and France would be filled by the Soviet Union. The only way to prevent this was to fill the vacuum with a regime of economic and political renewal substantial enough to resist Soviet and Communist influence. This was the main aim of the Marshall Plan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Czechoslovak-American relations connected with UNRRA (Lend-Lease), American credits and compensation for nationalized American property in Czechoslovakia after World War Two: S. Michálek: *Nádeje a vytriezvenia, československo-americké hospodárske vzťahy v rokoch 1945–1951* [Hope and Disillusionment, Czechoslovak-American Economic Relations in the Period 1945–1951]. Bratislava 1995, pp. 26–82.

<sup>4</sup> P. Petruf: *Marshallov plan* [The Marshall Plan]. Bratislava 1993, pp. 8–9.

How did Moscow react to the Marshall Plan? An initially uncertain reaction was replaced in the Kremlin by the view that the United States was using the plan as a means of isolating the Soviet Union and depriving it of its share of victory in World War Two, specifically of political influence in Eastern and Central Europe. It came to be viewed as the key factor in the desire to exclude the United States from Europe. The categorical rejection of the Marshall Plan by Moscow completed the disintegration of the anti-Hitler coalition.

As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, the Marshall Plan appeared at a time when difficulties and even signs of crises were beginning to appear in the economy. UNRRA deliveries had stopped and the country principle economic ally, the Soviet Union, was unable to provide resources sufficient to sustain economic development, either in financial or material terms. The loss of markets and qualified employees also emphasized the need for foreign economic aid. The Marshall Plan offered just such aid. It offered solutions and a route out of difficulty, and so Czechoslovakia initially accepted an offer to participate in the programme. The preparatory negotiations, the background to Czechoslovak participation, Stalin's pressure on the Czechoslovak delegation of Gottwald, Masaryk and Drtina in Moscow on July 9, 1947, the 'breaking of the front', and Czechoslovakia's sudden negative response are now notorious.

How did Lawrence Steinhardt, American Ambassador in Czechoslovakia at the time, comment on this 'reversal' of the Czechoslovak position towards the Marshall Plan? On July 15, 1947, he mentioned nearly a dozen factors, which he regarded as the most powerful instruments of Soviet influence in Czechoslovakia. They included the liberation of Czechoslovakia (except for parts of western Bohemia) by the Red Army, the leading position of the Communist Party in Czechoslovak politics (its complete control over key ministries of the interior, finance, agriculture and internal trade, foreign affairs and national defense as well as its control over the police, and significant influence over the army and national committees, the daily press and periodicals, and trade unions), Czechoslovakia's growing dependence on Soviet trade, and finally Czechoslovakia's fear of the economic revival of Germany against which the Soviet Union would be the best bulwark. According to Steinhardt, precisely, this complex of factors in combination with strong pressure from the Kremlin led to Czechoslovakia's rejection of America's economic project.<sup>5</sup>

It is certainly possible to agree with Steinhardt's conclusions. The American Ambassador more or less expected Czechoslovakia's change of position. His July 16, 1947 report to J. Riddleberger, head of the State Department's Central European division, confirms this assessment. He stated that the new position Prague announced at the Paris conference was not really a surprise. According

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<sup>5</sup> National Archives and Records (NAR), Washington DC, Records of the US Department of State relating to the Internal Affairs of Czechoslovakia 1945–1949, Rg 59, No. 860F.00/7–1547.

to him, only the rapidity of the reaction was surprising. Among other things in the report, Steinhardt promised Riddleberger that he would prepare his proposals concerning changes in American policy towards Czechoslovakia in the immediate future.<sup>6</sup> He submitted the promised proposals to the State Department on July 22, 1947, in which he suggested the immediate conclusion of a cultural agreement between the two countries and the adoption of a 'a moderate position' in the coming talks about Czechoslovak dollar payments in dollars for the transport of goods across the American occupation zone in Germany. These gestures indicated to Czechoslovakia that the United States had not abandoned it and understood that Prague's orientation towards the Soviet Union could not be avoided. He also proposed the possible revival of talks between the two countries on the question of American credits and loans. He proposed treating Czechoslovakia with greater caution, albeit with a continued show of goodwill. However, he did note that, as long as the Czechoslovak government continued to strengthen and build its economy on the basis of Soviet promises, the United States would avoid any specific action that would save the Czechoslovak economy from collapse.<sup>7</sup> Steinhardt broadly noted the rejection of the Marshall Plan by non-Communist parties in Czechoslovakia, describing the rejection as a shocking surprise and humiliation, that might indicate a certain panic. Apart from these observations on Czechoslovak non-Communist parties and the Marshall Plan, Steinhardt also expressed his views on the policies of the Communist Party. In a lecture to the National War College in Washington delivered on December 15, 1947 (though already prepared in November 1947), he said, among other things, that there had been a change in the position of the Communists in the Czechoslovak government after the rejection of the Marshall Plan. He noted that the Czechoslovak Communist Party was launching attacks on two fronts: internationally against the United States and other western countries, and domestically against the non-Communist camp, especially the Democratic Party in Slovakia.<sup>8</sup>

In order to supplement the already known facts regarding the rejection of the Marshall Plan, it is necessary to provide the views of Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovak Minister of Foreign Affairs. His original ambition to have an independent foreign policy was definitively destroyed by Soviet policy vis-à-vis European diplomacy. This was indirectly confirmed in the autumn of 1947 when he discussed various economic problems at the State Department in Washington. The main reason for Masaryk's journey was his wish to acquire financing either from the United States or the World Bank. In separate talks with Secretary of State Marshall, he spoke of the reasons that Prague had changed its original position on Czechoslovak participation in the Paris conferences for American aid.

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<sup>6</sup> W. Ullman: *The United States in Prague*. New York 1978, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> FRUS, 1947, Vol. VI., p. 224–226.

<sup>8</sup> Library of Congress, Washington DC, Steinhardt Papers, box 68.

According to the memoranda from the conversation on November 14, 1947, Masaryk explained that the reason for Czechoslovakia's position was simply that Czechoslovakia could not always adopt the position it wanted. Marshall responded with polite diplomacy to Masaryk's hopes of renewing normal economic relations between East and West, at least in terms of trade and increasing the overall exchange of goods. Marshall also called for the renewal of European confidence that had been lost in 1933, something he regarded as an important factor. He asked Masaryk about the various Soviet actions that he believed had undermined the good reputation of the Soviet Union after the end of the war. Masaryk attempted to explain the Soviet position as a result of the suspicion, and indeed obsession with the idea that the United States wanted to trigger a global collapse with the aim of liquidating the Soviet Union. The discussion between the two statesmen continued routinely, both men expecting support from the other for his government's various positions. Only in his concluding words did Masaryk reveal his personal feelings about the plan for European economic recovery and so indirectly about the United States. He told Marshall that he personally was a great admirer of the American effort to help Europe and expressed regrets over the fact that Czechoslovakia could not participate in the project.<sup>9</sup> However Masaryk expressed these personal feelings on the question of the Marshall Plan unofficially, and so they cannot be considered material.

Several questions arise in connection with the Marshall Plan. Did the United States really expect to grant economic aid to Czechoslovakia through the Marshall Plan? Could Czechoslovakia have reacted differently? Could Czechoslovak democracy have survived in such a sharply divided Europe? Was Czechoslovakia really only a test case, a method for Washington to test how Moscow would react? That is what I think.

Departing from the American declarations of the time, I believe that the widely conceived European Recovery Programme was actually intended only for Western European countries. Whatever the intention of the aid, the fact is that the Soviet Union would not have tolerated the influence of any other power in its part of divided Europe. This is confirmed by the fact that Czechoslovakia had no choice in its reaction. On the practical level, this illustrates that the country could not make independent decisions during this period, even on economic matters. It also confirms the fact, that, at least in the case of Czechoslovakia, the economic aspect of the Marshall Plan was subordinate to its political and ideological aspects. In this particular case, the ideas of Masaryk, Beneš and others regarding the so-called policy of the bridge between East and West definitively collapsed. Czechoslovakia was merely a country with which United States tested the response of the East in its Cold War competition. For two

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<sup>9</sup> NAR, No. 860F.51/11-1447, A/FLM.



years, Czechoslovakia represented an interesting synthesis of East and West, a sort of ideological mixture that some journalists called 'the great experiment'. In Czechoslovakia, the politicians knew very well that they were walking a political tightrope between two hostile camps and insisted that the new Czechoslovak orientation was the product of their realism, the only logical response considering their circumstances and traditions. This experiment in the coexistence of socialism and capitalism in economics and other areas of life was described by Dana Adams Schmidt in the book *Anatomy of Satellite* as "a theory of tolerance", whereby the two systems would not devour each but would successfully coexist.<sup>10</sup> When formulating this view, the author probably assumed an ideal world in which two superpowers with different societies and values would continue to cooperate even after the war. However, we know that this was not the case. We also know that since its liberation, Czechoslovak foreign policy was defined first and foremost by its military alliance with the Soviet Union. The Czechoslovak experiment did not fail because of Soviet pressure or because the West did not help, or even because the internal Czechoslovak non-Communist opposition was divided. It failed because communism and democracy do not mix.

In any discussion about Czechoslovak foreign policy in the period from 1945 to 1948, one must address the February coup of 1948. It decisively ended the era of pluralist parliamentary democracy and fulfilled the postwar aims of Soviet foreign policy i.e. Stalin's determination to build a belt of buffer states along the western frontier of his empire and transform it into a monolithic socialist bloc.

Soviet pressure and the decision of the United States in 1947 to leave Prague fully in the economic orbit of Moscow suggests that 'the policy of the bridge', promoted by the abovementioned representatives of Czechoslovak democracy during this period, never really had a chance of being achieved in practice.

I have two examples that prove, or at least illustrate, this opinion. These examples concern statements made by Jan Masaryk at the beginning of 1947, that is half a year before the official declaration of the Czechoslovak position on the Marshall Plan. In January 1947, he was on a brief working visit in the United States. At a press conference held at the Washington, Masaryk, tired and tragically optimistic, gave a personal response to a question that revealed how uncomfortable he really was the notion of Czechoslovakia being a 'bridge' between East and West. He said that he did not feel like a bridge and nobody was asking him to be one. Leaning on a bench in a bohemian way, smoking a cigarette, he played with words in his rejoinder: "Our political situation? Very simple. A loyal ally of Soviet Russia. We always liked Russia. We're Slavs – we are proud of being Slavs. But we see no reason at all to change our attitude to

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<sup>10</sup> D. A. Schmidt: *Anatomy of A Satellite*. Boston 1952, p. 349–354.

the West. We need your help... The Iron Curtain? I don't know anything about an Iron Curtain, simply nothing at all..."<sup>11</sup>

A second illustrative example: the liberal American monthly *Tomorrow* from February 1947 published a study by John Powers on the new Czechoslovakia. Among other things, the article printed Masaryk's response to a question by an American journalist at a press conference in Oslo. Asked once again whether Czechoslovakia could be a bridge between East and West, the Minister of Foreign Affairs answered more earthily than diplomatically: "A bridge has the unpleasant characteristic that sooner or later somebody will ride a horse across it and that horse will leave something behind."<sup>12</sup> In conclusion, Czechoslovak foreign policy developed dynamically during the period considered here. But unfortunately, Czechoslovakia never really had the possibility to express an independent view. It was forced to fill the role of a foot soldier in its geographical space. In other words: no new winds, just old dreams.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Češkoslovaška zunanja politika po drugi svetovni vojni: nov veter ali le sanje?*

Po drugi svetovni vojni so Združene države Amerike in Sovjetska zveza postale nov, odločilni pojav tako evropskega kot svetovnega razvoja. Kakšen je bil v tem obdobju mednarodni položaj Češkoslovaške, kakšni so bili nameni in cilji njene zunanje politike in kakšne so bile njene dejanske možnosti? Menim, da je bil mednarodni položaj Češkoslovaške najbolj kontradiktoren med vsemi srednje evropskimi državami. Državi so njeni notranji in zunanji gospodarski, kulturni in komercialni interesi narekovali usmerjenost k Zahodu. Politični vidik pa je bil bolj zapleten.

Prvotna ambicija Češkoslovaške v povojni Evropi je bila nekje v sredini, med dvema svetovoma (vzhodnim in zahodnim), dobro poznana tudi kot t.i. "graditev mostov" ali "politika mostov". Zagovorniki te politike so bili predvsem zunanji minister Jan Masaryk in vse nekomunistične stranke na Češkoslovaškem. Češkoslovaška bi lahko predstavljala nek evropski element, ki bi obstoj teh dveh svetov izkoristil v svoj prid.

<sup>11</sup> SUA, Praha, f. MZV-VA 1945–1951, č.kr. 493, *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, January 14, 1947.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., č.kr. 491, č.m. 1–97m.

Na žalost pa te prednosti ni izkoristila. Prevlada sovjetskih političnih dejavnikov in pritiskov je v srednji Evropi dosegla vrhunec februarja 1948. Posledice praškega komunističnega udara in diktature so bile padec svobode, morale, gospodarstva in življenjskega standarda. Češkoslovaška je postala trden del sovjetskega vzhodnega bloka, zato je vsakršna politika graditve mostov postala le iluzija in sanje.

Ignác Romsics\*

*American Wartime Plans for a New Hungary  
and the Paris Peace Conference, 1941–1947*

On December 28, 1941, three weeks after Pearl Harbor, President Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the establishment of a special organization within the Department of State. It was called the Advisory Committee on Post-war Foreign Policy and its task was to work out the policies that would guide the United States during postwar peace negotiations. The chairman of the Committee was Secretary of State Cordell Hull; its deputy-chairman was Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, and the actual day-to-day operations of the Committee were the responsibility of Leo Pasvolsky (1893–1953), an economist of Russian descent and one of Hull's advisers. Other key figures on the Advisory Committee included: Isaiah Bowman (1878–1950), a professor of geography and, from 1915 to 1935, president of the National Geographic Society, after 1935 professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University; Hamilton Fish Armstrong (1893–1973), editor of *Foreign Affairs*; Anne O'Hare McCormick (1882–1954), foreign policy analyst of *The New York Times*; Herbert Feis (1893–1972), economic consultant to the Department of State at the time and later one of the best-known historians of the war and Cold War years; Philip E. Mosely (1905–1972), a young Harvard graduate and a specialist in East European history who made a name for himself in the postwar decades as an expert on East Europe and the Balkans; and John C. Campbell (1911–), one of the youngest members of the Committee, also an East European specialist who made a career similar to that of Mosely.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee functioned under different names until the end of the war, holding hundreds of meetings and producing thousands of reports. The materials it accumulated amounted to nearly 300 boxes and included approximately 800 typewritten pages dealing exclusively with the future of Hungary. In this paper, I shall mainly discuss the material pertaining to American ideas and proposals concerning post-war Hungary.

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<sup>1</sup> Harley Notter: *Post-War Foreign Policy Preparation 1939–1945*. Washington, 1949, pp. 3–82, 119–159, 520–525; *Post World War II Foreign Policy Planning. State Department Records of Harley A. Notter, 1939–1945*. Washington D. C. 1987, pp. ix–xii. The biographical data are based on various encyclopedias.

This paper is divided into four parts. First, I shall deal with the larger context of the problem: with Eastern and Central Europe, and the various schemes concerning regional cooperation. The second section deals with ethnic tensions and their possible remedies, including the revision of frontiers. The subject of the third part will be the question of democratization in Hungary. Finally, I intend to conclude this brief survey by discussing the complete failure of the proposed American policy toward Hungary.

## I.

Plans for closer economic and political cooperation in the Danube region represented one of the major concerns of the Committee members. They considered it crucial, especially as regards security and economic viability. In terms of security, Committee members wanted the region to act as a bulwark against possible German or Russian penetration, and even against joint Russian-German aggression as happened in 1939.

The other main consideration, economic rationality, aimed at diminishing social tensions and creating the foundation for functioning democracies. It was believed that, without a minimum living standard, the region would continue to be a source of potential conflict. It was also believed that a higher living standard could not be achieved within fragmented and isolated economies; it could only be achieved in the framework of a larger economic unit that shared a common market, common currency, and customs union.

All agreed up to this point. There was, however, no consensus on the borders or on the specific form of regional cooperation. It was originally proposed that the economic unit be as large as possible, that it should encompass all countries from the Baltic to the Aegean. It was quickly realized, however, that this large region was composed of several sub-regions and that these sub-regions were heterogeneous as regards culture, religion, and history. So after long discussion, most members of the Advisory Committee were inclined to accept a plan calling for two East European federations: a Balkan union and a northern union. A possible third sub-unit, a Danubia federation, was briefly considered though the reconstitution of the Habsburg Empire proposed by Otto von Habsburg was never seriously advocated.<sup>2</sup>

Until the summer of 1943 the Advisory Committee was unable to reach a clear consensus on these matters. They did agree on certain things: that the form of regional cooperation should not be a federation but a union of independent and sovereign states, "cooperating for limited objectives through common non-

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<sup>2</sup> National Archives, Washington D.C. (hereafter: NA), RG 59. Notter File, Box 55. P Minutes 10, May 9, 1942. In Ignác Romsics (ed.): *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary. Documents from the U.S. Department of State, 1942–1944*. New York 1992, pp. 57–71. See: Sumner Welles: *The Time for Decision*. New York 1944, pp. 255–256.

legislative institutions, loosely rather than tightly organized."<sup>3</sup>

## II.

It was also believed that economic and political cooperation in the region – and here I come to the second part of this paper – could ease ethnic tensions. And yet the Committee was also convinced that such cooperation on its own – i.e. the abolition or 'spiritualization' of the borders – would not be enough. To solve or at least reduce the problem, important additional methods and devices would be needed. The following three proposals were put forward:

- the adjustment of political frontiers along ethnic dividing lines wherever possible;
- exchange of populations living near border areas;
- protection of minorities, international guarantees, and sanctioning of minority rights including the right to cultural and territorial autonomy in the case of large but remote enclaves.

I will now turn to the specific proposals that emerged from this model.

As far as borders were concerned, the Committee identified twenty-four disputed areas in Eastern Europe. Practically all of Hungary's borders were identified as requiring redefinition, with the exception of the Burgenland and the former Austro-Hungarian frontier, which were accepted as fair. The proposed solution for the Slovak-Hungarian frontier was the modification of the Trianon border more or less along ethno-linguistic line. As indicated on Map 2, four possible solutions were proposed based on the Czechoslovak census of 1930. Economic factors and transportation systems were also taken into consideration, though these sometimes conflicted with ethnic patterns. After protracted discussion, a compromise was finally reached. Instead of an emphatically pro-Hungarian solution (Figure 4) or a pro-Slovak variant (Figure 2), an intermediate version was selected as the preferred solution (Figure 3): namely, a territory of almost 3,000 square miles, with a population close to half a million, would be returned to Hungary. The ratio of ethnic Hungarians in this territory amounted to 64% (again according to the Czechoslovak census). The actual proportion of Hungarians was probably above 70%. Had this plan been adopted, more than 200,000 Hungarians would have remained on the Slovak side of the new border. In order to decrease the size of this minority population, the Advisory Committee proposed a voluntary exchange of population to take place under international control.<sup>4</sup>

Similar techniques were proposed in the case of Ruthenia. As indicated on Map 5, the border area in Ruthenia was inhabited mainly by a Hungarian-speaking population. However, a logistical problem lay in the fact that the only

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<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Box 56. P Document 24, June 19, 1942. In Romsics, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–76.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91–116 and 169–203.

railway line connecting Slovakia with Ruthenia ran through this region to the main railway junction at Chop. Finally, the Committee based its decision on ethnic demography rather than on the transport lines. In accordance with this decision, the Committee recommended the solution shown as Figure 3 on the map. The assumption was that it would be easier to solve the transportation problem by building a new railway line than to resettle an ethnic Hungarian population of approximately 80,000. This solution would have assigned to Hungary an area of about 535 square miles with a total population of about 90,000. According to the Hungarian census of 1910, approximately 78% of the population in question were Hungarian-speaking; according to the Czechoslovak data compiled in 1930, the number was only 58%. Based on this conflicting data, demographic experts of the Committee estimated the proportion as being 75%. For the remaining Hungarian population – estimates varied from 60,000 to 100,000 depending on the census – an exchange or unilateral removal was recommended.<sup>5</sup>

Because of its specific ethnic mixture, Transylvania proved to be a much more difficult problem. Various solutions displayed on Map 4 were discussed on three consecutive occasions in February 1943. The restoration of the Trianon borders of 1920 was considered undesirable; even Romanian census figures from 1930 indicated that Trianon placed a million and a half ethnic Hungarians under Romanian rule. "It would," it was concluded, "perpetuate a difficult minority situation." However, restoration of the pre-Trianon status quo (i. e., returning all of Transylvania to Hungary) was viewed as an even less desirable solution, because it would create a minority of three million Romanians within Hungary. The third possibility presented for consideration was to retain the borders established with the 1940 partition. Nevertheless this solution was impractical in terms of both economic and infrastructural considerations, and the partition would restore to Hungary not only the purely ethnic Hungarian easternmost region, Székelyföld, and the western regions that were predominantly Hungarian-speaking, but also one million Romanians living in ethnically mixed regions. Instead of accepting any of the above-mentioned solutions, the Committee decided to give preference to a new alternative: that most of Transylvania would belong to Romania but the Székely region would be given wide-ranging autonomy and the Romanian-Hungarian border would be revised in favor of Hungary. Map 4 illustrates the consequences of this: namely, that Hungary would be awarded a territory of 5,600 square miles with a population of more than one million of which only 35% was Hungarian (again according to the 1930 Romanian census). It was suggested that this solution could be combined with a population exchange involving the Romanians living in the border area and the approximately 600,000 Hungarians remaining in Transylvania outside of Székelys. The next most favoured solution was the establishment of an inde-

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<sup>5</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 65. T Documents 387–388. October 16 and 28, 1943.

pendent state of Transylvania that would be a member of the proposed Mid-European union, a condominium of Romania and Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

As far as the Yugoslav-Hungarian border was concerned the Committee's specialist on the matter, a young historian, distinguished five separate areas open to dispute (see Map 3, Figure 1). There were 28 predominantly Hungarian communities in the so-called 'Wend' (Slovenian) area along the southwestern frontier established at Trianon. The specialist recommended that the postwar adjustment recognize these as belonging to Hungary. The greater part of so-called Prekmurje, however, which was inhabited by Slovenians and the predominantly Croatian Medjumurje, both of which became Hungarian territories in the spring of 1941, were considered to be parts of Yugoslavia's ethnic territory. Along the southern border – in Baranya, Bácska, and the Bánát – he recommended a compromise solution similar to the American proposal of 1919, a solution which followed linguistic criteria to the greatest extent possible. As shown by the Figures 3 and 4 (Map 3), this compromise solution, returning the recommended northern districts to Hungary, would have left about as many Hungarians under Yugoslav rule (150,000) as Yugoslavs under Hungarian rule (174,000). This northern area, an area of 2,476 square miles, had a population of almost half a million, the ethnic distribution of which, according to the 1921 Yugoslav census, was as follows: 47% ethnic Hungarians, Southern Slavs 36%, German speakers 16%.

This proposal was rejected on the grounds that Hungary, an enemy state, should not be rewarded at the expense of Yugoslavia, which was considered an ally. Instead the Committee voted at the beginning of 1943 for the *status quo ante bellum*. However, within a few months this rigid position was reconsidered and changed. By the summer of 1943, the original proposal became the recommended solution with some minor modifications. The reason for this change of course remains unknown.<sup>7</sup>

A number of scattered minority groups and some quite large minority enclaves would have remained in most countries under consideration even if the border adjustments along ethnic lines had been consistently applied and populations had been exchanged on a large scale. Therefore, a system of minority rights and protection was also considered a necessity. Given the failure of the minority protection system of the League of Nations, the Committee wanted to work out a more effective solution. The most important proposal was the effective sanction of the protection system and the establishment of an international armed force to intervene in cases where minority rights were violated.

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<sup>6</sup> Romsics, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–168 and 211–216; Cf. NA RG 226. Office of Strategic Services, Foreign Nationalities Branch (hereafter: OSS, FNB), INT-15HU-80, 352–353 and 677.

<sup>7</sup> Romsics, *op. cit.*, pp. 126–147, 204–210, and 228–231.



### III.

After dealing with plans for an East European confederation, ethnic tensions and border issues, we will now turn to the internal problems of Hungary, that is to the issue of democratization. In its minutes and reports, the Committee repeatedly described the Horthy regime as "semi-authoritarian in character." The goal of the Committee, therefore, was to replace it with "a truly democratic government." According to analyses, interwar Hungary suffered from two great weaknesses: lack of real land reform and lack of real political democracy.<sup>8</sup>

The Committee dedicated most of its attention to land reform. A radical redistribution of holdings was defined as "a prerequisite for the establishment of a more democratic Hungary." However, the preferred alternative was "a rationally-planned reform" very similar to that advocated by the Károlyi Revolution of 1918–1919, rather than an agrarian revolution determined by essentially political motives. The planned land reform would take place "under the guidance of competent agronomists and with proper physical and financial implementation." It was projected that the entire process would take approximately ten years. The proposed size of the newly created farms would range from eight to fifty acres.<sup>9</sup>

The other issue studied in depth was the establishment of a post-war political system and the desirable composition of the future government. The Committee expressed strong reservations about either an authoritarian or soviet system. They thought it highly unlikely that the Hungarian people would opt for either one of them. Therefore, the "preferred solution" was "a democratic government in either a monarchical or republican form." In terms of the leadership of such a democratic government, they envisioned a popular front-type coalition involving Social Democrats, Smallholders, Liberal Democrats close to Mihály Károlyi and Oszkár Jászi, as well as certain intellectual groups within Hungary, especially some of the so-called populist writers.<sup>10</sup>

No decision was made regarding the future head of state. Committee members agreed, however, that the old ruling elite, including Horthy and István Bethlen should have no leading role in postwar Hungary. It was emphasized that the "old guard's" retention of power "would mean the continuation of an authoritarian regime" and "in all probability Hungary would again be a factor of instability in the Balkan-Danube region." The other factor which obviously influenced decision-making was the openly hostile attitude of the Russians to the survival of the Horthy regime in any form. The Advisory Committee learned

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<sup>8</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 153. H Document 104, January 22, 1944.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Box 65. T Documents 430 and 431. Hungarian Land Reform Since 1918, and Hungarian Agriculture; Box 66. T Document 465, March 11, 1944. A Suggested Basis for Land Reform in Hungary and Box 153. H Document 87-a, May 2, 1944. Hungary, Land Reform.

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Box 71. TS-58. Hungary. IV. Permanent Government, February 9, 1944, and Box 153. H Document 104. January 27, 1944. *Cf.*, RG 226. OSS. Box 177. No. 27158.

that "the Russians have expressed their objection to the retention of the regency and of the regime of the landlords."<sup>11</sup>

The Committee did not rule out the possibility that a new democratic Hungary would be a monarchy. Nevertheless, the possible enthronement of Otto von Habsburg was rejected. It was presumed, probably incorrectly, that Otto von Habsburg would object to radical land reform. Moreover, his ties to the aristocracy were considered too strong. The final document about Hungary stated: "The U.S. should disapprove the restoration of the Habsburgs to the throne of Hungary."<sup>12</sup>

#### IV.

If even half of these proposals were implemented in the postwar period, Hungary would probably have been one of the most satisfied countries in the world. However, as we know, not a single one of these proposals was carried out. Let us now examine the failure of the program.

It was clear that the plan of an East European confederation was illusory once the region was recognized as falling under the Soviet sphere of influence. Soviet diplomacy, as expressed in Molotov's famous letter of June 7, 1943, left no doubt about that.

...as regards the question of the creation of a federation in Europe of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Greece including Hungary and Austria, the Soviet Government is unwilling to commit to the creation of such a federation, and also considers the inclusion of Hungary and Austria within it as unsuitable.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of 1943, American diplomats had more or less agreed to let Stalin have his way in Eastern Europe. In Teheran, Roosevelt agreed to have Poland 'pushed' west, and agreed to the 1941 borders in the north and south as well. Sumner Welles, hypocritically, deferred to "the peoples of the Baltic States desire to form an integral part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."<sup>14</sup> That official Washington had increasing reservations with regard to the original proposal of the Advisory Committee was indicated also by the change in terminology. Instead of the terms "Mid-European union," "confederation" or "federation," 1944 documents for the most part refer to "regional groupings." A memo in connection with "a Democratic Danubian or East European Federation," dated January 22, 1944, notes: "At present, such regional units are viewed with disfavour in official quarters."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 154. H Document 135, February 26, 1944. Hungary. Transition to Permanent Government.

<sup>12</sup> Romsics, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–39.

<sup>13</sup> NA RG 59. M 1244/17. Records of the Office of European Affairs, 1934–1947.

<sup>14</sup> Sumner Welles, *op. cit.*, pp. 254–255, and 332; Cf. Stephen Borsody: *The Tragedy of Central Europe: Nazi and Soviet Conquest and Aftermath*. New Haven 1980, pp. 123–126.

<sup>15</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 153. H Document 104, January 22, 1944.

The disintegration of the idealistic plans formulated between 1942 and 1944 behind the padded doors of the State Department continued during the last year of the war, and throughout the course of 1946–1947. That this occurred was due not to some conceptual void in American diplomacy, as some have suggested, nor to Roosevelt's illness, but to the Soviets' dominance in the region and to the fact that the Americans had no material interest in challenging this dominance.

The Potsdam Conference in July 1945 was the last time American foreign policy objectives included an ethnically-based solution to the Czechoslovak-Hungarian and Yugoslav-Hungarian border disputes.<sup>16</sup> By the time the Allied foreign ministers met in London in September 1945, the issue had received a new formulation. There, and from then on, the Allies were in agreement that "the frontier with Hungary should be, in general, the frontier existing in 1938," and that the only areas still in dispute were Transylvania and the Romanian-Hungarian border.<sup>17</sup>

Several factors contributed to the Americans' abandonment of the principle of ethnic fairness, which they had considered so important at the time of the peace preparations. The most significant was that, contrary to Washington's expectations, the governments in Belgrade and Prague were adamantly opposed to any kind of frontier adjustment. The same politicians who, in 1942, 1943, and even early in 1944, considered the redrawing of the Hungarian-Slovak border a distinct possibility, believed, after the summer of 1944, that the only way to resolve the border dispute between the countries was to remove the Hungarian population from Czechoslovakia.<sup>18</sup> Similar feelings could be observed in Yugoslavia as well. The government in Belgrade asked for Allied permission to 'exchange' 40,000 ethnic Hungarians, and this number was in addition to those who had already fled in order to escape retaliation at the hands of the Yugoslav Partisans. Further, it registered an official claim to 50 square miles of the border region between Austria and Hungary north of the Drava River, emphasizing in its propaganda the legitimacy of annexing other adjacent Hungarian territories, mainly in the province of Baranya.<sup>19</sup> It was due primarily to the firmness of the

<sup>16</sup> Potsdam Conference Documents 1945. Reel 1. The Berlin Conference. Territorial Studies. July 6, 1945. University Publications of America (Microfilm).

<sup>17</sup> United States Department of State, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (hereafter, *FRUS*), *Diplomatic Papers 1945*. 2, (Washington: USGPO, 1967), vol. 2, 279; Cf., Bennett Korvig: *Peacemaking after World War II: The End of the Myth of National Self-Determination*. In: *The Hungarians: A Divided Nation* (ed. Stephen Borsody). New Haven 1988, pp. 69–88.

<sup>18</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 116. CAC–328. December 15, 1944; *FRUS 1946*, vol. 2, *Council of Foreign Ministers*, (Washington: USGPO, 1970), 418; cf., Sándor Balogh: "Az 1946. február 27-i magyar-csehszlovák lakosságcsere egyezmény," [The Czechoslovak-Hungarian Population Ex-change Agreement of February 27, 1946], *Történelmi Szemle*, no. 1 (1979), pp. 59–66.

<sup>19</sup> Potsdam Conference Documents 1945. Reel 1; Enikő Sajti, *Nemzettudat, jugoszlávizmus, magyarság* [National Consciousness, Yugoslavism and Hungarians] (Szeged, 1991), pp. 123–131.

United States government that the Yugoslav claims were not satisfied, and that Czechoslovak demands were only partially met. In general, Washington strongly objected to solving territorial differences by punishing entire ethnic groups for the sufferings caused by war (with the significant exception of the mass relocation of Germans.)<sup>20</sup>

Britain's attitude represented another important reason why the matter of the Czechoslovak-Hungarian and Yugoslav-Hungarian borders never came up in the course of postwar negotiations. Even before the Potsdam Conference, the British government had decided to support the restoration of the 1938 borders.<sup>21</sup> Taking all of this into consideration, it would have been a quixotic gesture indeed for the United States to insist on implementing the Advisory Committee's suggestions.

Unlike the Csallóköz and the Baranya-Bacska-Bánát issues, the status of Transylvania remained uncertain until May 1946. The American delegation at Potsdam recommended that "the three principal Allies proceed in the near future with preliminary talks concerning the establishment of a definite boundary between Hungary and Romania, and that favourable consideration be given to revision of the prewar frontier in favour of Hungary on ethnic grounds."<sup>22</sup> When the preliminary talks were held at the September 1945 meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Soviet delegation made no secret of the fact that it wanted to see "the whole of Transylvania" go to Romania. The joint British-American position, however, was for "examining the respective claims of the two States." Secretary of State Byrnes noted in the course of the debate that "the change which he had in mind would not affect more than 3,000 square miles." This was close to the minimum area recommended by the Advisory Committee in 1943–1944 (see Map 4, Rectification of Boundary table). No decision was made on the matter at the London session, and the Council agreed to adjourn the debate.<sup>23</sup>

The next time the problem of Transylvania came up was at the April 1946 meeting of the deputy foreign ministers, also held in London. The Soviet representatives insisted, once again, that the Trianon borders be restored. Britain and France reluctantly accepted this proposal and the United States was no longer in a position to press its own revisionist plans. American representatives did sug-

<sup>20</sup> NA RG 59. Notter File, Box 154. H-165, and Box 116. CAC-328; *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers. 1945*, vol. IV. (Washington: USGPO, 1968), 928–929; and *FRUS 1946*, vol. 3. *Paris Peace Conference: Proceedings* (Washington: USGPO, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> Mihály Fülöp: A berlini (potsdami) értekezlet és az európai béke, [The Potsdam Conference and European Peace]. In: *Külpolitika*, 1987, no. 5, p. 170.

<sup>22</sup> Potsdam Conference Documents 1945, Reel 1, and no. 407.; cf., *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers 1945*, vol. 5, pp. 509–510, 524–527.

<sup>23</sup> *FRUS, Diplomatic Papers 1945*, vol. 2, pp. 147–150, 184, 227–228, 275–283, 311; Cf., Sándor Balogh: Erdély és a második világháború utáni békeszerződés, [Transylvania and the Peace Settlement after World War II.]. In: *Külpolitika*, 1987, no. 5, pp. 188–189; Kovrig, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

gest that "provision be made to leave the way open for direct negotiations between the Governments of Romania and Hungary with a view to adjusting the frontier so as to reduce the number of persons living under alien rule." The Russians, however, refused to agree to even this diluted wording.<sup>24</sup>

With no consensus forthcoming, the deputy foreign ministers submitted a Soviet and an American recommendation to the May session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. Had there been British and French support, it is possible that Byrnes would have insisted on at least a token compromise. Diplomatically isolated, he judged the matter to be a lost cause and did not want to further test Soviet-American relations, strained enough as they were, with insistence on having his way on a 'third-rate' issue. In return for a trivial Soviet concession, he withdrew the American motion and accepted the Soviet plan. John C. Campbell, secretary of the peace delegation, justified Byrnes's move as follows: "With so many clauses in the four treaties in dispute between the United States and the Soviet Union, this one did not seem worth arguing about any longer."<sup>25</sup>

The fate of Transylvania was sealed by the American retreat. At the September 5 session of the Romanian Territorial and Political Committee where the issue of Transylvania was reviewed for the last time, the United States delegate, William Averell Harriman, made the following statement about the draft peace treaty: "The United States had not been a strong supporter of the proposed text but wished to make it clear that he would vote for it since it had been agreed by the Council." With this, the question of Transylvania was taken off the agenda.<sup>26</sup>

As regards the planned minority protection system, there was no follow-up. It was assumed that there would be no need for special minority rights in a true democratic state. This approach is generally blamed on the Soviet Union. However, it should be noted that this presumption was by no means confined to the 'socialist camp.' For a long time, major international organizations, such as the United Nations, concurred with this point of view. In 1948, Eleanor Roosevelt, who chaired the United Nations' Human Rights Committee, declared that as long as the human rights of individuals were observed, a declaration of minorities' rights was not needed.<sup>27</sup> In point of fact, it is hard to say exactly when, how and why the proposals for the perfection of the interwar system disappeared from the diplomatic scene.

The defeat suffered by American diplomacy at the hands of the Soviets was completed in June of 1947, when Ferenc Nagy, the new prime minister of Hungary, was forced to leave the country and the systematic liquidation of the fledgling Hungarian democracy began. The United States was outraged by the

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<sup>24</sup> *FRUS, 1946*, vol. 2, *Council of Foreign Ministers*, pp. 259–260.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*; John C. Campbell: The European Territorial Settlement, In: *Foreign Affairs*, October 1947, p. 212.

<sup>26</sup> *FRUS, 1946*, vol. 3, *Paris Peace Conference: Proceedings*, pp. 375–376.

<sup>27</sup> László Kövágó: *Kisebbség-nemzetiség* [Minority, Nationality]. Budapest 1977, p. 30.

Hungarian prime minister's forced exile. President Truman called it a disgrace and the Department of State referred to it as a *coup d'état*. Once again, however, Washington's vehemence was soon spent. Some junior members of the State Department did suggest that the Nagy case be brought before the United Nations, but the idea was rejected by the head of the European Department who not want the matter to distract the Security Council's attention from the problem of Greece.<sup>28</sup>

As the Americans saw it, Hungary became one of the communist states of Eastern Europe in the summer of 1947. Consequently, the policy of American support, officially called 'limited encouragement,' was abandoned. Hungary's short-lived democracy was commemorated by John F. Montgomery in his 1947 memoirs as follows: "For a second time within a decade, a small European country, Hungary, is being turned into a satellite of an overwhelmingly strong neighbor."<sup>29</sup> As we know, this state of affairs lasted for over 40 years.

## *Povzetek*

### *Ameriški medvojni načrti glede Madžarske in Pariška mirovna konferenca, 1941–1947*

Tri tedne po napadu na Pearl Harbour, 28. decembra 1941 je predsednik Franklin D. Roosevelt odobril ustanovitev posebne organizacije znotraj ministrstva za zunanje zadeve, ki se je imenovala Svetovalni odbor za povojno zunanjo politiko. Naloga odbora je bilo oblikovanje politike, ki bi ZDA služila kot usmeritev v povojnih mirovnih pogajanjih. Odbor je deloval pod različnimi imeni vse do konca vojne, izdelal je na tisoče poročil in organiziral na stotine sestankov. Gradivo je bilo zbrano v kar 300 škatlah, okoli 800 tipkanih strani pa se je ukvarjalo izključno s prihodnostjo Madžarske.

Namen tega prispevka je prikazati različna stališča o prihodnosti Madžarske, ki so se pojavila v razpravah tega Svetovalnega odbora. Predstavitev je razdeljena na štiri dele. V prvem delu je podan širši kontekst problema: situacija v vzhodni in srednji Evropi in programi regionalnega sodelovanja. Načrti za tesnejše gospodarsko in politično sodelovanje so bili v središču pozornosti članov odbora. Po dolgih razpravah so sklenili, da naj ima to sodelovanje obliko zveze neodvisnih držav in ne federacije.

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<sup>28</sup> Stanley M. Max: *The United States, Great Britain and the Sovietization of Hungary, 1945–1948*. Boulder 1985, pp. 105–110.

<sup>29</sup> John F. Montgomery: *Hungary, the Unwilling Satellite*. New York: 1947, "Dedication."

V drugem delu so obravnavane etnične napetosti in možna sredstva za njihovo reševanje. Obstajali so naslednji trije osnovni predlogi: 1) prilagoditev političnih meja etničnim ločnicam v največji možni meri in kjerkoli je to mogoče; 2) izmenjava prebivalstva, ki živi v obmejnih območjih; 3) odobritev manjšinskih pravic, tudi pravice do kulturne in ozemeljske avtonomije. Kar je zadevalo meje je odbor prepoznal štiriindvajset spornih območij v vzhodni Evropi, med njimi tudi celotno madžarsko mejo razen tiste med Avstrijo in Madžarsko, ki je štela za pravično.

Predmet tretjega dela je vprašanje demokratizacije Madžarske. Analize kažejo, da je imela medvojna Madžarska dve veliki slabosti, in sicer pomanjkanje prave zemljiške reforme in pomanjkanje prave politične demokracije. Politični sistem je bil vedno znova označen kot "pol-avtoritaren". Zato je odbor načrtoval, da ga nadomesti z "resnično demokratično vlado". Kar pa zadeva ponovno razdelitev posesti, pa so se zavzemali za "razumno načrtovano reformo".

V zaključku je podan opis, kako se je predlagana ameriška politika glede Madžarske izkazala za popoln polom. Razlog za to ni bila le določena konceptualna praznina ameriške diplomacije, kot to namigujejo nekateri, niti ne Rooseveltova bolezen, temveč sovjetska prevlada v regiji in pomanjkanje stvarnih interesov Amerike, da bi tej prevladi oporekala. Poraz ameriške diplomacije je bil dokončen leta 1947 s podpisom nove mirovne pogodbe in pričetkom sistematičnega uničevanja rojevajoče se madžarske demokracije.

UDK 323(453.3)"1945"

Nevenka Troha\*

*The Class and the Nationality:  
the Example of Trieste 1945*

"Trst je naš" ("Trieste is ours"), "Trieste italianissima" ("Trieste, the most Italian of cities") – these so frequently heard, overused and worn-out propaganda slogans demonstrate very clearly the division in this city and its wider hinterland,<sup>1</sup> which has developed through decades and reached its peak in the end of World War II and the years after that. It is still present to a certain degree today. The flyer of the Italian Trieste national liberation committee, dispersed during the visit of the International Demarcation Commission in March 1946, states: "The question of the affiliation of Trieste is the question of life and death".<sup>2</sup> And in reality not only the people in the Trieste, divided into two blocks (in Venezia Giulia), but also many people in Italy and Yugoslavia were convinced that they were the only ones with the true arguments why this seaport together with its wider hinterlands should be annexed to their country.

In Venezia Giulia, a region of mixed nationalities, the Italian fascist authorities, ever since they rose to power in 1922, implemented violent measures in the context of the border fascism policy against the political left as well as against certain nations – a cultural genocide of the Slovenian and Croatian minorities, as their actions are referred to by the best experts on the fascist denationalisation policy in the Venezia Giulia, the recently deceased Trieste historian Elio Apih and the Slovenian historian Milica Kacin Wohinz.<sup>3</sup> The Italian left was the politi-

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<sup>1</sup> The wider hinterland of Trieste is the area between the Austrian and Italian border (from 1915) and the so-called Rapallo border (from 1920) and the part of Udine province with Slovenian population, which was already annexed to Italy in 1866. Slovenians refer to this region as *Primorska* or *Slovensko primorje in Istra*, while Italians call it *Venezia Giulia*. This was also the official name for the territory of the Italian provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, Pola and Fiume, which were under the jurisdiction of two military administrations between 12 June 1945 and 15 September 1947 – the western part (Zone A) was under the jurisdiction of the Anglo-American Allies, while the eastern part (Zone B) was under the military administration of the Yugoslav Army.

<sup>2</sup> Arhiv Republike Slovenije [Archive of the Republic of Slovenia] (hereinafter ARS), collection Zbirka gradiva informacijske službe na Primorskem (AS 1584), ae 187. National League flyers.

<sup>3</sup> Elio Apih and Milica Kacin Wohinz also used this term in their discussions of the Slovenian-Italian cultural and historical commission, while in the report of this commission the term "etnična bonifikacija" ("ethnic improvement") is used. *Slovensko-italijanski odnosi 1880–1956*:



cal and ideological opponent of fascism, while the minorities were automatically its opponents, because by being born and identifying themselves as Slovenians or Croatians they could not understand that it was a special "mercy" to be allowed into the world of high culture, that it was a special "favour" to be able to become a part of a historical nation, that it was actually salvation from one's "barbaric" uncultured origins as a nation without history. Thus one of the founders of the cultural genocide policy, the fascist hierarch Livio Ragusin in his work *Politica di confine*, published in 1929, maintained that there are no national minorities at the Italian eastern borders, that there are only foreign groups without history, civilization, national awareness or intellectual class. These people were supposedly an inferior Slavic race, which should be, according to historical rules, assimilated by the superior Italian civilization by "colonization based on the example of the Roman Empire".<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Slovenians and Croatians, with the exception of individuals who agreed to the cooperation with fascism out of opportunism or necessity,<sup>5</sup> were also ideological and political opponents of fascism. According to Milica Kacin Wohinz, many Slovenians, including those in the countryside, joined the communist party because they believed in the principles of social justice and national equality. This combination resulted in the fascist neologism "slavocomunismo" or "slavobolscevismo", which brought together the ideological as well as racial stereotype and was used by the fascism at the border for the fight against two enemies at the same time.<sup>6</sup> Slovenians belonging to the liberal or Christian-social organisations were also ideological and political opponents of fascism. The Communist Party of Italy (*Partito comunista italiano*, PCI) and other Italian non-fascist parties were forbidden in 1926, while the Slovenian Trieste (liberals) and Gorizia (Christian socialists) Edinost parties were outlawed in 1928, when the Italian-Yugoslav treaty of friendship was terminated.<sup>7</sup>

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*poročilo slovensko italijanske zgodovinsko-kulturne komisije = I rapporti italo-sloveni 1880–1956: relazione della commissione storico-culturale italo-slovena = Slovenian-Italian relations 1880–1956: the report of the Slovenian-Italian historical and cultural commission.* Ljubljana 2001, p. 39 (hereinafter Slovenian-Italian relations). The term "bonifica etnica" ("ethnic improvement") was used by the Italian fascist authorities, and occasionally the terms "bonifica nazionale", "bonifica morale", "nazionalizzazione" and so on were also used. Milica Kacin Wohinz, Jože Pirjevec: *Zgodovina Slovencev v Italiji 1866–2000* [The History of Slovenes in Italy 1866–2000]. Ljubljana 2000 (hereinafter Kacin, Pirjevec, *Zgodovina Slovencev*), p. 62. *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848–1992* [Slovene Contemporary History: from the Programme of United Slovenia to the international recognition of Slovenia 1848–1992]. Ljubljana 2005 (hereinafter Slovenska novejša zgodovina), 1, p. 539.

<sup>4</sup> Kacin, Pirjevec, *Zgodovina Slovencev*, p. 62. Slovenska novejša zgodovina, p. 539.

<sup>5</sup> To date just a little partial research has been carried out about the people who agreed to the collaboration with the regime, for example by Ervin Dolenc: *Naši Fašisti*. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2000, No. 1, pp. 113–122.

<sup>6</sup> Slovenska novejša zgodovina, p. 529.

<sup>7</sup> Slovenska novejša zgodovina, p. 533. For more information see Milica Kacin Wohinz: *Prvi antifašizem v Evropi: Primorska 1925–1935*. Koper 1990. Egon Pelikan: *Tajno delovanje primorske duhovščine pod fašizmom: Primorski krščanski socialci med Vatikanom, fašistično*

During the war – the Italian occupation of the so-called Ljubljana province and then the German occupation of the Operation Zone of the Adriatic Littoral (in the time when violence and suffering reached its peak) – the opposition between fascists and anti-fascists became even tenser. Violence resulted in two-fold resistance. For the majority of Slovenians from the Venezia Giulia this was a struggle to preserve their nation, whose goal was not only liberation brought about by the defeat of the German occupiers, but first and foremost liberation from Italy, which meant the change of the border. One of the most prominent Slovenian Christian socialists from the Venezia Giulia, Engelbert Besednjak, wrote in his letter sent from Belgrade to his political ally in Venezia Giulia, father Virgil Šček, in the end of 1944: "All personal gains, factional aspects and considerations should be subordinated to this goal (liberation from Italy)".<sup>8</sup> Thus many people, who otherwise opposed the "godless" communism, joined the side they believed would be capable to bring about this liberation – the "communist" Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation, which has since the beginning in principle supported the programme of the United Slovenia and thus also the change of the border, and at the same time managed to organise a strong resistance movement which became a part of the allied forces. For many Slovenians from Venezia Giulia this resistance also meant the struggle for social class liberation, since the Italian state in the context of the aforementioned policy of ethnic improvement severely interfered with their social structure. Therefore they supported the political option they believed would bring a better life for them and their families.<sup>9</sup>

Some Italians, although with different goals, also stood up to the fascist authorities, then the German occupier and those collaborating with them. Some of them thought that after the war the region, annexed by Italy in 1920 with the Treaty of Rapallo, should be included in a democratic Italian state within its current borders. They organised themselves in the National Liberation Committee of Venezia Giulia (Comitato di liberazione nazionale Giuliano, CLNG). Because of their demands for the preservation of the Rapallo borders, they ended up in conflict not only with the Slovenian liberation movement, but also with the central National Liberation Committee of Northern Italy (Comitato di liberazione nazionale Alta Italia, CLNAI), which was interested in close coope-

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*Italijo in slovensko katoliško desnico – zgodovinsko ozadje romana Kaplan Martin Čedermac.* Ljubljana 2002.

<sup>8</sup> ARS, Collection Edvard Kardelj (AS 1277), box 75, the letter of Engelbert Besednjak to Virgil Šček, 31 December 1944 (published in *Goriški letnik*, 1976, No. 3, pp. 258–267).

<sup>9</sup> For the information on the standpoint of the Slovenian communists and the Slovenian Liberation Movement leadership about the question of the Slovenian Western border see Bojan Godeša: *Slovensko nacionalno vprašanje med drugo svetovno vojno*. Ljubljana 2006 (hereinafter Godeša, *Slovensko nacionalno vprašanje*), pp. 165–197. Nevenka Troha: *Slovensko osvobodilno gibanje in slovenska zahodna meja*. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 2003, No. 1–2, pp. 63–85.

ration with Slovenians or with the Yugoslav liberation movement as a part of the allied coalition. In June 1944 CLNAI adopted a public proclamation addressed to the Italian population in Venezia Giulia, which for the first time (and the last time) sees the causes for denationalisation not only in fascism but also in the peace treaties concluded in the end of World War I.<sup>10</sup> CLNG, except for the communists, rejected this proclamation and demanded that the term "the right of self-determination" in the text be replaced with "the rights of national minorities", which were included within the borders of Italy and also accepted by the legitimate Yugoslav representatives after World War I.<sup>11</sup> After the PCI Trieste federation seceded from CLNG in the autumn of 1944, CLNG adopted a declaration in December 1944, opting for a united Italy as fought for in Venezia Giulia in World War I, thus reaffirming the demands for the preservation of the Rapallo borders.<sup>12</sup>

The demand for the preservation of the victorious Italian World War I borders was maximalist. The Yugoslav demand for the border at the Slovenian ethnic border – meaning the border following the line of consistent Slovenian population in the countryside – can also be understood as such (and it was, in the Italian circles). However, there was an important difference between the two standpoints. Slovenian ethnic borders did not include any consistently Italian areas, but only the "Italian islands in the Slovenian and Croatian sea", meaning the cities where the majority of the population was Italian, while the Rapallo borders included extensive completely Slovenian areas. As an illustration I shall refer to the fact that, according to the 1910 census, in the area annexed to Slovenia after the 1947 peace treaty Free Territory of Trieste (Zone B of the without the Koper district), there were only 222 Italians among 182.474 inhabitants.<sup>13</sup>

Another part of the Italian anti-fascists chose class before nation and saw the hope of a better future in the communist Yugoslavia, therefore they affiliated themselves with the Slovenian Liberation Movement, the joint committees of the Workers' Unity,<sup>14</sup> or the Garibaldi Units. At the same time, the leadership of the Communist Party of Slovenia (Komunistična partija Slovenije, KPS) gradually took over the Italian partisan organisations in Venezia Giulia through the policy of the Slovenian-Italian fraternity, and after the leaders of the Trieste federation were arrested in the autumn of 1944, it also took over the local PCI, which already in October 1944 entirely supported the pro-Yugoslav standpoints.

<sup>10</sup> ARS, Collection CKKPS (AS 1487), ae 649. The report by Anton Vratuša to the Central Committee of KPS, 10 June 1944. See also ae 893.

<sup>11</sup> Galliano Fogar: *Trieste in guerra 1940–1945: società e resistenza*. Trieste 1999 (hereinafter Fogar, Trieste in guerra) pp. 151, 152, 158–159.

<sup>12</sup> Fogar, Trieste in guerra, pp. 206–209.

<sup>13</sup> The information acquired with the 1910 census was published many times, for example in *Oko Trsta*. Belgrade 1945, pp. 141–152.

<sup>14</sup> Godeša, Slovensko nacionalno vprašanje, pp. 161–164.

However, as the member of the KPS Committee for the Primorska (Slovenian part of Venezia Giulia) Branko Babič put it, some "practical problems" still existed.<sup>15</sup> In December 1944 a joint communist party committee was established in Trieste, which actually functioned entirely in accordance with the directives of KPS. The leadership of the Slovenian liberation movement attempted to gain complete control over the Italian partisan units in Venezia Giulia, which would keep their internal independence, political leadership would be ensured for PCI, and they were to be cleansed of the "fascist elements".<sup>16</sup> Before the end of the war the leadership of the Slovenian liberation movement also planned to establish a single mass political organisation, which would function on the same premises as the Slovenian Liberation Front. This did not happen; however, in the middle of April 1945 a joint Slovenian-Italian anti-fascist executive committee was established in Trieste, which functioned as a joint leadership of Slovenian and Italian organisations.<sup>17</sup> After the liberation this committee assumed power; on 7 May 1945 it was transformed into the City Liberation Council Trieste, and it continued functioning as joint political leadership.<sup>18</sup>

After the war a large part of the Italian worker population in large centres like Trieste, Monfalcone and Muggia supported the Yugoslav demands concerning the border, meaning the annexation of the whole Venezia Giulia to Yugoslavia. They believed they would be annexed to a country which would become a part of the great communist family, led by the Soviet Union they saw as a shining example. Naively, they expected that Yugoslav authorities themselves meant communism.<sup>19</sup> They often saw the Slovenian liberation movement as nationalist, partly also because of the propaganda of the opposite side, but partly also because Slovenians as "more reliable" held almost all key positions,<sup>20</sup> but the hope in the realisation of the communist society prevailed over the fear of being oppressed because of their nationality. Most of the Italian worker population in that region thus thought along the same lines as an important Italian communist from Monfalcone, Leopoldo Gasparini, who at the Gorizia region meeting on 3 July 1945 stated: "We are called upon to bring about a new order, not only in the Venezia Giulia, but also in Europe. /.../ We – Tito's

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<sup>15</sup> ARS, AS 1487, ae 1851. The letter of Lidija Šentjunc to CK KPS, 26 October 1944. file 535. The report of Branko Babič to the KPS Committee for the Primorska region, 28 October 1944.

<sup>16</sup> ARS, AS 1487, ae 630. The letter of Edvard Kardelj to the direction of PCI, 9 September 1944.

<sup>17</sup> ARS, AS 1487, ae 3467. The letter of the KPS Committee for the Slovenian Primorska region to Rado Uršič, 9 April 1945. AS 1529, collection Boris Kraigher, box 1. The dispatch from Boris Kraigher to Boris Kidrič, 29 May 1945.

<sup>18</sup> ARS, AS 1529, box 1. The dispatch from Boris Kraigher to Boris Kidrič, 29 May 1945.

<sup>19</sup> ARS, AS 1584, ae 99. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> OZNA sector Trieste, 12 May 1945.

<sup>20</sup> ARS, AS 1584, ae 109. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> OZNA sector Trieste, 14 May 1945. ae 114. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> OZNA sector Trieste, 18 May 1945.

partisans, Slovenians and Italians – achieved a military victory, but now we also have to secure a political victory".<sup>21</sup>

In the end of the war the Slovenian partisans together with the Yugoslav Army units liberated and occupied all of Venezia Giulia, and also the parts of the Udine province with Slovenian population (valleys of Natisone, Resia and Torre, Canale valley). They were the victors who wanted to change the state borders and at the same time introduce socialism (communism), and simultaneously they were the avengers for all the suffering brought about by fascism and war. A great majority of Slovenians and those Italians who were, in the time of fascism, as the writer Guido Miglia wrote, destined to obey, serve or keep quiet, greeted them enthusiastically.<sup>22</sup> Edvard Kardelj reported to Josip Broz Tito that Slovenians in Trieste, Gorizia and elsewhere in the Venezia Giulia "literally went crazy with enthusiasm about Yugoslavia" after the liberation.<sup>23</sup> The priest and Christian socialist Virgil Šček described the arrival of the Yugoslav partisans to Lokev near Sežana: "29 April 1945. At 5pm the first tanks showed up, Yugoslav soldiers sitting on them: they stopped in the village. People were surprised, ecstatic. They ran into their houses where they already had the flags prepared, they waited for the soldiers, yelling: Long live our boys! Women and men distributed cigarettes, flowers, drink. We saw eight boys and one girl on the first tank. They were shining with happiness because of the unexpected reception. A woman asked them: Where are you going? And they answered: To liberate Trieste!"<sup>24</sup>

Those supporting the annexation to Yugoslavia, Slovenians as well as Italians, also agreed with the measures implemented by the Yugoslav authorities in the occupied Venezia Giulia in May 1945, including arrests and deportations, which were seen as punishment for fascist crimes.<sup>25</sup> However, they did not understand this punishment to such a drastic degree as it was carried out, meaning the mass executions, and they also protested the imprisonment of innocent people.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> ARS, Collection Okrožni komite Komunistične partije Julijske krajine za Goriško (AS 1571), file 7. The report of the Gorizia district assembly, 3 July 1945.

<sup>22</sup> Guido Miglia, Statement for the newspaper Republika, 20 September 1994.

<sup>23</sup> ARS, AS 1277, box 29. The dispatch from Edvard Kardelj to Josip Broz Tito, 5 May 1945.

<sup>24</sup> Virgil Šček: Lokavske starine. III. del, manuscript, p. 196. Kept by the Lokev parochial office.

<sup>25</sup> After the liberation and the occupation of Venezia Giulia in May 1945 the Yugoslav authorities arrested several thousand people. Some of them were released, others were transported to camps and prisons in Yugoslavia, and some were executed in the days after the arrest. More in Nevenka Troha: *Komu Trst: Slovenci in Italijani med dvema državama*. Ljubljana 1999 (hereinafter Troha, *Komu Trst*), pp. 43–72.

<sup>26</sup> ARS, AS 1584, ae 41. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations sector Trieste, 6 May 1945. ae 126. The intervention of Boris Kraigher with the Department for the Protection of People chief J. Sluga, 11 May 1945. ae 137. The intervention of the Gorizia Liberation Front for the imprisoned Italian anti-fascists, without a date, ae 142. The request for the release of the prisoners from the POW camp Borovnica. AS 1583, collection Mestni osvobodilni svet Trst, file 7a. Interventions for the release.

Only Italians were among those demanding the preservation of the Rapallo border, even though they were on the opposite sides during the war. The so-called defence of Italianism in a way brought together the anti-fascists and the collaborators of the liberation struggle, and fascists and/or those who collaborated with the occupier. For all of them the arrival of the Yugoslav units to Trieste represented a greater danger than the German occupation, despite the Nazi plans about Trieste being a part of the Third Reich. The writer Silvio Benco from Trieste wrote the following about the Yugoslav occupation in May 1945: "All around the world peace finally smiled upon the people, but Trieste was full of terror and pain. /.../ Never has Trieste suffered such a cruel deformation of its face and such perversion of its emotions."<sup>27</sup>

The Trieste and Koper bishop Antonio Santin emphasized in June 1945 that Trieste had to put up with three tyrannical and police rules, one worse than the other.<sup>28</sup>

Before the end of the war the Italian Trieste national liberation committee without the communists who, as mentioned before, seceded it in 1944 and openly joined the side of the Slovenian liberation movement, was, because of its continuous ideological and especially national prejudice against the so-called Slavs, torn between the awareness that the Slovenian liberation movement was a part of the allied forces and thus good relations with it were required, and the fear of the Slavic danger, which was a common point between this committee and the Italian collaborationist circles. Knowing that it could not find an excuse for this with the allies, the committee did not agree to the united Italian anti-Slavic front during the war or to a joint struggle with the collaborationist circles as well as German and Chetnik units against the Slovenian liberation movement.<sup>29</sup> However, because of its demands for the renewal of the old Rapallo borders, despite the fact that it guaranteed equality and autonomy for the minorities within these borders,<sup>30</sup> the Italian Trieste national liberation committee obviously completely opposed the demands of the Slovenian liberation movement, thus any communication between them was extremely difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, in the beginning of April 1945 the Liberation Front leadership in Trieste renewed the contacts with CLNG, severed in the autumn of 1944, and offered it the chance to participate in the Slovenian-Italian anti-fascist executive committee, but only under the conditions of the Liberation Front; the refusal of this suggestion would mean they became open opponents in the struggle for Trieste. Two representatives of CLNG came to the plenary meeting

<sup>27</sup> Silvio Benco, *Contemplazione del disordine*, pp. 7, 8. In: Troha, *Komu Trst*, p. 33.

<sup>28</sup> Archivio storico-diplomatico del Ministero degli affari estri (hereinafter ASDMAE), AP 1931–1945, Jugoslavia, b. 153, Political situation in the Venezia Giulia and Friuli, 4 June 1945.

<sup>29</sup> Fogar, *Trieste in guerra*, p. 236–239.

<sup>30</sup> The statement of 9 December 1944 argued for the equality of nations and fully equal rights for all citizens. Fogar, *Trieste in guerra*, p. 207.

of the anti-fascist organisations representatives in the night between 12 and 13 April 1945, where the Slovenian-Italian anti-fascist executive committee was established, but left the meeting before it ended.<sup>31</sup> The final attempt of an agreement between CLNG and the Liberation Front took place after 20 April 1945, but once again it was unsuccessful, as were the discussions of military cooperation.<sup>32</sup>

The dilemmas of the Italian Trieste National Liberation Committee are described vividly in the memoirs of its member Pier Antonio Quarantotti Gambini, who also describes the way that the pro-Italian anti-fascist circles in Trieste thought. Gambini writes: "We are not Slavs, we do not want to be brought together in Tito's federation. We are Italians and we want to remain Italian, including most Marxists among us. Even the simplest people know that here we speak Italian, not Slovenian and Croatian like Tito's propaganda claims. Is not the language you speak the most basic and decisive declaration of the allegiance to one's country?"<sup>33</sup> At this point we should obviously ask ourselves whether they were truly unaware of the fact that with their demands for the preservation of the "holy and untouchable" Rapallo border they simultaneously denied the same right of the allegiance of the territory in regard to the language they demanded for themselves to the Slovenians and Croatians. The Yugoslav soldiers, who liberated and occupied Trieste in the end of the war and did not speak Italian, were inferior to them, while at the same time they themselves did not understand the language of their neighbours.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The joint leadership was supposed to ensure the normalisation of life, the democratisation of the authorities and democratic elections. According to the proposal of the Liberation Front only those members of CLNG should be allowed to join SIAIO, for whom "the question whether Trieste should be annexed to Yugoslavia was definitely solved", and there were no such people in CLNG. The members of CLNG had second thoughts about military units in these discussions, and they also demanded that the city guard (Guardie civiche) be acknowledged; this was not acceptable for the Liberation Front, which considered these units collaborators. CLNG also demanded the majority in the Trieste parity committee, and based this demand on the fact that it supposedly represented the majority of the Italian population. AS 1491, collection Oblastni komite KPS za Slovensko primorje, box 112. The report of MK KP Trieste, 15 April 1945. Nevenka Troha: *Politika slovensko-italijanskega bratstva: Slovansko-italijanska antifašistična unija v coni A Julijske krajine*. Ljubljana 1998 (hereinafter Troha, *Politika bratstva*), pp. 42–44.

<sup>32</sup> Teodoro Sala: *Crisi finale nel Litorale adriatico 1944/45*. Udine 1962 (hereinafter Sala, *Crisi finale*), pp. 142–145. ARS, AS 1491, collection Oblastni komite KPS za Slovensko primorje, box archive KPJK. The report A. Fonda Savio: Resurrection in Trieste, April 1945.

<sup>33</sup> Pier Antonio Quarantotti Gambini, (*Primavera a Trieste*). 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Trieste, 1985, pp. 161, 162. Quoted in Troha, *Komu Trst*, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> I shall quote the following text: "All offices in the city are in complete chaos. The leading posts are held by total analphabets. The citizens of Trieste can only laugh at the documents (passports, certain orders etc.), released by various offices: grammatically wrong, filled out incorrectly. /.../ And these people want Trieste and the coast. Return to your little village, if it is so beautiful; excuse me, go back to your thickets, filthy rabble." From *Cronistoria della Casa Religiosa dei Carmelitani Scalzi, Trieste, 27 May 1945*. In: Paolo Blasina: *Vescovo e clero nella diocesi di Trieste-Capodistria 1938–1945*. Trieste 1993, p. 121.

Thus, except for the communists and their sympathisers, the Italian anti-fascists did not expect the Yugoslav partisans in the end of the war as liberators, but rather like conquerors, new occupiers, who supposedly coveted the Italian holy territory. The report to the Italian government dating back to the middle of May 1945 says: "La città di Trieste italianissima – Trieste, the most Italian of the cities in regard to its blood, culture, emotions, language, history and tradition, is now in even a worse position than under the Nazi-fascist slavery. Is this the freedom, promised to the people, for which so much blood was shed?"<sup>35</sup> These convictions of theirs were even strengthened by the measures of the Yugoslav authorities after their occupation of Venezia Giulia, especially mass arrests, deportations and executions, which were understood as the elimination of Italians, as vengeance of one nation against another, although in fact they were punishment for fascist crimes and partly also the removal of those who would not recognize the Yugoslav Army as a liberator.<sup>36</sup>

After the Yugoslav units retreated east of the so-called Morgan Line of demarcation on 12 June 1945 and the administration of Trieste and the rest of the Zone A of Venezia Giulia was taken over by the Anglo-Americans, this common interest in defending what was Italian brought the Italian anti-fascists together with their yesterday's enemies – the fascists, former fascists, or, as they can be referred to, the heirs of fascism and nationalism. The barriers which prevented cooperation among them during the war were gone. During the peace negotiations all of them came together in the joint pro-Italian block. Within this block right-wing extremism kept gaining momentum and the ideals of a democratic society, in the name of which the parties of the Italian National Liberation Committee still existed, were gradually forgotten. The National Liberation Committee for Venezia Giulia was not disbanded. It kept representing the pro-Italian democratic parties (the Action Party, liberals, socialists and republicans), and apart from defending Italianism, the aforementioned acts of the Yugoslav authorities in May 1945 also influenced their relations with the right-wing or the neo-fascist groups. The authors of the joint introduction to the publication *Nazionalismo e neofascismo* emphasize that small illegal groups of anti-fascists, which represented CLNG during the war, were not able to resist the nationalist and chauvinist advance into Trieste for a long time after the war, since the habits, the way of thinking and culture were still almost identical, except that now these attitudes were justified with the necessity of defending the nation. These attitudes were still founded, according to the introduction, on the assumptions which the political struggle of the Italian leaders had been based on ever since the previous century, like: Italians against Slavic communists, cities

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<sup>35</sup> ASDMAE, Affari politici (hereinafter AP), Yugoslavia, box 149. Military report on the uprising of patriots in Trieste, 30 April 1945, 12 May 1945.

<sup>36</sup> This viewpoint can also be seen in the texts and also literature from that time, especially by certain Italian authors. See the overview of the publications in Raoul Pupo, Roberto Spazzali: *Foibe*. Milan 2003. Troha, *Komu Trst*, pp. 43–72.



versus rural areas. Their actions were reactionary, they opposed any and all changes, and thus also impeded the Italian non-communist anti-fascism.<sup>37</sup> The defence of Italianism, which became the first and foremost value, was identified with the defence of freedom, culture, progress and also democracy. Trieste gradually became the final defence line against the threat coming from the East, while fascism was supposedly just a short episode in the thousand-year history of the Italian nation.<sup>38</sup>

In the beginning of January 1946 CLNG adapted its programme to the demands of the Italian government, which did not insist that the Rapallo border be preserved, but suggested a border at the so-called Wilson Line instead.<sup>39</sup> In February 1946 a National League (Lega nazionale) was formed on the basis of the Austrian tradition, which may have declared itself as apolitical, but which was in fact, as the Yugoslav sources put it, "an exceedingly political concentration of the local reactionary forces", whose main goal was to defend Italianism.<sup>40</sup> It condemned the Slavic (Slovenian) imperialism and appealed to the Italians: "Italians, Slovenian imperialism is at Italy's door. Slovenians want our land."<sup>41</sup> Yugoslav intelligence sources reported the existence of various pro-fascist movements in Trieste in August 1946, but which, according to their evaluations, were more nationalist than fascist. They supposedly got their instructions from Milan to stop their fascist activities and spread anti-Yugoslav propaganda. The report states that several groups were active in Trieste, and that the former fascists were involved with the majority of them, covering up their fascist activities with Italian nationalism.<sup>42</sup>

The pro-Italian and pro-Yugoslav block started forming during the war, and the division between them was finally established at the end of the war and during the years of the so-called struggle for the borders which followed. This dividing line was not only ideological (class-related) or national, it was not just about the difference between fascism and anti-fascism, communism or anti-communism, Slovenians and Italians; instead, it was multilayered. It was about the combination of national interests despite ideological oppositions, and the combination of class-related interests despite national differences. It was up to

<sup>37</sup> *Nazionalismo e neofascismo nella lotta politica al confine orientale 1945–1975*. Trieste 1977 (hereinafter *Nazionalismo e neofascismo*), pp. 13–15.

<sup>38</sup> *Nazionalismo e neofascismo*, pp. 29–32, 45, 47. Giampaolo Valdevit: *La questione di Trieste 1941/1954: Politica internazionale e contesto locale*. Milano, 1986, pp. 114–116.

<sup>39</sup> *La Voce libera*, 1 January 1946. ARS, AS 1584, ae 421. Reports on the situation, unsigned, 5 and 8 January 1946. In 1919 the US president Woodrow Wilson suggested that the border should run across the clearly discernible national borders, but in the concrete suggestion this was not observed consistently, since his suggestion is practically identical to the border of Carniola and as such represents a compromise between the national border and the demands of Italy from the 1915 Treaty of London.

<sup>40</sup> ARS, Collection Glavni odbor KPJK (AS 1569), ae 273. The political situation in Trieste, without a date, probably 1947.

<sup>41</sup> ARS, AS 1584, ae 187. National League fliers.

<sup>42</sup> ARS, AS 1584, ae 230, intelligence report on the Italian reaction, 18 August 1946.

every individual which view was stronger than the other. Thus the struggle for being annexed to one or the other country unified these blocks internally. Simplifying the relations between these blocks merely with the concepts like "Italian fascists" and "Slavic communists", which once again became the synonym for opponents, burned down many bridges and further complicated mutual understanding and cooperation after the war.

The enigma "Trieste is ours" and "Trieste italianissima" was not formally solved until almost a decade after the war, when the London Memorandum was signed in October 1954. Today, Trieste is in Italy, while Venezia Giulia was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia, first with the peace treaty between Italy and Yugoslavia of 10 February 1947, and then with the aforementioned Memorandum. The border may have been a compromise between the demands of the two sides, but to a great extent it corrected the unjust provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo. The Slovenian and Yugoslav Liberation Movement made a significant impact on this course of events with its contribution to the victory over Nazism and fascism. The future of Trieste itself and of all the area around the border is not in continuous inflammation of nationalism and denial of differences, but in the realisation that differences can only enrich.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Razredno in nacionalno : primer Trst 1945*

Italijanske fašistične oblasti so na narodnostno mešanem območju Julijske krajine vse od prihoda na oblast leta 1922 izvajale dvojno nasilje: proti politični levici in kulturni genocid nad slovensko in hrvaško manjšino, torej nad rodом (narodom). Prvi so bili njeni politični in ideološki nasprotniki, drugi pa so bili nasprotniki že s tem, ker so se rodili in čutili kot Slovenci oz. Hrvati. Druga svetovna vojna, italijanska okupacija v t.i. Ljubljanski pokrajini in nato nacistična okupacija Julijske krajine, so v vsej svoji krutosti ta nasprotovanja še potencirali.

Nasilje je rodilo upor, ki je bil dvojen. Za veliko večino Slovencev je bil to boj za ohranitev naroda in osvoboditev ne le od nemškega okupatorja, ampak tudi za spremembo meje in osvoboditev od Italije. Obenem je bil za mnoge med njimi ta upor tudi boj za socialno osvoboditev, saj je italijanska država v okviru politike t.i. etnične bonifikacije hkrati grobo posegla v socialno strukturo tamkajšnjih Slovencev.

Fašističnim oblastem in nato nemškemu okupatorju so se uprli tudi Italijani, a z različnimi cilji. Vsi so se borili proti fašizmu in za izgon okupatorja, razlikovali pa so se v pogledih na bodočnost. Eni so jo prepoznavali v demokratični italijanski državi v njenih dotedanjih mejah, med njimi tudi rapalske, drugi, ki so razredno izbiro postavili pred narodnostno, pa so svoj boljši jutri prepozna-

vali v nastajajoči komunistični Jugoslaviji, zato so se v okviru politike slovensko-italijanskega bratstva povezali s slovenskim osvobodilnim gibanjem.

Del Italijanov in tudi Slovencev v Julijski krajini je iz različnih razlogov pristajal na kolaboracijo z okupatorjem. Slovence je vodilo nasprotovanje "komunistični" Osvobodilni fronti, pritegnile pa so jih tudi nekatere koncesije, ki jih je za razliko od italijanskih fašistov nudil nacistični okupator, Italijani pa so v bistvu nadaljevali s fašističnim delovanjem.

Ob koncu vojne so skupaj z enotami Jugoslovanske armade enote slovenske partizanske vojske osvobodile in zasedle vso Julijsko krajino. Prišli so kot zmagovalci in tudi kot maščevalci za vse trpljenje, ki sta ga prizadejala fašizem in vojna. Velika večina Slovencev in del Italijanov, torej vsi tisti, ki jim je bilo usojeno ubogati, služiti ali pa molčati, jih je z navdušenjem pozdravila. Strinjali so se tudi z ukrepi, ki so jih izvajale jugoslovanske oblasti maja 1945, tudi z aretacijami, ki so jih doživljali kot kazen za fašistične zločine. Vendar ne za tako drastične, kot so bile izvedene, kot množične likvidacije. Hkrati so protestirali proti zapiranju nedolžnih. V okviru nastajajočega projugoslovanskega bloka so terjali spremembo meje, ki jim je pomenila komunizem in /ali/ združitev z matično državo.

Njim nasproten proitalijanski blok je bil nacionalno enoten. V imenu obrambe italijanstva ga je povezovala skupna zahteva po ohranitvi rapalske meje, ki je združevala tako protifašiste in sodelavce osvobodilnega boja, kot fašiste in druge, ki so pristajali na kolaboracijo z okupatorjem. V očeh mnogih Italijanov so namreč Nemci kljub svojim načrtom o Trstu kot delu Tretjega rajha predstavljali manjše zlo od preteče slovanske nevarnosti.

Proitalijanski del prebivalstva je bil tudi proti jugoslovanski zasedbi, ne le proti priključitvi. Jugoslovanskih partizanov niso sprejeli kot osvoboditelje, ampak kot osvajalce, v očeh mnogih, tudi protifašistov, so bili manjvredni barbari, ki so hlepeli po "sveti italijanski zemlji". To njihovo prepričanje je še utrdilo ravnanje jugoslovanskih oblasti ob zasedbi Julijske krajine, zlasti množične aretacije, deportacije in likvidacije, ki so jih razumeli kot odstranjevanje Italijanov, kot obračun enega naroda z drugim, čeprav so bile dejansko kaznovanje za fašistične zločine in deloma tudi odstranitev tistih, ki niso izenačevali Jugoslovanske armade z osvoboditvijo.

Ločnica med dvema blokoma, ki sta nastajala med vojno, se je tako dokončno oblikovala ob njenem koncu. Ni bila zgolj ideološka (razredna) ali zgolj narodnostna, saj ni šlo za razlikovanje med fašizmom in protifašizmom, med komunizmom in protikomunizmom ali za razlikovanje med Slovenci in Italijani. Boj za to, da bi pripadli eni ali drugi državi je oba bloka, ki sta bila sicer znotraj sebe ideološko pisana, poenotil, bolj kot kdajkoli prej ali pa pozneje. Poenostavljanje odnosov med njimi zgolj na pojme, kot sta bila italofašist in slavokomunist, ki sta ponovno postala sinonim za nasprotnika, sta podrla marsikatero mostove in po fašizmu in vojni še otežila medsebojno razumevanje in sodelovanje.

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*Davide Artico* \**Population Transfers to and from Lower Silesia  
after World War Two***Foreword**

Compulsory migration, deportations and forced population transfers have taken place since the beginning of history. Forced transfers have often been implemented along with territorial changes, and the motivation for them is often long-standing racial, ethnic or ideological antagonism. At the core of forced transfers and territorial shifts, hate for the 'other' is usually present-with the 'other' defined as a foreigner who poses an alleged danger to the indigenous local community-and hate generates aggression. In recent centuries, compulsory mass migration has occurred at least partially as a result of the nation-building process, which along with the very persistence of the concept of the nation state, has been an ongoing source of nationalist sentiments.<sup>1</sup>

During World War Two, there was a dramatic increase in violence and terror with civilians paying the highest price. This was particularly true in Poland where every tenth Pole and every fifth German were forced to leave their home as a result of hostile military actions. Another consequence of the war was that the international community ended up tacitly approving population transfers as a necessary step in the creation of a new world order. The expulsion and transfer of millions was experienced throughout the whole of Europe.

The expulsion of millions of people from their homes could only be achieved through direct compulsion or situational pressure. It could either be implemented by the home country or by a foreign power. In the latter case, it was often linked to expulsion from a specific nation state. Population transfers were either implemented in the context of international agreements, in an allegedly humanitarian way, or could be the result of brutal force. Each option had its own profound consequences. It is not of minor importance which values form the foundation of the expulsion of people from their homes, but one thing is certain: in many of cases, expulsion was the only reality, the only option.

In geographical and chronological discussions of Europe during the later

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<sup>1</sup> Krystyna Kersten: *Przymusowe przemieszczenia ludności – próba typologii*. In: Hubert Orłowski, Andrzej Sakson (ed.): *Utracona ojczyzna*. Poznań 1996, pp. 13–29.

phases of World War Two and the late forties, the expulsion of autochthonous German-speaking communities from Lower Silesia is something that is rarely considered and, when it is considered, is viewed as insignificant. But the numbers speak for themselves. The total amount of German civilians transferred from their homes to somewhere else in Europe is close to 14 million and the transfers incurred some 2 million casualties. Approximately 9 million of the total were living in what is present-day Poland and roughly a third of all forcibly transferred Germans lived in the region between the Oder and the Neißé Rivers. From this data, it is clear that no other European region ever experienced such a massive population transfer. Take the case of Hungary. The American authority in Germany accepted in their zone approximately 130,000 refugees from Hungary, indicating that total expulsions from the country were less than a quarter of the people forcibly transferred from the urban area of Breslau alone.

In most European areas where forced population transfers took place, Germans represented only a fraction of the local population during the interwar period. They often were a national minority. In Lower Silesia, in contrast, the percentage of German-speaking natives during the interwar years was recorded at nearly 95%. The expulsion and replacement of such a large part of the local population was accompanied by the necessity of building a completely new community. Such circumstances caused many problems, the solutions to which often proved to be harsh and painful. What actually occurred in Lower Silesia was a multi-directional population transfer, and the expulsion of Germans was only the most visible process in the context of the total 'Polonization' of the area. While German-speaking locals were being expelled from Lower Silesia, several other population transfers were taking place in the region. Polish-speaking settlers were being moved from areas annexed to the Soviet Union; Polish Jews were moving in from several regions in the Soviet Union, and eventually, tens of thousands Ruthenians were deported from Carpathia during Operation Vistula, ostensibly undertaken as a measure against Ukrainian terrorists.

Most forced population transfers in Europe during the twentieth century consisted of the deportation of a more or less substantial population group that had formerly been in conflict with another ethnically-specific group that could be identified as the majority.<sup>2</sup> This means that compulsory transfers were generally characterized by hostility towards one or more autochthonous population groups, the presence of which was considered a destabilizing factor, if not a threat, to the political and economic hegemony of the majority. In the case of Lower Silesia, there had been no rupture in the peaceful coexistence of the population groups since the expelled group, 'the Germans', represented nearly the whole of the prewar local population. To the contrary, the group in charge of establishing the postwar order, 'the Poles', consisted almost entirely of immi-

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<sup>2</sup> Terry Martin: *The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing*. In: *The Journal of Modern History*, 70.

grants. Sheer numbers prevented the Polish-speaking locals from playing any significant role in the 'Polonization' process.

Another issue needs to be considered that belongs in the category of political history. Most postwar population transfers were approved during the Potsdam Agreement of August 2, 1945 and the treaties that followed. These mostly related to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The attitude of these governments toward 'de-Germanization' varied. For instance in Hungary, the post-war government never actually supported any policy that emerged from the alleged collective responsibility of all Germans for Hitler's crimes. Instead, deportation was mainly restricted to active members of the Nazi Volksbund, and German oppositionists were somehow spared.<sup>3</sup>

In Czechoslovakia and Poland, the official attitude was decidedly more ethnocentric. In the case of Poland, nearly all political parties approved of the massive deportation of all German-speaking natives regardless of their past attitude towards Hitlerism. This position was shared by both the Moscow-friendly Labour and Socialist parties, and the Catholic nationalists. Former opponents of the Nazi regime were also considered to be enemies of the Polish nation, their mere presence in Poland considered a threat.

An example of this attitude can be found in an exchange of letters between the Bishop Stanisław Adamski and the minister Władysław Kiernik. The latter, a member of the Peasant Party, was by no means a communist. On July 27, 1945, Bishop Adamski wrote to the Ministry of Public Administration complaining about the methods by which the deportation of the German-speaking population was being carried out. At this time, no population transfer had been agreed to in Potsdam.

As a member of the Polish Catholic clergy, Bishop Adamski expressed his concern that Poland might earn an unreliable reputation in the international community because of the brutality with which German civilians were being compelled to leave their homes and belongings.<sup>4</sup> There is no indication what 'international community' Bishop Adamski referred to. It is highly possible that Adamski was thinking of Great Britain. A little over a month later, Prime Minister Clement Attlee promised the Archbishop of York that the new Labour government would monitor the population transfers in Central Europe and provide some humanitarian aid to deported German civilians.<sup>5</sup>

On August 5, 1945, Minister Kiernik sent a personal reply to Bishop Adamski. He stated that the population transfers being implemented were being paid for by a nation that in the past deserved no special attention as they had never shown any for their neighbours. The understatement in the reply is pointed,

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<sup>3</sup> István Bibó: *Miseria dei piccoli stati dell'Europa orientale*. Bologna 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Both Bishop Adamski's letter and Minister Kiernik's reply can be found in: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Ministerstwa Administracji Publicznej, Gabinet Ministra, sygn. 758.

<sup>5</sup> Hans-Åke Persson: *Rhetorik und Realpolitik: Großbritannien, die Oder-Neiße-Grenze und die Vertreibung der Deutschen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Potsdam 1997.

based on the assumption that nations exist unchanged throughout history and they blindly adhere to their leader. Embedded in Minister Kiernik's understated reply is the notion that all civilians without exception are responsible for the actions of the political elite ruling them, even though in this particular case, the elite ruled in the context of a totalitarian system. Another element in Kiernik's letter is a sort of anti-morality emerging from the assumption that nations are bound to fight against each other through history, again ignoring the fact that the very idea of a 'German nation' had been an inconsistent one in modern times. Indeed it was still undergoing significant modification during Hitler's dictatorship.

Nearly all interpretations of the past refer to a defined set of values and ideas. In interwar Poland, the attitude towards the national past was strictly derived from politics.<sup>6</sup> The connection between national history and politics still played a key role in Poland after World War Two. Specifically, postwar Polish authorities tended to collapse the issue of forced population transfers into more general issue of the post-World War One restoration of national independence from Prussia and the eternal struggle against forced Germanization. This ideological link to interwar nationalist thought became a strategic issue in postwar Poland, as it was used to prove that the new ruling elite was patriotic and thus to defuse charges, widespread in the country at the time, that it cooperated too closely with Stalin's Soviet Union. In the case of Lower Silesia, the interwar nationalist heritage was used in a propaganda campaign, of which the typical elements were:

1. the equation of the area with other territories of the Third Reich in which the Germans had been a national minority (rather than the majority);
2. the equation of Lower Silesia with Polish territories that had been occupied by the Germans during World War Two.

A series of misleading definitions emerged from this general context. During the first postwar months, what is today western Poland (then part of Germany) were referred to as 'postulated lands': that is, territories to be assigned to Poland as compensation for the huge destruction caused by Nazi Germany. Later on, the definition changed and the same territories were named 'the recovered territories' despite the fact that they had not been Polish for centuries.

The inclusion of Lower Silesia into the 'recovered lands' has its own specificity within the general program of the postwar Polonization of what were once territories in the eastern part of German. Certain facts are undisputed: that the population transfer was not only enormous but it was the single largest in the whole of Europe; that it was a multilevel transfer, millions being moved into Lower Silesia from several areas of Eastern Europe; that a kind of social and political engineering was exerted from above with the aim of building a completely new society.

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<sup>6</sup> Markus Krzoska: *Die polnische Geschichtswissenschaft in der Zwischenkriegszeit*. In: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1994, 5, p. 430.

## A Digest of Facts

Observing the transfers of postwar German-speaking population out of what is today Poland, three different phases can be identified according to the agents ordering and possibly monitoring the forced migration.

1. The first population transfers took place in late 1944 and early 1945. They were mostly ordered by Nazi authorities because of the impending Soviet invasion. These evacuations rarely had a humanitarian character. Civilians were compelled to move to allegedly safer German areas so that the military would benefit from a more efficient supply system in cities that had been declared 'fortresses'. Evacuated people were given little or no help. They had to travel long distances on foot, often freezing and starving. This first phase ended with the German capitulation on May 9, 1945, though most refugees left their homes much sooner when the frontline was approaching.

2. The second phase took place between the Soviet conquest and the final Allied decision on population transfers, which took place on November 20, 1945. Transfers of German populations were foreseen in Chapter XIII of the Potsdam Agreement signed on August 2, 1945. It was also agreed in the treaty that the governments of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland would "suspend further expulsions" pending the examination of the transfer issue by the Allied powers.<sup>7</sup> But transfers were never suspended in Poland. Expulsions continued unabated through the second half of 1945. In spite of Allied controls, civilians were deported on a regular basis from their homes to the Soviet zone in Germany. Transfers that took place in this phase are known as 'wild expulsions'.

3. The last phase of mass transfers took place under the auspices of Operation Swallow, when deportation trains were regularly sent into the Allied occupation zones of Germany. The number of civilians expelled from Poland under this programme was estimated to be three and a half million, of which two million were to be sent to the Soviet zone and one and a half million to the British zone. *Ex post* data indicates that number was smaller. Approximately three million people were actually transferred under both 'wild expulsions' and Operation Swallow.

## Winter 1945

In Lower Silesia, civilians did not feel the impact of the war until the autumn of 1944. Direct combat actions were so uncommon that were considered exceptional events. This can be inferred from diaries kept by both Catholic and Protestant clergymen. For instance, a Catholic priest named Paul Peikert wrote down in amazement that the main railway station had been bombed on Novem-

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<sup>7</sup> "Official Gazette of the Control Council for Germany", Supplement No. 1, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1946.



ber 13, 1941, reporting ten casualties and a score of wounded people.<sup>8</sup> According to Pastor Ernst Hornig, the death of 69 people in an air raid on October 7, 1944 was considered to be an extraordinary event.<sup>9</sup>

A large number of refugees from western parts of Germany came to Breslau in late 1944 because of the city's relative safety. The dramatic increase in the number of inhabitants is noted in comparing data from 1939 and 1944. In this period, the city grew from approximately 630,000 inhabitants to over a million. In addition to this number, prisoners lived in several facilities belonging to the Groß-Rosen concentration camp. The facilities were spread throughout the whole of Lower Silesia and some were also located in the Breslau metropolitan area. Prisoners were mostly Russian and Polish, and they were used as forced labour in stone quarries and ammunition factories in the Sudeten area,<sup>10</sup> or in workshops in the main camp.<sup>11</sup> The main camp also served as a transit facility for Jewish prisoners bound for the gas chambers of Dachau, Buchenwald or Auschwitz.<sup>12</sup>

On January 12, 1945, the Soviet winter offensive began. Lower Silesia was invaded by detachments of the Red Army's First Ukrainian Front. On January 19, German Gauleiter Karl Hanke ordered the 'stronghold regime in Breslau, which meant the immediate evacuation of all civilians. On January 23, several Soviet patrols were sighted on the hills around the town of Treibnitz. By mid-February the Soviet 6<sup>th</sup> Army had completely surrounded Breslau.<sup>13</sup>

Hanke's decision to evacuate German civilians was not motivated by his concern for their safety. It was a pragmatic issue, as the absence of civilians in a 'stronghold' would grant a greater freedom of manoeuvre to the troops as well as and more abundant supplies. This interpretation is supported by the order he gave to residents on the left bank of the Oder River. He ordered men to remain in their work places after evacuating their wives and children. Even the approach of hostile tanks would not be considered a reason to leave work. Hanke even stated that the purpose of the evacuation was not the women and children's safety, but that the men would fight more relentlessly without that 'burden'.<sup>14</sup>

At least three quarters of Breslau's metropolitan population was evacuated. According to communication between the German 17th Army Commander, General Friedrich Schulz, and Air Force General Ritter von Greim, there still

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<sup>8</sup> Karol Jonca, Alfred Konieczny (ed.): *Paul Peikert: 'Festung Breslau' in den Berichten eines Pfarrers*. Wrocław 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Ernst Hornig: *Breslau 1945: Erlebnisse in der eingeschlossenen Stadt*. München 1975.

<sup>10</sup> Bogdan Cybulski: *Aussenlager des KL Groß-Rosen im Eulengebirge*. Wałbrzych 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred Konieczny: *KL Gross-Rosen*. Wałbrzych 1987.

<sup>12</sup> Aleksandra Kobielec: *Więźniowie Żydzi w KL Gross-Rosen: Stan badań* Wałbrzych 1993.

<sup>13</sup> The siege of Breslau in early 1945 was described in detail by German commanders, with a few chronicles also written by Polish authors. See for example: Hans von Ahlfen, Hermann Niehoff: *So kämpfte Breslau*. München 1956; Karol Jonca, Alfred Konieczny: *Upadek 'Festung Breslau' 15. II.–6. V. 1945*. Wrocław 1963.

<sup>14</sup> "Schlesische Tageszeitung", 27<sup>th</sup> January 1945.

were only 143,000 people in Breslau on March 19, 1945, of which 6,411 were wounded.<sup>15</sup>

The winter of 1945 was exceptionally cold in Lower Silesia, with temperatures dipping as low as  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$  in January. Hundreds of thousands had to leave their homes in horse carriages or on foot; most of them women and children, the old and the infirm. A number of railway transports were headed for Saxony and Hanover, but they were too few for everybody to find a place on them. People waited up to 48 hours for a place on a train. During the siege of the city, many railway lines had been severely damaged by bombings. By February 8, only two railway lines were still functioning in Breslau: from Freiburg Station to Görlitz, and from the main railway station to Schweidnitz via Zobten.<sup>16</sup> The extent of damage to railway lines can be found in postwar reports by Polish State Railway engineers. By the end of the war, only 128 kilometres of railways were viable. Some 139 railway bridges had been destroyed or heavily damaged.<sup>17</sup>

Evacuation under such circumstances resulted in the death by freezing or starvation of many refugees. According to German estimates, civilian casualties ranged from 90,000 to 200,000. Polish sources state that as many as 700,000 people left Lower Silesia during that period.<sup>18</sup>

The Red Army took Berlin on May 2, 1945. On Sunday, May 6, 1945 Karl Hanke fled the 'stronghold' of Breslau in a Stork aircraft. It is believed that he was later convicted and executed in Czechoslovakia.<sup>19</sup> A few hours after Hanke fled, Infantry General Hermann Niehoff signed the German capitulation.<sup>20</sup>

### 'Wild expulsions'

On June 25, 1941, Lavrenty Beriia, People's Commissioner for Internal Affairs ordered Soviet NKVD troops to participate as second-line support in the Red Army's military operations. NKVD personnel and border guard detachments were ordered to support frontline fighters and to secure prisoners of war. Initially, POW camps were administered by the GULag authority which reported to the NKVD. But by early 1945, there were so many Axis soldiers captured by the Red Army and a special agency was created within GULag to manage POWs. This agency was called Glavnoye Upravlyeniye po delam Voyennoplennykh i Internirovannykh and later became known by its acronym: GUPVI. By the end of the war, GUPVI administered as many as 170 POW detention facilities.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Karol Jonca: *Oblężenie*. In: Odra, 1995, 5, pp. 8–12.

<sup>16</sup> Peikert, p. 29.

<sup>17</sup> Wrocław State Archive, Urząd Wojewódzki Wrocławski, file I/41.

<sup>18</sup> Bolesław Dolata: *Wyzwolenie Polski*. Warsaw 1974, p. 333.

<sup>19</sup> Karol Jonca: *Ostatni lot gauleitera*. In: Odra, 1995, 5, pp. 2–7.

<sup>20</sup> Marek Czapliński: *Śląsk od pierwszej po koniec drugiej wojny światowej*. In: M. Czapliński (ed.): *Historia Śląska*, 2002, p. 424 – cfr. E. Hornig, *op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> Stefan Karner: *Im Archipel GUPVI: Kriegsgefangenschaft und Internierung in der Sowjetunion 1941–1956*. München 1995.

Numeric data about German POWs comes mostly from a 1955 report of the German Red Cross. In this report, one reads that the Red Army captured approximately 800,000 German soldiers in the area between the Vistula and Oder Rivers from January 12 to May 9, 1945. After the German capitulation, approximately 600,000 were deported to 650 concentration camps in the Soviet hinterland. Another 100,000 died before deportation. In Lower Silesia, German POWs were numerous. Here the GUpVI took over former German POW camps in the Breslau suburbs of Fünfeichen and Hundsfeld. The number of German prisoners in these two facilities reached a peak of 300,000 at one time. Other large camps were located in Lauban and Sagan. Approximately 70,000 convicts were housed in these facilities. By 1950, some 15,000 were dead.<sup>22</sup>

The GUpVI did more than just manage POW camps. According to an NKVD order dated February 22, 1945, the agency also established detention facilities for civilians who were to be 'politically verified' and possibly sentenced to forced labour in the Soviet Union. Former Nazi party members, factory managers and even journalists belonged in this category. Civilian prisoners were separated from POWs.

In early June 1945, there were over 100,000 German civilians in Soviet concentration camps east of the Oder River. Only a few thousand had actually been accessories to Nazi war crimes. Regardless of the results of the 'political verification' process, most civilian prisoners were sent as forced labour to Soviet-owned farms in Poland.

Many other people suffered from various forms of violence. Civilians who were not convicted were driven away from their homes, according to the procedure called 'wild expulsion'. According to the accounts of those expelled, NKVD troops were the main perpetrators of this process.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, the remaining documentation is insufficient to even approximate the number of German civilians expelled from Lower Silesia during that period.

Meanwhile, Polish-speaking settlers were arriving in Lower Silesia. Transfers were formally supervised by the State Bureau for Repatriation (PUR). Nonetheless, there were a number of other Polish agencies conducting so-called 'repatriation', most of them political parties and trade unions.

In Breslau, soon renamed Wrocław according to Polish phonetics, an old Cracovian Socialist named Bolesław Drobner became the first mayor. His job was to build up the first Polish civilian municipal authority. A special settlement department was established in the framework of the new municipal authority. Ultimately, the settlement of the new Polish-speaking population became the primary task of the entire civilian administration.<sup>24</sup>

What happened in this first phase of Polish settlement is difficult to recon-

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<sup>22</sup> Manfred Zeidler: *Kriegsende im Osten*. München 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Maria Podlasek: *W skórze Niemca*. In: *Polityka*, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1993.

<sup>24</sup> Andrzej Kwilecki: *Migracje pionierskie na Ziemiach Odzyskanych*. In: *Studia Socjologiczne*, 1986, No. 1, pp. 17–18.

struct as documents are scarce and often unclear. It is difficult, for example, to know with any certainty how many civilians charged with being part of the Nazi system were summarily executed. Execution without trial was very frequent, as indicated by security service reports. For instance, on May 17, 1947, the UBP commander in Trzebnica wrote that all suspected SS and Gestapo members had been 'liquidated' long ago.<sup>25</sup>

During this first phase of Polish settlement in Lower Silesia, conditions were highly insecure for the Polish settlers as well. They were often compelled to spend weeks at a time on the outskirts of Wrocław waiting for housing and employment. Poor sanitary conditions were a constant feature of these settlements and there were frequent outbreaks of epidemic diseases.<sup>26</sup>

The "removal of Germans from Poland"<sup>27</sup> was finally formalized at the Tripartite Conference in Berlin on August 2, 1945. At the same time, the Polish Provisional Government was requested "to suspend further expulsions pending the examination by the Governments concerned of the report from their representatives on the Control Council."<sup>28</sup> But not until November 20, 1945 was the decision made regarding the number of German civilians to be 'removed' and the schedule for their 'removal' established. Two million were to be transferred to the Soviet occupation zone in Germany, and another one and a half million to the British zone. The transfer operation was called Operation Swallow because it was to be completed before the swallows came back to Germany in mid-summer 1946.

Despite the decision in Potsdam, deportations from Lower Silesia were never suspended. The government in Warsaw ordered the establishment of concentration camps in every *powiat*, the collection of Germans civilians in these camps, and their ongoing expulsion to the Soviet zone on the other side of Poland's western border. Orders from the ministries in Warsaw made it clear that expulsions were to be carried out as soon as possible.<sup>29</sup>

Civilians slated for deportation were moved from various concentration camps to *agañ*, and from there to the border checkpoint at Forst where they were taken over by Soviet detachments and escorted to Mecklenburg. As stated above, these compulsory transfers took place despite the decision to suspend expulsion in the Potsdam Agreement. There was only a short lull from October 30 to November 6, 1945, but otherwise at least 42,000 civilians were expelled during this period.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Wrocław Section, file 053/862.

<sup>26</sup> Wrocław State Archive, Urząd Wojewódzki Wrocławski, file IX/95.

<sup>27</sup> "Official Gazette of the Control Council for Germany", Supplement No. 1, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1946.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Bernadetta Nitschke: *Pierwsze zorganizowane wysiedlenia ludności niemieckiej z Polski po konferencji poczdamskiej*. In: "Sobótka", 1997, 3–4, pp. 351–365.

<sup>30</sup> *Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny w latach 1945–1948 na Dolnym Śląsku*, PUR, Wrocław, 1948.

Recently, a Polish scholar attempted to estimate the number of forced transfers of German civilians in the second half of 1945. Including 'wild expulsions' and the first organized deportations to Mecklenburg, it is estimated that a total of nearly half a million people were forcibly driven from their homes in Lower Silesia before the Potsdam decisions were officially enforced.<sup>31</sup>

### **Operation Swallow**

According to the Polish census, 1,934,791 people lived in Lower Silesia in February 1946. Of that number, 1,234,425 were Germans and 680,000 were Poles. However, such data proves to be unreliable when compared to official statements by the State Bureau for Repatriation. According to the latter, some 1,295,000 Germans were expelled from Lower Silesia during the period between February and December 1946, and few of them were not autochthonous.<sup>32</sup> Taking into consideration classified data from a Warsaw ministry,<sup>33</sup> 92,833 Germans still lived in Lower Silesia on August 20, 1947. Thus, the total numbers of Germans in February 1946 must have totalled about 1,377,000.

The totals from February 1946 are important because the first agreement between Poland and the United Kingdom concerning the enforcement of Operation Swallow (i.e. the transfer of civilians to the British zone in Germany) was signed on February 14.<sup>34</sup>

During Operation Swallow, civilians were to be deported to both the British and the Soviet zones. Two delivery points where the occupying authorities in Germany would take charge of the transports were established. The first, in Tulpice, would deliver transports to the Soviet zone only. The second, in Kaławsk, would deliver transports to the British zone. Several convoys bound for the Soviet zone went through Kaławsk as well.

The population transfers officially began in late February 1946 and were suspended in December. They started again the following April and continued without interruption until October 21, 1947. General estimates for the period from February 1946 through October 1947 indicate a total of some 770 transports, transporting no fewer than 1,300,000 German civilians deported from Lower Silesia.<sup>35</sup>

### **A case study: Wałbrzych**

Accounts of postwar events in the Wałbrzych mining area indicate that transfer of German-speaking locals from Lower Silesia was sometimes implemented

<sup>31</sup> Beata Ociepka: *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku w latach 1945–1970*. Wrocław 1992, p. 20.

<sup>32</sup> *Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny w latach 1945–1948 na Dolnym Śląsku*, op. cit.

<sup>33</sup> Archiwum Akt Nowych, Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych, file 564.

<sup>34</sup> Ociepka, *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku*, pp. 20–21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

in a way very much at odds with the plan agreed upon by the Allied powers in Potsdam. In this area, transfers were the consequence of a political project aimed at a social transformation that would pave the way to a centrally-planned economy.

Three main factors that prevailed in this area make it distinctive. First, the geographical position of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda in the southwest part of Lower Silesia meant that they remained virtually untouched by military action during the Soviet offensive of early 1945. Proof of this can be found in data from May 1, 1945, only a week before German capitulation. At that time, there were as many as 2,558 farms in the district. None of them reported damage more severe than 15% of its value.<sup>36</sup>

The second factor was the peculiar structure of the local economy. The main income source was not from agriculture but coal mining. Coal mines were a strategic natural resource in the area of energy production as were power plants to process the fuel.

The third factor was indisputably political. In spite of its large population and flourishing economy, the Wałbrzych area was not an important administrative centre in the former German state. For this reason, it had little symbolic value. If the assertion of Polish sovereignty in Breslau or Liegnitz, for example, had a high strategic value for the postwar Polonization policy in Lower Silesia, Wałbrzych's minimal international renown meant that the area had low symbolic value and therefore the expulsion of the German-speaking population was not as crucial as it was elsewhere.

These factors taken together allowed the new Polish authorities to preside over an industrialized area undamaged by the war and with little symbolic importance in international politics. It turned out to be the best possible solution for accelerating collectivization with no need to find a replacement for cheap German labour.

Criteria for the determination of nationality were far from clear in the first postwar period.<sup>37</sup> Owing to vague laws and a number of acts granting nearly absolute and arbitrary power to local committees, the naturalization of Lower Silesian autochthones turned out to be a matter of selective opportunity. A large number of German-speaking locals became Poles for the sake of the coal mining facilities, that is to prevent cheap labour from being deported into Allied zones and keep it at work where it was needed.

From a demographic point of view, Wałbrzych's prewar population had a typically industrial structure. In 1939, more than 54% of the population worked in industry and handicraft, only 15.5% in services, and a mere 1% in agriculture. Such data is even more meaningful when compared to neighbouring re-

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<sup>36</sup> Wojewódzki Urząd Statystyczny i Urząd Miejski w Wałbrzychu, *Ludność Ziemi Wałbrzyskiej 1945–1985*, Wałbrzych, 1985 (LZW).

<sup>37</sup> Grzegorz Strauchold: *Autochtoni polscy, niemieccy, czy... Od nacjonalizmu do komunizmu (1945–1949)*. Toruń 2001.

gions. According to the 1925 German census, in Lower Silesia as a whole there were nearly 600,000 peasants, some 36% of the local working population. Approximately 622,145 residents worked in "industry, mining, and building", or 37.5% of the total (German: *Industrie, Bergbau, Baugewerbe*).<sup>38</sup>

In early May 1945, Wałbrzych was taken by the 21<sup>st</sup> Army of the First Ukrainian Front after a short and fairly uneventful battle with the German 17<sup>th</sup> Corps. After the German defeat, Soviet Major Pakhomov took authority. On May 22, a 34-man team of Polish officials were working on creating a civil administration.<sup>39</sup> On May 28, Red Army officers formally surrendered authority to Polish Plenipotentiary Piaskowski following orders received from the First Ukrainian Front Headquarters in Radebeul near Dresden.<sup>40</sup>

The very first Polish settlers in Wałbrzych were former prisoners from the Groß-Rosen concentration camp.<sup>41</sup> Soon more settlers came from central Poland and by the end of June 1945, the total Polish-speaking population stood at about 500. Thereafter, Polish refugees from the Soviet Union began to arrive until the number of Poles reached around 2,800 at the end of August, an extremely low number compared to the total of nearly 200,000 inhabitants, with more than 71,000 living in the conurbation around Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda.<sup>42</sup>

Because of the ethnic ratios, Polish authorities were not in a position to replace German miners and workers with Polish labour. This was true also for administrative clerks. Until the end of the forties, a large number of Germans remained and even worked in some instances at the lower levels of the Wałbrzych municipal government.<sup>43</sup>

By the end of 1945, area Plenipotentiary Eugeniusz Szewczyk ordered the suspension of the settlement of refugees from the Soviet Union. Allegations in the local press stated that the decision was forced on him by the local Coal Authority.<sup>44</sup> The influx of refugees meant homes and jobs had to be granted to them, though they had no experience or qualifications for work in the coal mines. In order to keep the coal mines efficient, German workers remained employed.

Local law gave the Coal Authority certain powers. The corporation was directly controlled by the cabinet's economic committee. Coal Authority managers therefore had the same powers as officers of the state. They directly decided who received government-owned flats. Area plenipotentiaries could do nothing but approve the decisions.

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<sup>38</sup> *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 1927, p. 410.

<sup>39</sup> LZW.

<sup>40</sup> Stanisław Czajka: *Samorząd Wałbrzycha w latach 1945–1950*. In: *Kronika wałbrzyska* 1981, p. 6.

<sup>41</sup> Dorota Sula: *Filie KL Gross-Rosen (wybór artykułów)*. Wałbrzych 2001.

<sup>42</sup> LZW.

<sup>43</sup> Wrocław State Archive, Section Boguszów Gorce, Zarząd Miejski w Wałbrzychu, Sprawy osobowe.

<sup>44</sup> *Urządzamy gorników*, Trybuna Dolnośląska, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1945, 8.

The suspension of refugee settlement also had a political background. In many government-owned farms in Lower Silesia, managing positions had been taken over by former *Armia Krajowa* soldiers who were suspected of being anti-Communist. Evidence of this can be found in the local archives of the Public Security Office, a secret service in charge of counter-espionage and political intelligence. In Public Security Office documents in Bolesławiec, former *Armia Krajowa* soldiers are accused of the "expression of right-wing ideas".<sup>45</sup> As a result, they were not allowed to settle in locations strategically important from a military or economic point of view. Therefore, former *Armia Krajowa* soldiers were transferred mainly to the 'reconquered lands' along with refugees from the Soviet Union.

The effects of the Coal Authority's policies can be found in employment data for the Wałbrzych area. At the end of December 1945, only 20% of nearly 20,000 miners were Poles. Even fewer were employed in other sectors. On December 31, 1945, there were 112 factories in Wałbrzych, in which china, glass, fabrics, and garments were produced. The total workforce was 29,714, of which Germans comprised 24,682 or 83%.<sup>46</sup>

With the beginning of Operation Swallow in early 1946, the local economy faced the threat of losing almost all of its workers. Planned transfers were delayed, with the first deportation train leaving as late as April 30, 1946. At that point, the German-speaking population in the urban area was 72% of the total, indicating that the German population was proportionally higher in surrounding areas. The total figure for Lower Silesia was 63%, though in other urban areas of similar dimensions the percentage was lower. For instance, Germans in Schweidnitz comprised only 57% of the total population, in Hirschberg 43%, and in Liegnitz 38%.

There had been virtually no 'wild expulsions' from the Wałbrzych area before November 1945. Instead, German-speaking locals were naturalized in large numbers. Theoretically, the naturalization process was regulated by the Parliament Act of April 28, 1946, "On Polish citizenship to be granted to Polish nationals living in the reconquered lands."<sup>47</sup> The National Verification Committees were mostly made up of members appointed by local plenipotentiaries and enjoyed nearly complete and arbitrary authority. They could use any piece of evidence they wanted to support an individual's 'Polishness'.

The indirect results of the activities of the Wałbrzych National Verification Committee can be found in the Polish census of February 13 to 14, 1946. In that census, only 51,997 inhabitants out of a total of 72,789 living in the conurbation were classified as Germans.<sup>48</sup> This number is surprisingly low when the fol-

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<sup>45</sup> Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, Wrocław Section, file 053/710.

<sup>46</sup> LZW.

<sup>47</sup> *Dziennik Ustaw R.P.*, 1946, 15, pos. 106.

<sup>48</sup> Wrocław State Archive, Section Boguszów Gorce, Zarząd Miejski w Wałbrzychu, Wydział Ogólny, Referat Statystyczny, Powszechny spis ludności na dzień 13.–14. II. 1946.



lowing facts are considered: the prewar German population was well over 64,000 people;<sup>49</sup> during the war, there was no evacuation of civilians; in early 1945, German refugees fled in large numbers to Wałbrzych from bordering areas invaded by the Soviets. This means that several thousand Germans were missing from the 1946 census. At the same time, the census showed as many as 19,716 'nationally verified' Poles.

Studies from the late nineteen-sixties confirm these facts. Data on the ethnic origin of postwar inhabitants of Lower Silesia is shown in the following table:<sup>50</sup>

	<b>% Wałbrzych</b>	<b>% Lower Silesia</b>
Autochthones	15.8	5.5
From other Polish areas	54.2	53.6
Refugees from the USSR	18.2	35.0
From Western countries	10.7	4.8
Other	1.1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

The autochthones figure is three times larger than the Voivodship average, while the number of refugees from the Soviet Union is about half the average in Lower Silesia.

### Conclusions

1. The westward shift of the postwar Polish borders was important to Soviet interests and was consolidated when Poland became part of the Cold War eastern bloc. This does not mean that only Polish Communists approved of such a solution. On the contrary, non-Marxist political groupings also accepted the border shift. Indeed, it was formally accepted by the Allied powers in Chapter IX, Paragraph B of the Potsdam Agreement.

2. In Lower Silesia, the demographic situation was exceptional, as the prewar German-speaking population was over 95% of the total.

3. The authoritarian regime supervising population transfers caused unspeakable suffering to both Germans being deported and Poles coming to settle from central Poland and other areas in the east that had been annexed to the Soviet Union.

4. In a few areas of Lower Silesia, for instance the conurbation of Wałbrzych and Nowa Ruda, population transfers presented an opportunity for the nationalization of natural resources and the introduction of a planned economy.

<sup>49</sup> Stanisław Czajka: *Repatriacja ludności niemieckiej z ziemi wałbrzyskiej w latach 1946–1948*. In: *Kronika wałbrzyska*, 1981, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> B. Chruszcz: *Osadnictwo i przeobrażenia społeczne w Wałbrzychu ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zagadnienia małżeństw mieszanych w latach 1945–1955*. In: *Studia Śląskie*, 1969, 16, p. 187.

5. In the period when most population transfers took place i.e. in the second half of the nineteen-forties, a completely new society was created in Lower Silesia. Important components in this process were the temporary settlement of a significant Jewish community and the deportation of thousands of Ruthenian civilians from the Carpathian area, the latter being the outcome of Operation Vistula targeting Ukrainian nationalists.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Preseljevanje prebivalstva v Spodnji Šleziji po 2. svetovni vojni*

Vprašanje preseljevanja prebivalstva v vzhodni in srednji Evropi po drugi svetovni vojni znanstvenikom še dandanes ne dopušča objektivne poglobljene analize posameznih dogodkov. To velja še posebej za Poljsko, saj je ta država med in po vojni poleg množičnih preselitev prebivalstva doživela tudi precejšnje ozemeljske spremembe. Med letoma 1939 in 1940 so bila prostrana območja zahodne Poljske priključena Tretjemu rajhu, kar je povzročilo prisilni prehod okoli milijona prebivalcev z germaniziranih območij pod "Generalno gubernatorstvo". Po drugi strani je bilo območje okoli 140.000 km<sup>2</sup> vzhodno od t.i. Curzonove meje, vključno z zgodovinsko poljskimi mesti, ko sta Lvov in Vilna, priključeno Belorusiji, Litvi in Ukrajini. Avgusta 1945 je bila na tripartitni konferenci v Berlinu sprejeta odločitev, da se Poljski kot nadomestilo za sovjetizirana območja na vzhodu dodelijo predvojna nemška območja spodnje in srednje Šlezije, Pomeranije in delno Prusije, skupaj v obsegu okoli 100.000 km<sup>2</sup> ozemlja, ki je pred letom 1937 pripadalo Nemčiji.

Neposredno po vojni so bile te ozemeljske spremembe predmet močne ideološke kampanje, katere namen je bil upravičiti tako nasilno preseljevanje prebivalstva kot ozemeljske spremembe. Medtem ko so bile selitve predvsem nemškogovorečega civilnega prebivalstva z zahoda in poljskega prebivalstva s sovjetiziranih območij še nekako legitimne na podlagi odločitev zavezniških sil, pa je bilo ozemeljske spremembe precej težje razložiti. Že pozno poleti leta 1944 je Nacionalni odbor za osvoboditev Poljske (PKNW) sprejel Stalinov načrt o teritorialnih menjavah. O vzhodnonemških območjih, ki naj bi se priključila Poljski kot nadomestilo za sovjetizirana območja, se je že takrat začelo govoriti kot o "postuliranih območjih" in to je objektivno opredelilo tudi razmere ob koncu vojne. Potsdamski sklepi iz avgusta 1945 so ta območja preimenovali v "ponovno osvojena ozemlja". Takšna definicija je bila precej nenavadna, saj to območje vse od 14. stoletja nikdar ni pripadalo Poljski. Poleg tega so na nekaterih delih tega območja, predvsem v Spodnji Šleziji, Nemci predstavljali več

kot 95% vsega prebivalstva. A ta posebna oblika nacionalizma je kljub temu pripeljala do uveljavitve ideološke dogme o "ponovno osvojenem ozemlju".

Ta dogma živi še danes. Poljska je danes del Evropske unije, a kljub dvostranskim dogovorom z združeno Nemčijo na začetku devetdesetih let 20. stoletja se poljski zgodovinarji le redko lotevajo raziskav degermanizacije in polonizacije spodnje Šlezije brez neke vrste *excusatio non petita* glede povojnih priključitev in preseljevanj prebivalstva. Zdi se, kot da bi objektivna rekonstrukcija tega vprašanja lahko ogrozila današnje poljske interese. To velja še posebej za nekatere definicije. Tako v poljskih publikacijah ne bomo nikdar našli izraza "polonizacija" spodnje Šlezije, temveč vedno "ponovna polonizacija", kot da se od časa dinastije Piastov iz poznega srednjega veka do današnje Tretje poljske republike ne bi zgodila nobena sprememba. Izraz "degermanizacija" je le težko sprejemljiv in se lahko uporabi le kot nasprotni pol izraza "nemška okupacija". Tako se omenjene preselitve prebivalstva le redko proučuje same po sebi, pač pa pogosto v povezavi s Potsdamsko konferenco. Takšna ideologizacija resno zavira regionalno zgodovinopisje.

V tem prispevku predpostavljam, da so vsi nacistični zločini, med njimi tudi prisilne preselitve poljskega prebivalstva na območje "generalnega gubernatorstva" in deportacije poljskega civilnega prebivalstva na prisilno delo v Nemčijo, zgodovinska resnica, ki je dokazana in o kateri se je tudi veliko poročalo. Prav tako predpostavljam, da so bile odločitve, sprejete na tripartitni konferenci v Berlinu leta 1945, zadostna legitimizacija tako povojnih prisilnih selitev nemškega prebivalstva z današnje zahodne Poljske kot tudi ozemeljskih sprememb glede na situacijo pred vojno. S tem prispevkom torej ne nameravam relativizirati nacističnih vojnih zločinov niti ni moj namen primerjati povojne Poljske s Hitlerjevo Nemčijo. Namen tega prispevka je predstaviti nekaj posebnih, ne le splošnih vidikov preseljevanja prebivalstva spodnje Šlezije, vključno s preseljevanjem nemškega civilnega prebivalstva, ki je bilo odobreno v Potsdamu, naseljevanjem poljskih državljanov iz Belorusije in Ukrajine, začasno imigracijo poljskih Judov iz Sovjetske zveze in deportacijami ter prisilnim naseljevanjem civilnega prebivalstva ljudstva Lemko z območja Karpatov v poznih 1940-ih letih, kar je bil stranski učinek vojaških operacij proti ukrajinskim nacionalistom.

Prispevek v glavnem temelji na virih iz varšavskega arhiva *Archiwum Akt Nowych* in lokalnih arhivov Spodnje Šlezije, upoštevana pa je tudi poljska in nemška literatura.

UDK 321.74(438-15)"1945/1989"

Jakub Tyszkiewicz\*

*Communist Propaganda in the German Provinces  
Ceded to Poland (1945–1989)*

The German Provinces ceded to Poland by the Allied powers in the Potsdam Agreement in August 1945 were the subject of intensive propaganda campaigns by the Polish Communists during their 40 years of rule in Poland. In this paper, I will present the main phases of these efforts and their primary aims.

It must first be noted that the decision of the Allies in Potsdam to move Polish borders to the west was the result of events that had taken place five years earlier: above all, the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact signed by Hitler and Stalin on August 23, 1939. In a secret additional protocol, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union agreed to the eventual partition of Poland and that the prewar eastern provinces of Poland, invaded by the Red Army on September 17, 1939, would be annexed to the Soviet sphere of influence. Even after the German attack in June 1941 when the Soviet Union became an ally of Great Britain and Poland (Polish soldiers had been fighting against the Nazis since the beginning of World War Two), Stalin did not give up his territorial claims. Indeed at the Teheran Conference, he reiterated his intention to retain the territorial acquisitions made by the Soviet Union in 1939. At this point, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed that Poland's territorial losses to Russia in the east would be compensated by the annexation of German territory in the west.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Polish government-in-exile in London was unwilling to make this bargain, the Allies proceeded without consultation with the Poles. In April 1943, Stalin abruptly withdrew diplomatic recognition from the pro-western Polish government when it appeared to support Nazi accusations that the Soviet Army was responsible for the 1940 massacre of thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. In fact, Stalin's manoeuvre was nothing more than a pretext to install a pro-Soviet Communist government in Poland. It was also at this time that Stalin began to support the claims of his Polish puppets regarding the annexation of German provinces east of the Oder-Neisse Rivers. From this point on, these territories were the subject of an intense propaganda campaign by Polish Communists.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example: W. R. Keylor: *The Twentieth-Century World. An International History*. New York 1996, p. 191.

The process had already begun in the middle of 1944. The arrangement was based on the Polish Communists' voluntary ceding to Stalin and the Soviet Union pre-war eastern territories that had historically been an important part of the Polish cultural heritage. These territories included Lvov (now located in Ukraine) and Vilnius (now located in Lithuania). The vast majority of Poles saw this concession as a betrayal of Polish interests. As a consequence, Stalin's puppet government needed to generate arguments to convince the Polish nation that the annexation of the former German provinces would be beneficial to postwar Poland. This campaign intensified at the end of the war when it became clear that the territories to the east of the Oder-Neisse Rivers would be transferred to the Polish administration by Red Army commanders who up until then had been treating them a part of Germany.

The first phase of the propaganda campaign (1945–1948) focused on the role of the new Communist rulers in Poland. These leaders described themselves as being solely responsible for the 'return' of the former German provinces to Poland. During that period, the area was officially called the 'recovered territories'. Polish communists hoped that the presence of those provinces within Polish borders would cause a change in attitude among the Polish people (who remained staunchly anti-communist) regarding the Soviet regime installed in Warsaw. This intention could be clearly identified in a speech by Władysław Gomułka, the head of the Polish Communists at that time, who stated that the 'recovered territories' were the only way to create sympathy between the pro-Soviet government and Polish society.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting and worth emphasizing that many of the slogans used by the communist propaganda machine were based on theories that had been in existence since the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The issue of annexing the German provinces had already been present in prewar studies written by scholars from Poznań University. These scholars had contacts with the Polish Western Union and were engaged in the problem of the so-called 'postulate lands' as they were described before World War Two. Those same scholars also played a key role in the popularization of the issue of the postwar 'recovered territories' and, though their political convictions tended more toward national political theory, they frequently collaborated with the communist regime.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Protokół z plenarnego posiedzenia KC PPR odbytego w Warszawie w dniach 20–21 V 1945 r., (w:) *Protokół obrad KC PPR maj 1945, Dokumenty do dziejów PRL*, z. 1 (Warszawa: ISP PAN 1992), s. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Compare: T. Kulak: *Polska myśl zachodnia okresu rozbiorów* (in:) *O ziemie Piastów i polski lud (1795–1918), W stronę Odry i Bałtyku*. Wrocław 1990, p. 25–38; W. Wrześniński: *Kresy czy pogranicze. Problem Ziemi Zachodnich i Północnych w polskiej myśli politycznej XIX i XX w.* In: *Między Polską etniczną a historyczną. Polska myśl polityczna XIX i XX w.*, t. 6 (1988), p. 119–165.

<sup>4</sup> See more: M. Mroczko: *Polska myśl zachodnia 1918–1939 (Kształtowanie i upowszechnianie)*. Poznań 1986, p. 114–140, 172–349; B. Piotrowski: *O Polskę nad Odrą i Bałtykiem. Myśl zachodnia i badania niemieckoznawcze Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego (1919–1939)*.

Communist propaganda not only drew from ideas that had been current among intellectual circles connected with National Democracy and other nationalist parties before World War Two, but also from programmes generated during the war by the Polish government-in-exile in London.<sup>5</sup>

The main argument used to prove that the 'recovered territories' were Polish was a historical one. The communists pointed out that since the early Middle Ages, and even before, there were groups of people of Polish origin who had been 'Germanized' over the centuries. Again this argument was a repetition of prewar ideas.<sup>6</sup> It soon became clear, even to the Communists, that the argument was not effective. Therefore, a second argument was developed: specifically, that the presence of the 'recovered territories' within Polish borders was crucial to the security of Poland and indeed to the security of all Europe. First, the theory was advanced that the annexation of these territories to Poland would deter Germany from any future eastward aggression, and second, that it would allow Poland to defend itself more effectively. These theories had also been present before the war. Indeed, the notion of a new Polish-German border along the Oder and Neisse Rivers as the safest border for the Polish state was a repetition of a popular argument in the rightwing radical nationalist press in 1940 that continued during the war.<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the decision to establish a borderline on the Oder-Lusitanian Neisse Rivers had already been made at the Potsdam Conference in August 1945. Though the final definition of this border would be decided during subsequent peace negotiations with Germany, the communist propaganda machine made it known that the Allies had already decided on a new western border for Poland. It was no surprise, therefore, that shortly after Potsdam, Władysław Gomułka triumphantly announced that the Allies had officially recognized the new western border of Poland.<sup>8</sup> The reiteration of this statement became compulsory in any public announcements made by the communist regime during that time. "The leaders of the three biggest powers in the world have confirmed the recovery of the western territories to the Polish administration. This border was demarcated by Polish forces fighting side by side with the Red Army," Ostap Dłuski, one of the main communists responsible for the propaganda campaign, wrote, "and will undoubtedly be recognized by the world during the peace conference."<sup>9</sup>

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Poznań 1987, p. 174–290. See also *Polska myśl zachodnia w Poznaniu i Wielkopolsce. Jej rozwój i realizacja w wiekach XIX i XX*, pod red. A. Kwileckiego. Poznań 1980.

<sup>5</sup> M. Orzechowski: *Odra–Nysa Łużycka–Bałtyk w polskiej myśli politycznej okresu II wojny światowej*. Wrocław 1969; St. Dąbrowski: *Koncepcje powojennych granic Polski w programach i działalności polskiego ruchu ludowego w latach 1939–1945*. Wrocław 1971; B. Pasierb: *Polska myśl polityczna okresu II wojny światowej wobec Niemiec*. Poznań 1990.

<sup>6</sup> A. Skowroński: *Polska a problem Niemiec 1945–1965*. Warszawa 1967, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Pasierb, op. cit., p. 247.

<sup>8</sup> W. Gomułka: *W walce o demokrację ludową*. Warszawa 1947, p. 167.

<sup>9</sup> "Głos Ludu" no 200 from 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1945.

In an article written by Gomułka one can easily identify other key elements in the propaganda campaign, above all an emphasis on the crucial role played by the communist regime in recovering the western territories. The efforts of the Communists during the war and the new policy of alliance with the Soviet Union – the latter described as "the only state to unconditionally support Polish demands" – were invariably defined as key factors in the 'recovery' of the former German provinces. The communist regime put forward other arguments as well – for example, the economic significance of these regions that would allow the rebuilding of Poland and assure its prosperous growth in the future. Postwar Poland would have the opportunity to be an economic and political European power, but only if Poles settled in the 'recovered territories'. In these ways, the communist regime created a motivation for the Polish people to justify the replacement of eastern territories taken by the Soviet Union with new provinces to the west. Gomułka appealed to Poles to settle in the new territories. "Our victory will be complete only if all the towns and villages in the west and on the Baltic Sea will be populated by Poles." Only then would "haughty Prussian imperialism" be replaced by "the Polish peace guard."<sup>10</sup>

It is worth noting that even the economic and demographic arguments used by the Communists were recycled from prewar ideas of scholars connected to the movement called Polish Western Thought. The idea that shifting the Polish border to the west would trigger a change in the economic structure of Poland was formulated for the first time by the offices of the Polish government-in-exile in London.<sup>11</sup>

Other important elements of communist propaganda – its use in the political fight against the democratic opposition and against the Catholic Church in Poland – were introduced in the period from 1946 to 1948. First, the prewar government and the pro-western Polish government-in-exile were accused by the Soviet puppet state of renouncing these same territories. The 'recovery' of this territory was made possible only by the Polish nation's "destruction of the power of great landowners and capitalists." After the American Secretary of State questioned the new Polish border in a speech made in September 1946, the communist propaganda machine also repeatedly stated that the United States was against the 'recovered territories'. As the sole democratic opposition party in Poland, the Polish Peasant Party, was politically supported by Washington, and thus was also said to be against Polish national interests. This was used by the Communists as a pretext to launch a political campaign against the opposition and to minimize its role in Polish society shortly before elections were announced. Another political campaign, this one against the Catholic Church, was launched in April 1948. After a letter regarding the fate of Germans expelled from Eastern Europe was sent by Pope Pius XII to the German bishops, Polish

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<sup>10</sup> Gomułka, op. cit., p. 171–172.

<sup>11</sup> *O Odrę, Nysę Łużycką i Bałtyk (1939–1944)*, t. 3, Wrocław 1990, doc. No 6, p. 31.

Communists attempted to discredit the Catholic Church in the eyes of Polish society. This campaign produced no good results and was soon abandoned.<sup>12</sup>

It is worth noting that the communist propaganda campaign for Poland's new western territories never admitted that the 'recovered territories' were compensation for lost areas in eastern Poland. Only once, in August 1945, was it openly stated that the loss of Polish territory on its eastern border had to be compensated for in the west.<sup>13</sup> The propaganda campaign also abandoned the approach that the 'recovered territories' were compensation for damage suffered during the Germany occupation of Poland.

Until 1948, the Polish Communists tried instead to convince the people that the western provinces had been in some way linked with the Polish territory 'forever'. They also attempted to prove that there were no differences between the various parts of Poland, contradicting earlier statements that the provinces taken in 1945 were more advanced than the rest of the country. The successful linking of the 'recovered territories' with the rest of Poland was presented as the single greatest triumph of the communist leadership after World War Two. In 1948, the regime in Warsaw decided to exhibit this achievement in a monumental and unusual show called the *Exhibition of the Recovered Territories* in Wrocław (German Breslau until 1945). The show was an effort to finally prove their version of the story, though reality was somewhat different.<sup>14</sup>

The Western Institute in Poznań took an active part in creating a scholarly basis for the importance and irreversibility of the decision made in Potsdam regarding the Polish-German border. The institute, created in 1945, assembled people who had been engaged in the development of Polish Western Thought before the war. In 1947, Alfons Klafkowski published a book entitled *Legal Basis of the Oder-Neisse Border in Light of the Yalta and Potsdam Treaties*. In this work, he considered the legal position of Poland regarding its new borders and stressed that the Oder-Neisse border had been recognized in accordance with a formula in the agreement that stated "former German lands, east of the Polish border." In other words, the matter had been decided, not only *de facto* but also *de jure*. Klafkowski also stressed the already fact that both the Yalta and Potsdam agreements consented to the notion of a territorial equivalent for Poland. In accordance with this notion, the 'recovered territories' had been assigned to the Polish state by the Allies in Potsdam. He also considered the decision to expel Germans from Poland. He used the term 'resettling' which was the official term used by Polish Communists at that time. Although this policy had not been specifically defined in Potsdam, he noted that the Polish state was the

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<sup>12</sup> More about this subject see: Jakub Tyszkiewicz: *Sto wielkich dni Wrocławia. Wystawa Ziem Odzyskanych we Wrocławiu a propaganda ziem zachodnich i północnych w latach 1945–1948*. Wrocław 1997, p. 15–32.

<sup>13</sup> Trybuna Robotnicza, nr. 184 z 28 VIII 1945 r.

<sup>14</sup> More Tyszkiewicz, loc. cit.



main administrative ruler of this territory.<sup>15</sup> The arguments from this book were often repeated by Klafkowski and used by other authors in the nineteen-sixties and seventies.

The second phase of intense propaganda regarding the 'recovered territories' began in October 1956 and was connected to the return of Władysław Gomułka to power as First Secretary of the Polish Communist Party. The German question was extremely important to him and the integration of these territories with the rest of Poland became one of the watchwords of his new propaganda campaign. From 1956 to 1970, the main plank of the propaganda campaign was the fact that a new generation of Poles had been born and raised in the region. The effort here was the creation of a unanimous social group, fully integrated with the rest of Polish society, i.e., the young citizens of 'western lands', the new Polish provinces in the west. The new propaganda campaign also attempted to show that this new integrated Polish community was truly 'socialist' and that this had been achieved through the efforts of the communist regime. Until the end of the sixties, this issue played a crucial role in propaganda regarding the western territories. It was perhaps even more potent than the question of German 'revisionism' presented in the Polish media, i.e., the fear of a potential West German claim on the region that arose from the fact that the government in Bonn had never officially recognized the new Polish borders.<sup>16</sup>

And yet old slogans persisted. They could be detected in the 1965 speech made by Gomułka to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of victory over Germany. The leader of the Polish Communist Party said that though it had been widely believed in 1945 that German imperialism and Nazism were defeated forever, the current situation indicated otherwise. Gomułka particularly condemned the 'revisionists' in West Germany who strived to change world opinion regarding the *status quo* created in Potsdam. West Germany must be held responsible for "stirring the spirit of chauvinism, militarism, and revenge in the German nation" with its demands for territorial changes and a returned to the old *Drang nach Osten*. Gomułka stressed that though West Germany was not a direct neighbour of Poland, the government in Bonn continued to question that border. Gomułka feared the possibility of a united Germany adding that: "...the problem of the Oder-Neisse border will not be the subject of a Polish-German or international bargain, nor will the unification of Germany mean the swallowing of GDR by FRG." This prediction turned out to be false. Gomułka repeated his own words from August 1945: that Poland had returned to the Oder, Neisse and Baltic Sea, and that this return was sanctioned by Potsdam. Moreover, the Polish-German border had been permanently defined in the agreement with the first "peaceful, socialist German state" – namely, East Ger-

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<sup>15</sup> A. Klafkowski: *Podstawy prawne granicy Odra-Nisa na tle umów Jaltańskiej i Poczdamskiej*. Poznań 1947.

<sup>16</sup> See more in: G. Strauchold: *Wrocław – okazjonalna stolica Polski. Wokół powojennych obchodów rocznic historycznych*. Wrocław 2003.

many or GDR which, in 1950 in the treaty of Zgorzelec, consented to "the irrevocable facts of Potsdam."<sup>17</sup>

This summary of Gomułka's speech is useful because it clearly illustrates the main thrust of the communist government's propaganda during the period from 1956 to 1970. It concentrated on three main points and above all on the unconditional decision by the Allies made at Potsdam. The description in the Potsdam Agreement of provinces to the east of the Oder-Neisse line as 'former German territories' was presented as important proof. According to propaganda, it meant that the Allies' agreement in August 1945 viewed territories taken over by Poland separately from the occupation zones. From this, one Polish author drew the conclusion that the term 'under Polish administration' had permanent implications because only the occupation zones were temporary. Another important proof of the permanent shift of the border was found in the 'resettlement' of approximately two million Germans from this territory. Polish propaganda stressed that many of these Germans had been expelled by the Nazis during the last months of war or had fled before the Red Army offensive. Because of this "there was no attempt to announce to the world that this population transfer ... had been temporary, that there was any perspective for reversing this exodus."<sup>18</sup>

Legal arguments were also presented in the official propaganda of the nineteen-sixties. In 1965, Kłafkowski once again repeated his earlier arguments about the Potsdam Agreement. In his opinion the decision made by the Allies remained in force with no time limit. He pointed out that it had never been suggested that the agreement be dissolved either in part or in its entirety, or indeed any specific authorizations and obligations therein. Even violations of the Potsdam Agreement were not considered by the Allies as a withdrawal from the decisions made in 1945.<sup>19</sup>

The agreements signed in 1970 between West Germany and the Soviet Union (as one of the four powers responsible for Germany as a whole) and Poland were interpreted by the Polish communist propaganda machine as a tacit acceptance of the territorial *status quo*, i.e., as recognition of the postwar borders. It was said that the agreement between Poland and West Germany meant the recognition of the loss of those formerly German territories and at the same time underscored the "pointlessness of questioning the Potsdam boundary decisions."<sup>20</sup>

During the next decade (1980–1989), propaganda related to the provinces 'recovered' by Poland in 1945 did not play an important role in the public sphere. Old notions such as the threat of German 'revisionism' and the building of a 'socialist' society in this region were not relevant or convincing for most

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<sup>17</sup> Przemówienie w XX rocznicę zwycięstwa nad faszyzmem, (w:) Władysław Gomułka: *Przemówienia, lipiec 1964–grudzień 1966* (Warszawa: KiW 1967), p. 266–277 i 289–290.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>19</sup> Kłafkowski: *Polska-NRF a umowa poczdamska*. Warszawa 1965.

<sup>20</sup> J. Kokot: *Od Poczdamu do Helsinek. Koniec okresu powojennego w Europie*. Opole 1974.

Poles after Solidarity (1980–1981). One begins to detect at this time the beginning of an independent view regarding the history of these territories. A distinct change took place when Jan Józef Lipski, a leader of the Polish democratic opposition, published a brochure entitled "Two Heimats, Two Patriotisms", in which he articulated a new attitude toward the regions taken by Poland in 1945 and the fate of the expelled Germans. He wrote the following: "The obligation to create a new life for the millions of Poles who had to leave their *heimat* in the eastern part of prewar Poland is only an excuse for what happened". He questioned the historical and ethnic arguments used by the communists as the principle reasons for moving the Polish borders westward. Undoubtedly, Lipski's new perspective was accepted by many Poles who began to protest against manipulations of the so-called 'German question' by the ruling government, to demand corrections in the false picture of the Polish-German past presented in communist propaganda campaigns, and to show a more sympathetic attitude towards the fate of the divided German nation. Although the propaganda continued to emphasize the special role of the communists in 'recovering' these territories for Poland, a new and independent view of these historical and social problems was emerging and it began to play a more important role in Polish communities in that region. When the democratic changes occurred in Poland in 1989, an open discussion in which official propaganda played no role was launched about the various problems between Poles and Germans.

There is no doubt that the 1990 recognition of Poland's western border by united Germany had an enormous effect on putting a stop to further propaganda efforts regarding the region east of the Oder-Neisse line. Although slogans similar to those used by the Communists can sometimes be found in the political manifestos of today's radical rightwing nationalist parties, most Polish publications present an objective reconstruction of the issue. For this reason, I cannot agree with the rather pessimistic attitude of Davide Artico regarding Polish historiography. In his abstract, he argues that "Polish historians seldom attempted any research on the de-Germanization and Polonization of that region, that is, on the postwar population transfers." In fact, during the past fifteen years of democracy, Polish scholars have put a great deal of effort into building an objective picture of the difficult history of Lower Silesia and others regions ceded to Poland in 1945. A collaborative work of Polish and German historians – four volumes of documents presenting a full account of the expulsion of Germans from 1945 to 1950 – deserves special mention.<sup>21</sup> This issue has also been also been considered by B. Nitschke.<sup>22</sup> B. Ociepka wrote a book about the German people of Lower Silesia from 1945 to 1970.<sup>23</sup> P. Madajczyk presented very

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<sup>21</sup> *Niemcy w Polsce 1945–1950*, vol. 1–4, ed. W. Borodziej, H. Lemberg, D. Bockowski. Warszawa 1999–2004.

<sup>22</sup> *Wysiedlenie ludności niemieckiej z Polski*. Zielona Góra 1999.

<sup>23</sup> *Niemcy na Dolnym Śląsku 1945–1970*. Wrocław 1992.

valuable material about Germans in Poland<sup>24</sup> and J. Tyszkiewicz wrote about postwar communist propaganda dealing with the 'recovered territories'.<sup>25</sup> A book by J. Kochanowski tells of the fate of German prisoners in Poland.<sup>26</sup> There are also a number of new general historical works about Silesia,<sup>27</sup> Lower Silesia,<sup>28</sup> and Wrocław<sup>29</sup> written by historians from the University of Wrocław that objectively present the complex and multinational past of those territories over the centuries. These works received good reviews not only in Polish but also in German scholarly periodicals. I conclude, therefore, that Polish historians have made a serious effort to provide the Polish people with an objective picture of the situations of both Germans and Poles from 1945 to 1947 and that their work has gone a long way toward eliminating the influence of decades of communist propaganda campaigns.

### Povzetek

#### *Komunistična propaganda v zvezi z nekdanjimi nemškimi ozemlji, ki so pripadla Poljski (1945–1989)*

Nekdanje nemško ozemlje, ki so ga tri velesile avgusta 1945 v Potsdamu priznale Poljski, je bilo med vladavino komunistov na Poljskem v ospredju intenzivne propagande. V prispevku predstavljam glavne faze in cilje teh prizadevanj.

V prvem obdobju (1945–1948) je propaganda izpostavljala predvsem vlogo novih komunističnih voditeljev na Poljskem, ki naj bi bili edini, ki so bili Poljski sposobni "vrniti" nekdanje nemško ozemlje. Pripadnost teh območij Poljski je bila tudi edini dejavnik, ki je poljsko družbo (ki je bila v glavnem protikomunistična) povezoval s sovjetskim marionetnim režimom. Propaganda je poudarjala gospodarski pomen tega ozemlja, s pomočjo katerega se bo država lahko na novo utrdila in dosegala uspešno rast. Kot drugo pa je t.i. "ponovno pridobljeno ozemlje" pomenilo tudi nadomestilo za škodo, ki jo je Poljska utrpela pod nemško okupacijo. Uporabljalo se je tudi kot sredstvo v boju proti demokratični opoziciji in katoliški cerkvi, predvsem v letih 1946–1948. Izredna "Razstava povrnjenih ozemelj" v Wrocławu leta 1948 naj bi pokazala, da je bilo to ozemlje ponovno "za vedno" združeno s preostalim poljskim ozemljem in da

<sup>24</sup> P. Madajczyk: *Niemcy polscy*. Warszawa 2001.

<sup>25</sup> Tyszkiewicz, op. cit.

<sup>26</sup> J. Kochanowski: *W polskiej niewoli. Niemieccy jeńcy wojenni w Polsce 1945–1950*. Warszawa 2001.

<sup>27</sup> *History of Silesia*. Wrocław 2002.

<sup>28</sup> *History of Lower Silesia*. Wrocław 2006.

<sup>29</sup> W. Suleja: *Historia Wrocławia*, t. 3. Wrocław 2001.

je to predvsem dosežek komunističnih naporov po koncu druge svetovne vojne. Realnost pa je bila očitno drugačna.

Naslednje obdobje intenzivne propagande glede tega območja se je začelo oktobra 1956, ko je Władysław Gomułka postal prvi sekretar Komunistične partije na Poljskem. Ker je bil nemški problem zanj eden večjih problemov, je propaganda zopet poudarjala pomen združitve tega ozemlja s preostalo Poljsko. V obdobju 1956–1970 glavni motiv ni bila ponovna zgraditev tega območja, temveč vzpostavitev enotne družbene skupine mladih poljskih državljanov, ki so bili na tem območju rojeni in zato tudi že polno integrirani v poljsko družbo. Jasno je, da je bila, kot je izhajalo iz propagande, ta integracija možna le zaradi prizadevanj komunističnih voditeljev. Dokazati so si tudi prizadevali, da ta nova integrirana skupina v bistvu predstavlja novo "socialistično" družbo. Do konca 1960-ih let je imel ta problem najpomembnejšo vlogo pri propagandi teh ozemelj, celo pomembnejšo od tedaj še vedno prisotnega nemškega "revizionizma".

V obdobju 1970–1980, ko je bil Edward Gierek novi komunistični voditelj, so se ta prizadevanja nadaljevala, a z zmanjšano močjo. To pa predvsem zato, ker so se vzpostavili diplomatski odnosi med Bonn in Varšavo, zahodno-nemška vlada in parlament pa sta priznala mejo po črti Odra–Nisa. Poleg tega je komunistična propaganda poudarjala, da je nova združena "socialistična" družba na Poljskem že vzpostavljena.

V naslednjem desetletju propaganda ni imela več tako pomembne vloge. Nekdanja gesla, kot sta nemški "revizionizem" in graditev "socialistične" družbe, po obdobju "Solidarnosti" na Poljskem, ki je pomenilo začetek neodvisnega pogleda na zgodovino tega območja, za družbo niso bila več prepričljiva. Komunistična propaganda je še vedno poudarjala vlogo komunistov pri vrnitvi tega ozemlja Poljski. Od leta 1981 pa je vse pomembnejšo vlogo začel igrati nov, neodvisen pogled na zgodovino tega območja in socialne težave tam živečega prebivalstva. Ko pa je na Poljskem prišlo do demokratičnih sprememb, je bila omogočena tudi odprta razprava o vseh težjih problemih, kar pa je pomenilo tudi konec uradne propagande.

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Christian Promitzer\*

*How Not to Constitute a Minority.  
The Slovenians in Austrian Styria  
at the End of World War Two*

## 1. Introduction

During the past fifteen years, the issue of the "Slovenians of Austrian Styria" ("Steirische Slovenen" in German and "Slovenci na avstrijskem Štajerskem" in Slovenian) has become an indicator of the political climate between Slovenia and Austria. There is no doubt of the existence of a Slovenian-speaking population in the southern parts of the Austrian Federal Province of Styria, but its will to become officially recognized as a minority is still in question. It is even questionable whether this population forms a homogenous group which could be called "the Slovenians of Austrian Styria". In my opinion, the question of the Slovenians in Austrian Styria is not only one of formal recognition as a national or ethnic minority, but also a projection of well-meaning Austrian and Slovenian intellectuals. In general terms, we might call the "Slovenes of Austrian Styria" a phantasm, and, with respect to the vivid example of the Carinthian Slovenians, a simulacrum. To clarify, there is solid historical, ethnographic, and linguistic evidence to suggest the existence of small groups of people who live on the territory of the Austrian Federal Province of Styria and speak Slovenian vernacular in private,<sup>1</sup> but it is another issue if the various uses of the signifier

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<sup>1</sup> An incomplete survey of recent works since 1989 would comprise: Mirko Križman: *Jezik kot socialni in nacionalni pojav: primerjalno z jezikovnimi odnosi v Radgonskem kotu* [Language as Social and National Concept: Comparative Language Relations in Radgona Corner], Maribor 1989; *Blatten. Ein Dorf an der Grenze*, Johannes Moser and Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch (ed.), Graz 1992; *Slovenci v avstrijski zvezni deželi Štajerski. Zbornik referatov na znanstvenem srečanju v Mariboru, 25.–27. maja 1993*, [Slovenians in the Austrian Federal Province of Styria. Memorandum from scientific meeting in Maribor, May 25–27, 1993], Ljubljana 1994; Christian Promitzer: *Verlorene Brüder : Geschichte der zweisprachigen Region Leutschach in der südlichen Steiermark (19.–20. Jahrhundert)*, (unpublished doctoral dissertation) Graz 1996; *Slowenische Steiermark. Verdrängte Minderheit in Österreichs Südosten*, Christian Stenner (ed.), Vienna-Cologne-Weimar 1997; Mirko Križman: *Jezikovna razmerja : Jezik pragmatike in estetike v obmejnih predelih ob Muri* [The Language Situation, Pragmatics and Aesthetics in the Mura Borderlands]. Maribor 1997; Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik and Christian Promitzer (ed.): *Grenzenlos zweisprachig : Die Erinnerungen des Keuschlersohnes Anton*

'the Slovenians of Austrian Styria' coincide with the actual interests of the signified population.



*Areas with a Slovene population in Austrian Styria*

The reasons for the introduction of such a signifier can be found in the particular situation of this population after World War Two. 'The Slovenians of Austrian Styria' are, on the one hand, the product of the interpretation of the Slovenian national program by the Slovenian Communist Party since 1937,<sup>2</sup> and, on the other hand, of recent multiculturalism.<sup>3</sup> The 'Slovenians of Austrian Styria' were also a modest, and one might be inclined to say, justified response

Šantel (1845–1920) *an seine Kindheit in Leutschach und Jugend in Marburg*. Graz, 2002; Andrea Haberl-Zemljič: *Die Sprache im Dorf lassen : Festhalten und aufgeben der slowenischen Sprache in Radkersburg Umgebung*, Graz-Bad Radkersburg 2004; Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik: *The Hidden Slovene Minority in Soboth (Austrian Styria) : An Example of Assimilation in Borderlands. Times, Places, Passages. Ethnological Approaches to the New Millennium*, Budapest 2004, pp. 135–142; Peter Čede and Dieter Fleck: *Die steirischen Slowenen im Spiegel der amtlichen Volkszählungen*". In: *Europa ethnica*, 2005, No. 3–4, pp. 101–114; Klaus-Jürgen Hermanik: *Eine versteckte Minderheit. Mikrostudie über die Zweisprachigkeit in der steirischen Kleinregion Soboth*, Weitra 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Tone Zorn: *Nova Jugoslavija in vprašanje severne meje 1943–1945 [The New Yugoslavia and Questions of the Northern Border]*. In: *Prispevki za zgodovino delavskega gibanja*, 1968–1969, No. 1–2, pp. 311–318, esp. p. 316.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the activities of Pavlova hiša and the Cultural Association Article VII for Austrian Styria (*Kulturno društvo člen 7 za Avstrijsko Štajersko*) in the neighbourhood of the Radkersburg (Radgona in Slovenian) – cf. <www.pavel.at>.

to German nationalism and National Socialism; the German-Austrian elites perceived the incorporation of the Slovenian part of the old Archduchy of Styria with its centre, the city of Maribor, into the first Yugoslav state in late 1918 as a traumatic event, as 'sundering of Styria' ('Zerreiung der Steiermark' in German) and as a 'bleeding wound'.<sup>4</sup> The 'healing' of the wound called for reintegration, which would have dangerous and racist consequences. The situation reached a climax during the annexation of Slovenian Styria by the Third Reich in 1941 when the continued existence of the Slovene nation was put into question. At the end of the war and the years that followed, Slovenian experts worked out territorial claims vis-à-vis Austria. They were thinking in terms of using Austrian territory as a sort of compensation for the German occupation during the war. In order to justify Yugoslav claims, Slovenian experts had to start from the idea that a Slovenian minority in Austrian Styria existed, as it did in Carinthia. In this paper, I will concentrate on the situation of the Slovenian-speaking population of Austrian Styria in this period and attempts to 'proclaim them a national minority'. First of all, we must examine term 'national minority'.

## 2. National minorities in the Interwar and Early Postwar Periods

The end of World War One led to the division of the multiethnic Russian, Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and the creation of nation states or states which were to some extent 'synthetic states': for example, Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia). The ideal case, where state territory and (ethnic) nation were in concordance, hardly ever occurred. Large portions of populations that were considered 'ours' in national (ethnic) terms remained beyond new state borders. This was the fate of quite a number of Germans and Hungarians, the big losers of the war. But not even Slovenians, nominally among the winners of the war, found themselves united in the new Yugoslav state. This meant that unrealized national programs often remained an ongoing irritant. Secondly, the principles of the nation state did not anticipate ethnically-mixed territories or ethnic enclaves. Their difference and eccentricity resisted the unambiguous consequences of the new state borders.<sup>5</sup> As a remedy,

<sup>4</sup> Christian Promitzer: *The South Slavs in the Austrian Imagination: Serbs and Slovenes in the Changing View of German Nationalism to National Socialism*. In: *Creating the Other : Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, New York-Oxford 2003, pp. 183–215, esp. 195; *ibid*, "A Bleeding Wound" : How the Drawing of Borders Effects Local Communities : A Case Study from the Austrian-Slovenian Border in Styria. In: *Nationalising and Denationalising European Border Regions, 1800–2000. Views from Geography and Historiography*, Dordrecht et. al, 1999, pp. 107–130, esp. 120.

<sup>5</sup> *Sprachliche, kulturelle und ethnische Zwischenrume als Zugang zu einer transnationalen Geschichte Europas*, Philipp Ther, *idem.*, *Regionale Bewegungen und Regionalismen in europischen Zwischenrumen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts.*, Marburg 2003, pp. IX–XXIX.



the term 'national minority' entered the various peace treaties and the regulations of the League of Nations. The kin-states of the minority groups performed the role of protecting powers, while the states that the minorities lived in were compelled to grant them a certain amount of protection and some autonomy.<sup>6</sup>

In many cases, minority protection was not practiced. Minorities faced various forms of discrimination with respect to education, culture, freedom of assembly and expression, communication in their mother tongue with government officials and institutions, adequate representation in political life, etc. These forms of discrimination, that are basically strategies of 'exclusion', were accompanied by various assimilation policies that are strategies of 'inclusion by subordination' applied to members of minority groups willing to be absorbed by the majority population. The institutions that conducted these assimilative policies were police (monitoring loyalty), schools (inseminating majority language and culture), and institutes of social control in general (the civil society of the majority population). This was the most common narrative of the fate of national minorities after World War One.

This narrative is not inaccurate since it does reflect the various violations of minority rights that took place during the interwar period. And yet its major flaw resides in the dichotomy that sets nations and minorities apart, and defines them as essential entities. It neglects the historical and flexible character of manifestations of group consciousness, suggesting that meaning is derived only as a construction of modernity. Namely, nations and national minorities are not preset. They are artificially established.<sup>7</sup>

This dichotomy between nations and national minorities is a result of their treatment by international law and in some ways provides a reflection of the level of knowledge and awareness during the post-World War One era when the laws were drafted. The blunt dichotomy does not adequately reflect findings of more recent cultural studies on identity and ethnic affiliation, nor does it recognise the indifference toward national identity (of so-called *sujets mixtes*), or the fact that national affiliation and linguistic affiliation are not always in agreement.<sup>8</sup> Cases when a minority group does not show a will to be politically recognized as such are not represented within this dichotomous scheme. These are minority groups that would prefer to stay hidden from the public and whose members overtly claim to belong to the majority population.<sup>9</sup> History shows,

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<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Ortakovski: *Minorities in the Balkans*. Skopje-Štip 1998, pp. 109–118.

<sup>7</sup> Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London-New York 1995; Ernest Gellner: *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford 1988.

<sup>8</sup> "Speaking Slovene – Being Slovene. Verbal Codes and Collective Self-Image: Some Correlations between Kanalska dolina and Ziljska dolina". In: *Slovene Studies*, Munich 1988, No. 2, pp. 125–147.

<sup>9</sup> Kristijan Promicer: *(Ne-)vidljivost skrivenih manjina na Balkanu : Neka teorijska zapažanja*. In: *Skrivene manjine na Balkanu*, Beograd 2004, pp. 11–24.

however, that such strategies of self-protection did not necessarily help these populations to evade aggressive policies of assimilation.<sup>10</sup>

The interwar system of international law, which was built on this dichotomy of nations and national minorities, was destroyed during the rule of the Nazis in Europe. The Nazis transformed the ethnic picture in Europe through mass deportations and genocide. Immediately after World War Two, most members of German minorities were expelled from eastern Central Europe and Italians from communist Yugoslavia. Admittedly, a new treatment of ethnic groups, similar to the Soviet model, was introduced in the people's democracies of eastern Central Europe. That this model proved to be selective, however, can be seen in the suppression of the Albanians in Kosovo and the aggressive policy of assimilation toward Turks in Bulgaria, to just to name only two ethnic groups.<sup>11</sup>

On the western side of the Iron Curtain, the reestablished democracies were reluctant to employ essentially new forms of minority protection. This is especially valid for those states whose minorities had a communist kin-state. Ignoring Finland with its small Russian minority, three states fell into this category: Greece with its Slavic-Macedonian minority, Italy with its Slovenian minority, and Austria with its Slovenian minority.<sup>12</sup> In Greece, the outcome of the Civil War sealed the fate of the Macedonian minority that had sided with the Greek communists. In Austria and Italy, official policies also considered the Slovenian minority groups to be supporters of the communist cause. The displacement and resettlement of Germans and Italians from Yugoslavia likewise did not contribute to a positive climate. However, the negative climate towards Slovenian minority groups was also a direct result of early Cold War power relations and particularly unsettled border issues with Yugoslavia.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time – and this is no contradiction – we can observe in the immediate years after the war the increased self-awareness of Slovenian minority groups in Italy and Austria. This has to do with the nature of the communist seizure of power in Yugoslavia which was not a *coup d'état* as was the case in other countries of eastern Central Europe, but instead was the consequence of a popular movement of anti-fascist resistance that – albeit controlled by a Stalinist party and its security police (OZNA) – nevertheless had many followers not only inside the country, but also among the Slovenian populations beyond the borders of the old Yugoslav state. From the Slovenian point of view, the post-

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<sup>10</sup> Christian Promitzer: *Body, Race and the Border : Notes on the Paradigm of German National Thinking about the Slovenians*. In: *Zbornik Janka Pleterškega*, Ljubljana 2003, pp. 597–608.

<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Höpken: *Muslimische Emigration nach dem Ende der Osmanischen Herrschaft*. In: *Comparativ*, 1996, No. 1, pp. 1–24.

<sup>12</sup> One should also mention the Croatian minority in Austrian Burgenland which was separated from its kin population since the early modern age and the Pomaks in Western Thrace which official Bulgaria considered to be Bulgarian Muslims.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Knight: *Ethnicity and Identity in the Cold War: The Carinthian Border Dispute, 1945–1949*. In: *The International History Review*, June 2000, No. 2, pp. 273–303.

war situation opened a 'window of opportunity': namely, the possibility of realizing the aims of the mid-nineteenth-century Slovenian national program and, if this could not be achieved, at least to guarantee the existence and legal protection of the Slovenian minorities in Austria and Italy. Any success in pressing these goals was to a large degree owed to the fight of the resistance movement.

### 3. The Slovenians of Austrian Styria during the Interwar Period

In the case of the Slovenians of Austrian Styria, however, the window of opportunity was missed. During the interwar period, this group did not respond to the dichotomous scheme of minority protection and opted to remain hidden in order to avoid stigmatization by the majority population and institutions of the Austrian state. I will now demonstrate that in the days and weeks after World War Two, Slovenia and Yugoslavia did not make use of a favourable historical situation in order to constitute such a minority. I will further argue that Yugoslav authorities had an ideologized image of their 'lost brethren' across the border<sup>14</sup> and were not attentive to the group's actual circumstances and way of life. Thus Yugoslav territorial claims were not responded to by the population on behalf of whom the claims were made.

Before going into detail, some general remarks should be made on the ethnic group in question. The Slovenians of Austrian Styria lived (and still do) in three small rural areas close to the border with Yugoslavia (now Slovenia): the Radkersburg Triangle (Radgona in Slovenian), the area south of the small market town of Leutschach (Lučane) in the district of Leibnitz (Lipnica), and the area of Soboth (Sobote) to the west. Until the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy, these three areas fell within the Archduchy of Styria, and their location in the transient area between compact Slovenian and German territorial regions made them subject to interventions of competing German and Slovenian nationalisms. In the struggle for the souls of the people, the German nationalists tended to gain more adherents among the population because of their superior position in education and local politics. Already in this period, the use of the Slovenian language often did not coincide with Slovenian national affiliation. After World War One, these three areas remained in the Austrian Federal Province of Styria despite claims by the first Yugoslav state. The three areas were isolated from each other and there were no mutual contacts, so these population clusters did not form a collective awareness of being Slovenians in Austrian Styria. Nor were there contacts between Yugoslav authorities and the population of these three areas that would have been typical of contacts between a kin-state and its diaspora. During the interwar period, Slovenian intellectuals and institutions did occasionally refer to these areas as lost territory.<sup>15</sup> But we should also quote the

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<sup>14</sup> The first use of this phrase can be found in the March 18, 1907 issue of the newspaper *Domovina*, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Promitzer, *Verlorene Brüder*, pp. 274–275.

historian and ethnographer Franjo Baš (1899–1967) who declared in 1936: "Our prewar ethnographic border became our state border. [...] So that, with the exception of Radkersburg, our current border is the approximate ethnographic German-Slovenian and Hungarian-Slovenian border."<sup>16</sup>

In those years, the Slovenian speaking population in Austrian Styria formed three distinct 'hidden' minority groups. They were not present in the public, did not ask for minority rights, and were in the process of being absorbed by the German-speaking majority population. This process accelerated during the Nazi rule of World War Two, though its course was not as smooth as this short description might suggest. I have already mentioned the diverse strategies of exclusion and of inclusion by subordination. The institutions of assimilation used the power of authority, be it the church that abolished Slovenian sermons after World War One or the schools that made German the sole language of instruction, and the interventions of the German national association Deutscher Schulverein Südmark in this effort. Although there was no open manifestation of 'being Slovenian' nor any demands for minority rights, during the mid-twenties police searched out nationalist attitudes in the population and when Austria was annexed to the Third Reich, the Nazis seriously considered the 'ethnic cleansing' of Slovenians from the region along the Yugoslav border.<sup>17</sup>

The Nazis needed to assess the concrete numbers of Slovenian-speakers in the Styrian borderlands. In 1938, a group of students counted 1,588 people who spoke Slovenian in everyday life in the Leutschach area – specifically in the municipalities of Schloßberg (Gradišče in Slovenian) and Glanz (Klanci) – among a population of 3,858.<sup>18</sup> The population was far more cautious in the official census of 1939. That census listed only 445 Slovenian speakers of the 3,089 people with German citizenship in the two municipalities. Similar underestimates might have been made in the Radkersburg Triangle: here the official census of 1939 listed 305 Slovenians in a population of 868 in the five villages that were considered Slovenian: Laafeld (Potrna in Slovenian), Sichelendorf (Žetinci), Dedenitz (Dedonci), Zelting (Zenkovci), and Goritz (Gorica).<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, we have no data about the Soboth area during those years.

<sup>16</sup> Franjo Baš: *Slovenska narodnostna meja na severovzhodu* [Slovenian National Borders to the Southeast]. In: *Naši obmejni problemi. Referati na omladinskem narodno-obrambnem tečaju Družbe sv. Cirila in Metoda v Ljubljani*, Ljubljana 1936, pp. 19–35, esp. p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Promitzer, *Body, Race and the Border*, pp. 604–605.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Library of the University of Graz, II 199.142: *Lebensfragen der Grenzbevölkerung untersucht an der Steirischen Südgrenze. Reichsberufswettkampf der deutschen Studenten*, Kennnummer 967, Gau Steiermark, Vol, 4, Graz, unpubl. manu, 1938/39, pp. 317–318.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Arhiv Inštituta za narodno vprašanje, Ljubljana (AINV) [Archive of the Institute for Ethnic Studies], Zgodovinski arhiv, Severni oddelek: box 53, folder 493 "Sonderzählung der Volkszugehörigkeit und der Muttersprache 1939, Auszählungsgebiet Steiermark, Kreis Leibnitz, Kreis Radkersburg, Die Reichsangehörigen ohne Juden nach der Muttersprache"; cf. also Tone Zorn: *Prispevek k ljudskemu štetju 1939. leta na zgornjem Štajerskem*. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 1971, No. 2, pp. 329–335, esp. 332–334.

#### 4. The Role of the Partisans

After the German occupation of Yugoslavia in 1941, the plan for 'ethnically cleansing' the three small Slovenian areas lost its meaning. With the re-conquest of Slovenian Styria, they were no longer situated at the border. Moreover, for the Nazis, the issue of the Slovenian population south of the former border was far more pressing.

This is not the place to discuss the deportation of parts of the Slovenian population from Slovenian Styria and the various other measures of Nazi policy aimed at the extermination of the Slovenian nation. Nor will I go into detail about the formation of the military resistance by the communist-led Liberation Front in Slovenian Styria. Among the partisan units that operated in this region, the Lackov partizanski odred [Lacko Partisan Detachment] would become important for the Slovenian population on the northern side of the former state border with the defunct Yugoslavia. In early 1944, the Lackova četa [Lacko Company] was established and in spring was renamed the Lackov partizanski bataljon [Lacko Partisan Battalion]. The unit was named after Jože Lacko (1894–1942), a Communist peasant activist from the region of Slovenske gorice who died in custody after being tortured by the Gestapo.<sup>20</sup> The Lacko battalion operated around the city of Maribor and Dravsko polje, the western part of Slovenske gorice to the Kozjak mountain range (Poßruck or Remschnigg in German), and the eastern part of the Pohorje mountains close to Maribor. In early summer 1944, the battalion was given the task to concentrate its field of operation in the Kozjak mountain range north of the Drava River. The intent was to expand the northern flank of the Partisan movement between Carinthia and Hungary and to sabotage German communication routes and power supply systems.<sup>21</sup> The former state border between Austria and Yugoslavia ran alongside the Kozjak mountains, the northern rim being ethnically mixed and including the already mentioned areas of Leutschach and Soboth and their Slovenian-speaking populations.

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<sup>20</sup> Milan Ževart: *Lackov odred : Lackova četa, Lackov bataljon, Pohorski – Lackov odred*, 2 vol. Maribor 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Ževart, op. cit., p. 70.



*The role of the partisans (the Lacko Unit – Lackov odred)*

During the weeks that followed, Franc Zalaznik-Leon (1907–1973), a leading activist of the Slovenian Liberation Front, explored the prospective operation zone on what had been the Austrian side of the former border. He came in contact with Slovenian peasants and with a German the priest from Leutschach and tried to persuade them to join the Liberation Front and establish a local committee, but the conspiratorial talks took place in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion and proved fruitless. It was the Christian convictions of the Austrian participants that caused their disapproval of the Nazi regime. And, what is more, their sympathies lay with the British; they had no desire to cooperate with Yugoslav Communists.<sup>22</sup> What were the reasons for Zalaznik-Leon's attempt to recruit Slovenians north of the former state border? We know that in February 1944, the Scientific Institute of the Slovenian Liberation Front discussed the future borders of Slovenia and requested the annexation of those territories of Austrian Styria that were inhabited by Slovenians.<sup>23</sup> We did not find evidence, however, of the extent to which Zalaznik-Leon's activities were motivated by the institute.

<sup>22</sup> Franc Zalaznik-Leon: *Dolga in težka pot 1941–1945* [A Long and Difficult Path]. Maribor 1963, pp. 242–259, 300–303, 314–317.

<sup>23</sup> Fran Zwitter: *Priprave znanstvenega Inštituta za reševanje mejnih vprašanj po vojni* [Preparations of the Scientific Institute to Salvage the Postwar Border Questions]. In: *Osvoboditev Slovenije (referati z znanstvenega posvetovanja v Ljubljani 22. in 23. decembra 1975)* [The Liberation of Slovenia], Ljubljana 1977, pp. 258–276, esp. pp. 258, 262, 264–265.

In late September 1944, the Lacko partisan detachment, the main body of the partisans with approximately three hundred fighters, arrived in the Kozjak mountain range. Their job was to escort a small group of Austrian Communist partisans, who were trying to find recruits in the German hinterlands, and to begin to disseminate propaganda among the Austrian population. Zalaznik-Leon's failure to recruit the people of Leutschach, however, influenced their decision to harass only the peasants on the Austrian side of the border and spare the population on the southern and formerly Yugoslav side of the Kozjak mountains.<sup>24</sup> Naturally, this reduced the possibilities of effective propaganda activities and confidence-building among the Slovenian population on the Austrian side. The situation became worse in late autumn 1944. More and more civilians on both sides of the former state border became collateral damage in the heavy fighting between the Nazis and partisans. The partisans hid in the hillside forests and launched sporadic assaults on police stations in the valleys, while the regime police, Gestapo, and SS Wehrmacht controlled the fortified villages and market towns in the valleys from which they launched concerted actions to hunt down partisans.<sup>25</sup>

In early 1945, the partisans were preparing for the situation after the capitulation of the German Wehrmacht. The local Slovenian population on the Austrian side of the former border, who the previous summer had met representatives of the Liberation Front with distrust, was again the object of the organization's calculations. The situation had changed however; back in the summer, the fighting had not yet begun. By early 1945, the population realized that other than the dangerous option of siding with either the partisans or the Nazis, there was only prevarication. What could be done if in the morning partisans arrived at a farmstead, requesting food and asking household members if they had been visited by the Gestapo, and in the afternoon the Gestapo came knocking and asked if they had been visited by the partisans?<sup>26</sup> In the first months of 1945, locals suspected of helping the partisans were arrested. A handful of them were transported to the Dachau concentration camp from where they never returned.<sup>27</sup>

We do not know of propaganda activities used by Lacko detachment to press territorial claims, except that in February 1945 the secretary of the Communist Youth (SKOJ) of the detachment declared that the partisans must not repeat the

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<sup>24</sup> Zalaznik-Leon, op. cit., 318, 322–323.

<sup>25</sup> Archive of the Diocese Graz-Seckau (ADGS), fund "Dechantl. Visitationen, Dekanat Leutschach, Kirchenvisitationen 1900–1955", letter of the priest of Leutschach dated December 31, 1944; Herbert Blatnik: *Zeitzeugen erinnern sich an die Jahre 1938–1945 in der Südweststeiermark*. Eibiswald, 2000, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, pp. 268–311.

<sup>26</sup> ADGS, letter of the priest of Leutschach dated December 3, 1944; Blatnik, op. cit., pp. 353–381.

<sup>27</sup> Zalaznik-Leon, op. cit., p. 470; Arhiv Republike Slovenije (ARS) [National Archives of Slovenia], AS 1856, Lackov odred narodnoosvobodilne vojske in partizanskih odredov Slovenije, 1944–1945, Štab Lackovega odreda, obveščevalni center, status report of January 24, 1945.

mistakes of the Yugoslav troops after World War One who squandered the positive feelings of the local Slovenian population.<sup>28</sup> This warning referred to the fact that the temporary Yugoslav occupation of the Slovenian areas of Austrian Styria from 1918 to 1920 had been notorious for its requisition of cattle and other infringements to the degree that even the local Slovenian population considered the Yugoslav troops occupiers rather than liberators.<sup>29</sup>

A diplomatic step to secure territorial claims at the international level was taken by the Yugoslav government on April 2, 1945. Namely, it demanded the allocation of an occupation zone in Austria that would be made up the Slovenian territories of Austria. In fact, only the Soviet Union allowed Yugoslavia to participate with its troops in the provisional Soviet occupation zone in Austrian Styria.<sup>30</sup>

At this point, activists of the Liberation Front in Slovenian Styria already realized that territorial claims would be unlikely to succeed if they were not supported by the local population. The young men from the Austrian side who had fled into the forests during the last weeks of the war in order to escape recruitment by the Nazis were welcomed among the ranks of the Lacko detachment. Unfortunately, we do not know either the number or identities of these men.<sup>31</sup> A more palpable measure was the establishment at the end of March of three local committees of the Slovenian Liberation Front on the Austrian side. It appears though that even this was conducted in a rash and half-hearted manner. The committees were supposed to prove the legitimacy of the territorial claims on the spot. Two of the three committees were in the municipalities of Leutschach and Glanz, while the location of the third one is unknown (perhaps Schloßberg). Zalaznik-Leon, the activist mentioned above, organized the foundation of the committee in Glanz. In his memoirs, we read that he needed a translator, since not all of the committee members understood Slovenian.<sup>32</sup>

We can assume that the committees were conspiratorial and could not exercise authority during the last days of war while the fighting continued. The three committees were affiliated to the District Committee Maribor-Left Bank (Okrožni odbor Maribor-levi breg) of the Liberation Front. But there were no representatives at the first meeting of the local committees of the district which took place on April 27, 1945 when the annexation of the Slovenian territories on the Austrian side was being discussed. The report of the meeting made only a half-

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<sup>28</sup> Ževart, op. cit., p. 567.

<sup>29</sup> Haberl-Zemljič, op. cit., pp. 73–93; Promitzer, *Verlorene Brüder*, pp. 205–211.

<sup>30</sup> Dušan Biber: *Britansko-jugoslovanski nesporazumi okrog Koroške* [British-Yugoslav Misunderstands around Koroška]. In: *Zgodovinski časopis*, 1978, No. 4, pp. 475–488, esp. pp. 482–483; Janko Pleterski: *Slovenci na avstrijskem Štajerskem in člen 7 pogodbe o Avstriji* [Slovenians in Austrian Styria and Article 7 of the Austrian Treaty]. In: *Avstrija in njeni Slovenci 1945–1976*, Ljubljana 2000, pp. 227–236, esp. 231–232.

<sup>31</sup> Ževart, op. cit., p. 683.

<sup>32</sup> Zalaznik-Leon, op. cit., 481–482.



hearted claim that the people on the Austrian side generally wanted to join Slovenia.<sup>33</sup>

Thereafter we hear nothing more about these local committees. It is not known when, how or why they withered away, but we can assume that they did not manage to rally a sufficient number of people who would lobby to join the new Yugoslav state. If during the next weeks the Slovenian Liberation Front had tried to keep these committees alive, they might have become more than just a passing phenomenon and at least established a platform for the permanent representation of the local Slovenian population. But this was not the case. On the contrary, the way the occupation was conducted in the Leutschach area deterred the Slovenian population from constituting themselves as a distinct minority, still less from expressing a preference to join Yugoslavia. Despite the warnings of the secretary of SKOJ, the mistakes of the Yugoslav occupation after World War One were repeated.

## 5. The Yugoslav Occupation

On May 11, the Lacko detachment commenced the formal occupation of the Leutschach area. When they arrived in Leutschach, they discovered that a commando of the First Bulgarian Army had already taken the little town. The Bulgarians were behaving violently; looting property and raping women. By restoring public order, the partisans of the Lacko detachment won the sympathy of the local population.<sup>34</sup> But on May 13, the Lacko detachment departed and were replaced by a unit of the Fourteenth Shock Division of the Yugoslav Army.<sup>35</sup> A soldier of the Fourteenth Division described the local population as follows:

Possibly some people will be surprised when I say that the majority here are Slovenians. I have been in these areas before as a partisan and therefore I have some knowledge. [...] Truly, German power has put the locals under severe pressure. The majority of them have been defeated for there have been no Slovenian schools or any other cultural institutions in our language. [...] The people are not evil; they are not in the slightest like the Prussians. They still have our Slovenian character, even if they are not able to speak our language anymore. [...] Our aim is to win over the sympathies of these people with our behaviour; in this way, they will grow fond of us, will develop an interest in us, and will learn Slovenian as soon as possible.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> ARS, AS 1741, Okrožni odbor Osvobodilne fronte Maribor 1944–1945, Okrajni Odbor OF Maribor levi breg, status report of April 27; Okrožni odbor OF Maribor, report of May 6, 1945, p. 4; Ževart, op. cit., p. 410.

<sup>34</sup> Ževart, op. cit., p. 402; ADGS, letter of the priest of Leutschach dated December 31, 1945.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ževart, op. cit., p. 402–404.

<sup>36</sup> ARS, AS 1868, Štirinajsta divizija Narodnoosvobodilne vojske in Partizanskih odredov Jugoslavije, 1943–1945, propagandni odsek XIV. div., črtice, razni spomini.

First, we note how the self-assigned stereotype in 'our Slovenian character' contributed to the creation of a simulacrum – the Slovenians of Austrian Styria – and second the fact that the liberator had to imbue the local population with the need to be liberated.

The incarnation of this would-be liberation would be a mysterious person who held civil power for about forty days. This person, Andreas Fišinger, called himself 'commissar' and 'local commander of the militia'. He said that he had been appointed by the civil authorities in Maribor in order to prepare the area of Leutschach for annexation by Yugoslavia. Fišinger was born in Maribor and had been apprenticed in Leutschach some years before. His reign polarized the local population. He was apparently supported by the Yugoslav troops and given executive power over the local gendarmerie. He tried in vain to introduce Slovenian as the official language of the town and prevent the local population from attending church. Fišinger demanded that the Austrian flag only be displayed next to the Yugoslav one. Local chronicles record that during the reign of the commissar, death threats, rapes, and looting took place.<sup>37</sup> On July 1, the Yugoslav troops left the area and were replaced by a Soviet unit that arranged the return of Fišinger to Yugoslavia. On July 24, when the whole of the Austrian Federal Province of Styria became part of the British occupation zone, Soviet troops were replaced by British troops.<sup>38</sup>

The episode of the self-appointed commissar who established a severe local regime in the name of the Yugoslav state would have been comical if it did not reveal such a high level of cynicism. A well-meaning observer might note that the treatment of the area, which was supposed to join Yugoslavia, had nothing more than amateurish and superficial. But in fact, it destroyed any possible sympathy for the Yugoslav cause among the population. Moreover, it was terribly misguided as it attempted to Slovenize a small market town that had always been German. By the end of the commissar's reign, there were virtually no people in the region who supported union with Slovenia. Unlike Carinthia, there was no pressure group, no substrate, no local Slovenian organizations in the area of Leutschach that would lobby for Yugoslav territorial claims.

The situation in the region of Soboth to the west was similar. The population in this area had suffered even more as a result of intense fighting during the last months of war. When the Lacko detachment reached the small market town of Eibiswald (Ivnik in Slovene) on May 10, its local headquarters asked to establish a Slovenian school<sup>39</sup> – a request that was understandable only in the euphoria of victory since the population of the town had always been German and the Slovenian-speaking population in the mountains to the south had never devel-

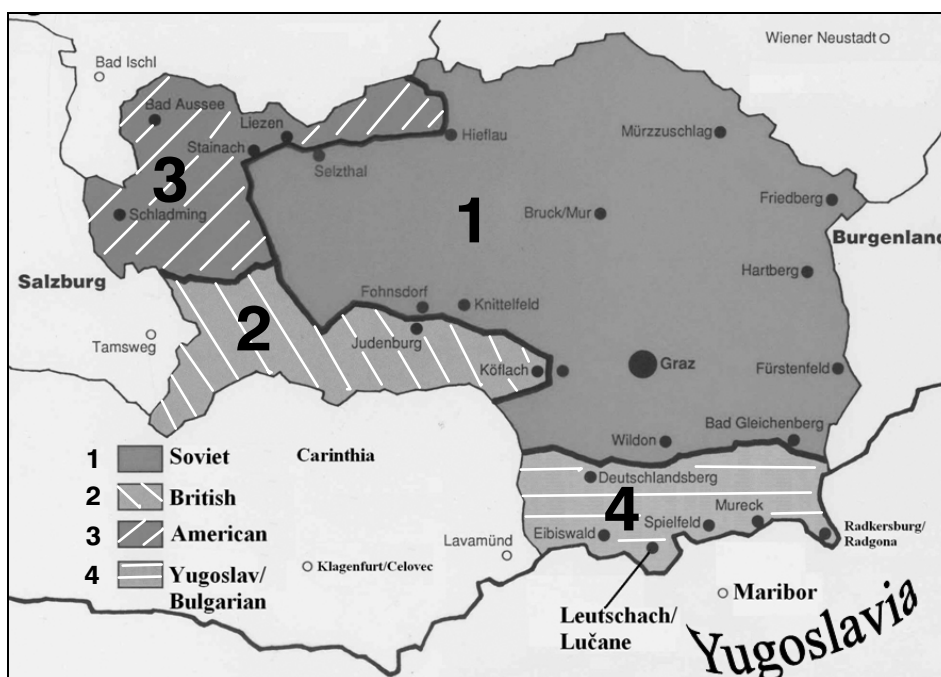
<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Chronik der Gemeinde Glanz*, Glanz, p. 119; *Schulchronik von Leutschach*, Leutschach, 1944/45. ; *Steirerblatt*, August 2, 1947, p. 2; *Zeitung der Woche*, June 21, 1952, p. 1; *Kleine Zeitung*, July 4, 1952, p. 7 and July 5, 1952, p. 6; October 17, 1956, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Cf.

<sup>39</sup> Ževart, op. cit., pp. 397–399.

oped a nationalistic sense of being Slovenian. As far as poor behaviour on the part of the Yugoslav, Bulgarian and Soviet troops was concerned, the situation around Eibiswald was similar to the one in Leutschach.<sup>40</sup>

Yugoslav armed forces were also present in the Radkersburg Triangle up until July 1945. During this period the new mayor of the town of Radkersburg championed the annexation of the area to Yugoslavia and, on July 1, 1945, local activists in a meeting in Radenci in Slovenia declared that they wanted to participate in the new federal and democratic Yugoslavia.<sup>41</sup> We can assume, however, that these manifestations reflected above all insecurity about the future of the region or, if serious, were the expression of a small minority. For the majority of the population on the southern border, the trauma of the 'sundering of Styria' was palpable and was part and parcel of the general anti-Slavic sentiment toward the Soviet, Bulgarian and Yugoslav occupiers throughout Austrian Styria.<sup>42</sup>



*Occupation zones in Austrian Styria (9. 5. 1945–2. 7. 1945)*

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Blatnik, op. cit., pp. 426–459.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Haberl-Zemljič, op. cit., pp. 195–196.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Siegfried Beer: "Das sowjetische 'Intermezzo' : Die Russenzeit in der Steiermark. 8. Mai bis 23. Juli 1945". In: Joseph F. Desput (ed.), *Vom Bundestaat zur europäischen Region. Die Steiermark von 1945 bis heute*, Graz 2004, pp. 35–58, esp. pp. 36–37.

## 6. Territorial Claims

Given the behaviour of the partisans and the poor implementation of the Yugoslav occupation, we must also shed some light on how Slovenian experts articulated Yugoslav claims to parts of Austrian Styria. Yugoslavia's position was weak in comparison to its situation after World War One. After the retreat of Yugoslav troops in July 1945, it had no control over the territory that it was claiming. In the period from 1945 to 1948, the British occupation forces in Carinthia looked suspiciously at minority claims as a kind of 'fifth column activity'.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, we can assume that the Slovenian issue coming to the fore in Austrian Styria was against their interests.<sup>44</sup> As a result, Yugoslavia's position in Austria was reduced to that of powerless bystander. When the first Austrian elections for the parliament and the provincial diets were announced for November 25, 1945, the Yugoslav government could only deliver a letter to the Allies (dated November 14) in which they opposed the elections to be held in contested areas since international negotiations should have been held to first determine their affiliation to Yugoslavia or Austria.<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime, the department for border issues of the Slovenian Scientific Institute was working to substantiate Yugoslav territorial claims vis-à-vis Austria. Julij Felaher (1895–1969), the referent for Carinthia, was responsible for overseeing the work, while Franjo Baš, who in 1936 had declared that the state border was almost identical to the ethnographic border, worked on the specific Yugoslav claims to Austrian Styria. In the early summer of 1946, Baš presented his first report which included two maps that were intended to document that the contested territories gravitated towards Slovenian Styria as regards ethnography and transportation lines. He also attached photographs, mostly of ethnographic artefacts, to illustrate his claims. The institute produced several reports in 1946 and 1947, most of them authored by Baš.<sup>46</sup> The institute also intended to publish an anthology on Austrian Styria in order to demonstrate the injustice of the border of St. Germain, a result of the historical retreat of the Slovenian national position to the south and the takeover of property by German capital.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Knight: *Peter Wilkinson and the Carinthian Slovenes*. In: *Zbornik Janka Pleterskega*, pp. 427–42, esp. p. 439; cf. Knight, *Ethnicity and Identity*.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Felix Schneider: *Britische Besatzungs- und Sicherheitspolitik*, Desput (ed.), *Vom Bundesstaat zur europäischen Region*, pp. 60–98, esp. 80–83.

<sup>45</sup> Pleterski, op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>46</sup> AINV, Zgodovinski arhiv : box 1, uprava – korespondenca (oddelka z v.d. direktorjem Lojzetom Udetom) 1946–1947, "korespondenca med Lojzetom Udetom in referentom za Koroško Julijem Felaherjem, June 29, 1946, July 5, 1946, July 15, 1946.; box 2, uprava – korespondenca, (uradi v SFRJ) 1945, 1947, 1950, Izvršni odbor Osvobodilne fronte slovenskega naroda 1946, 1950, 1951, July 24, 1946; box 80, zasebni arhiv Lojzeta Udet, Franjo Baš 1945; AINV Zgodovinski arhiv, Severni oddelek: box 65, folders 630–631; box 71, Štajerska in Pomurje – članki, elaborati, poročila, program za Štajerski zbornik; box 81, folder 405–406; AINV Tekoči arhiv, Franjo Baš, Korektura jugoslovensko-austrijske granice u Štajerskoj.

The anthology was never finished, however, since peace negotiations started earlier than expected.<sup>47</sup>

The material was eventually used in the "Memorandum of the Government of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia on Slovene Carinthia: The Slovenian Border Regions of Styria and the Croats of Burgenland."<sup>48</sup> This memorandum was presented in January 1947 at a meeting of special deputies for the Austrian Treaty. The deputies were appointed by the Council of Foreign Ministers, namely by the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> The Yugoslav delegation justified its territorial claims with Austria's 1941 participation in Nazi aggression against Yugoslavia and its occupation of Yugoslav territory. Aside from the southern part of Carinthia, it claimed the Radkersburg Triangle, a major part of the Leutschach area, and the municipality of Soboth with an area of 130 square kilometres and a population of 6,000 to 10,000 Slovenes.<sup>50</sup>

Yugoslav claims were rejected not only by Austria as the concerned party but also by the Allies.<sup>51</sup> In April 1948, Yugoslavia reduced its claims by one for Soboth.<sup>52</sup> After the break between Stalin and Tito, Yugoslavia also lost Soviet support. In the next round of negotiations, Yugoslavia insisted only on the protection of the south Slav minorities in Austria, including Austrian Styria, and this formed the basis for the August 1949 compromise among the foreign ministers of the Allies. The compromise became part of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955.<sup>53</sup>

The inclusion of Austrian Styria among the territories where the minority protections articulated in the Austrian State Treaty would be applied was a relative success for Yugoslavia, first because Carinthia and its Slovenian minority were much more important for Yugoslavia than Austrian Styria, and, second because throughout the period of peace negotiations, Slovenian experts for the Yugoslav delegation had no access to the contested areas and therefore no real insight into the situation. They had to make use of pre-World War One ethnographic and census data in order to legitimize the Yugoslav claims.

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<sup>47</sup> AINV, Štajerska in Pomurje – članki, elaborati, poročila, program za Štajerski zbornik.

<sup>48</sup> AINV, Zgodovinski arhiv: box 1, uprava – korespondenca (zavodi, ustanove, založbe, uredništva, društva, privatniki) 1945–1948, 1950, korespondenca dr. Jože Vilfan, January 8, 1947.

<sup>49</sup> Gerald Stourzh: *Um Einheit und Freiheit. Staatsvertrag, Neutralität und das Ende der Ost-West-Besatzung Österreichs 1945–1955*. Wien, Köln, Weimar 1998, pp. 63–64.

<sup>50</sup> Memorandum of the Government of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia on Slovenian Carinthia, the Slovenian frontier areas of Styria, and the Croats of Burgenland, 1947.

<sup>51</sup> Stourzh, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>52</sup> Stourzh, op. cit., p. 135; Feliks J. Bister: *Vprašanje štajerskih Slovencev v avstrijskem časopisju po Drugi svetovni vojni*. In: *Slovenci v avstrijski zvezni deželi Štajerski*, pp. 113–121, esp. 116.

<sup>53</sup> Stourzh, op. cit., pp. 147–148, 155–161; Bister, op. cit., pp. 117–119.

## 7. The Local Population

But did the Yugoslav claims correspond with the will of the population in question? Had this population expressed its wish to unite with communist Yugoslavia? Did they even request minority status and rights?

As noted on several occasions, there is no doubt that the Slovenian language and those who spoke it in public were objects of persecution and targets of linguistic assimilation programmes since the late nineteenth century in the areas of Austrian Styria where the language was present. This was true immediately after World War One, during the interwar period, and in the Nazi era.<sup>54</sup> There was no significant change during the years of British occupation. German national ideology had roots in the local public and public institutions even in the decades before the Third Reich. This situation was simply taken for granted and not even the fall of the Nazis dislodged or altered it. The power structures established by the hegemony of German or German-Austrian ethnic politics, by definition excluded the Slovenian population that might have declared its sympathy for Yugoslavia. As I mentioned, the establishment of real resistance against this policy might have had a chance if the partisan movement had used a different approach with the local population and if the Yugoslav occupation had taken a different course. In the decisive years after July 1945, however, there were no contacts between Yugoslavia as kin-state and the Slovenian minority in Austrian Styria. The beginning of the Cold War and the subsequent closing of the borders by the British occupation forces made it virtually impossible.<sup>55</sup>

Consequently, there was no connection between the position of Yugoslavia and the actual will of the population in question. All the same, the Yugoslav position with respect to Austrian Styria survived without such a connection. It relied on features such as language and ethnography (although using outdated sources) and on the principle of territorial compensation for Austrian participation in the aggression of the Third Reich against Yugoslavia. Thus for Yugoslavia, the Slovenians of Austrian Styria became a phantasm of an enslaved ethnic group striving to be liberated from its oppressors. It was the art of Slovenian experts such as Franjo Baš to make connections between an imagined situation and the actual traits of the population in concern (such as the slow passing of the Slovenian vernacular), while ignoring the fact that the population itself expressed no desire to be treated as Slovenians.

With the goodwill of the British occupation forces and the ongoing news of the persecution of non-Communist opposition inside Yugoslavia it was rather easy to strengthen the adverse ideological position of the population. These factors, along with the hegemonic character of local German-Austrian ethnic

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<sup>54</sup> Promitzer, *A Bleeding Wound*; idem, *Body, Race and the Border*.

<sup>55</sup> Schneider, *Britische Besatzungs- und Sicherheitspolitik*, p. 80.

politics, made it more likely that the population, if asked, would declare its loyalty to the Republic of Austria and repudiate Yugoslav demands.

But what was the Austrian policy in the case under consideration? In answering this question, we must keep in mind that the border issue in Styria was secondary vis-à-vis the case of Southern Carinthia. This order of priority was also valid for the negotiators on the Yugoslav side.

On the Austrian side, the strategy was threefold:

1. Austrian politicians, from the Federal Chancellor down, rejected Yugoslav claims and denounced them as illegitimate.<sup>56</sup>

2. Austrian newspapers denied the existence of an autochthonous Slovenian population in Austrian Styria.<sup>57</sup>

3. Local politicians, together with Josef Krainer, member of the Styrian provincial government, organized mass pro-Austria demonstrations in Soboth, Leutschach and Radkersburg in January and February of 1947. In April 1948, when Yugoslavia repeated her claims to the regions around Leutschach and the Radkersburg Triangle, Josef Krainer escorted a delegation from these two regions to the Federal Chancellor in Vienna who declared once again that he rejected all Yugoslav claims. In April 1949, when Samuel Reber, the head of the American delegation at the London Conference, visited the borderlands of Austrian Styria, he was met by massive pro-Austria demonstrations and the mayors of the contested municipalities submitted a memorandum to him in which they asked to remain in Austria.<sup>58</sup>

This strategy of creating reality on the ground worked perfectly. Nevertheless, the local Austrian authorities did not fully believe in their power and behaved as if they had a more effective Yugoslav adversary. What if the Yugoslav propaganda about the Slovenians of Austrian Styria was true? As a result of their uncertainty, they behaved fiercely, as if they had an enemy that had to be defeated at any price. Thus one reads in a local newspaper a description of the population in the Soboth area: "And if this is now the Slovenian territory of [Austrian] Styria, let us have a look at the boys and girls with their blue eyes and their blond mops of hair, their open regards and their unfettered cheerfulness, and tell us if you can see anything Slavic about them."<sup>59</sup> Such evocations indicate a certain insecurity, the existence of which led to paranoid behaviour as the following anecdote about a disobedient district council reveals. In early 1947, when Yugoslavia announced its claims, the provincial government of Styria ordered unanimous resolutions from the district councils in the contested municipalities of Radkersburg and surrounding villages. In Radkersburg itself

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<sup>56</sup> Stourzh, op. cit., pp. 65–67, 69–70, 81, 136; Bister, op. cit., pp. 115–116.

<sup>57</sup> Bister, op. cit., pp. 114–115.

<sup>58</sup> *Chronik der Marktgemeinde Leutschach*, Leutschach, 1947, p. 185; *Steirische Bewährung 1945–1955. Zehn Jahre Aufbau in der Steiermark*, Graz, s. d. [1956], pp. 18–20; Bister, op. cit., pp. 114–116.

<sup>59</sup> Julia Enzi: *Bergheimat Soboth*. In: *Weststeirische Rundschau*, No. 4, January 1, 1947, p. 2.

and in the village of Sichelendorf (Žetinci in Slovenian), the district councils could not reach an agreement about the resolution. The issue was not that they wanted to declare themselves Slovenians, but that some of them owned vineyards on the Yugoslav side of the border and feared losing them if they signed a pro-Austrian resolution. Because of their failure to comply, the district councils of Radkersburg and Sichelendorf were dissolved and replaced by new ones.<sup>60</sup> In this way, the phantasm of the Slovenians of Austrian Styria fused with the compulsive repetition of the old trauma of 'sundering Styria'.

In the area of Leutschach, the head of the elementary school and the priest of Leutschach tried their best to explain to an inquiry commission that the population was almost exclusively German and that there was only an insignificant number of Slovenians all of whom were loyal Austrians.<sup>61</sup> It is not without irony that in a letter to the Bishop in late 1944, when the partisans had become a strong local factor, the very same priest had declared that Leutschach was "predominantly a Slovenian parish" ("*eine vorwiegend sloven[ische] Pfarre*").<sup>62</sup> But in early 1947 panic in Leutschach reached its climax in early 1947. The priest wrote in another letter to the bishop that the people of the town were bracing for the arrival of Yugoslav occupation troops that would come any day now, that the townspeople had stopped working, prostrated themselves before the allied inquiry commissions, and in their desperation sought refuge in drink.<sup>63</sup>

The reason for this desperation was probably not the Yugoslav claims alone but the general insecurity in the region. In 1946 and 1947, the Yugoslav state security service, UDBA, had launched a cross-border operation in the municipality of Schloßberg where they engaged an anti-Communist gang of royalist Yugoslav émigrés (so called Matjaževa vojska) and their ringleader Ferdinand Sernec. Together, British troops and the UDBA (working independently of each other) ended up eliminating most of the gang in the early summer of 1947. Those who survived were convicted in trials in Ljubljana, Maribor, and Graz.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Haberl-Zemljič, op. cit., pp. 207–208.

<sup>61</sup> Provincial Archive of Styria, Graz, fund Archiv des Marktes Leutschach box 3, folder 16, declaration of May 1, 1948; Bister, op. cit., p. 115.

<sup>62</sup> ADGS, letter of the priest of Leutschach dated December 31, 1944.

<sup>63</sup> ADGS, fund Leutschach – Pfarre (Neubestand), Verschiedenes, letter of the priest of Leutschach dated June 15, 1947.

<sup>64</sup> Felix Schneider: "Military Security" und "Public Safety". *Zur Arbeit des Kontroll- und Sicherheitsapparates der britischen Besatzungsmacht in der Steiermark 1945–1948*. In: *Österreich unter alliierter Besatzung 1945–1955*, Vienna – Cologne – Weimar 1998, pp. 465–493, esp. 475–478; Rudolf Jefábek: *Zur Tätigkeit von "Partisanen" in Österreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. In: *Österreich im frühen Kalten Krieg 1945–1958*, Vienna – Cologne – Weimar 2000, pp. 137–170, esp. 160–169; Christian Promitzer: *Aus den Archiven der UDBA : Der "heiße" kalte Krieg an der österreichisch-jugoslawischen Grenze*. In: *23. Österreichischer Historikertag Salzburg 2002*, Salzburg, 2003, pp. 297–302; Mateja Čoh: *Ilegalna skupina Ferdinanda Serneca* [The Illegal Gang of Ferdinand Sernec]. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 2004, No. 2–3, pp. 529–546; Martin Premk: *Matjaževa vojska 1945–1950*. Ljubljana 2005, pp. 158–177.



While the fighting went on, both groups, the gang and the UDBA, were in contact with the population of Schloßberg with whom they spoke Slovenian. In March 1947, three Austrian citizens disarmed three members of the Serneč gang and delivered them to the Yugoslav border guards.<sup>65</sup> As late as 1948 and 1949, the UDBA maintained regular contacts with Austrian Slovenians and particular with a peasant who lived in the hillside south of Leutschach.<sup>66</sup> In 1993, the peasant, by then an old man, came to Maribor to attend the first academic conference regarding the Slovenians of Austrian Styria, as living proof that the group existed at all. He was presented and interrogated like an exotic foreigner.

Before he died, I had the chance to talk to him in private. His father had been killed in Dachau because he had aided the partisans of the Lacko detachment. He himself was reluctant to give information about his own activities at the end of World War Two. He only said that he had fled into the woods when the Nazis tried to recruit him (born in 1928, he was seventeen at that time). Although anti-Fascist and a self-declared Slovenian, he and his wife – who was also Austrian Slovenian – decided to bring up their children using only the German language.

This can only make us wonder: is it not a sad paradox of history and symbolic of the whole complex question of Slovenians of Austrian Styria, that in the late nineteen forties Yugoslav UDBA agents had more contact with the local population for the sinister purpose of gathering intelligence than did the Slovenian experts<sup>67</sup> who were busy developing a phantasm: the noble idea of their 'lost brethren' on the other side of the border?

## *Povzetek*

### *Kako ne osnovati etnične manjšine. Slovenci na Štajerskem v Avstriji ob koncu druge svetovne vojne*

Konec druge svetovne vojne in začetek hladne vojne sta pripeljala tudi do novega doumevanja etničnih manjšin v srednji Evropi. To pa zato, ker se je njihov matični narod v nekaterih primerih znašel na drugi strani železne zavese. Kljub ločitvi Jugoslavije od sovjetskega bloka leta 1948 je velik del avstrijskega prebivalstva južnoslovanske manjšine, ki so živele na njihovem ozemlju (Gra-

<sup>65</sup> Cf. fund "bande", "Sernečeva banda", fol. 41; cf. also Premk, op. cit., pp. 163–164.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. AS 1931, fund "bande", folder "analize – bande in ilegalne organizacije 1945–1951", pp. 70, 98.

<sup>67</sup> It would take until 1954 before Lojze Ude (1896–1982), scientific collaborator of the Institute for Ethnic Studies, paid an incognito one-day visit to the areas of Soboth and Leutschach in order to ascertain that the people were still speaking Slovenian. – cf. AINV, Zgodovinski arhiv, Severni oddelek: box 96, folder 658, unit 6.

diščanska in Koroška), še naprej obravnaval kot izpostavo komunizma (Titoizma); to je veljalo še posebej za Slovence na Koroškem. Splošno protikomunistično ozračje je bilo tudi eden izmed razlogov, da se v avstrijski zvezni deželi Štajerski slovenska manjšina nikdar ni osnovala. Kljub temu pa je treba upoštevati, da: 1) je slovensko govoreče prebivalstvo živelo v treh regijah v bližini meje z Jugoslavijo (Radgonski trikotnik/the Radkersburg; območje južno od Lučan/Leutschach v okraju Leibnitz/Lipnica; in na zahodu v regiji Sobote/Soboth); 2) je Jugoslavija v mirovnih pogajanjih v drugi polovici štiridesetih let ta območja zahtevala zase; rezultat tega je bil, da je bila v Avstrijski državni pogodbi Štajerska omenjena kot območje, kjer morajo južnoslovanske manjšine uživati določene pravice.

Ob upoštevanju tega širšega konteksta predstavljam razmere slovensko govorečega prebivalstva ob koncu vojne na območju južno od Lučan. To območje je bilo v precej edinstvenem položaju ne le zaradi tam živečega jezikovno mešanega prebivalstva, temveč tudi zato, ker je ni osvobodila sovjetska vojska, temveč slovenski partizani Lackovega odreda, ki je na tistem območju deloval od sredine leta 1944.

Dogodki, ki so se zgodili na območju južno od Lučan v letih 1944–1945, kažejo na nekonsistentno politiko slovenske Osvobodilne fronte in komunističnega režima do vprašanja Slovencev na avstrijskem Štajerskem. Pripadniki Lackovega odreda so namreč na začetku še hoteli priti v stik z nasprotniki nacističnega režima na avstrijski strani (nekdanje) državne meje, kasneje pa so se odločili, da tja usmerijo svoje zahteve. Pozimi 1944/45 je bilo slovensko prebivalstvo na obeh straneh (nekdanje) državne meje vzdolž gorovja Požbruck-Kozjak žrtev hudih bojov med pripadniki nacističnega režima in partizani. V zadnjih tednih vojne so se celo domači Avstrijci pridružili Lackovemu odredu in na avstrijski strani so se ustanavljali krajevni odbori Osvobodilne fronte. Kdaj in zakaj so izginili, ni znano.

Le nekaj dni po koncu druge svetovne vojne je bil Lackov odred, ki je prevzel vojaško zasedbo tega območja, razpuščen, namesto njega pa so tja prišli druge enote jugoslovanske vojske. Ti pa z lokalnim prebivalstvom niso imeli nobenih izkušenj. Maja in junija 1945, ko je bila avstrijska Štajerska še pod sovjetskim vojaškim nadzorom, je samooklicani komisar v imenu jugoslovanske države vzpostavil strog režim in si prizadeval slovenizirati malo mesto Lučane, ki je bilo od nekdaj nemško. Ko pa je sovjetska vojska Štajersko prepustila britanskim okupacijskim silam, se je komisar vrnil v Jugoslavijo.

Nekonsistentna slovenska politika do vprašanja Slovencev na Štajerskem se je v naslednjih letih še nadaljevala. Slovenski strokovnjaki v jugoslovanski delegaciji, ki je sodelovala pri mirovnih pogajanjih z Avstrijo, niso imeli vpogleda v dejansko situacijo na etnično mešanih območjih, poleg tega pa so za legitimiziranje jugoslovanskih teženj uporabljali zastarele etnografske podatke in popise iz časov pred prvo svetovno vojno. Po drugi strani pa je imela jugoslovanska služba za državno varnost (UDBA) s Slovenci, ki so živeli na avstrijski

strani, precej zarotniške stike. UDBA je v borbi proti slovenskim protikomunističnim skupinam, ki so delovale na območju južno od Lučan, delovala celo podtalno. Nazadnje je leta 1947 mešano avstrijsko prebivalstvo na javnih manifestacijah zavrnilo jugoslovanske zahteve in proglasilo zvestobo Republiki Avstriji.

Kaj je šlo narobe? Zakaj "izgubljeni bratje" z druge strani meje niso želeli, da jih osvobodi "nova" Jugoslavija? Zakaj so se raje odločili za asimilacijo kot za osnivanje etnične manjšine? Preveč enostavno bi bilo trditi, da je bila za to odgovorna le nemška asimilacijska nacionalna politika in nacionalsocializem. Tu je treba spomniti tudi na odgovornost Jugoslavije, ki je v odločilnih trenutkih po koncu vojne le postavljala zahteve, ni pa bila sposobna presoditi situacije, v kateri se je to prebivalstvo dejansko znašlo.

UDK 329.15(497.4)"1944/1945"

Vida Deželak Barič\*

*Preparations of the Communist Party of Slovenia  
for the Takeover of Power 1944–1945*

The revolutionary takeover of power was undoubtedly a strategic goal of the Slovenian communists ever since the moment they have organised the resistance against the occupiers and taken over the leadership of this resistance. Already the statements regarding the social classes, released immediately after the occupation and before the beginning of armed resistance, show that the communists saw the occupation as an opportunity to carry out the revolution and settle the score with the pre-war regime.<sup>1</sup> The open introduction of revolutionary concepts into the liberation struggle, or the initiation of the so-called second stage of revolution in the spring and summer of 1942 in the region of the Italian occupation zone (the Ljubljana province), held by the partisan units at that time, confirmed that the orientation of the communists was revolutionary.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the foreign policy and domestic policy considerations and directives from Moscow, the Communist Party of Slovenia (KPS) limited its radicalism and accepted the concept of holding back the open approach to revolution and its postponement to the post-war period. Therefore, in the period of occupation, it was supposed to persist in the so-called national liberation positions, in the context of which it was able to assert its leading role in the resistance movement, thus creating a solid basis for the completion of revolution after the war.<sup>3</sup> That meant the liberation struggle was used for revolutionary purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Dokumenti ljudske revolucije v Sloveniji [Documents of the People's Revolution in Slovenia], book 1, Ljubljana 1962, doc. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Slovenska novejša zgodovina : od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848–1992 [Slovenian Contemporary History : from the Programme of United Slovenia to the International Recognition of Slovenia 1848-1992], Ljubljana 2005, pp. 633, 634.

<sup>3</sup> Janko Pleterski: *Problemi součinkovanja narodne in socialne revolucije v nastopu Osvobodilne fronte in pojav antikomunizma* [Problems of the Combined Effects of the National and Social Revolution in the Appearance of the Liberation Front and the Emergence of Anti-Communism]. In: *Slovenski upor 1941 : Osvobodilna fronta slovenskega naroda pred pol stoletja* [Slovenian Resistance in 1941 : Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation Half a Century Ago]. Ljubljana 1991, pp. 229, 230.

Edvard Kardelj, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) and the leading Slovenian communist besides Boris Kidrič, held a lecture on strategy and tactics at the Party school of the Central Committee of KPS in the beginning of 1944, and explained to the participants of the Party workshop that revolution in Yugoslavia started at the moment when "we took up arms and started bringing together the elements, faithful to the proletariat", and that the revolution would be achieved with a number of tactical successes, not a single battle. At that time, Kardelj evaluated the achieved level of revolution as a stage of bourgeois democratic revolution, when the Communist Party was nevertheless taking the positions which would enable it to proceed to the proletarian revolution. He expected that this process could also be carried out with reforms. He defined the revolution as a process, fundamentally determined by the liberation struggle in the circumstances of the occupation, in which the proletariat (in fact the Communist Party, which was by definition the avant-garde of the working class) had to ensure the leading positions, thus creating a solid basis for the completion of the revolution after the war. He also emphasized it was extremely important for the communists to define their struggle against their opponents at home on the national liberation foundation, not class, in order to prevail.<sup>4</sup>

The question of timing the revolution properly was answered about a year later, in the end of the war, at the inaugural congress of the Communist Party of Serbia (in the beginning of May 1945), by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of KPJ Josip Broz-Tito, who until as late as the summer of 1944 assured Churchill that it was not his intention to introduce communism, since all European countries after the war should have democratic systems and that Yugoslavia should not be an exception to this rule.<sup>5</sup> He stated, in regard to the frequent opinion among communists, that after the war ended, the so-called second stage would take place, that the Yugoslav Communist Party was already entering the second stage surreptitiously. He also stressed that they should not expect any decisive turning points ("communism will not take place overnight"), because the Party would achieve their goals following the path set before it by the facts of the liberation war, which were the reason for the unclear delineation of the stages of the bourgeois democratic and proletarian revolution. According to the discussion he had with Stalin in regard to this issue, this was not in contradiction with the Leninist principles in any way.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Vida Deželak Barič: *Narodnoosvobodilni boj kot priložnost za izvedbo revolucionarnih ciljev* [National Liberation Struggle as an Opportunity for the Realisation of Revolutionary Goals]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1995, No. 1–2, pp. 148, 149.

<sup>5</sup> Tito–Churchill : *Strogo tajno* [Top Secret]. *Zbornik britanskih dokumentov* [A Collection of British Documents] 28 May 1943 – 21 May 1945, Zagreb–Ljubljana 1981, pp. 276, 277.

<sup>6</sup> Josip Broz Tito: *Sabrana djela* [Collected Works], book 28, Beograd 1988, *Govor v Beogradu 12. maja 1945 na ustanovnem kongresu KP Srbije* [A Speech at the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Serbia on 12 May 1945 in Belgrade], pp. 33.

In accordance with these directives, due to tactical reasons the communists were forced to undertake a moderate popularisation of their Party in the final stages of the war, in order to avoid repulsing those who already opposed communism or the communists or at least had reservations towards them. Thus they presented their Party, when they discussed it in public, first and foremost as a national political subject with the greatest merits for the organisation and leadership of the resistance against the occupiers, or as a Party striving exclusively for the good of the nation. Simultaneously they emphasized the Party's honest devotion to national liberation goals, denied the class implications of the resistance, thus answering the reproaches of the counter-revolutionary side. For example, the publication *Komunistična partija v narodosvobodilni borbi* ("Communist Party in the National Liberation Struggle"), published in the autumn of 1944 in the Styria, concludes with the following finding: "During the liberation struggle, the Communist Party has truly become a national Party, therefore its goals are national goals, its gains are national gains, and its enemies are national enemies."<sup>7</sup> It has to be underlined that the expression *national* was often manipulated in the sense of *people's*.

Because of this, the members of KPS frequently felt the characteristic division when it came to tactics, which should ensure its broad scope and mass appeal, but at the same time not lead to relenting, thus making the future position of the Party more difficult and weaker. So, for example, the Secretary of the Central Committee of KPS Franc Leskošek told the participants of the Party conference in May 1944 that the Party should be raised to the "level of the soul of all movement in the region, to the level of that basic principle, providing the meaning and initiative for work"; at the same time he warned them that the "leading role of the Party should not dissolve the broad scope of our liberation movement, in contrary, it should result in an even greater unity of all of the positive forces of our nation and their even greater activation".<sup>8</sup>

In 1944, KPS as an integral part of the united, monolithic and centralised KPJ already controlled the whole partisan movement and was systematically getting ready for the revolutionary takeover of power after the war. Due to tactical reasons it never discussed the revolution publicly, and it covered the revolutionary nature of its political agenda with expressions like *people's democracy*, *true people's democracy*, *new democracy*, *the accomplishments of the national liberation struggle*, and so on. The situation was different in the internal Party

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<sup>7</sup> Arhiv Republike Slovenije (ARS) [Archive of the Republic of Slovenia] (hereinafter ARS), dept. 2, (AS 1887), National Liberation Struggle Press, Vinko Hafner: *Komunistična partija v narodnoosvobodilni borbi* [Communist Party in the National Liberation Struggle]. Published by the Agitation and Propaganda Commission at the Administrative Committee for the Styria, September 1944, sig. 209, pp. 22.

<sup>8</sup> ARS, collection Centralni komite KPS [Central Committee of KPS] 1941–1945] (AS 1487), A paper by Franc Leskošek at the Party Conference of the Ljubljana Province Party Organisations in Semič on 28 and 29 May 1944, a.e. 62.

circles, where the revolution was discussed openly. For example, in March 1945 the Slovenian Party leadership stated that the revolution in Yugoslavia was proceeding with all force, that the process of the revolution demanded victory, that the Soviet Union was the only friend and protector, but that a suitable policy should also be maintained towards the Western Allies.<sup>9</sup>

In 1944, the positions of Slovenian communists in the resistance movement were solid and fortified. Namely, in the political field KPS had also acquired a formally acknowledged priority apart from the actual position in the resistance movement, already with the adoption of the so-called *Dolomitska izjava* (*The Dolomites Declaration*) of March 1943, in which the Christian Socialists and the so-called *Sokoli* (a patriotic gymnastic society named Falcons) – besides the communists the founding groups of the Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation – renounced the further development of their own organisations.<sup>10</sup> Thus the Communist Party ensured a total political monopoly for itself, which in the further development allowed it to efficiently and without any obstruction interfere with the process of the formation of the new, the so-called people's authorities and state. In the final period of the occupation, just like before, KPS acted in a distinctly double manner. Outwardly it persisted in its national liberation positions, thus reinforcing the resistance in its military and political components. The concept of clandestine transition towards the revolution preserved the unity and power of the resistance, and it also paid off in the international arena in regard to the international acknowledgement of the Yugoslav resistance as a whole. At the same time, KPS also methodically strengthened its own ranks in the organisational and ideological sense, obviously acting to its own advantage and preparing for the assumption of power.

In comparison with the pre-war situation, when the communists were excluded from the public life or even forced to remain underground for as many as twenty years, during World War II KPS became a relatively numerous organisation. It especially grew stronger in 1943 and 1944, and before the end of the war it had around 12 000 members in the field and in the partisan army, which meant ten times as many members as in the beginning of the occupation, despite great losses due to early resistance and the persistence in constant resistance.<sup>11</sup> By distributing their members carefully, KPS has, even before the end of the war, more or less systematically established a network of its organisations in the

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<sup>9</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnik seje politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 29 March 1945.

<sup>10</sup> Dokumenti ljudske revolucije v Sloveniji [Documents of the People's Revolution in Slovenia], book 6, Ljubljana 1981, doc. No. 3; Bojan Godeša: *Prispevek k poznavanju Dolomitske izjave* [Contribution to Understanding the Dolomites Declaration]. In : *Nova revija*, 1991, No. 105–106, 107, 108; Spomenka Hribar: *Dolomitska izjava* [The Dolomites Declaration]. Ljubljana 1991, pp. 115–134.

<sup>11</sup> Vida Deželak Barič: *Organizacijsko vprašanje Komunistične partije Slovenije 1941–1945* [The Organisational Question of the Communist Party of Slovenia 1941–1945], doctoral thesis, University of Ljubljana, 1999, pp. 453.

whole ethnic territory, also among Slovenians who remained in Austria and Italy after World War I, in order to carry out one of the basic points of the Liberation Front programme by encouraging resistance also in these areas – to unite all Slovenians, which indicated an interest of the Yugoslav communists in spreading the revolution towards the west. Even though it was strong, during the war and immediately after it KPS remained a party of qualified staff. Masses of politically inexperienced and ideologically uneducated new members, who, during the occupation, have not only joined KPS out of social or explicitly revolutionary, but also out of national liberation intentions, represented a significant problem for the way of how revolution was being carried out and how strategy and tactics were being managed. Therefore the political and ideological education of the members and explicit training of cadre in the Party schools and workshops was a very important part of the Party life; in 1944, it was organised on all levels – from the central, regional, district and county KPS committees to individual partisan units. The study materials included the indispensable *History of VKP(b)*, Stalin's *Problems of Leninism*, the works of Lenin, etc.<sup>12</sup>

Among numerous directives, sent by the Central Committee to the Party organisations in the final period of the war in order to ensure their correct orientation, continuous work and maintenance of the leading role, the circular of October 1944 – a strictly obligatory study material – has to be emphasized. The Central Committee defined the main tasks awaiting the Party organisations – as stated in its introduction – in regard to the expected "victory against the occupiers and their treacherous collaborators as well as to the initiation of the national struggle for the protection of the accomplishments, ensured by the three and a half years of fighting, from everyone who would endanger them...", and it especially emphasized the weaknesses that the Party organisations should eliminate in these decisive moments. It believed that Party organisations together with the forums supposedly stopped being the motive of the liberation struggle, became self-sufficient, succumbed to bureaucracy, got lost in details and lost the wider perspective; due to the predominance of professional political staff they lacked true contact with the masses, individuals started losing personal modesty, started pursuing careers and became leaders; the organisations were too liberal or "inappropriately generous", there was a lack of meaningful criticism, and so on.<sup>13</sup> This was a kind of a list of intolerable mistakes and deficiencies, and it was urgent to do away with them before the imminent end of the war, thus creating a disciplined and reliable Party mechanism.

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<sup>12</sup> Vida Deželak Barič: *Partijsko šolstvo med narodnoosvobodilnim bojem v Sloveniji [Party Education During the National Liberation Struggle in Slovenia]*. In: *Prosveta i školstvo u narodnooslobodilačkom ratu i revoluciji naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije*, Novi Sad 1984, pp. 505–516.

<sup>13</sup> ARS, AS 1447, Okrožnica O organizacijskih in kadrovskih vprašanjih naše Partije [A Circular on the Organisational and Personnel Issues of Our Party], a. e. 238.



In 1944, an efficiently functioning and hierarchically organised Party organisation was established, which used selected methods to ensure realistic influence in all of the organisations and institutions of the resistance movement for the Party. For example: the Liberation Front committees, especially at higher level, at that time consisted mostly of communists; even a principle of personal unions was being introduced – Secretaries of Party Committees were simultaneously Secretaries of the corresponding Liberation Front Committees. In the mass organisation of the Liberation Front – the *Slovenian Youth Association* – members of *Communist Youth Association* took over the leading roles, while the positions in the Communist Youth Organisation were held by members of KPS. The *Slovenian Women's Anti-Fascist Union* was also mostly led by communists.<sup>14</sup> In the partisan army, the Party organisation was the only organised and functioning political organisation. In 1944 approximately one quarter of military ranks was included in KPS, and if we take the communist youth into account, the communist organisation included up to a half of them; the command posts had belonged to the communists ever since the formation of the partisan army in 1941, and through the institution of political commissars, political education had been carried out in the army.<sup>15</sup> Communists also had a monopoly in the important field of propaganda.

The monopoly enabled the communists to enforce the revolutionary orientation in the character of authorities as they were established in the context of the Liberation Front after the first meeting, in February 1944, of the Slovenski narodnoosvobodilni svet (Slovenian National Liberation Council – SNOS), a representative and legislative body of the liberation movement, when the process of establishing so-called people's authorities was speeded up. It was oriented towards the long-term perspective, and its aim was to preserve the positions of the partisan movement and the rise to power under the communist leadership after the end of the war.<sup>16</sup> In this context, it was especially important to prepare the administrative apparatus and plans for the adoption of concrete measures when assuming the power, introduce the new revolutionary legal order and the judicial branch of power, as well as establish the political police, OZNA (Department for the Protection of People). The solving of aforementioned issues

<sup>14</sup> Vida Deželak Barič: *Vloga in značaj Komunistične partije Slovenije med drugo svetovno vojno* [The Role and Character of the Communist Party in Slovenia during World War II]. In: *Preteklost sodobnosti : izbrana poglavja slovenske novejšje zgodovine*. Ljubljana 1999, pp. 101–103.

<sup>15</sup> Dokumenti centralnih organa KPJ : NOR i revolucija (1941–1945) [Documents of the Central Committee of KPJ : National Liberation War and Revolution (1941–1945), book 17, Beograd 1986, doc. 76, pp. 280–282; Vida Deželak Barič: *Organizacijsko vprašanje Komunistične partije Slovenije 1941–1945* [The Organisational Question of the Communist Party of Slovenia 1941–1945], pp. 422–443.

<sup>16</sup> Tone Ferenc: *Ljudska oblast na Slovenskem 1941–1945* [People's Authorities in Slovenia 1941–1945], book 3. Ljubljana 1991, pp. 8–32.

took place in the context of the Communist Party's directives. The judicial power, refusing the case-law and legislation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, justified its legitimacy on the will of the people and their mass support to the liberation movement, following the example of the Soviet Union's legislation. The judicial system had an important task of preventing and punishing the actions of the movement's opponents and collaborators, which even worsened the differentiation among Slovenians, who at that time lived in an atmosphere of utterly tense mutual conflicts or a civil war.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of OZNA in May 1944 was of special importance. In the Yugoslav context this was a strictly centralised organisation, which was, together with the State Security Army (VDV) as its armed enforcement authority, subordinate and responsible to Tito, Supreme Commander and Commissioner for National Defence of the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia, and Aleksander Ranković, Head of OZNA, otherwise an Organisational Secretary of KPJ. Thus OZNA was under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Party, excluded from the system of civilian authorities. Its basic activities besides protecting the movement were oriented against the opponents of the partisan movement and towards preparing the post-war state security apparatus with the aim of ensuring the new post-war authorities and protecting the revolution. It gained considerable powers and had the right, for example, to exile the opponents of the movement and their families as well as the families of Home Guard members (including the right to confiscate their property); it also had the right to initiate investigation procedures against the so-called national enemies who were then tried at military courts, supervise foreign military missions, etc. Above all, the Party had to provide OZNA with support in personnel and carry out the political work within it, but it had no right to interfere with its actual operations.<sup>18</sup>

Just like the Party leadership wanted to strengthen the Party ranks before the end of the war, it also strived for increased strength and unity in a broader sense. In regard to the administrative and activist cadre, a whole campaign about the struggle against bureaucracy, professionalism, careerism and other phenomena, unacceptable to the Party, was carried out. The elimination of these phenomena was supposed to purify the cadre, strengthen its discipline and selflessness, in order to prepare it for the time after the war. Should they fail to eliminate these phenomena, Kidrič warned that instead of "officials of a new kind, people's officials, who grow from the people and are permeated with all the qualities of true fighters and makers of free future", they would end up with

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<sup>17</sup> Jera Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946* [The Takeover of Power 1944–1946]. Ljubljana 1992, (hereinafter Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*) pp. 11–26.

<sup>18</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 28–38; Ljuba Dornik Šubelj: *Oddelek za zaščito naroda za Slovenijo* [Department for the Protection of People for Slovenia], Ljubljana 1999, pp. 47–56, 219–221.

an apparatus, "brimming with the characteristics of the former, hated anti-people apparatus". Such an apparatus would be "the single greatest danger to everything our nations and people fought for during their three-year struggle". This would allow the reaction to take root in it, attempting to reclaim the lost positions and discredit the democratic nature of the movement.<sup>19</sup>

As the end of the war drew closer, the warnings of the leadership that not only did the final victory against the occupiers have to be insured, but that they also had a duty to "protect and further develop the democratic results of the national liberation struggle in order to protect that which our people shed rivers of blood for", were becoming increasingly frequent. There was talk about traitors and speculators, who would in the future seek new ways in order to reclaim their lost positions, which meant they would try to harm the unity of the Liberation Front and its revolutionary nature. The urgency of deepening the democratic awareness of the masses and the partisan fighters was emphasized, which would be, besides the democratic people's authorities, a guarantee for the preservation and further development of democratic accomplishments.<sup>20</sup> Democracy (with adjectives or without) and the achievements of the liberation movement, including the democratic and federal regime of the new Yugoslavia, equality of Yugoslav nations and people's democracy, were mentioned frequently. The army also counted among these accomplishments in the sense of guarantees for the working people, that is, workers, farmers and the so-called honest intelligence, that the national liberation would also bring democratic and social improvements.<sup>21</sup> By emphasizing the so-called people's democratic nature of the Liberation Front, this organisation also publicly became revolutionary.

In the autumn of 1944 the movement's leadership endeavoured for an as complete military mobilisation as possible, which now also included most of the activists. In November 1944, Kidrič wrote that if in the initial periods (1941 and 1942) the political organisations in the field were nevertheless decisive in regard to the missions at that time, in the final stages of the war (then frequently referred to as the patriotic war) the might of the partisan army would be of key importance. That, of course, did not mean that the political organisations of the Liberation Front in the field and the establishment of governance would be neglected, but the work in these areas would not affect the army. Men, capable to fight, would be replaced in the field by women and youth, and military mobili-

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<sup>19</sup> Boris Kidrič: *Zbrano delo* [Collected Work], book 2, Ljubljana 1978, Boj birokratizmu, kari-erizmu in drugim nezdravim pojavom [Struggle Against Bureaucratisation, Careerism and Other Unhealthy Phenomena], pp. 198.

<sup>20</sup> Kidrič, *Zbrano delo* [Collected Work], 2, Za poživitev in poglobitev političnega dela v naši vojski [For the Revitalisation and Enhancement of the Political Work in Our Army], pp. 214, 215.

<sup>21</sup> Kidrič, *Zbrano delo* [Collected Work], 2, O osnovnih značilnostih v graditvi demokratične in federativne Jugoslavije [On the Basic Characteristics of Building the Democratic and Federal Yugoslavia], pp. 111–115; Dve vojski, dva značaja in dva namena [Two Armies, Two Characters and Two Purposes], pp. 227.

sation, carried out as consistently as possible, would result in a broad political mobilisation and development of new cadres from these two groups.<sup>22</sup>

At the same time the women's rights to equality were emphasized, which supposedly belonged among the basic programme demands of any true democracy. Women supposedly acquired this right by themselves, that is, by directly taking part in the resistance by joining the army, assisting the army from the background, working in political organisations and in public authorities. Thus they have done away with "reactionary prejudice", "obstacles of the past", and enforced women's equality themselves. The propaganda stressed that by participating in the resistance women contributed the same share as men in casualties, shortage and suffering, thus they would also have the same share in victories. The liberation movement supposedly had a people's democratic character also due to the demands of its programme for women's equality and its practical implementation, but the leadership also cautioned against the phenomenon of feminism, since women's equality in the new Yugoslavia could not be separated from the general democratic movement, for it was a basic and integral part thereof. Before the end of the war, Kidrič stated that the question of whether to admit women's equality or not no longer existed, because women had fought for equality themselves. However, the question of the continuous implementation of the equal position of women as citizens remained – the more numerous their participation in the political organisations and public authorities during the war, the fuller the assertion of their equal role would be in the future, thus the question of activating women was of extraordinary importance, not only for the wartime, but also future development.<sup>23</sup>

Especially since the autumn of 1944, the Central Committee of KPS, operating in the context of the Political Bureau during the war, held a number of meetings, where it discussed the imminent end of the war and defined the tasks in regard to this and also in regard to the actual situation at the time. The accepted directives of broader importance or character were then implemented by the members of the Central Committee or the Political Bureau in the Presidency of the Slovenian National Liberation Council and the Executive Committee of the Liberation Front, which was a characteristic decision-making practice.

During the preparations for the takeover of power at the end of the war, the session of the Party leadership on 1 September 1944 was very important. Here the main measures to be carried out immediately after the end of the war were specified. The following measures were decided: when the occupiers break, especially urban centres and main transport connections have to be taken over and the main cadre deployed there; OZNA has to prepare everything for the man-

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<sup>22</sup> Kidrič, Zbrano delo [Collected Work], 2, Pošljite v vojsko, kar sodi v vojsko [Send Those, Who Belong There, to the Army], pp. 217, 218.

<sup>23</sup> Kidrič, Zbrano delo [Collected Work], 2, Pravica in njena uporaba [Justice and its Implementation], pp. 267, 268; Govor slovenskim ženam [A Speech for Slovenian Women], pp. 269, 270.

agement of these centres; the National Guard or militia has to be established everywhere, because crime will soar (the black market, for example); the movement of the population has to be limited (the introduction of curfew, passes and apartment controls); military administration has to be set up temporarily, releasing the first decrees; cities should be under military jurisdiction and a general mobilisation has to be carried out. In regard to economy and finance, the continued business operations of Slovenian banks and the confiscation of occupier's banks were envisioned, and the same went for industry. It was explicitly stated that the economic policy should be controlled by the Party, the basic direction would be state capitalism, and in the first period too much freedom as well as excessive rigidity should be avoided; measures which would frighten the bourgeoisie should not be taken. So they decided for a compromise, a middle way, which would allow the post-war authorities to speed up the renewal and economic strengthening and to stabilise the situation as soon as possible, which the Party itself saw as one of the main political issues after the war. Due to the economic crisis, they decided to enhance state control, while fighting the discouragement of the population because of the crisis and unemployment with agitprop. It was necessary to specify all the personnel, and the so-called cleansing of the existent state apparatus was required, while the departments of Slovenian National Liberation Council had to prepare the relevant plans.<sup>24</sup> Until the end of the war, numerous political decisions of strategic as well as tactical character were also reached. In September 1944, the movement leadership made a decision that the door to the Liberation Front would since then be closed to all Party representatives and those who waited for so long (the so-called center). The Party leadership saw such policy as the formal milestone between two stages in the development of the liberation struggle,<sup>25</sup> and it undoubtedly stemmed from the need to assume power after the war. Besides large numbers, the unity of the Liberation Front was also emphasized, and it was at that time justified with the need for unified resistance leadership, even though in reality the Party's control over it was the actual reason. The significance of the Liberation Front was further determined in March 1945, when a decision was reached by the Party leadership that no political parties except for the Liberation Front would exist in Slovenia after the war.<sup>26</sup> In regard to labour unions it was also concluded that they had to represent the unity of the working class under the Party leadership and that there were to be "no compromises and relenting" in

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<sup>24</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnik seje politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 1 September 1944.

<sup>25</sup> Edvard Kardelj: *Pot nove Jugoslavije : članki in govori iz narodnoosvobodilne borbe 1941–1945* [The Path of the New Yugoslavia: National Liberation Struggle Articles and Speeches], Ljubljana 1946. Zaprta vrata [The closed door], pp. 423.

<sup>26</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnik seje politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 29 March 1945.

regard to this issue.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, before the end of the war, numerous solutions were reached in regard to the deployment of the Party cadre; for example, just before the end of the war some of the most prominent Party members were sent to the Primorska (maritime province of Slovenia), since the question of its annexation was at that time one of the most important Slovenian and Yugoslav political issues. Special attention was paid to OZNA, which was discussed at almost every meeting of the Political Bureau in the efforts to politically strengthen it by allocating the cadre from the ranks of activists and the army to it before the end of the war. The units of KNOJ (People's Defence Corps of Yugoslavia), that is, the former units of the State Security Army, were also paid special consideration.<sup>28</sup> The suggestion about the structure of the Slovenian government, established on 5 May 1945, and the presidency of Boris Kidrič was also prepared by the Political Bureau.<sup>29</sup>

Slovenians awaited the end of the war with relief, but in regard to the differences, extremely intensified by the war, also with uncertainty and fear. The victory of the partisan army involved the retreat of numerous anti-partisan soldiers or anti-communist units and civilians together with the retreating German army. The leaders of the victorious side, which enjoyed mass support, once again, just like so many times during the war, announced severe vengeance against the occupiers' collaborators and opponents of the partisans. When Kidrič accepted his position of President of the first Slovenian post-war government, he explained that "the organisers and leaders of criminal activities deserve no mercy" and that the government would do everything in its power to completely support the authorities in charge of the uncompromising struggle against "fifth columnists and traitors". On the other hand, the government would not take any actions against the masses which had been led astray; after the war they would be given the option to make up for their wartime transgressions by working hard to renew their homeland, devastated by the war.<sup>30</sup> During his visit to Ljubljana on 26 May 1945, Tito stated at a mass gathering that "justice, the arm of vengeance for our people" has already found the majority of opponents ("traitors").<sup>31</sup>

This was a violent epilogue of the war or retribution against the wartime collaborating formations, but also a strike against the potential opponents of the new authorities. Home Guard units retreated to the Austrian Carinthia in the first days of May 1945, surrendering to the British units; however, the British turned them over to Yugoslav authorities, which executed the majority of them,

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<sup>27</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnik seje politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 24 October 1944.

<sup>28</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnika sej politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 29 March 1945 and 8 April 1945.

<sup>29</sup> ARS, AS 1487, t.e. 1, Zapisnika sej politbiroja CK KPS [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS Session] 7 March 1945 and 29 March 1945.

<sup>30</sup> Kidrič, Zbrano delo [Collected Work], 2, Govor na svečani seji predsedstva SNOS [A Speech at the Solemn Session of the Presidency of SNOS], pp. 299.

<sup>31</sup> Ljudska pravica, 27 May 1945, No. 28, The Speech of Marshal Tito in Ljubljana, pp. 1.

mostly without court proceedings, in the end of May and in June, after the war had already officially ended. Only until the amnesty in August 1945, mass and individual post-war executions claimed more than 14.000 lives. The number of everyone killed after the war represents as much as 15% of all World War II victims.<sup>32</sup>

In the end of the war, the Slovenian Communist Party had politics, the military and the police under complete control, which allowed it to seize the power. However, the takeover involved a lengthy and often controversial process. Namely, besides the key positions it already had under control, the Party had to fortify its position more broadly. At the Political Bureau meeting of 2 June 1945 they estimated that until then the first "general organisation phase" had already been completed, but the gradual consolidation of opponents ("adaptation of reaction") was characteristic for the ensuing second phase.<sup>33</sup>

The Yugoslav Army was among the key factors in the takeover of power in the end of the war, and it concentrated massive forces in the Slovenian ethnic territory, where the final battles took place. Furthermore, OZNA was very important – its main task immediately after the war was to imprison all members of counter-revolutionary and occupiers' organisations who had already been included into its lists, drawn up during the war, or accused at the end of the war. Together with the KNOJ units it carried out the task of protecting the revolution by the so-called cleansing or by executing the members of the Home Guard and other opponents. By means of a network of agents it started controlling public and private life, related to the political, economic and religious activities, but especially the work of the potential political opponents. It informed the relevant Party authorities of the events which could threaten the unity of the authorities. It monitored the activities of more prominent individuals involved in the pre-war and wartime political life and the clergy which opposed the revolution, since the evaluations of the political circumstances were important for the results of the 1945 elections (into National Liberation Committees in July and August, and into the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia in November). It monitored the organisation of the elections and supervised the work of the government (especially the departments managed by non-communists) as well as the work of local committees. It also controlled most prisons and camps, postal services, railway, etc.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Boris Mlakar: *Slovensko domobranstvo 1943–1945* [Slovenian Home Guard 1943–1945], Ljubljana 2003, pp. 484–526; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 225–250; The computer database of the Institute for Contemporary History – Casualties among the population in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia during World War II and immediately after it.

<sup>33</sup> *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS/ZKS 1945/1954* [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of KPS/ZKS 1945/1954] (hereinafter *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS*). Ljubljana 2000, doc. No. 1, pp. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti po vojni in vloga Ozne – obračun* [Takeover of Power After the War and the Role of OZNA – Retribution]. In: *Slovenija v letu 1945*, Ljubljana 1996, pp. 93–110.

The next instrument in the strengthening of Party power was the judicial administration. From 1943 until the autumn of 1945, only special courts were actually functioning in Slovenia – military courts, national honour courts, special senates against speculators and so on. Their main task was to punish war criminals and the so-called enemies of the people. The category of war criminals was very loosely defined, and everyone who opposed the people's authorities or the new political system also counted among enemies of the people. The sentences and resulting measures disabled any opposition, not only economic, but especially political, since the active and passive right to vote was denied to a certain part of the population. Judicial proceedings against individuals, charged with economic collaboration, took place in July and August at the national honour courts. They were initiated on the grounds of the Political Bureau decision and had special significance or effect, since through them the new authorities took hold of private property, thus the state soon controlled as much as 90 % of industry. With judicial proceedings, whose aim was to eliminate the pre-war elite from the decision-making process and nationalise private property, the authority of the Party also strengthened in the economic field.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, KPS gradually took over the management of state and other institutions, political organisations and associations, while it also strengthened the control in the field by deploying its cadre in all districts. When the Liberation Front Committees (partly also public authorities, already elected during the war – the national liberation committees) started taking the power from the army and preparing the public authorities elections, these elections were accompanied by intense activities of the Party. The elections were of great political significance for the Party. They would mean the victory of the Liberation Front and mass support of the new people's authorities, and they also represented the political preparation for the Constituent Assembly elections. Mass organisations were supposed to be included into these preparations, therefore the Political Bureau speeded up their establishment where they had not existed before, interfering with the activities of associations. Namely, in June it decided to forbid all previous activities and set out that associations should be integrated into mass organisations.<sup>36</sup>

Initially, the Party ascribed a very important role to the Liberation Front as the only political organisation, since it was aware of the significance of the widespread Liberation Front Committees, allowing it to carry out its political work in the field. Thus the Political Bureau quickly convened the first Liberation Front congress, which took place in the middle of July 1945. Otherwise the political actions of the Liberation Front were completely consolidated; its tasks also included the struggle against political opponents, which ensured the Party a strong political support in order to eliminate the opposition and all those who

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<sup>35</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 266–279.

<sup>36</sup> *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS*, the session of 2 June 1945, pp. 27, 26.



resisted the new authorities. The role of the Liberation Front was weakened after the November elections, as the political role of labour unions started to get stronger.<sup>37</sup>

In accordance with the aforementioned standpoint, already adopted during the war, immediately after the war the Party refrained from interfering with the important economic issues or the issue of private property due to tactical reasons. This was decided due to extremely poor economic and social reasons, and the Party did not risk any radical interventions in order to avoid even worsening the situation. It decided to stifle this sector gradually, and to strengthen the state sector covertly. They nationalised the most important companies by confiscating them or assigning them a provisional national management, while others were made dependent on the state with economic and repressive measures. Revolutionary measures in regard to property relations and the adaptation of the economic system to the political system, whose political goal was to strengthen sector of state property in a Party state and weaken the previous authorities in the economic field, were mostly carried out after the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1945. At that time the role of the Liberation Front also changed, since the Party started openly and publicly appearing under its own name. If in the first period after the war the role of the Liberation Front was to expose its opponents and the Party needed it in the stage of strengthening, now its task was to attract the people for further revolutionary changes.<sup>38</sup>

KPS had to consolidate and strengthen its own ranks and solve the personnel questions in regard to the situation at that time. In the summer of 1945, the Central Committee of KPS determined that the Party had its stronger cadres only within more important authorities, while in the field there were no Party organisations whatsoever in certain regions, or they were organisations with new and inexperienced members, "at a very low level" ideologically and politically. Until then the reorganisation of districts and regions had been completed, and only then was the regular convening of Party organisation meetings achieved. However, the leadership still lacked a detailed overview of the organisational situation and the social makeup of the Party members. In five departments (Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Novo mesto, East (Vzhodna) Primorska) and in the area of the Ljubljana City Committee (or in 69 districts), 4978 members were in the field, while the Carinthia and the West (Zapadna) Primorska region with Trieste were not taken into account, since the leadership still lacked its organisational overview. Among internal issues and problems, the Central Committee of KPS emphasized that the number of Party professionals was too high and that they were not in contact with the masses, which is why their atti-

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<sup>37</sup> Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS, the session of 2 June 1945, pp. 28 and 21 June 1945, pp. 30, 31; Kidrič, Zbrano delo [Collected Work], 2, Poročilo na I. kongresu osvobodilne fronte [The Report at the 1<sup>st</sup> Liberation Front Congress], pp. 353–360; Vodušek Starič, Prevzem oblasti, pp. 400, 401.

<sup>38</sup> Vodušek Starič, Prevzem oblasti, pp. 288–292.

tude to accepting new members was incorrect or sectarian. An improper attitude to criticism was also supposedly noticeable among the Party cadre, insufficient emphasis was placed on personal responsibility and discipline, and a "self-willed dictatorial attitude of some, especially the so-called old communists", was also detected. The Central Committee apparatus or its commissions have not started forming until summer, on the basis of the standpoint which Kardelj had emphasized – that the work of the Party cannot be separated from the state work.<sup>39</sup> The cadres for the commissions had already been selected, but the commissions were not functioning yet. The personnel department was the first to become operational, just as the war ended. In the summer, the Central Committee of KPS reported that it has just started to implement the personnel policy and that it was connected with personnel departments in the state apparatus. With regular activities of all the planned commissions, the Party leadership expected that the authority of the Central Committee and the Party leadership itself would improve thoroughly.<sup>40</sup>

The Party organisation in the city of Ljubljana was the most important one. The City Committee of KPS Ljubljana also encompassed the city district committees as well as the Party organisations of government institutions, OZNA, state railway direction, post office, universities, radio, agitation and propaganda apparatus, newspaper editorships (the *Ljudska pravica* and *Slovenski poročevalc* newspapers), theatre, etc. In September 1945, 120 cells with 1122 members and 236 candidates were operating in the city; in regard to social origin, 397 members and 84 candidates were labourers, 31 members and 4 candidates were peasants, 50 members and 15 candidates were artisans and traders, 106 members and 41 candidates were employees, while the group of intellectuals was the strongest with 538 members and 92 candidates.<sup>41</sup> On the basis of class standards, this composition was by all means unsuitable.

After the session of the Provisional National Assembly of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia in August 1945, the Party started to emphasize the implementation of legality or struggle against illegality as one of its most important tasks. In this regard, sectarianism or the distortion of the political orientation was supposedly the main mistake, reflecting itself, for example, in the frontal assaults against merchants and innkeepers as well as the implementation of the Electoral Registers Act, which was taken too strictly by the activists, who proceeded to illegally eliminate certain individuals from the registers. Illegal ac-

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<sup>39</sup> Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS, the session of 21 June 1945, pp. 32.

<sup>40</sup> ARS, fond Centralni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije 1945–1990 [Central Committee of the Communist Association of Slovenia 1945–1990] (AS 1589), t.e. 18, the report by Lidija Šentjerc – probably in August 1945 Central Committee of KPJ.

<sup>41</sup> Zgodovinski arhiv Ljubljana (ZAL) [Historical gArchive Ljubljana (hereinafter ZAL), LJU 684, Mestni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije Ljubljana 1945–1954 [Ljubljana City Committee of the Communist Association of Slovenia 1945–1954], t.e. 3, a.e. 45, Pregled partijske organizacije mesta Ljubljane za september z dne 1. 10. 1945 [Overview of the Party Organisation of the City Ljubljana for the Month of September of 1 October 1945].

tivities, in the opinion of the Party leadership, were in conflict with the need that all available material resources be allocated towards rebuilding and renewing the state; furthermore, they were in conflict with the people striving for the normalisation of the situation and for normal life under the rule of law, while the opponents of the regime supposedly used illegalities to encourage dissatisfaction and discourage the unity. Due to these illegalities, the Ljubljana City Committee, for example, decided to establish a Board for Requests and Complaints within the Presidency of Slovenian National Liberation Council, thus ensuring legality, carrying out a mass campaign against sectarianism and pursuing legality and unity. Because the percentage of individuals eliminated from the electoral registers in Ljubljana was 10%, and because this percentage was also high elsewhere (in places even as high as 70%), the so-called reclamation campaign followed in Slovenia in order to ensure the necessary corrections and promote the sense that legality was being preserved. At the same time a campaign for joining the Liberation Front took place in order to stimulate the political work, while the registration itself would discipline the members. The Party had to supervise the electoral registers as well as the enrolment into the Liberation Front. Before the gatherings in regard to the Constituent Assembly Elections, which were supposedly manifestations in support of the new authorities, the cells had to meet urgently and prepare themselves for the discussions, and at the gatherings the members had to oppose the complaining, emphasizing the will to make sacrifices. They also had to stand up against the sectarianism against peasants and clear up the concept of black market – those who speculated and traded in the black market were not to be stigmatised as peasants, but black marketers.<sup>42</sup>

The results of the November elections in Yugoslavia and the victory of the People's Front in Slovenia, which concluded an important phase in the solidification of the Party's authority and building a Party state, were seen by the Party as "a confirmation of our struggle, our victory, a result of a revolutionary democracy", meaning the condemnation of the previous system, even though the Party was still not completely satisfied with the results of the elections in Slovenia. In contrary to the expectations that the Liberation Front would probably have the worst election results in certain parts of the Lower Carniola (where during the occupation the Home Guard enjoyed the strongest support, while in the end of the war this region suffered the most because of mass executions), the results were the worst in the Maribor region. With the analyses of the election results, the Party especially held itself responsible for failing to ensure even better results, and believed it had failed to appraise its opponents properly. In

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<sup>42</sup> ZAL, LJU 684, t.e. 3, a.e. 27: Minutes of the Ljubljana City Committee of KPS session with the Secretaries of District Committees and institutions of 3 September 1945, the Ljubljana City Committee of KPS session with the Secretaries of District Committees of 5 October 1945, and the Ljubljana City Committee of KPS session with the Secretaries of District Committees and institutions of 16 October 1945].

Ljubljana, where 7% of voters allegedly voted against the Liberation Front, they, for example, warned about inadequate monitoring of the remains of clericalism, underestimating the influence of the clergy, the so-called White Guard and Blue Guard organisations, those whose property had been confiscated, etc. All of this supposedly pointed to the fact that Party became a victim of bureaucratisation, while the Party members were "losing the revolutionary perspective, forgetting that we are still in the middle of a revolutionary process". Bureaucratisation supposedly reflected itself in loosing the contact between the Party and the people, leaving factory workers under the influence of the old social democrat trade union representatives, which was an especially pressing issue in Ljubljana, where few true proletarians were members of KPS, which resulted in the danger that the Party would fall victim to petty bourgeoisie. Careful enrolment of new members into the Party and placing the right people in the important positions was emphasized, and the Maribor region was stated as a warning – there, supposedly, kulaks and speculators infiltrated the Liberation Front, while the communists failed to make good use of the Agrarian Reform Act. The Party appealed to general vigilance, in the following sense: "Every Party member must be an eye of OZNA. Democracy is for broad people's masses, not for the reaction." Accordingly, the supervision of private companies was to be strengthened, while in the field of education schools on the "scientific basis" were to be ensured – this supervision was especially aimed against nuns in schools. The influence of social democrats in factories was to be eliminated, while the activities of the clergy, which was soon branded as the main opponent, were to be supervised, also by attending the church rituals. The black market and speculators were to be persecuted more strictly, while simultaneously supporting the establishments of cooperatives and so on.<sup>43</sup>

In short, Party was to regain its true revolutionary character, thus doing away with opportunism, the danger of its own weakening or drowning in the People's Front and the danger of the so-called petty bourgeoisie. In this sense, Tito was also critical of the Slovenian Party in the end of 1945.<sup>44</sup>

### *Povzetek*

#### *Priprave Komunistične partije Slovenije na prevzem oblasti 1944–1945*

V letu 1944 je Komunistična partija Slovenije (KPS) kot sestavni del enotno delujoče Komunistične partije Jugoslavije že obvladovala celotno partizansko

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<sup>43</sup> ZAL, LJU 684, t.e. 5, a.e. 91, Minutes of the Party Conference of 24 November 1945.

<sup>44</sup> Politbiro centralnog komiteta Komunističke partije Jugoslavije 1945–1948 [The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia], Beograd 1995, doc. 11.

gibanje in se načrtno pripravljala na revolucionarni prevzemanje oblasti po končani vojni. Iz taktičnih razlogov o revoluciji javno ni govorila in je revolucionarno vsebino politične usmeritve prekrivala z izrazi *ljudska demokracija*, *pridobitve narodnoosvobodilnega boja* itd.

Po sprejetju Dolomitske izjave marca 1943 si je KPS pridobila tudi formalno priznano prvenstvo v odporniškem gibanju in si tako zagotovila popoln monopol na političnem področju ter učinkovito poseganje v proces snovanja nove t.i. ljudske oblasti. Kot dotlej je tudi v zaključnem obdobju okupacije delovala izrazito dvosmerno. Na zunaj je vztrajala na "narodnoosvobodilnih pozicijah" in skladno s tem krepila odporništvu v njegovi vojaški in politični komponenti. Koncept zadrževanja odkritega prehoda k revoluciji je ohranjal enotnost in moč odporništvu, kapitaliziral pa se je tudi na področju mednarodnega uveljavljanja jugoslovanskega odporništvu. Hkrati je KPS načrtno krepila lastne vrste v organizacijskem in ideološkem pogledu.

Dosežena monopolna vloga je komunistom omogočila uveljavljati revolucionarno usmeritev v značaju oblasti, kakršna se je udejanjala v okviru Osvobodilne fronte po prvem zasedanju Slovenskega narodnoosvobodilnega sveta februarja 1944, ko je pospešeno stekel proces izgradnje ljudske oblasti; le-ta je bil usmerjen v daljšo perspektivo, s ciljem zavarovanja pozicij partizanskega gibanja in prevzema oblasti ob koncu vojne pod komunističnim vodstvom. V tem okviru so bili pomembni še zlasti uvajanje novega – revolucionarnega pravnega reda in sodne veje oblasti, priprava upravnega aparata in načrtov za sprejem konkretnih ukrepov ob prevzemu oblasti, kar je vse potekalo v okviru smernic komunistične partije. V ožjem partijskem vodstvu pa so bile pred koncem vojne sprejete še interne taktične opredelitve glede vodenja politike do posameznih vprašanj (npr. glede odnosa do Cerkve) neposredno po končani vojni.

Ključno vlogo pri neposrednem prevzemu oblasti sta imeli vojska, ki je bila v političnem oziru v izključni domeni komunistov ter politična policija (OZNA), ki je bila ustanovljena leta 1944 predvsem zaradi poveljnih potreb utrjevanja nove oblasti in v tem okviru tudi zaščite revolucije, kar je po končani vojni potrdila njena vloga v zvezi s poboji domobrancev in preganjanjem političnih nasprotnikov. V prvih mesecih po končani vojni maja 1945 je KPS postopoma prevzemala nadzor nad državnimi in drugimi ustanovami, političnimi organizacijami ter društvi in z razmeščanjem kadrov po okrožjih krepila nadzor tudi na terenu. S sodnimi postopki, ki so med drugim imeli cilj izločiti iz odločanja predvojno elito in poddržaviti privatno lastnino, se je partijska oblast krepila tudi na ekonomskem področju. Do volitev u ustavodajno skupščino novembra 1945 je KPS javno delovala predvsem prek Osvobodilne fronte, katero je še potrebovala v fazi utrjevanja ljudske oblasti.

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*Jerca Vodusek Starič\**

*A Model for "People's Democracy".  
Some Backgrounds of the Tito–Šubašić  
Provisional Yugoslav Government*

The assessments of the events in Yugoslavia between 1944–1945 are still very diverse even today, in historiography and especially in politics; the same holds for this phase as for other phenomena of critical importance (for example, the purges and trials in the Soviet Union, the Spanish Civil War and so on). It is history, according to the American historians Radosh and Habeck,<sup>1</sup> which still represents a subject for debate worth arguing about for those who write it and for those who take a romantic or political posture towards the events.

The subject of dispute, when it comes to the year 1945 in Yugoslavia, and especially when an anniversary is involved, is how to evaluate the circumstances in Yugoslavia at that time and in other countries since then known as Eastern Europe or the Eastern Bloc. Did the situation consist only of the victory of anti-fascist coalitions and a national struggle for liberation, or was it also a revolution in process and (or) the sovietisation of this region? Tito's dispute with Stalin, which took place three years later, caused widespread 'turning a blind eye' to the actual state of affairs in Yugoslavia in 1944–45 and the nature of its system as a whole.

The border line, which ran through the middle of Central Europe, was known and clear. Stalin had already shown his intentions of spreading his influence of to this line as early as 1941. This was also the line along which the model for provisional governments, which should have been based on political compromise, was formed. F. Fejtó indicates Poland as the first typical example of this, and Yugoslavia as the second one. It is our opinion that Yugoslavia was the first one, in terms of sequence as well as significance. Furthermore, it became a pattern for the other countries of the future Eastern Bloc to follow.<sup>2</sup> F. Fejtó puts forward an interesting theory about the events at the end of World War II, when he states that in theory, the Anglo-American-Soviet alliance should have corresponded to a similar alliance of all internal political forces in all of the European nations, meaning

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald Radosh, Mary. R. Habeck, Grigory Sevostianov: *Spain Betrayed*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2001, p. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Francois Fejtó: *Histoire des démocraties populaires, I*, Editions du Seuil, 1979, p. 32–33.

an alliance ranging from the communist to the anti-Axis national right wing forces. Accordingly, the essence (*le but*) of the People's Front policy should have been to avoid the rivalry between political parties or classes as well as clashes between the pro-western and the pro-eastern forces, and to join forces against the common enemy. As the war neared its end the Soviet Union gave the impression that it still wished to preserve the spirit of the alliance and to cooperate with its capitalist allies in the post-war period, and it publicly discouraged communist parties all around from revolution and civil war. The same was supposed to be done by the West, which was to encourage its sympathisers to cooperate with the communists. According to Fejtő, this was actually carried out in the West and in the case of Czechoslovakia. But the situation was different in those countries which had a pre-war experience with prohibited communist parties; here the anti-German national movements were at the same time extremely anti-Soviet; the leaders of these movements saw the communists merely as agents of the Soviet Union and refused to cooperate with them. Under the pressure from the Big Three, these coalitions nevertheless came into existence towards the end of the war, but they were very fragile, unnatural, and lasted only due to the constant intervention of the great powers. All this resulted in an even greater division and each of these groups sought protection of one or the other of the great powers: subsequently, such politicians lost their independent character and gradually became mere agents of one of the sides of the barricade, Fejtő concludes. This deliberation from years ago, as well as methods used in the Spanish Civil War, lead us to the conclusion that it was important for Stalin to supervise the provisional governments, created at the end of the World War II in his area of interest.<sup>3</sup> Therefore all that remains to be answered is what (and who) he could have used as a tool to achieve it. We have already explored in depth the policies put in place during the process of the formation of the provisional government in Yugoslavia and the course of events after it was instated.<sup>4</sup> In this paper we will only reflect on some of the activities behind the scenes, in order to shed light on the methods of the communists and to give explanation for some of the shortages of the opposition in Yugoslavia or, better put the absence thereof.

After many years of research on the subject, we could claim that the process of take-over of power by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia came to pass not only in agreement and with full standing support from Moscow, but that Mos-

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<sup>3</sup> Historical documents, collected by historians in various recently opened Soviet archives, have already demystified the romantic image of the Spanish Civil War and proved right those who claimed it was all about the communist struggle for hegemony within the Spanish Republic. It remains to be seen whether these archives will shed more light on the manner in which the Yugoslav communists fought for hegemony between 1944/1945 and about the coordination with Stalin. For now we can only make indirect assumptions, since nobody explores this subject systematically in the Moscow archives.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prezem oblasti 1944–1946* [The Takeover of Power 1944–1946]. Ljubljana 1992; Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Kako su komunisti osvojili vlast 1944–1946* [How the Communists Rose to Power 1944–1946]. Zagreb 2006.

cow in many ways determined its proceedings, as it did later in the remaining Eastern European countries. The idea for such a model of take-over of power had its beginnings in the concept of the People's Front from the mid thirties; it was tested and complemented in Spain. The methods we are going to describe also originate from there. The newly opened archival collections of the intelligence and secret services confirm and clarify the details. Taking a closer look at the sequence of events and the methods applied, it becomes obvious that the historical interpretations such as the one claiming that the provisional governments based on the People's Front principle were governments of equal opportunity for all political parties, are in the least, naive. Why?

It is known that Stalin disbanded the Comintern early on, in 1943. But what is less known is that the main reason for it was to enable Moscow to directly supervise and steer events worldwide with the help of its residents and agents; working through local communist parties was much less efficient and more visible, making the agents vulnerable. This can be seen from the instructions Pavel Fitin sent in September 1943 to all of the more important Soviet NKVD residencies abroad (New York, San Francisco, Ottawa and others). He gave orders to separate the work of the agents and residencies from the local communist parties, implying that the Soviet Union did not want any suspicions to arise that Moscow's agents were directing the work of the communists around the world, and wrote: "2. Our workers, by continuing to meet the leaders of the FELLOWCOUNTRYMEN (i.e. Communists), are exposing themselves to danger and are giving cause (1 group unidentified) local authorities to suspect that the BIG HOUSE (BOL'SHOJ DOM, i.e. Comintern) is still in existence." Therefore, the residencies and agents were to be strictly separated in the future, i.e. they should work separately from the members of the local communist parties, as Fitin ordered: "a) that personal contact with leaders of the local FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN organizations should cease and that FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN material should not be accepted for forwarding to the BIG HOUSE; b) that meetings of our workers may take place only with special reliable undercover (ZAKONSPIROVANNYJ) contacts of the FELLOWCOUNTRYMAN (organizations), who are not suspected by the (1 group unidentified) local authorities, exclusively about specific matters of our intelligence work (acquiring (1 group unidentified) contacts, leads (NAVODKI), rechecking of those who are being cultivated, etc.). For each meeting it is necessary to obtain our consent."<sup>5</sup> Thus it is a fact that by 1944 Stalin had achieved direct supervision of the surroundings and the political moves of

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<sup>5</sup> A message from Moscow to Canberra, 12 September 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (National Security Agency), (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 27 March 2008. These instructions also demonstrate the nature of the contacts of secret coded telegraphs correspondence – it took place between individual agents abroad or at the headquarters INO or the Foreign Department, and later NKVD, which was managed before the war by the young student of the School for Special Purposes Pavel Mihailović Fitin, after INO was cleansed in an extensive purge.



his Anglo-American Allies by means of the NKVD or INO GUGB (from 1938 the GRU was part of the NKVD) agents. The on-going discussion today is mostly about what the actual status and influence of the individual residents, agents, collaborators or informants of the Soviet secret service was, namely who was a true agent, who was a so-called "agent of influence", tipping the scales in the favour of Soviet arguments and wishes, and who was a mere informant.

It appears that many high ranking politicians and officials worked to the advantage of Stalin's politics as sympathisers, informants, and agents. In the United States, for example, the following men were, according to expert opinion, agents: the second in line at the Ministry of Finance of the United States, Harry Dexter White, Donovan's assistant at the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Duncan Lee, and especially Alger Hiss, Director of the Office of Special Political Affairs at the State Department.<sup>6</sup> Hiss took part in all major international events, at the Yalta Conference and as Secretary-general at the founding conference of the United Nations in May and June 1945; he had worked for GRU as early as 1935. Moreover, Alger Hiss, cover name 'Aleš', went to Moscow after the Yalta Conference, where he received a high Soviet decoration for his group and himself, covertly, of course.<sup>7</sup> There is difference of opinion on the issue of Roosevelt's close adviser Harry Hopkins,<sup>8</sup> who was of assistance to the Soviets in 1943, when they acquired large quantities of uranium from the Lend Lease programme, even though it was unclear why they needed it and despite the opposition of the US military circles.<sup>9</sup> Kern places Hopkins in the circle of 'determined ignoramuses',

<sup>6</sup> All authors – Gordievski and Vasili Mitrokhin in their works written in cooperation with Christopher Andrew, as well as all others (N. West, G. Kern, Herbert Rommerstein, Eric Breindel etc.) – agree that since the middle of 1930s Harry D. White (agent 'Jurist') and Alger Hiss were part of the network of the American communists led by W. Chambers (editor of the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses* newspapers) and Nathan Gregory Silvermaster. Chambers stopped working for Moscow in the autumn of 1939 due to his disappointment with the purges and the danger that the Soviets could pass the information coming from the United States to the Third Reich due to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact; he then disclosed his activities and contacts to the U.S. Administration and the Congress. The authors also agree about Donovan's personal assistant Duncan C. Lee (with the cover name KOCH) and around twenty other agents. Andrew and Mitrokhin state the following: "During World War II, NKVD knew far more about OSS than OSS knew about NKVD." (Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin archive*, Allen Lane & The Penguin Press, 1999, p. 143.)

<sup>7</sup> Nigel West: *Venona*, Harper-Collins, London 2000, p. 235, where N. West refers to the decoded telegram from Venona, sent by Anatolij V. Gorsky or 'A. Gromov' ('Vadim', the NKVD resident in Washington) from Washington to Moscow on 30 March 1945. Hiss and his group supposedly just collected military information; Hiss was an exception among agents, since he was not taken over by the NKVD after the purges, like most of the military intelligence network.

<sup>8</sup> Some (Rommerstein and Breindel, op. cit.) claim that Hopkins was an agent; others claim that he was merely a tool of the agents around him (for ex. G. Kern, op. cit.).

<sup>9</sup> Romerstein and Breindel, *The Venona Secrets*, Regnery Publ. Inc., Washington 2000, p. 468. More about Hopkins's contacts and the information he sent to Moscow is disclosed by Andrew and Mitrohin in the aforementioned work, p. 147, where they also state that KGB officers bragged about Hopkins being their agent.

together with the Vice President of the United States Henry A. Wallace and US ambassador Joseph E. Davies. The latter is generally known to have claimed that the show trials in Moscow in the years 1937 and 1938 were convincing and genuine. Kern comments: "Davies later would hold that the Bolshevik word of honour was as good as the Bible and that Stalin was the best man to get lost in the wilderness with, so trustworthy was he. Top advisors were so partial to the Stalin regime that they did not have to be recruited – Harry Hopkins, Henry Wallace, Joseph E. Davies. ... When the USA and the USSR became allies, widespread sympathy for 'the Russians' removed practically all security controls."<sup>10</sup> This attitude went so far as to cause the dissolution of the division of Eastern European affairs at the US State Department. To complete the picture, we would have to give the account of many other parts of the Venona disclosures, especially those on the network of agents that sent heaps of intelligence from the USA and Great Britain to Moscow about the development of the atomic bomb. But let us just use the words of one of the experts: Roosevelt's wartime administration was "infested by Soviet spies". And all this came to pass in spite of the testimonies of Whittaker Chambers and all the other defectors from the Soviet secret service in the years 1938-39 (Krivitsky, Orlov, and later Guzenko).

It was a bit different in Great Britain, where the so-called agents of influence failed to convince Churchill. But here Stalin had some very high ranking spies in the British SIS, whom he reactivated in 1940/41. They intercepted and forwarded important information. The question which emerges in this case, and has not yet been well researched, is – how much have they influenced the state of affairs in Eastern Europe?<sup>11</sup> The agents are well known, the major ones being Antony Blunt, Kim Philby and Donald Maclean. In their case one could assert that it was less likely that they had a key influence on the policies of the SIS, the FO or the British Government, but they definitely relayed confidential and secret data, assessments and decisions to Moscow. Only one example from the recent studies: such an amount of intelligence was passed on to the Soviet Union through Lend Lease and other channels that in 1945 at Potsdam Stalin knew more about the first atom bomb explosion than the new president of the United States, Harry Truman.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Garry Kern, *A Death in Washington*, Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror, Enigma books, New York 2003, pp. 180, 230.

<sup>11</sup> S. Ritchie, *Our man in Yugoslavia*, pp. 174–177. He claims that the penetration of Kim Philby and the like did not influence SIS policy in Yugoslavia, at least there is no such evidence yet. Then, as he explains the double role of the British intelligence officers with the Yugoslav and Italian partisans (simultaneously collecting information about German military plans as well as the communist movement), he states that these fortunate circumstances did not last long, since: "SIS had of course been penetrated by Soviet agents, and it may well be that communist leaders like Tito were warned by Moscow that the SIS officers attached to their units held a dual brief." It was either such a warning or the Yugoslav partisans' own suspicion which gave rise to the rift between the British and Tito in the autumn of 1944. As we will see later on, the Moscow warning was the reason.

<sup>12</sup> G. Kern, *A Death in Washington*, p. 230.

If we now take a closer look at the contents of their reports and the subject of their interests at the end of the war, and at the same time follow the political developments in 1944/45, we can see that both diplomacy and the work of the agents and residencies was focused on the important political questions of the post-war settlement in Europe. Upon reading through the decoded messages of the Venona collection<sup>13</sup> it becomes clear that the Soviet agents transmitted many telegrams and sent a large number of films, particularly about the issues pertaining to Eastern Europe, and disclosing the British-American differences,<sup>14</sup> the details of the Lend Lease programme, the planning and the arrangements the Western Allies made at the conferences in Quebec, the UN conference in San Francisco in May 1945, the activities and structure of the OSS, the plans for the division of Germany, and so on.<sup>15</sup> For example, on 7 September 1944 Donald Maclean sent a detailed report to Fitin in Moscow via the Soviet consulate in New York on the subject of the upcoming discussion between Roosevelt and Churchill at the conference in Quebec, such as the division of Germany, the difference in position between the British and the Americans in regard to the Morgenthau plan and the solution of the Greek question (where, he said, the British intended to set up a "government well disposed towards England" and "their tactics consist in supporting the King", yet the US government "regards the British intrigues in Greece suspicion"). Maclean suggested (it stands: he hoped) that the Soviet Union should take advantage of these circumstances to disrupt the plans of the British. In a similar spirit, in one day, on 17 October 1944 the Soviet consul in New York sent 56 films to Moscow. He received them from Silvermaster, and they contained the evaluations of the British Ministry of Economic Warfare on

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<sup>13</sup> Many historical analyses have been written about Venona in the last decade, but we only listed some of them; the first ones were written by C. Andrew, A. Weinstein and A. Vassiliev, who also examined the evidence in the KGB collections. (K.G. Robertson, ed., *War, Resistance and Intelligence*, Leo Cooper, 1999, p. 220.)

Venona was a top secret project, even more so than Ultra, of the US Army Signal Security Agency, later Signals Intelligence Service or NSA, with the aim of first decoding the codebooks and then also the collections of Soviet diplomatic, foreign trade, GRU, KGB and Comintern encrypted messages from abroad to Moscow and back. The various origins of these messages were very interesting. The decoding started as early as the 1 February 1943 and was completed in 1980. Around 2,900 decoded or partly decoded messages of KGB and GRU were then declassified in 1998 and are stored in the national archives in Washington and London; some selected messages are also published at the NSA (National Security Agency) and CIA websites. Later the FBI (in 1947), the CIA (1953) and British intelligence (1960) joined the project.

<sup>14</sup> The roots of this problem of dissent on some of the policies go back at least to 1941 if not earlier – it involved the disagreement between the British and the Americans about the Soviet demand that the Allies should consent to the annexation of those territories that the Soviet Union acquired on the basis of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, which, just like the 'Polish question', lasted throughout the war and reached one of its culminations with the Katyń Massacre in the spring of 1943.

<sup>15</sup> In the autumn of 1944, Silvermaster (and his group) sent detailed films of American documents to Moscow, as well as reports and evaluations on the circumstances involved.

the situation in Germany and on economic intelligence information from the Far East, the instructions on the disbandment of the National socialist Party in Germany, as well as a number of reports on the Lend Lease programme, and other matters.<sup>16</sup> However, Poland and Yugoslavia, countries on the fringe of Stalin's future "defence zone", constantly remained a subject of interest in the telegrams concerning Eastern Europe that were transmitted to Moscow.

The proposals and procedures for the formation of joint provisional governments started quite early on during the war. These governments were to be assembled from representatives of the governments of the occupied countries in exile in London and the leaderships of the resistance movements at home, which were frequently led by the communists. Such a compromise, which was endorsed and supervised by the Big Three, was a lengthy and often unpromising procedure. The only one to avoid it was the Czechoslovak president Eduard Beneš, who obtained individual guarantees from Moscow for the course of action to be followed during the liberation of his homeland; he achieved them by signing the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on 12 December 1943. On account of this exception, it is of no small interest that we find Beneš in the decoded Venona NKVD reports in a message as early as May 1943. Namely, on 2 May 1943 general Fitin received a coded telegram from New York which said that '19' is reporting on a meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Vice-President Wallace, to which he was invited. '19' commented, among other things, that Roosevelt was not keeping Wallace up to date with important military decisions and that it was possible that Wallace lacked precise information about the opening of the second front in Europe.<sup>17</sup> The rundown of the Venona decoders shows that '19' was the cover name of Beneš. And according to some interpretations he was no less than a recruited Soviet agent.<sup>18</sup> The other possibility is that he was an instrument of the agents in his entourage, such as Captain Jan Fierlinger, the employee of the Czechoslovak Information Centre in New York Sukhomlin, and others who were recruited agents as Venona states most conclusively. Either way, we find it more interesting to uncover the motives behind such conduct. In order to do this, we must take into account the diplomatic controversies of the time, especially the severance of diplomatic relations between the Soviet government and the Polish government in exile (after the Katyń Affair) in May 1943 and the diplomatic pressures from all sides about the future Polish borders and representation. This was probably the root of Beneš's relatively early

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<sup>16</sup> Telegram from Moscow to Canberra, 12 September 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (National Security Agency), (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 27 March 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 29 May 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/Venona>), acquired on 5 March 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Nigel West: *Venona*, p. 122. West states: "Discreet inquiries at the White House quickly established that agent 19 was the Check leader Eduard Beneš, long suspected of having been a Soviet source. However, by the time the connection had been made, Beneš had returned to Czechoslovakia at the end of the war, and had subsequently been removed from power."

decision to try and negotiate with Stalin by himself. However, such a move was in discord with the policy of the Western Allies. Namely, soon after the signature of the agreement between the Soviet Union and Great Britain in 1942, Anthony Eden expressed to the Soviets a wish of his government that the great powers should work out the future of the small allied countries in unison, and still more, that they should attempt to reach an understanding on their post-war status in order to prevent any "undignified competition" between these small countries; the British retained this point of view in 1943. Furthermore, their discussions with Mayski gave them the impression that he agreed with such a method; Mayski even named this principle the 'Self-denying ordinance'. Then, in May 1943, Beneš informed the British Foreign Office that he had been negotiating with the Soviet government for a while in order to obtain some guarantee that the Soviets would respect the Czechoslovak territorial integrity and would not interfere in the internal affairs of the state; furthermore, he had discussed the possibility for a Soviet–Czechoslovak–Polish Agreement. It was obvious that the inclusion of Poland into such a negotiation was not possible after the severance of the Soviet Polish diplomatic relations. Subsequently, on 11 May Beneš travelled to the United States, where he stayed until 11 June and had several discussions with Roosevelt; reports of this came to Moscow, among others via 'Mars', an official of the Czechoslovak Information Centre in the USA.<sup>19</sup> Beneš's intention was to leave for Moscow right away in June and conclude an agreement with the Soviet Union. It is well known that the Western Allies protested against such a plan at once. After that Beneš and the Soviet diplomats temporarily abandoned the idea, but Moscow expressed its official resentment on the issue.<sup>20</sup> We can only speculate what triggered such haste. Some claim that Beneš truly believed in a post-war rapprochement of the East and the West and that he held no ideological prejudice towards Stalin. Regardless of what his true convictions were, his wish for a compromise for post-war Czechoslovakia is clear and understandable, since he realistically assessed the future (pre)dominance of the Soviet Union in the Central European region. At least, that is how he explained his visit to Moscow later in December 1943 after he again met with a good deal of disapproval from the Western powers. Beneš's appraisal of his visit to Moscow did not remain secret for long either. When he came back to London, he told the British that he was happy with the attitude of the Soviet government towards the European question, that he was bringing Mikolajczyk a message that the Soviet Union was not opposed to a renewal of diplomatic relations between the two countries, that it did not strive for a communist Poland or demand that the borders should be the same as in 1941, that it only wished for the Curzon line with a few amendments as well

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<sup>19</sup> Nigel West claims that several Venona messages show that Jan Fierlinger (codename 'Officer'), at that time an employee at the Czechoslovak mission in New York also worked for the Soviets, more precisely, for Pravdin. (N. West, *Venona*, p. 219.)

<sup>20</sup> L. Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Vol. II, HMSO, London 1971, p. 595–596.

as changes in the Polish government. After Beneš entrusted his interpretations of the Soviet position to the British, they forwarded them the American State Department. From there it did not take long, and in February 1944 the information was reported back to the 8<sup>th</sup> Department of the NKVD via New York.

In a similar manner, Stalin acquired information regarding the Yugoslav situation. It was delivered either consciously or not so by Yugoslav politicians in exile (or their entourage), who were paving the way towards a compromise with the partisan movement. The proper person for such a purpose had to come from the leading, governmental circles or from high representatives of the political parties in exile. The reason for this, as has been demonstrated earlier, was that Stalin needed to know about their connections in the West and their exchanges with Roosevelt and Churchill, their ministers and intelligence services. It must be stressed at this point that the information that came through NKVD channels, which we are speaking about, was as a rule collected at NKVD headquarters and forwarded to Stalin and that the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Soviet ambassadors did not receive it. Stalin was, therefore, the one who was interested in the plans and attitudes of the West about post-war Europe, its borders and the delivery of economic aid. Therefore, it is not much of a surprise that as early as 1943 we find Dr. Sava Kosanović and Dr. Ivan Šubašić among the collaborators – agents, informants or mere sources, whichever, – of Vladimir Pravdin (cover name 'Sergej'), a member of the NKVD, but formally a TASS correspondent in Washington. In June 1943, the decoded messages from New York to Moscow refer to them under the cover names 'Seres' (Šubašić) and 'Kolo' (Kosanović), both reporting several times on Alexander Halpern, the former secretary of Kerensky, who was at the time working for British intelligence.<sup>21</sup> In relation to Yugoslavia, two more names often appear in the encrypted messages. One is 'Khazar', who has not been identified by the official decoders. The message of 9 September 1943 states that OSS directed him to travel to Yugoslavia, perhaps to see Tito himself, who is mentioned later in the text. The second collaborator is 'Croat' or 'Khorvat', for whom the NKVD was unable to cover all expenses in Stockholm, so they suggested to general Fitin that he should allow 'Croat' to get a job at the British Embassy.<sup>22</sup>

Both of the politicians mentioned held key positions in Yugoslav politics; Šubašić was the ban of Croatia, which gained a fair amount of autonomy on the eve of the war and Kosanović represented the largest Serb party that was in favour of a federal Yugoslavia. He was the first one of the leaders of the KDK (Peasant Democratic Coalition), after that of the Independent Democratic Party. He was a member of parliament in the 1930s, one of its opposition leaders, and

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<sup>21</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 21 June 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008, or Nigel West: *Venona*, p. 219.

<sup>22</sup> Telegrams from New York to Moscow, 9 September, and from Stockholm to Moscow, 17 December 1943, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008.

later became a minister in the government of Dušan Simović in exile.<sup>23</sup> Apresyan, the young Soviet vice-consul in New York, wrote to general Fitin in Moscow in July 1944 that Kosanović is a person who is devoted to us and understands that his country's welfare depends on us.<sup>24</sup> But Apresyan was less pleased with the attitude of Kosanović towards the Yugoslav compromise agreed upon on the island of Vis in June 1944 and was particularly unhappy because Kosanović was not observing the necessary secrecy; he had already reported about it in 1943, after Kosanović had revealed to Šubašić that he was working for Pravdin. When Kosanović moved from the USA to London in July 1944, Apresyan made it a point in his letter to Fitin that they should persistently make Kosanović understand that he had to keep his contacts with the NKVD completely secret and that he was not to make any important decisions without a prior consultation with the NKVD.<sup>25</sup>

Earlier on, when Šubašić was leaving the USA for London, similar reports were sent to Moscow. One of them in May 1944 reported on his farewell meetings with Dunne, Cordell Hull's assistant, and Donovan, the head of OSS. Both of the high officials agreed with the argumentation, presented by Šubašić, that there should be an overall endeavour for the unification of all the parties in Yugoslavia with the partisans (the telegram uses the term *gruppirovka* for such unification), and that Draža Mihailović should no longer be part of the Yugoslav Royal Government. The messages also make quite clear that before he left, Šubašić recommended two other members of the HSS (Croatian Peasant Party), i.e. Tomo Baburić and Pavao Pocrnić, as possible future contacts with the NKVD. He even wrote excellent personal reports about both of them, saying that "... they deserve complete confidence" and advised the Soviets how to establish contact with them.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, all these reports to Moscow give us no hint as to what both Yugoslav politicians expected to achieve from this kind of cooperation with the Soviets. One can only speculate that such a step, taken by Šubašić, who was not only one of the heads of the Croatian Peasant Party, but also a personal friend of its leader Dr. Vladko Maček, had to affect the position of the Croatian Peasant Party at home; perhaps it even had repercussions for the party in the aftermath of the war, during the preparations for the constitutional elections. It is also evident that Stalin needed Šubašić solely for the duration of the provisional government in Yugoslavia. That he really just took advantage of Šubašić, can be deduced from all that ensued, when Šubašić was ousted from politics and held in house arrest after the elections. And especially from the ironic question Stalin

<sup>23</sup> For more information see Sava Kosanović: Jugoslavija, bila je osuđena na smrt. Globus, Arhiv Jugoslavije, Beograd, Zagreb 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 25 July 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 4 May 1944, The Venona Documents, NSA (<http://www.nsa.gov/venona>), acquired on 6 April 2008.

posed to Tito, during his visit to Moscow in May 1946: "How is my 'friend' Šubašić doing?"<sup>27</sup> Here it is possible to make a parallel with the attitude Stalin and the NKVD officers had towards Largo Caballero.

The spring of 1944 was not only the point in time when overtures were being made for the Yugoslav compromise, but also the time when Moscow sent its first official emissaries to Yugoslavia, and a Yugoslav partisan mission was sent to London. The NKVD did not control only some of the royal circles in London, but also had collaborators in the partisan circles. One of the members of the partisan mission, led by Vladimir Velebit, and the secretary to Dr. Drago Marušič, Gregor Ravnihar, worked for them. Soon after, the agents 'Karas' and 'Kolo' arrived to London from the United States. One of Apresyan's reports from New York, written on 17 May 1944, shows that 'Karas' was the president of the Yugoslav Merchant Navy Association. The report of 14 June states that they acquired a new contact for him – he was to meet a NKVD agent at a certain spot in London. The password for the new contact was: "Vlado says hello," and 'Karas' had to respond with: "Thank you very much! I haven't seen him for a while."<sup>28</sup> The same password for setting up contact in London was given to Kosanović a month later (but it is not known what Vlado, derived from Vladimir, represented or who he was). 'Karas' was Antun Ivančić, member of the Joint Committee of South Slavs in London, led by Dr. Boris Furlan, Mihailo Petrović and Dr. Rudolf Bičanić. All three gave their support to the partisan movement and, as did many of the members of their association, left for Yugoslavia soon after.

It is not very likely that Tito could have been oblivious to all these intelligence channels or at least about the contents of the messages reaching Moscow in this manner. Namely, when Bičanić participated at the session of the UN-RRA council in Montreal in the autumn of 1944 as Tito's representative, he simply reported to Tito through the very same Soviet channels.

Later on in London, Šubašić received a mandate from the King to form a new Yugoslav government in exile, which was to negotiate with Tito. In this new government two of the five ministers were Dr. Sava Kosanović<sup>29</sup> and Dr. Drago Marušič. The predominance of ministers, who were favourably disposed towards Tito, was, of course, a condition set by Tito, and therefore an exigency for the merger of forces with the communists. Furthermore, to incorporate different political parties in a future joint government greatly helped to keep up the appearance of political diversity in front of the international community. As has already been mentioned, the compromise formula for the representation of the

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<sup>27</sup> Nešković's record on the conversation between Stalin and Tito, 27 – 28 May 1946.

<sup>28</sup> The National Archives of the UK (PRO), HW 15/58.

<sup>29</sup> Later on, from 1946 to 1949, Kosanović was the ambassador of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia to USA and Mexico, and then until his death in 1956, a member of the Federal Executive Council (i.e. the central government); among other things, he was a member of the Yugoslav delegations at the 1946 Paris Peace Conference and at the United Nations Assembly meeting in 1947.



Yugoslav Royal Government in London and the National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ) in a joint provisional government was then contracted in the Tito–Šubašić Agreement at Vis in 16 June 1944. Another basic principle of the agreement was also that all military forces should gather under Tito's leadership. At that point already many claimed that Šubašić relinquished his position and gave too many concessions to Tito. Another of the elements or foundations for the compromise came from Moscow as well: it was the amnesty of 1944, which was to facilitate individual cross-over into the ranks of the National Liberation Forces. Furthermore, the telegrams clearly show that Stalin also bore in mind the so-called Chetniks or Serbian question, being well aware that the British were carefully monitoring the situation in Serbia.

In the aftermath of the Vis agreement Šubašić pressed for an immediate establishment of the joint government, yet Tito disregarded his pleas for several months to come; Tito had his well known tactical grounds for it. He was therefore inaccessible for Šubašić until the autumn of 1944, i.e. until after he had gained military control over Serbia and Belgrade and the famous percentage agreement of fifty/fifty between Churchill and Stalin had been reached in Moscow on 9 October.

Throughout this time and later on as well, Tito coordinated his actions with Moscow. The intensity of the coordination was described in September 1945 in the testimony of the Soviet cipher clerk Gouzenko: "According to Gouzenko, another NKVD man who is a close friend of Lieutenant Kulakov is Marshal Tito's personal cipher clerk in Yugoslavia. Gouzenko states that this cipher clerk is almost worked to death because Tito sends messages to Moscow asking for instructions and advice on the most minor matters."<sup>30</sup> Much the same is the testimony of the radio operator of the Russian mission with the Slovene partisan command, who said that his 'Duplex' station had the largest amount of traffic in Slovenia; he was forced to work from 6 am until midnight, without time to eat, and the radio overheated, with parts of it almost melting. On a busy day he received around 6000 number groups (each group had 5 digits), and he transmitted more than he received. The ciphering was carried out by Lieutenant Peter (Kornjenko?) and Captain Boris. Traffic was transmitted between Moscow, the Supreme Headquarters, the aviation base in Bari as well as locations in the Pohorje hills and northern Italy. After a month the written encrypted telegrams would be destroyed.<sup>31</sup>

From the autumn of 1944 on, we can witness an intertwinement of numerous military, strategic and political moves, outlooks and arrangements on the European and the Yugoslav stage; two problems were of importance here. The first one was an ever more evident and already well-known process of deterioration in the cooperation between the partisan movement and the Western Allies; this

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<sup>30</sup> Venona detailed report, Hoover's letter to Frederick B. Lyon at the State Department, 24 September 1945, CIA (<http://www.cia.gov/csi>), acquired on 20 September 2005.

<sup>31</sup> ARS, MFS.

was more or less on line with the broader political picture, i.e. the falling apart of the East-West relations, and the growing influence of politics in the course of the war. The encrypted intelligence messages contain some new revelations in this case as well. They show that Tito did not cool his relations with the Western Allies in September 1944 due to the Allied scheme to disembark in Istria, as Slovene (and ex-Yugoslav) historiography suggests. Namely, as early as on 9 May 1944 Moscow (and Tito) received a message from the Silvermaster group in the USA informing them that, on 22 April 1944 the British had abandoned the planned invasion in the Balkans.<sup>32</sup> The extensive report that the British diplomat and NKVD agent Donald Maclean sent to Moscow in August 1944 informing them on future British actions, clearly states that the only thing that was suggested by the British military circles was that a suitable number of troops should be stationed in Trieste to supervise the Yugoslav Italian border and to keep peace there.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, Moscow and Tito knew of the intentions of the Allies very early on and the estrangement between Tito and the West should be attributed to something other than the classic ideological motives. It was another message Tito received from Moscow. The message in question revealed that the Allied liaison officers in Yugoslavia are in fact collaborators of SIS, or that many of them have a dual role – they represent SOE and at the same time work for SIS. For this reason the partisan secret police, the OZNA,<sup>34</sup> with the aid of the Soviet military mission, started the classical processing of data (drawing up of 'dossiers') on all of the Western liaison officers, members of their missions and contacts. This was carried out from summer of 1944 on and throughout Yugoslavia, down the hierarchical chain. For example, in Črnomelj, the centre of the Slovene liberated territory, such evaluations were prepared by the NKVD majors Zavaronkov and Sorokoumov in cooperation with the Slovene OZNA officer Boris Čižmek-Bor. Meanwhile, Ivan Maček-Matija, the head of the Slovene OZNA, sent members of the OZNA to the Russian mission for intelligence training. Furthermore, members of NKVD set up an extensive network of their own in such a manner that they "simply changed the party and SKOJ<sup>35</sup> into a spying organisation; they met with individual members of the Party and the SKOJ and gave them spying assignments on specific individuals."<sup>36</sup> In the spring of 1945, after the liberation of the capital Ljubljana, mem-

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<sup>32</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 9 May 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005.

<sup>33</sup> Telegram from New York to Moscow, 2/3 August 1944, Part II, Selected Venona Messages, CIA <http://www.cia.gov/csi>, acquired on 20 September 2005. In this telegram Maclean also reports on the differences between the goals of both allies, namely that the British aimed to strengthen their influence in the Balkans, while the United States strove for minimum involvement in European affairs.

<sup>34</sup> OZNA is the Department for the Protection of the People.

<sup>35</sup> SKOJ is the Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije = The League of Young Communists of Yugoslavia.

<sup>36</sup> ARS, MFS.

bers of the Soviet NKVD and military intelligence missions were joined by the agents of SMERSH (Belajev, Petrov and Monsurov). They in turn, immediately started seeking out and interrogating Russian emigrants in Yugoslavia; in their search they also had access to the OZNA concentration camps, for example the one in Teharje.

Such collaboration between the Soviet and Yugoslav secret police and intelligence services that targeted 'all Westerners was not limited only to the war effort, but also had a long term objective. This was another of the revelations obtained by the defector Gouzenko. In 1945 he testified that, on the basis of the traffic he had read, he reached the conclusion that the Soviets intended to plant "many Soviet espionage agents in the diplomatic establishments" in the West. "These espionage agents are to be sent from Eastern, Central and Balkan European countries. These would number 50% to 100% of the employees below the rank of Ambassador and would actually be Soviet trained Military Intelligence, NKVD or Comintern men."<sup>37</sup>

There are a large number of other interesting facts and details in the espionage traffic of 1944 that had implications on or directly influenced the progress of events in 1945; but let us return to the formation of the provisional government.

The circumstances and the contents of the October 1944 percentage agreement between Stalin and Churchill are known. At that stage Churchill exerted increasing pressure on Tito to carry out the Tito–Šubašič Agreement and finally grant the appointment of a joint government. However, since October 1944, as we have already extensively described in the book on the communist take-over of power in Yugoslavia,<sup>38</sup> Tito's primary concern was to establish himself in the capital of Yugoslavia Belgrade, and to take control of the major state institutions, staffing them with trustworthy members of his movement. Only at the Yalta conference did a step forward occur. At the conference the Allies signed the Declaration of Liberated Europe and the Western Allies expected that the democratic principles would be observed and that the situation would revert to the Atlantic Charter. Namely, the Declaration was, among other things, an agreement on the principle of establishing provisional governments in Europe and their competences and tasks in order to resurrect democratic institutions. "The establishment of order in Europe and the rebuilding of national economic life must be achieved by processes which will enable the liberated peoples to destroy the last vestiges of nazism and fascism and to create democratic institutions of their own choice. This is a principle of the Atlantic Charter – the right of all people to choose the form of government under which they will live – the restoration of sovereign rights and self-government to those peoples who have been forcibly deprived to them by the aggressor nations." In order to stipulate

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<sup>37</sup> Venona detailed report, Hoover's letter to Frederick B. Lyon at the State Department, 24 September 1945, CIA (<http://www.cia.gov/csi>), acquired on 20 September 2005.

<sup>38</sup> As in fn. 4.

these processes all three signatories were to help ensure peaceful internal conditions in the individual countries, provide relief, and assist them: "(c) to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of Governments responsive to the will of the people; and (d) to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections."<sup>39</sup> The intent was, therefore, that the provisional governments should prepare general elections and were as such meant to be of a temporary nature and with a limited mandate. In the case of Yugoslavia, all these standards, even more explicitly, had been endorsed by Tito and Šubašić earlier on, in the amendments to the Vis Agreement already in November and December 1944.

The Tito-Šubašić government that finally came into existence on 7 March 1945 was formally a provisional government. But Tito never used the term "provisional". He always referred to it as the joint government. It had 28 Ministers (including Ministers for federal units, an utterly artificial office). 18 of them came from the NKOJ, four of which represented different political parties at home, but all that supported Tito, and six Ministers joined them from the London government in exile. Among these were Šubašić as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and Dr. Sava Kosanović as the Minister of Information. Only Dr. Milan Grol was new and he was so angry at Šubašić because of the latter's stance on the subject of the formation of the provisional parliament in Yugoslavia and on other issues that he refused to travel to Belgrade on the same plane, fearing that somebody in Yugoslavia would think Šubašić "owned him".<sup>40</sup>

Kosanović as the Minister of Information not only had access to key information from the other Ministries, but he also had control over propaganda, press and censorship. At the same time he, being a Serb, provided a better supervision of the Serbian newspapers, which were not favourably disposed towards the communists ("Narodni list" and others). Propaganda was of key importance in the process in which the Communist Party got rid of its key political competitors under the pretext of collaboration and treason, and many were publicly denounced as 'enemies of the people'. Foreign observers were quick to notice that the new administration in Yugoslavia was monopolising the public opinion and dialogue, allowing only the promotion of its own point of view.

In addition to all these well-positioned individuals in the new government, further support to their undertaking came from the West as well. The first UNRRA representative sent to Yugoslavia first made contact with the Soviet espionage agents and agreed to collect information for them. It is unnecessary to even dwell on the second representative, James Klugman, a Comintern agent and a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, whose files are now declassified in the archives.

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<sup>39</sup> The Avalon Project at Yale Law School, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Documents, The Yalta Conference; 1945, (<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/20th.htm>).

<sup>40</sup> The National Archives of the UK (PRO), FO 371/48863/177.

In the summer and autumn of 1945, a number of government and Front politicians ensured, in the context of the so-called People's Front policy, the accomplishment of what later became known as Rakosy's 'salami cutting policy'. At once two versions of the HSS, the Democratic Party and the Peasant's Party appeared in Yugoslavia – one within the People's Front and the other, the original remained outside of it. Of course, the first one would publicly challenge the legitimacy of the second one. This technique of public disqualification of political parties (regardless of whether they were officially permitted or not) and the hidden pressure of the OZNA applied individually on politicians like Grol, Šubašić and others, was used in the same way in Poland and Bulgaria, where they resorted to threats in order to get rid of Georgij Dimitrov - Gemeto prior to 1945, whereas they simply executed Petkov judicially two years later. This strategy was honed to perfection by Matjos Rakosy in Hungary after the general elections of November 1945, where the majority of votes went to the anti-communist small holders' party (57%), while social democrats and communists received 17% each. In Hungary, as in many similar cases, the communists led and controlled the Ministry of Internal Affairs from the very beginning, while the Security Service obtained documentation from NKVD agents; they made use of it for the disqualification of political parties or parts of these as well as the Catholic Church. In the next step the communists transformed the electoral legislation (which happened in Yugoslavia in summer 1945 in the Provisional parliament); they introduced disfranchisement and won the August 1947 elections in Hungary. With similar tactics as in Yugoslavia, the communists controlled other ministries, which were just formally led by members of other parties or famous personalities. The situation in Romania was analogous – communists in the provisional government controlled the Ministries of Economic Affairs (with control over oil wells), Justice and Internal Affairs, and at the same time they made certain that the remaining ministries were in the hands of "loyal" politicians, although members of other parties. However, in 1947, after the elections in autumn 1946, they simply imprisoned the leader of the Peasant Party, Julius Maniu. The situation in Albania was similar to the one in Yugoslavia, whereas the fate of Mikolajczyk is widely known, as the Polish government in London obtained only 3 members in the provisional government. Therefore, modus operandi in Yugoslavia in the years 1944 and 1945 reappeared in other areas, where the Red Army first came into control. The details are known about the events of the summer of 1945 in Yugoslavia, as well as the circumstances of the resignation of the Šubašić and his fellow ministers, as well as the opposition's obstruction shortly before the elections for the Constitutional Assembly. Viewd from this perspective, the objectives followed by Moscow become clear, along with the reason why Šubašić remained completely resigned and silent after the elections.

In conclusion it must be said that it is inconsequential whether some of the above mentioned politicians were consciously involved or not in informing

Moscow in the decisive moments at the end of World War II and its immediate aftermath and whether they were agents, informants, or they just served Moscow with the intention to benefit, gain favours or guarantees for their own political agenda. What is more important is that the new archive documents of the Western as well as the Eastern intelligence services prove that Stalin systematically controlled the political development, the formation and performance of the provisional governments, each time in pursuit of his interests. The fact that he permitted, at least formally until about 1947, certain pre-war political parties to take part in such provisional governments, by no means changes the nature of the process and of the objective, pursued jointly by Moscow and the communists in the provisional governments, including the Yugoslav one. Once again it was all just tactics (as to the correct tactics there was sometimes disagreement even among the communists themselves), which in no way changed the strategic goal. The events behind the scenes just serve to prove once again that it was all a coordinated effort after all, and that Yugoslavia was no exception in 1945; it was perhaps even a model of how to take-over power. The process was carried out tactically in such a way that the new people's democracies preserved a favourable disposition with the West by giving small, often trivial political concessions. In return they gained material assistance and support, as well as, finally, political recognition. With all that said, we could conclude that, as far as the methods of the communists were concerned, the year 1945 was in fact not a turning point, just "Spain revisited", to quote Evelyn Waugh.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Vzorec za 'ljudsko demokracijo'. Nekatera ozadja začasne jugoslovanske vlade Tito-Šubašić*

Zadnji meseci vojne so v političnih odnosih v zavezniškem taboru bili namenjeni predvsem implementaciji načina prehoda iz vojnega v povojno stanje. Seveda sta si oba pola, zahodni zavezniki na eni in Sovjetska zveza na drugi strani, po svoje predstavljala bodoči politični zemljevid Evrope, zlasti ko je šlo za vmesni teritorij med njima in to sta bila srednja Evropa in Balkan. Zadnji poskus doseči dogovor na podlagi demokratičnih standardov je bila konferenca na Jalti. Toda že takoj po njej se je pokazala globoka vrzel med obema stranema in opaziti je že duh hladne vojne, čeprav do ostre konfrontacije zaradi pacifiške fronte še ni prišlo.

Jaltska Deklaracija o osvobodjeni Evropi je bila med drugim dogovor o postopku formiranja, o pristojnostih in nalogah začasnih vlad po Evropi. Roosevelt si je z zagotovitvijo Stalinovega podpisa predstavljal, da bo slednji spoštoval demokratična načela; toda kmalu se je razočaral. Zelo podobna načela so za Jugoslavijo bila zapisana že prej, v sporazumih Tito-Šubašić, ki naj bi zagotav-

ljali demokratični okvir za izvedbo volitev v Jugoslaviji. V vseh deželah srednje Evrope je v načelu veljalo, da bodo takšne volitve tudi izpeljane. Toda v postopku njihovih priprav so komunisti v različnih deželah s podporo Moskve dobili dejanski vpliv z zasedbo ključnih ministerstev v začasnih vladah in paraliziranjem političnih strank z organizacijo ljudske fronte in dupliranjem nekaterih strank v fronti. Na Češkoslovaškem so imeli podpredsednika vlade (Gottwald) in Klementisa v zunanjem ministrstvu ter ministre za notranje zadeve, kmetijstvo, informiraje, izobraževanje in za socialo. Na Poljskem so komunisti zasedli ministrstvo za notranje zadeve in za obrambo, šef KP Gomulka pa resor za reorganizacijo novopriključenih ozemelj na zahodu in izgon Nemcev; poljska londonska vlada je dobila le 7 od 21 sedežev v vladi, itd. Tam kjer je bilo notranje ministrstvo v rokah komunistov je steklo tudi neposredno sodelovanje z NKVD v postopkih čiščenja, sicer pa posredno s pomočjo lokalne KP.

Toda to ni bilo vse, ali vsaj ne odraža vseh podrobnosti, obsega in načinov Stalinovega nadzora nad političnim dogajanjem v ključnem letu 1945. Novejša zgodovinska dognanja danes kažejo, da je bila okolica Roosevelta prestreljena z agenti obeh sovjetskih obveščevalnih služb (NKVD in GRU). To velja tako za zvezno upravo (administracijo), kot za ameriško obveščevalno službo (OSS) in jedrski program (project Manhattan). Ko pogledamo podrobneje jugoslovansko prizorišče, lahko ugotovimo, da so te lovke segale tudi sem, s pomočjo posameznikov, ki so med vojno pristali na delo za sovjetske službe. Torej so komunisti, poleg lastnih, ključnih ministrstev nadzorovali še druga, ki so le navidez bila v rokah drugih strank ali znanih osebnosti. Eden takih ministrov v vladi Tito-Šubašić je bil Sava Kosanović, formalno član Samostojne demokratske stranke, dejansko pa agent NKVD, kar je postal za časa svojega bivanja v izgnanstvu med vojno. Kot minister za informiranje je imel ne samo dostop do ključnih informacij iz ostalih ministerstev, temveč tudi nadzor nad propagando, tiskom in cenzuro. Obenem je kot Srb zagotavljal boljši nadzor na srbskimi časniki, ki komunistom niso bili naklonjeni. Propaganda je bila ključnega pomena, saj se je pod obtožbo za kolaboracijo in izdajstvo, partija znebila svojih ključnih političnih tekmecev. Zunanji opazovalci so hitro ugotovili, da nova uprava v Jugoslaviji monopolizira javno mnenje oziroma izražanje in dovoljuje le promocijo lastnih stališč. Sava Kosanović je bil eden od agentov na zvezi znanega sovjetskega obveščevalca Sergeja Pravdina, dopisnika TASS-a v New Yorku, ki je bil leta 1945 vpleten v obveščanje Moskve o stališčih zaveznikov do implementacije jaltskih sklepov in formiranja začasnih vlad v bodočih državah ljudske demokracije. Tako je bila Moskva vnaprej obveščena in opozorjena na stališča zaveznikov do implementacije Jalske deklaracije, naprimer do formiranja začasne poljske vlade, o pogledu zahoda na razmere v Romuniji in drugje. Obenem pa je vplivala na formiranje teh stališč. Najhitreje in najpopolneje je stekel postopek prevzema oblasti v Jugoslaviji, kot ene najzahodnejših točk, ki ga bomo obdelali podrobneje. Ta je potem bil vzor in vzorec za ostale dežele ljudske demokracije.

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Zdenko Radelić\*

## *Communist Authority and Opposition in Croatia after 1945*

### **The situation in Croatia after the end of World War Two**

Several facts were essential for the situation in Croatia after the end of World War Two. NDH (Independent State of Croatia) was abolished after its military defeat and the retreat of its leadership. At the same time the resistance, the National Liberation Movement of Yugoslavia, led by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (Komunistična partija Jugoslavije, KPJ) in alliance with the representatives of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, restored Yugoslavia with the name Democratic Federative Yugoslavia. The political, ideological and military influence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), or the Soviet Union, was very strong. The number of casualties was high, and the material damage was extensive. The remaining anti-Yugoslav and anti-communist guerrilla groups, operating under the name "Crusaders", fought for their own survival as well as the renewal of NDH.<sup>1</sup> The changes of the Croatian borders were also radical – in comparison with the borders of the Croatian Bannate it lost parts of the Bosnia-Herzegovina region and Srem. However, it gained parts of its ethnic and historical regions – Baranja, Dvor na Uni, Rijeka, Zadar, the islands of Cres, Lastovo, Lošinj and the Croatian part of Istria. Istria had a special status, since it was under the Yugoslav Army military governance.

### **The pressure of the western forces and USSR**

The most important change, brought about by KPJ, was enforcing its dictatorship and carrying out mass vengeance and a premeditated execution of many potential opponents. It had total control over all essential instruments of power. It fought the opposition with its secret intelligence and security service, named the Department for the Protection of People (OZNA). It was established not only to uncover enemy activities and all the activities of the opposition against the communist authority, but also to neutralise all the potential adversaries who

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see Zdenko Radelić: *Križari – gerila u Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb 2002.



could obstruct the revolutionary measures of the Communist Party. OZNA operated as a Party and state body in accordance with the concept of a uniform Party and state authorities. Almost all members of OZNA were also members of the Communist Party. OZNA was the main instrument of the hidden revolution, carried out by the communists up until as late as 1947/1948. During the first years of their being in power, the communists covered up their revolutionary activities by numerous accusations of their opponents and wealthier people about their alleged collaboration with the enemy and their allies at fixed trials, the realisation of a monetary reform and seizure of war profits. As a rule all trials were concluded with the confiscation of property, which was a supplementary punishment.

KPJ also carried out open revolutionary acts, which were not hidden behind the allegations of hostile activities, but were based on the determination of the KPJ to reorganise the society in accordance with communist views and theory. In agriculture that primarily meant a large agrarian reform and the allocation of land to the farmers in August 1945, but after the condemnation by the Cominform members KPJ radicalised its agrarian policy and introduced a wide collectivisation through agricultural cooperatives. In December 1946 and April 1948 the private industrial sector almost completely vanished after an extensive nationalisation.

However, initially the total communist dictatorship was endangered by the pressures of the allies, which manifested itself in the introduction of regents, the establishment of the common government consisting of the members of the partisan National Committee for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (NKOJ) and the royal government on 7 March 1945, the expansion of the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) and the elections into the Constituent Assembly on 11 November 1945. Communists agreed to most of the demands, but the formal parliamentarism was in fact just a matter of their tactics.

### **Communists and the public**

Communists proclaimed their policy publicly through the People's Front, specifically on the legislative level and through the legislation on elections, which supposedly enabled everyone to be politically active except for the "national enemy". Already during the war the communists claimed they were not fighting for the enforcement of their dictatorship and the realisation of radical social changes; instead, supposedly the main objective of the partisan movement was national liberation and "national democracy". They would assure political pluralism and private property. In this context the *Declaration of the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Yugoslavia and the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia* was released on 8 February 1943, and the *Declaration on the objectives and principles of the National Liberation War* was released on 26 May 1943 by the Country Anti-Fascist Council of

People's Liberation of Croatia (ZAVNOH) and the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Croatia.<sup>2</sup>

However, these public declarations on democracy and political freedom were denied by their authors from as early as 1946. Thus Josip Broz-Tito denied the accusations that the KPJ strived for a single-party system, but at the same time he warned the public that the renewal of the multi-party system is out of the question.<sup>3</sup> This way the Communist Party combined the revolutionary procedures with formal observation of parliamentary rules.

### Croatian Peasant Party

Croatian Peasant Party (Hrvatska seljačka stranka – HSS) represented the strongest opposition to the new authorities in Croatia. However, various opposing forces within HSS agreed only to oppose the communist dictatorship, but they differed in the way they operated.<sup>4</sup> Due to drastic communist repression, HSS, like all other political parties, was unable to restore its position and function through local organisations.

During the war many members of HSS joined the partisans. The Communist Party politics in regard to the members of HSS had three basic goals: 1) to enlist as many HSS members as possible among the partisans, which would mean that a large percentage of Croats would join them; 2) to bring down Vladko Maček, the president of HSS, and the HSS leadership with the excuse that they committed treason; 3) to enforce a new party leadership, use it as an instrument in the struggle for the change of authority and employ it into the service of the People's Front, which the Communist Party used to cover up the communist program.

It all depended on the main objective: to get as many Croats as possible to join the partisans in the armed conflict, to win the war with as much support as possible, to gain power and achieve international recognition of the new Yugoslavia. Those HSS members who joined the partisans in contrary to the party politics, thus renounced the HSS leadership. They established the Executive Committee of HSS and proclaimed it the true representative of the party. In July 1945 the Executive Committee of Croatian Peasant Party was renamed into the Executive Committee of Croatian Republican Peasant Party (HRSS).

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<sup>2</sup> *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske : Zbornik dokumenata 1943.* Zagreb 1964, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Vojislav Koštunica, Kosta Čavoški: *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam.* In: *Tribuna* (Ljubljana), special edition, 27 November 1987, p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see: Ljubo Boban: *Kontroverze iz povijesti Jugoslavije*, 1. and 2., Zagreb 1989; Fikreta Jelić Butić: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka.* Zagreb 1983; Zdenko Radelić: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.* (hereinafter Radečić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*), Zagreb 1996.

## Croatian Republican Peasant Party

The new Croatian Republican Peasant Party (Hrvatska republikanska seljačka stranka, HRSS) was used by the Communist Party to break up HSS. This communist HRSS, as I call it for the sake of argument, thwarted the demands of the HSS supporters to renew the original party. The excuse for this was that HRSS was the true HSS and that after Maček's treason it took the old name and renewed the struggle for a republic. Besides, the communists referred to HRSS as the proof that a multi-party system existed in Yugoslavia and that the accusations about the Communist Party dictatorship were nothing but hostile propaganda. It is a fact that communists acted within and through HRSS and that it was them who kept it alive, for it mustered little response from HSS members. Communists used HRSS in the 1945 Constituent Assembly election campaign as well as in the Croatian Constituent Assembly election campaign in 1946. When the elections confirmed their unlimited power and when HRSS completed its role, they discarded it and let it disintegrate quietly. It has to be emphasized that HRSS was never really a party, because it had no members of its own. It functioned exclusively through the Executive Committee, a few city and regional committees, mass meetings, and published the *Slobodni dom* publication.

## Croatian Peasant Party Leadership

In contrast with HRSS the party leadership of HSS insisted on passive policy and distanced themselves from communists after an unsuccessful attempt to come to an agreement with the Communist Party. Namely, the party vice-president August Košutić joined the partisans after an unsuccessful attempt at a coup by Ante Vokić and Mladen Lorković (ministers in the NDH government who wanted to steer NDH towards the Western allies). In this way he wanted to avoid the manipulations of Ante Pavelić.<sup>5</sup> After he joined the partisans he wanted to negotiate with the communists, but they interned him in October 1944 because they did not want to share the power with anyone, least of all HSS, which was their strongest political opponent in Croatia.

Maček, who was interned by the Ustashe on his land, emigrated in May 1945 before the partisans arrived in Zagreb, for he was convinced he would be treated the same way as Košutić. In an interview for the *New York Times* on 23 July 1945 he stated that Yugoslavia was facing a dictatorship of the communist regime. He said that he did not support Ivan Šubašić and Juraj Šutej, members of the Yugoslav government, because he thought that the new regime saw HSS as its main opponent in Croatia.<sup>6</sup> From his exile in Paris he sent secret instructions to HSS

<sup>5</sup> Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*, p. 28.

<sup>6</sup> *New York Times*, 23 July 1945, Maček predicts the dictatorship of Tito. He states that in Yugoslavia the communist regime has been ensured, but that the Croatians would resist it. See

that it should not participate in the elections in November 1945. He was convinced that any cooperation with the authorities would mean that HSS gives legitimacy to the communist regime. At the same time he was convinced that a war would break out shortly between the East and the West and that HSS would reclaim power after the Western victory.

Košutić remained imprisoned even after the war, though without being convicted of a crime. However, with the help of his wife Mira Košutić, who visited him in prison, and through *Narodni glas*, the only opposition publication in Croatia after the war, he influenced the party policy heavily in accordance with Maček's policy.

### **Ivan Šubašić**

Šubašić, a member of HSS, the former ban of the Croatian Bannate and the minister of foreign affairs in the government of Josip Broz-Tito, who was forced on the king, the Greater Serbian circles and then also on the partisans by the British, argued for a policy of compromise.<sup>7</sup> He believed that by cooperating with the authorities he could prevent the absolute power of the Communist Party. He was convinced that the best solution would be to unify HSS and HRSS and participate together at the Constituent Assembly elections in the context of the People's Front. He saw a great advantage for the future of HSS in the fact that HRSS actively participated in the partisan movement.

Šubašić believed in the People's Front as an alliance of political parties. He expected that in time only two parties would remain – the peasant and the labourers' party: HSS and KPJ. However, in private Tito explained to him that People's Front is an association of individuals, not political parties, since the communist idea was that all parties shall actually dissolve in the People's Front, which would operate under the Communist Party leadership.

### **HSS members in the Provisional People's Assembly**

In the beginning of August many important political events took place. Immediately after the congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia between 5 and 7 August 1945, the third meeting of AVNOJ, which included the so-called non-compromised members of the pre-war National Parliament of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, began on 7 August. The recommendations of the allies' Yalta Conference about the inclusion of non-compromised members of the pre-war National Parliament of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia into AVNOJ was thoroughly modified. With the explanation that the People's Assembly was elected in 1938 under non-democratic conditions, which was not even mentioned at Yalta, it was concluded

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Dinko Šuljak: *Tražio sam Radićevu Hrvatsku*. In: *Knjižnica Hrvatske revije*, Barcelona, München 1988, p. 409.

<sup>7</sup> On the activities of Ivan Šubašić Dragovan Šepić: *Vlada Ivana Šubašića*. Zagreb 1983.

that the AVNOJ should be expanded not only with a certain number of pre-war Members of Parliament, but also with the members of the political parties which existed at that time and with reputable public and cultural figures; however, the objective of this all was the inclusion of as many KPJ sympathisers as possible into the assembly. The Provisional People's Assembly included, in the name of HSS, 26 members, who, together with the former members of AVNOJ from the HRSS party, made up a group of 37 members. Out of 26 new Members of Assembly half of them belonged to the Šubašić's circles within HSS, and the other half were suggested by HRSS.<sup>8</sup>

### **Šubašić without the support of the rest of the party leadership**

Šubašić and his policy of cooperation with the Communist Party had little support within HSS. Thus the Members of Assembly from the Šubašić's circle negotiated without the consent of HSS leadership. Some HSS members gathered around Mira Košutić, who kept enforcing the policy of her husband. Košutić demanded total freedom of operations for HSS, which was the very reason why the communists kept him in prison.

On the other hand, Šubašić and his supporters planned that the Members of Assembly from HSS and HRSS would join forces in the Provisional People's Assembly and later the parties would follow their example and unify. However, the members of the HRSS Executive Committee thought that they were the ones to decide who of the HSS leadership should participate in the unified party at all. Instead of merger they actually proposed that HSS members should be incorporated into HRSS according to the criteria of the HRSS Executive Board. Thus the destiny of HSS would be completely overtaken by the leadership of the Communist Party, the original author of this political ruse. Besides, the HRSS Executive Board demanded that the supporters of HSS should immediately join the ranks of the People's Front. It is obvious that these were not negotiations among two equal parties – it was HRSS blackmail. The main objective of KPJ was to prevent the restoration of HSS, remove it from the political scene and replace it with HRSS. The negotiations lasted until September 1945.

Unsuccessful negotiations about the unification of HSS and HRSS motivated Šubašić to organise a party conference in Zagreb. There they were supposed to define the basic guidelines for the party activities. Thus on 2 September 1945 a large number of respectable party leaders met in the hotel Esplanade. The exact criteria by which the members of HSS were invited to the conference are not known, but it is obvious that those people occupying the higher party posts were invited who did not emigrate and were not imprisoned.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Branko Petranović: *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988. godine*. Beograd 1988, (hereinafter Petranović, *Historija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*) p. 388; Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> For more information see Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*, pp. 54–60; id., *Konfe-*

At the conference, Šubašić presented three dilemmas: 1) the unification of HSS and HRSS; 2) the inclusion of the party into the People's Front; 3) the participation of HSS at the elections. Two viewpoints formed. The majority of them supported the idea that Šubašić and Šutej should resign their positions in the government and that HSS should not participate in the elections together with HRSS, let alone in the context of the People's Front. They advised that HSS should remain in opposition, and they founded this opinion on the fact that the party president Maček emigrated, while the vice-president Košutić was in prison. A few of them argued that the party should cooperate with the People's Front. Finally Šutej thought of a compromise: Šubašić should go to Paris and meet with Maček, who should decide the future actions of the party. At the same time, Košutić should also give his opinion.

### **Šubašić and Košutić**

Šubašić was convinced he would win Košutić over with his policy. He demanded that the communist authorities free him from prison. But the Communist Party presumed that freeing Košutić in the time before the Constituent Assembly elections could endanger the final elimination of HSS, thus they wanted to force certain conditions upon Košutić. We can only guess at the nature of these conditions. Certainly one of them was to incorporate the party into the People's Front or to retreat from politics. Košutić obviously refused, so he remained in prison without any rights to trial.

Šubašić only had the support of a few of his backers, for example eng. Franjo Gaži and Tom Jančiković. Due to the pressure from most of his party colleagues he decided to travel to Paris and explain the difficult political situation to Maček. He requested help from the British, who made a plane available to him. However, on 10 September 1945, the day before his journey, the vice president of the government Edvard Kardelj informed Šubašić that he was not allowed to go to Paris and meet Maček. In the evening of the same day Šubašić suffered a minor stroke. When the plane arrived from Italy, the army blocked his house. They informed the public of Šubašić's illness and stated that the medical board recommended he should have "absolute peace". Thus Šubašić found himself in house arrest.

### **Šubašić's and Šutej's resignation from the Yugoslav government**

In just a few months Šubašić suffered a number of defeats: 1) The Potsdam Conference in the end of July and in the beginning of August 1945 did not go according to the expectations and failed to put pressure onto the Yugoslav authorities to finalise the Tito – Šubašić Agreement (on 2 August); 2) king Peter II Karađorđević revoked his regents' rights to represent him (on 8 August); 3) the vice-

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*rencija prvaka HSS-a u hotelu Esplanade u Zagrebu 1945.* In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1993, No. 2–3, pp. 149–164.

president of the government Milan Grol resigned his position (on 18 August); 4) the leaders of the Serbian bourgeois parties who remained in emigration sent a special memorandum to the Conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in London, wherein they condemned the policy of the Yugoslav government (on 10 September); 5) the Bishops' Conference of Yugoslavia published a Pastoral Letter and accused the communist regime of persecuting the Catholic Church (on 20 September). We should not forget that Šubašić as a member of the government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs doubtlessly felt responsible for all the violence of the regime, regardless of the fact that his position as a minister was merely formal and controlled completely by the Communist Party. Finally, on 8 October 1945 Šubašić and Šutej resigned from the government.

### **The *Narodni glas* group**

The other leading members of HSS gathered around Mira Košutić, who kept enforcing the policy of her husband and Maček. The president and vice-president of the party demanded complete freedom of operations for HSS.

Mira Košutić published the magazine *Narodni glas čovječnosti, pravice i slobode* ("National Voice of Humanity, Justice and Freedom") with the aid of Marija Radić, Stjepan Radić's widow, and Ivan Bernardić, editor in chief and the responsible editor. The only issue came out on 20 October 1945. The public prosecutor in Zagreb temporarily forbade the sale of the magazine with the excuse that it contained texts opposing the National Liberation Struggle, spread lies, provoked national intolerance and supported the enemy. However, the true reason for the suppression were the articles on communist dictatorship, the use of HRSS by its "true masters" the Communist Party, and an appeal for the boycott of the elections.

Bernardić also prepared the second issue of the *Narodni glas* magazine; however, according to a notification published in *Vjesnik*, the party paper of the People's Front of Croatia, the workers in the People's Printing House refused to continue printing *Narodni glas* with the excuse that it was reactionary. Of course, obviously the communist authorities rendered the publishing of the magazine impossible. Soon after that, in November 1945, a bomb exploded in front of Radić's bookstore in the centre of Zagreb, where *Narodni glas* was sold. Due to the fact that the communist youth already broke into the bookstore in August and broke the pictures of Stjepan Radić and Maček, the editorial board had no choice but to give in to the pressures of the authorities and desist from publishing the *Narodni glas* magazine.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> For more information see Zdenko Radelić: *Narodni glas – glas oporbe 1945*. In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 299–315.

### What *Narodni glas* wrote about

In the introductory article *Why we will not take part in the elections* HSS defined their activities. They emphasized that freedom was the foundation for any political activities. They denied the claims of the regime that Radić's program was being realised under the KPJ leadership. Furthermore, they condemned HRSS and stated clearly that KPJ was its true master. They declared openly that the Communist Party introduced a dictatorship and that it wrongfully accused its political opponents of being fascist in order to be able to persecute them. However, it did not declare its revolutionary acts openly, because it acted in accordance with the international situation. Besides, they stressed that the government did not observe personal freedom and the freedom of private property, and that federal units, Croatian ones among them, had no jurisdiction whatsoever. They warned that the free will of the people would not be expressed at the Constituent Assembly as the authorities claimed that they would defend all they had gained with the National Liberation Struggle by all means necessary. Finally, the *Narodni glas* magazine appealed to its readers and especially HSS supporters to boycott the elections.

### KPJ, HSS and the parliamentary elections

The Constituent Assembly elections were of utmost importance for the future of democracy and the national regime of Yugoslavia. That is why all the political activities of KPJ and its weak bourgeois opposition focused on these elections, especially as far as the legislative activities were concerned. The electoral laws, passed by the Provisional People's Assembly in the summer of 1945, which defined that the members of "enemy military formations" and "their collaborators" had no right to vote, were especially important. At the same time the pre-war electorate was doubled, since women, people over 18 years of age and soldiers also got the right to vote. The decree in accordance to which the fighters and soldiers of the Yugoslav Army were able to vote regardless of their age at any location they were at on the day of the elections, regardless of whether they were registered in the electoral register or not, was especially problematic.<sup>11</sup>

In response to the boycott of the elections by the Croatian and Yugoslav opposition, the authorities introduced ballot boxes without a list. Besides secrecy, these ballot boxes supposedly ensured that the voters had the possibility to choose.

On the basis of the electoral laws 194.158 people in Yugoslavia and 69.109 people in Croatia lost their right to vote. That means that out of 2.034.628

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<sup>11</sup> Kartarina Spehnjak: *Javnost i propaganda : Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske : 1945–1952*. Zagreb 2002 (hereinafter Spehnjak, *Javnost i propagand*), p. 128; Petranović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, p. 382; Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946*. Ljubljana 1992, (hereinafter Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*) p. 365.



Croatian voters 3,28% were left without a right to vote. Actually the communist regime, on the basis of these laws, narrowed the number of voters in accordance with their needs.<sup>12</sup>

The elections took place on 11 November 1945. In regard to the situation and the fact that the authorities threatened the population, forcing the people to vote, the number of the people who stayed at home was probably a strong indicator of opposition. However, opposition was actually shown only by those who cast the rubber balls into the ballot boxes without a list. Poor turnout was most prominent in the northern regions of Croatia. In the Varaždin region 20% of voters did not vote, and 15% of voters cast their rubber balls into the ballot boxes without a list. 17% of voters abstained in the Bjelovar region, while 15% of voters cast the balls into the ballot boxes without a list.<sup>13</sup>

The People's Front won with an absolute majority – with about 90% votes out of 90% of voters who came to the elections. Of course, the official results have to be considered taking into account the conditions in which the opposition worked or the fact that it did not participate at the elections as well as the methods used by the Communist Party. The election campaign was completely in the hands of KPJ; communists controlled all the media, organised the polling stations and election committees, prepared the electoral registers and counted the votes in the end. Not only did the opposition not take part in the elections, but they did not even monitor the counting of the votes. People were frequently forced to vote; however, the secrecy of the elections was not ensured. Those who refused to vote were intimidated by the authorities. The authorities threatened them with taking away their ration cards, pensions, apartments, as well as with persecuting them legally and executing them. The ballot boxes without a list were referred to as "enemy ballot boxes", "black boxes" and "Ustashe boxes". They often had narrow openings, so the voters could not reach inside, and dropping rubber balls inside was audible. There were also known cases of transferring the balls from the ballot boxes without a list into the People's Front ballot boxes. Where not many voters voted until 7pm, they extended the deadline. There are reports of the authorities finding a way of monitoring how the voters voted. Those who voted into the "black box" were often victims of open or secret state repression. Many of them were sent to "various works".<sup>14</sup>

Out of 524 Members of the Constituent Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia more than 400 were members of KPJ. Croatia sent 86 individuals into the Federal Assembly, among them 56 members of the Com-

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<sup>12</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 131; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, p. 344; Dušan Bilandžić: *Hrvatska moderna povijest*. Zagreb 1999, p. 220.

<sup>13</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*, pp. 89–90; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, p. 365; Hrvatski državni arhiv (HDA), fund CK SKH, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK KPH, Informacije o izborima za Sabor NR Hrvatske na kotaru Kostajnica.

munist Party, 26 members of HRSS, 3 members of the Independent Democratic Party (SDS) and 1 nonpartisan individual. Among 25 Croatian Members of the Assembly of Nations, 14 were members of KPJ, 6 were members of HRSS and 5 of them were nonpartisan individuals.<sup>15</sup> Altogether there were 111 Croatian Members of the Constituent Assembly, among them 70 members of KPJ, 32 members of HRSS, 3 members of SDS and 6 nonpartisan individuals.

After the federal elections the communists only had to confirm their power at the republic elections. This time the ballot boxes without a list did not exist anymore, since exclusively individuals and not lists were running for these elections.<sup>16</sup> The electoral registers included 2.045.740 voters. 1.859.444 of them voted on 10 November 1946, so the participation was around 90%. The regional results show differences between certain areas. In the Lika region the participation was 99,91%, in the Varaždin region 94,27% and in the Slavonski Brod 80%.<sup>17</sup> However, not many reports about what went on before the elections into the Constituent Assembly exist, even though perhaps a glimpse of events at that time can be acquired in another manner. Namely, the party report from Split, dating back to 3 December 1946, states that after the elections in this region there was a "struggle against those who refused to vote".<sup>18</sup>

176 Members of the Constituent Assembly of the People's Republic of Croatia were elected. All of them were members of the People's Front, but 30 of them represented themselves as members of HRSS. The government of the People's Republic of Croatia included 10 members of KPJ, 4 members of HRSS and 3 nonpartisan individuals.

The elections for the Constituent Assembly in Istria, Lastovo, Rijeka and Zadar were not organised before 30 November 1947, when these regions were annexed to Yugoslavia in accordance with the peace treaty with Italy. 150.209 people voted, and 94% of them voted for the People's Front. 15 Members of Assembly were elected.<sup>19</sup>

The possibility of voters losing their right to vote remained in force until 1951, when the criminal laws were changed to include the possibility of limiting this right, but taking it away was no longer provided for. Where before the interpretation of an unspecified arbiter could take away people's rights to vote on the basis of unspecified verdicts, in this case the voters could be given back their rights on the basis of an evaluation of their patriotism. However, the "enemies" were still imprisoned or threatened immediately before elections.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Spehnjak, *Narodni front Hrvatske 1945.*, p. 134.

<sup>16</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 135; id., *Funkcioniranje "plebiscitarne demokracije" u Hrvatskoj 1945 – 1952 : zborni aspekt organizacije legitimacijskog procesa*: In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1991, No. 1.–3, pp. 215–242, 225.

<sup>17</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, pp. 136–137.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 137, 141; Ivo Perić: *Hrvatski državni sabor 1848.–2000. Treći svezak: 1918.–2000*. Zagreb 2000, (hereinafter Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor*) p. 215.

<sup>20</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, pp. 142, 145.

The second elections for the People's Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia took place on 26 March 1950. The electoral registers contained 2.565.800 Croatian citizens. 2.321.780 of them, that is 90,4%, voted. 2,14% or 49.629 citizens cast their vote into the ballot box without a list.<sup>21</sup>

Even though according to the reports of the British diplomats the opinion of a large part of the population supported the Communist Party and the People's Front, the authorities once again threatened the voters. Thus the British discovered that abstaining from the elections could even result in evictions from apartments. Even though the number of votes was strongly in favour of the People's Front, the Communist Party was not satisfied, so it "adjusted" them a bit. The results of the elections were falsified in all parts of Croatia, but according to the information of the People's Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Part of Croatia, there was no need to "adjust" the results in the region of Dalmatia, Rijeka and Zagreb.<sup>22</sup> According to the report of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia for Dalmatia, in the Dalmatia region the State Security Administration (UDBA) carried out its share of the pre-election activities. UDBA called in around 200 "headstrong individuals", had an "interview with them", which "mostly yielded good results".<sup>23</sup>

However, on the day of the elections numerous voters "left for the nearby hills, forests, vineyards and fields" in order to avoid pressures. Except for passive resistance the party authorities also reported some banners being torn down, triumphal arches destroyed, telephone wires cut, as well as some physical attacks against the People's Front activists. The police killed two attackers "in self-defense". Some people in the Križevci region came up with an original way of passively resisting the pressure of the communist activists – some of them got so drunk they were unable to carry out their responsibility as citizens. The authorities took measures against "hostile elements" – they imprisoned them, interrogated them, gave out administrative penalties and made them participate in work actions. One of the reports stated that thus the "masses of people" were delivered of their "fear of the enemy" and "aligned themselves with us".<sup>24</sup>

Before the Parliament of the People's Republic of Croatia elections on 5 October 1950, the republic legislation was brought in line with the federal legislation, especially the decrees about the candidates being individuals exclusively and the introduction of ballot boxes without lists.<sup>25</sup> These were the final

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<sup>21</sup> HDA, CK SKH, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK SKH, 25. 12. 1952.; *ibid.*, Politbiro CK KPH, Analiza izbora za kotarske, gradske i oblasne narodne odbore, bez d., inv. br. 2155a; *ibid.*, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK KPH, Izborni rezultati za oblast Bjelovar, Dalmacija, Karlovac, Osijek, Rijeka, Zagreb i grad Zagreb za Sabor 1950., 5. 11. 1950.

<sup>22</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 135, 149–152, 284.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>24</sup> HDA, CK SKH, Politbiro CK KPH, Analiza izbora za kotarske, gradske i oblasne narodne odbore, bez d., inv. br. 2155a.

<sup>25</sup> Spehnjak, *Javnost i propaganda*, p. 152; Perić, *Hrvatski državni sabor*, p. 229.

Parliament elections with rubber balls in Croatia (as well as the whole of Yugoslavia); namely, in 1952 a modern way of voting with voting papers was introduced. Because in the same year the exclusively individual candidacies were imposed, the ballot boxes without lists were also not used anymore.

The election results for the Parliament of the People's Republic of Croatia definitely got close to the ideal of 100% of voters giving 100% of their votes for the People's Front. However, the regional data shows great differences among different regions. Thus 0,50% of votes in the Dalmatia region ended up in the ballot box without a list, while in the Križevci III electoral district in the Bjelovar region this box contained as many as 12,68% of votes.<sup>26</sup>

The function of elections was mostly that of a manifestation; the high participation showed the support to the authorities, which protected everything they had gained with the armed struggle by means of state repression, elaborate propaganda and by including the population into mass organisations.<sup>27</sup> At the Executive Committee of the National Front of Croatia on 11 May 1951 it was stated clearly in what way the People's Front acquired more than 90% of votes. "We solved this issue by achieving perfection with the use of measures of force and repression; even though the elections themselves were quite democratic (we have not actually beaten up anybody), there were still means available to us which we could use to get them to vote."<sup>28</sup>

### The dispute about the registration and legalisation of HSS

Also in the time after the elections the main question concerning HSS was whether the party would be registered or not. Under the *Societies, Meetings and Other Public Gatherings Act*,<sup>29</sup> all political parties which wanted to restore their activities were obliged to report that. Two ways in which parties could function existed: 1) the declaration of accession to the People's Front; 2) the lodging of a request to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the program and the statute of the party.<sup>30</sup>

Among the HSS leaders, who opposed the cooperation with the People's Front, two approaches to this question were formed. Košutić was against registration and active operations, while Šutej wanted the party active. That was one

<sup>26</sup> HDA, CK SKH, Komisija za narodnu vlast CK KPH, Izborni rezultati za oblast Bjelovar, Dalmacija, Karlovac, Osijek, Rijeka, Zagreb i grad Zagreb za Sabor 1950., 5 November 1950.; Spehnjak, Javnost i propaganda, p. 154.

<sup>27</sup> Spehnjak, Javnost i propaganda, pp. 50, 57.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>29</sup> Službeni list DFJ [Official Gazette of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia], No. 65, of 31 August 1945, Act No. 612.

<sup>30</sup> Momčilo Pavlović: *Politični programi Demokratske, Narodne radikalne, Jugoslovenske republikanske demokratske, Socijalističke i Socijal-demokratske stranke Jugoslavije iz 1945. godine*. In: *Istorija XX veka*, 1985, No. 1, pp. 119–155.

of the reasons for the convening of the new party conference. It took place at the Priest's House in Zagreb on 15 November 1945, and 26 HSS leaders attended. Most of them supported the registration of the party. Ivan Andres, Sigismund Čajkovic, eng. Franjo Gaži and Tomo Jančiković were among them. They believed that the legalisation of the party was essential for public political activities. That would enable them to contact foreign diplomats. In this way they would prevent the possibility that the authorities could accuse HSS of illegal work and treat it the same way as the Ustashe. However, the opponents of legalisation warned them that only Košutić and Maček could decide such matters. Ivan Stilinović, Jakov Silobrčić and Karlo Žunjević were the most fervent antagonists of the legalisation. Finally they agreed that vice-president Košutić should be the one to give the final opinion. In a short while, Košutić sent them a secret letter, opposing the registration of HSS resolutely.

The communist authorities were aware of Šutej's plans to activate the party for the 1946 Constituent Assembly elections, which was in conflict with the policy that was agreed upon. That is why they decided to release Košutić from prison, because his passive policy suited them. Košutić was released in September 1946. Immediately after that he stopped all activities which would cause the state repression against HSS members.

### **The alliance with the Serbian and Slovenian opposition**

In the spring 1946 the initiative for the establishment of the Peasant Members of Parliament Club in the People's Parliament of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was presented; actually it was about establishing the Peasant Bloc (HRSS, HSS, National Peasant's Party and the Agricultural Workers' Union). In May 1946 Imro Filaković, a HRSS representative, and the priest Ante Salacan, independent Member of Parliament in the People's Front, joined this initiative. Both of them were disappointed in the policy of the HRSS Executive Committee, so they sought to establish contact with the HSS group, gravitating towards Šubašić and Šutej. However, none of the other Members of Parliament from HRSS wanted to sign a statement of accession to the Peasant Bloc.

In July 1946 Imro Filaković, Ante Salacan, Dragoljub Jovanović and his National Peasant Party (NSS), during the meeting of the People's Parliament of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, renewed the idea of establishing a Peasant Club and Peasant Bloc, which would be made up of HSS, NSS, Agricultural Workers' Union, Slovenian People's Party, Peasant Party and a group of peasant Members of Parliament from Macedonia. However, they have not made any concrete steps. The reason for this was the lack of unity within individual parties as well as the repression of the communist authorities.

Occasional contacts among party leaders were preserved until the beginning of 1947. Meanwhile, the opposition activities in the People's Parliament boiled down to mere discussions of the braver individuals, who disagreed with individual

legislative proposals. Imro Filaković, who was expelled from HRSS already in 1946, was the last one to contradict the communists – on 21 January 1950 he protested the reintroduction of the ballot boxes without lists.<sup>31</sup> He thought that the opposition could run in the elections with their own list, but that the proposal about the ballot boxes without lists is not in line with the democratic nature of the law. However, during his speech the members of the parliament, not for the first time, yelled at him, that "that was not an Ustashe country". Filaković nevertheless took advantage of his speech and also protested the fact that people were dragged to interrogations during the night. He emphasized that better future could only be found "in the garden called freedom".<sup>32</sup> His speech was the last voice of opposition to be heard in the People's Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. He was not elected at the next elections.

### Maček's message

Maček has kept in contact with HSS through secret channels since as early as November 1945. In the spring of 1946 Šutej wrote a message which was sent to Maček in Paris, probably through the French or the US consul in Zagreb. In July of the same year eng. Gaži, with the knowledge of Jančiković and Šutej, sent an oral message to Maček through an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia. He warned him that HSS should be activated as soon as possible. He demanded that Maček agree to the election of the new provisional leadership of HSS.

Maček's answers, which arrived in July and September, had four essential points: 1) HSS should not be registered; 2) it should not cooperate with the Communist Party; 3) it should establish a Peasant Bloc with the other Yugoslav peasant parties; 4) it should expect that United States and Great Britain would support the democratic forces in Yugoslavia.

### Košutić's release

As I have already emphasized, the communist authorities knew about Šutej, Gaži and Jančiković's plans of activating the party. Because the Constituent Assembly elections were drawing near, there was a danger that this time HSS would take part in them. That is why the authorities decided to release Košutić from prison. Namely, they knew that since 1944 he has changed his tactics that he was imprisoned for, which was to attempt to cooperate with communists, to

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<sup>31</sup> Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.*, pp. 178–182; id., *Izvršni odbor Hrvatske republikanske seljačke stranke i njegovi otpadnici (1945.–1948.)*. In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 59–81, 64.

<sup>32</sup> *Peto vanredno zasjedanje Veća naroda i Saveznog veća, 20–21 januara 1950 godine*, stenografske beleške, Prezidijum Narodne skupštine FLRJ, Beograd, no year of publishing, pp. 85–87.

the very opposite. He argued for the policy of waiting for the international circumstances to change. Such policy now suited the Communist Party, so on 6 September 1946 they released Košutić from prison. Together with him Stipe Pezelj and Bariša Smoljan were also released.

Immediately after the release Košutić met with Šutej. Šutej tried to convince him that registering the party is the basic condition for its continued existence. Namely, Šutej was convinced that this was the only way for the leaders of HSS to work together against the People's Front, and he also thought that HSS should participate at the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1946. However, Košutić persisted at his and Maček's conclusion that the party should not be registered and that its activists should not take part in any political activities. He knew that by acting they would provoke the reaction of the regime, which was prepared to use every resource at its disposal to thwart the opposition.

### **Božidar Magovac**

Unlike the party leadership, in 1943 Božidar Magovac renounced the policy of passive waiting and of the equal attitude of HSS towards the Ustashe and the communists.<sup>33</sup> He was convinced that HSS should join the Communist Party in its struggle against fascism, not only because of the common goals of this struggle, but also in order to prevent the communists being the only victorious side. Magovac led his policy in opposition to what the party leadership wanted. He was convinced that in this way HSS would benefit in the end, because this tactics would prevent the Communist Party from enforcing its authority. He believed that if a large number of HSS supporters joined the fight, that would, as he stressed, neutralise the "communist colour" of the partisans.

Magovac joined the partisans in June 1943. The communists accepted him because they believed that not only was Magovac an influential bourgeois politician, who would ensure a greater support for the partisans among Croats, but also the politician who they could use to enforce HSS with a new leadership under the communist influence.

Magovac planned that the ZAVNOH would be organised like a kind of a coalition of political parties, actually like a coalition between HSS and KPJ. He insisted on the public statements of the National Liberation Movement leadership up until then – that their primary goal was to liberate the nation and that they guarantee pluralism and private property. Magovac was the founder of the HRSS Executive Committee. When after several months of intense negotiations and pressures the communists established a pro-communist movement within the HSS Executive Committee, led by Franjo Gaži and Franjo Frol, they renounced Magovac. Meanwhile, Magovac nevertheless became the vice-

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<sup>33</sup> For more information on Božidar Magovac see Zdenko Radelić: *Božidar Magovac : s Radicom između Mačeka i Hebranga*. Zagreb 1999.

president of the NKOJ partisan government.<sup>34</sup> After a short while he had to resign his position in the Executive Committee and his post as the editor of *Slobodni dom*. After the allies forced Šubašić on the communists (on 16 June 1944) as a new partner, Magovac was forced to give up all of his other duties as well.

### Magovac becomes active again

In August 1944 Magovac was first interned on Vis, and from May to June 1945 he was in house arrest in Zagreb. Later, when he was employed as the director of the Zagreb city library, he resumed his political activities. He believed that communists would accept him as a political ally, because the state found itself in political and economic problems, not only due to the casualties and material damage, but also because of the revolutionary terror and radical economic reforms. He hoped that his concepts would be acceptable to communists, because with his and Šubašić's assistance, whom he befriended, the authorities would gain the support of the Croatian people.

He was convinced that a war would break out between the Western forces and USSR. He believed that USA and Great Britain would win. It was important for him that the representatives of HSS should be "side by side" with the communists in the decisive moments, so that they could take over the power and pass it on to Maček. So even in 1946, just like in 1943, Magovac saw himself as a HSS leader.

He insisted that the HSS representatives should participate at the Constituent Assembly elections on 10 November 1946. He knew, though, that KPJ did not want to have HSS as a partner, so he saw the alternative in only some of its most important individuals running as candidates. Obviously he thought those individuals should include himself and Šubašić as former allies of the Communist Party. Magovac prepared a special *Plan* for the negotiations with the communist authorities, in which he demanded that the Communist Party acknowledge the "democratic parliamentary" regime and compliance with political freedom, guaranteed with the constitution.<sup>35</sup> He suggested changes, which would prevent the possibility of a civil war. In October 1946 Šubašić took his *Plan* to a discussion with Vladimir Bakarić and Ivan Krajačić-Stevo, members of the Croatian government and the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Croatia, but they firmly refused the suggestion that the Communist Party should let them run at the November 1946 elections.

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<sup>34</sup> Eng. Franjo Gaži and Franjo Gaži are two different individuals.

<sup>35</sup> Archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, RO B. Magovac, XI.



### **Magovac's new initiative**

Even though the repression by the authorities intensified in 1947, also against several HSS leaders, Magovac and Šubašić were not demoralised. In July they started a new initiative. They intended to demand that the KPJ stop the violence and organise free elections, and to assign Šubašić to the post of the "president of the Presidium" of the Parliament or the post of the "Prime Minister of Croatia", while Magovac should become a minister in the federal government. They also intended to insist on political amnesty and reprieve, abolishment of the death penalty, stopping the violence of the regime and organising free elections. But, as could be expected, on 19 August 1947 the police arrested Magovac on the railway station in Karlovac as he was returning from a visit to Šubašić at his vacation house in the city outskirts and took him to the prison in Zagreb. In November 1948 he was tried under false allegations and sentenced to six years in prison.

### **Imprisoned HSS leaders**

Thus Magovac joined many HSS members sentenced to jail. Namely, in the beginning of 1947, the Central Committee of KPJ decided to take strict measures against everybody who acted in opposition to KPJ. Therefore in 1947 many court proceedings against HSS members took place. The most respectable and influential people among them were Tomo Baburić, eng. Franjo Gaži, Tomo Jančiković, Andrija Papa, Ivan Štefanac and Karlo Žunjević. IN 1949 Bariša Smoljan was also imprisoned. The rest of them – August Košutić, Marija Košutić, Marija Radić, Ivan Šubašić and Juraj Šutej – were under constant surveillance by the authorities, who not only checked and recorded their phone conversations, but also followed them personally. For all of them, including Maček and Juraj Krnjević, they prepared detailed files for any possible trials.

Due to the resolute actions of the authorities all opposition soon ceased. It should be noted that in 1951 the police had some information about Šutej and Šubašić supposedly putting together a memorandum with the intent to send it to the representatives of the Western countries.<sup>36</sup>

But nevertheless, Magovac's initiative was actually the last initiative of HSS. With a number of court proceedings and other forms of repression, the Communist Party completely obliterated HSS, the most dangerous opposition party in Croatia. Since then HSS was only active abroad.

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<sup>36</sup> HDA, MUP, 010–37, kut. 15, Šutej dr. Juraj.

## **Conclusion**

The process of the increasing differences within HSS gained momentum because of the formation of NDH in April 1941 as well as because of the resistance towards the Ustashe regime, the Kingdom of Italy and the units of the Third Reich, and the expansion of the partisan movement led by the Communist Party. However, HSS was left completely without leadership after the war ended. Vladko Maček emigrated to France with some of the leaders, and then to USA, because he thought that was the best way to attempt, at least indirectly, to influence the political processes in his homeland. The group led by Košutić followed Maček's standpoint. Just like they opposed the Ustashe regime before, they also opposed the communist regime later. They demanded complete political and civil freedoms, and the right for the Croatians to choose their representatives and the form of government freely at free elections.

The objective of the Communist Party was to present Maček's positions as Ustashe positions. In this way they wanted to neutralise Maček as the most dangerous political opponent among Croatians. Therefore they established HRSS in order to replace HSS. HRSS was a party without organisation and members, and its Executive Committee carried out the Communist Party program under the old party name. This formation, a kind of a communist peasants' section, whose activities depended on the work of its select leadership and local communist organisations, operated with the aim of eliminating the fear of communism among the Croatian peasants. That is why the communists from HRSS were most active in the People's Front election campaign. When the Communist Party position was ensured, HRSS quickly became inactive and vanished from the political scene.

With a total takeover of the state apparatus, the Communist Party ensured all the conditions for the victory of the People's Front at the Constituent Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia and the Constituent Assembly of the People's Republic of Croatia elections, thus formally confirming its total dominance. The Communist party stopped the rare initiatives of some of the members of HSS leadership with stronger repressive policy in 1947 and with political court proceedings. The leaders of HSS were convicted of treason, collaborating with the enemy, establishing contacts with imperialist forces, spying and terrorism.

The words "mačekovština" and "mačekovci" became synonyms for betrayal and for supporting the Ustashe regime, which was the most effective manner in which the authorities could prevent all HSS activities. Unlike HSS, the Ustashe movement, which was partially preserved through the activities of the Crusaders, the Ustashe guerrilla groups, adapted to the new conditions after its military and political defeat and started looking for new allies among the Western forces. However, the advantage that the communists had was unbeatable.

Vengeance was the right of the victorious side, thus there was no reaction from the major forces – they treated all of the defeated sides similarly. The communists justified their radicalism, which sometimes on the lower levels also

included vengeance based on the Serbian nationalism, as vengeance for the Ustaše radicalism. The communist Yugoslavia, a dissident in regard to the world communist movement, found itself on the borders of the world divided by the Cold War. That is why the major world forces strived to win Yugoslavia over to their side, or at least not to push it towards the other side. Under such conditions the opposition could not gain a stronger support – the citizens, tired of the war and the post-war violence and poverty, agreed to the communist regime, which, especially to the young generation, offered new hope for a better life and a more just system. Even the most fervent supporters of HSS and the Crusaders quickly lost their will for a serious long-term resistance.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Komunistična oblast in opozicija na Hrvaškem po letu 1945*

Proti koncu druge svetovne vojne in po njej je politično situacijo v Hrvaški bistveno opredelilo nekaj dejstev: uničenje in razpad Neodvisne države Hrvaške, obnova Jugoslavije, močen vpliv ZSSR, ki je izrinil vse ostale vojaške, politične in ideološke konkurente; velike človeške žrtve in ogromna materialna škoda; delovanje preostalih ustaških in v manjšem številu, četniških skupin po vojni; oblast komunistične partije, ki ji je uspela vsiliti svojo diktaturo in izvesti maščevanje nad poraženci, pa tudi načrtovano likvidacijo mnogih potencialnih vojaških in političnih konkurentov; radikalna sprememba zunanjih in notranjih meja Hrvaške, ki je v primerjavi s stanjem iz leta 1939 izgubila del bosansko-hercegovega območja in Srem, a dobila je del svojih etničnih ali zgodovinskih območij (Baranjo in Dvor na Uni, Rijeko, Zadar, Istro in otoke Cres, Lastovo, Lošinj); poseben položaj Istre, ki je do 1947 bila pod vojno upravo in se je tega leta združila s Hrvaško (Buje, Novigrad in Umag so pripadli Hrvaški 1954).

Komunistična partija je imela popolni nadzor nad vsemi bistvenimi inštrumenti svoje oblasti od začetkov partizanskega gibanja. Toda popolna komunistična diktatura je bila ogrožena zaradi pritiskov zaveznikov, ki so rezultirali z dogovorom Tita s Šubašićem (16. junija 1944), ustanavljanjem skupne vlade iz članov partizanskega NKOJ in kraljeve vlade (7. marca 1945), uvajanjem kraljevih namestnikov, razširitvijo AVNOJ in z volitvami v Ustavodajno skupščino (11. novembra 1945). Čeprav so komunisti pristali na večino zahtev, je bilo formalno spoštovanje parlamentarizma, dejansko samo vprašanje njihove taktike. Ne glede na vse poskuse omejevanja komunistične oblasti, so to komunisti obdržali v celoti.

Odločilno vlogo za državno ureditev Jugoslavije so bile volitve v Ustavodajno skupščino. Zato se je vsa politična aktivnost komunistične partije in meščanske

opozicije osredotočena v to. Različne opozicijske struje znotraj Hrvaške kmečke stranke (Hrvatska seljačka stranka – HSS) so bile enotne samo v nasprotovanju komunistični diktaturi, razlikovale pa so se po načinu delovanja. Postavljale so vprašanje o položaju Hrvaške v Jugoslaviji, politični ureditvi, svobodčinah, še posebej svobode političnega delovanja. Glede na močno komunistično represijo in vseprisotni strah na eni in na zmagovalno navdušenost in prepričanje enega dela prebivalcev, da bo komunistična stranka zgradila pravičnejšo družbo, na drugi strani, se nobeni drugi politični stranki ni uspelo obnoviti in tudi ne sestaviti zaočkroženi politični program, še manj pa dolgoročno delovati preko lokalnih organizacij. Obdobje od 1945 do 1950 je zaznamovala komunistična stranka, ki je uspešno kombinirala revolucionarne postopke z formalnim spoštovanjem parlamentarnih pravil. Na podlagi dejstva, da je obnovila in obdržala Jugoslavijo na strani zmagovite protifašistične koalicije, je uresničila svojo brezmejno oblast.

Najmočnejša predvojna stranka na Hrvaškem je bila Hrvatska seljačka stranka (HSS). Toda sposobnost komunistične partije da prikaže usklajenost programa HSS z programom Ljudske fronte, je vplivala na to, da so se mnogi pripadniki HSS priključili partizanom. Politika komunistične partije je imela glede pridobivanja članov HSS tri bistvene točke: pridobiti čim večje število članov HSS v partizane, kar bi, seveda, pomenilo da jim se bo priključil velik del Hrvatov, ki so do tedaj, razen na ozemlju Hrvaške v okviru Kraljevine Italije in pod njeno kontrolo, bili bolj ali manj pasivni; zavreči Mačekova in vodstvo HSS pod izgovorom da so izvršili izdajo; vsiliti novo vodstvo stranke in ga instrumentalizirati v boju za oblast ter ga vpreči v službo proklamiranega programa Ljudske fronte, ki je bil pravzaprav prekriti komunistični program.

Novoustanovljena Hrvatska republikanska seljačka stranka (HRSS) je postala sredstvo komunistične partije, ki ga je izkoristila za razbijanje HSS. Poleg tega so komunisti HRSS izkoristili kot dokaz obstoja večstrankastva in demokracije v Jugoslaviji in da so obtožbe o diktaturi komunistične partije sovražna propaganda. Hkrati je takšen, pogojno ga imenujem komunistični HRSS, onemogočal zahteve pristašev HSS, da se stranka obnovi, pod izgovorom da je HRSS prava HSS, ki je po Mačekovi izdaji prevzela stari program in obnovila boj za republiko. Komunisti so zato uporabili HRSS v predvolilni kampanji v Ustavodajno skupščino 1945, kakor tudi za hrvaški republiški ustavodajni sabor 1946. Pravzaprav so, vse dokler se komunistična oblast ni čutila dovolj močno, HRSS obnavljali in jo ohranjali pri življenju. Ko pa so z zaplembami in širjenjem državne lastnine, izgraditvijo represivnega aparata in z volitvami potrdili svojo neomejeno oblast, so komunisti HRSS zavrgli in jo prepustili tihemu odmiranju.

Vsi poskusi Ivana Šubašića in njemu nasprotnega strankarskega tabora zbrana okrog edinega poveljnega hrvaškega opozicijskega glasila Narodni glas in od oktobra 1944 priprtega podpredsednika stranke Augusta Košutića, so se končali neuspešno. Onemogočeni so bili z komunističnim monopolom v koalicijski vladi in z bombaškim napadom skojevcev na uredništvo Narodnega glasu ter s sodnim pregonom in zaporom glavnega urednika Ivana Bernardića.

Državni teror, likvidacije in prekrita revolucija, ki se je uveljavljala z množičnimi obtožbami o sodelovanju z okupatorji in narodno izdajo, so se od leta 1946 in 1947 prelevili v odkrito revolucionarno delovanje (nacionalizacija) in organizacijo sodnih procesov proti tistim članom HSS, ki so naivno verjeli deklarativni politiki komunističnih oblasti. Skupaj z vojaškim uničenjem maloštevilnih gverilcev, ki so nastopali pod imenom križarji in popolnim mednarodnim priznanjem Demokratične federativne Jugoslavije, je komunistični partiji uspelo popolnoma onemogočiti opozicijsko delovanje na Hrvaškem, kar je veljalo tudi drugod v Jugoslaviji.

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Aleš Gabrič\*

*Opposition in Slovenia in 1945*

The attitude of the Slovenes towards the communist regime which rose to power in 1945 has been a subject of numerous and conflicting assessments. Over the years, certain 'historical' stereotypes have developed, without being substantiated with specific data or analyses. While black and white characterisation is not something peculiar to the Slovene appraisal of the recent past, it is somehow curious that this open issue has received no critical historiographic analysis for a such long time. As a result, two opposing stereotypes have prevailed among the public, according to individual beliefs and political orientation.

The first was formed soon after the Second World War by the leading communist ideologists. As its 'source', the following words pronounced by Josip Broz-Tito before the elections for the Constituent Assembly, held on 11 November 1945, have frequently been quoted: 'In Serbia, the opposition mainly relies on the remaining supporters of Milan Nedić and Draža Mihailović. (...) The opposition in Croatia relies on the Ustaša who shout today, 'Long live the king!' (...) In Slovenia, it relies on the remnants of the Bela garda (White Guard).'<sup>1</sup> Others similarly claimed that the political opinions of the regime's opponents were formed under the influence of 'foreign powers'. In public statements, rather than referring to their political adversaries as 'opposition', they usually branded them as paid western spies and the remnants of those 'anti-popular forces' who were responsible for the catastrophe that befell the first Yugoslavia in April 1941.

A typical example of such reasoning were the words of Boris Kraigher, the Slovene Interior Minister, at a session of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Slovenia in June 1947. In reference to the so-called Nagode trial, he pointed out that the trial 'should be seen as a strike at the political centre, i.e. the bourgeoisie, and characterised as anti-state espionage.' Following his proposal, the Politburo decided that 'by means of this trial and through political activity, they should clearly present this group as a handful of spies and class enemies, paid by foreigners, whose activity is devoid of any political contents or basis.'<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Josip Broz Tito: *Graditev nove Jugoslavije* [Building of the new Yugoslavia]. Prva knjiga. Ljubljana 1948, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS/ZKS 1945-1954* [Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central

Stereotype based on such assessments can be found in the book *Zgodovina Slovencev (History of Slovenes)* from 1979, which only marginally mentions the attitude of the Slovene population towards the new political reality of 1945. As evidence of overwhelming popular support for the new regime, also claimed by leading communists in 1945, the official election results were presented. The only reference to the opposition is that, due to its impotence, 'it has chosen the path of abstinence, intrigue and false propaganda, both at home and abroad.'<sup>3</sup>

A totally opposite view regarding the opponents of the new regime of 1945 emerged in the 1980's and strengthened in the 1990's, after the fall of the communist regime in Slovenia. It was based on the hypotheses of a strong opposition which had been wiped off the face of the earth only by the terror of the political police of the communist regime. Such hypotheses, however, found no backing in the contemporaneous historiographic analyses. The first in-depth analysis of the political opposition in Yugoslavia in 1945 was made by Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški in their monograph *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam (Party Pluralism or Monism)* published in 1983 in Belgrade. The authors, however, dealt mainly with Serbia, scarcely mentioning Slovenia.<sup>4</sup> The first work on the political opposition in Slovenia was *Oblast in opozicija v Sloveniji (The Regime and Opposition in Slovenia)*,<sup>5</sup> written by Peter Jambrek in 1989. Still, this was more of a sociological and politological outline of the need to establish a democratic society and organise political opposition, without actually touching upon the opposition in Slovenia in the past. The 1992 monograph by Jera Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946 (The Takeover of Power 1944–1946)* also follows the same scheme. In the chapter on the opposition, the author refers almost exclusively to Serb and Croat politicians, making no mention of the Slovene.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, the opponents of the communist regime from 1945 were frequently mentioned in daily newspapers and polemics between the party elites, and all too easily qualified as the opposition. The problem with this stereotype is that its authors were unable to indicate who these people actually were and what were their aspirations or political programmes. The chief argument against those asserting the contrary was that they bore the legacy of indoctrination under communist education.

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Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia / League of the Communists of Slovenia]. Ljubljana 2000, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Zgodovina Slovencev* [History of Slovenes], Ljubljana 1979, p. 890.

<sup>4</sup> Vojislav Koštunica – Kosta Čavoški: *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam : društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Jugoslaviji 1944–1949* [Party Pluralism or Monism: Social Movements and the Political System in Yugoslavia 1944–1949] Beograd 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Jambrek: *Oblast in opozicija v Sloveniji* [Regime and Opposition in Slovenia]. Maribor 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946* [The Takeover of Power 1944–1946]. Ljubljana 1992. The chapter entitled 'Opposition' is on pages 314–328.

The undeniable fact is that the 1945 regime enjoyed strong support from one sector of the population, while meeting with the opposition of those who disagreed with its political objectives and, even more, means. The dissatisfaction with the regime, from which the opposition grew, is strongly expressed in the anonymous letters addressed to Boris Kidrič, President of the Slovene government, in the first months after the war. Some of them referred to the post-war executions, blaming the existing regime for the crime. In the letter of mid-September 1945, 'Vilemira' from Lower Carniola, introduced herself to Kidrič as a 'sister of two Home Guard members (Domobranci) who had laid their lives on the altar of their homeland, at its orders.' She told him that they were taken from Teharje around 20 June and accused him as being responsible for their killing, 'because their innocent blood, shed two months after the end of the war, will one day drown all of you as well.' She stressed that those executed 'did not fight for the 'freedom' we enjoy now but for a better future of the nation.'<sup>7</sup>

In an anonymous letter, a 'Catholic priest' complained to Kidrič about the inhumane treatment of detainees, adding that the general amnesty was of little use, since many of those who should have been released had been killed beforehand. He also posed the Prime Minister Kidrič a political question, 'Is this supposed to be a preparation for the election? Bad, very bad!'<sup>8</sup>

There were other expressions of clear dissatisfaction with the regime. In another letter, 'Catholics' joined the criticism from the pastoral letter of the Yugoslav Catholic bishops, levelled at the new regime because of its disregard of religious freedom. In their letters, the wives of the detained former Yugoslav army officers expressed despair and a growing distrust in the uprightness of the regime. Of particular interest is the letter signed 'an old partisan craftsman' who accuses the new elite for the privileges afforded to themselves, showing that also the partisans were rapidly turning away from the regime they had helped to put in power.<sup>9</sup>

While some letters were undoubtedly written by genuine opponents of the regime, in some others, also signed, individuals criticised specific errors of the regime without expressing a general dissatisfaction with it or the desire for its replacement. However, the very fact that so many criticisms were expressed anonymously is indicative of the restricted atmosphere in which people were afraid to freely speak their mind in public.

Still, criticism or disagreement with the regime cannot simply be equated with the opposition, in the sense of an organised political party as it was known in democratic countries. Many of those who opposed the regime had no intention of founding an opposition party, which would formulate its disagreement

<sup>7</sup> Arhiv Republike Slovenije [Archives of the Republic of Slovenia](ARS), AS 223, box 28, Pismo Velimire – tov. Kidriču [The letter by Velimira to comrade Kidrič], undated.

<sup>8</sup> AS 223, box 28, Katoliški duhovnik – Gospodu predsedniku narodne vlade za Slovenijo [A Catholic priest to the President of the National Government for Slovenia], undated.

<sup>9</sup> All the aforementioned letters are kept in: AS 223, box 28.



with the existing regime and its politics into a comprehensive democratic political programme. The authors of the aforementioned anonymous letters make no reference to any political authority or Slovene politician abroad who could be harmed by such support. As the only one genuine stance, that by the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church is frequently mentioned. Although characterised as the greatest opposition to the communist regime, the Church's attitude towards political issues often did not stem from a democratic platform and was certainly not one expected from a democratically oriented opposition. Similarly, it can be said of many opponents of the communist regime after 1945 (and also of the 'belated' critics from the post 1990 period), that they expressed only anti-communist views which were not necessarily democratic. In the editorial of the miscellaneous *Temna stran meseca* (*The Dark Side of the Moon*), Drago Jančar stressed that the Slovene communists could not use the anti-fascist struggle as an excuse for the crimes committed after seizing power. He also wrote down a thought which leaves little room for doubt, 'While every democrat may be an anti-fascist, not every anti-fascist is necessarily a democrat.'<sup>10</sup> This could be equally applied to the opponents of the third totalitarian system of the twentieth century, 'Every democrat may be an anti-communist, but not every anti-communist is necessarily a democrat.'

Those Slovenes who opposed the political orientation leading towards the communist totalitarian system were many and could easily be listed. The difficulty arises when attempting to identify those opponents of the communist regime who wanted to publicly present a different, more democratic vision of the future. The first question is where to place, in this scheme, the leaders of the so-called Tabor Parliament of 3 May 1945, who were not in the country at the end of the war. Their activities before the end of the war met with little response at home, and even less abroad, among the victors of the Second World War, which had already recognised the provisional government, following the agreement between Josip Broz-Tito and Ivan Šubašić, with the former as the President of the Government of the Liberation Movement and the latter as the President of the Royal Government in exile.

In Slovenia, the Liberation Front, led by the Politburo of the Communist Party of Slovenia, enjoyed considerable public support immediately after the war. This was mainly due to the fact that the Liberation Front was part of the anti-fascist coalition, which placed Yugoslavia/Slovenia on the side of the victors, and that the occupiers were chased from the Slovene territory by the Yugoslav army. After the war, Slovenia expanded westwards at the expense of Italy, becoming a federal unit of Yugoslavia. For the first time, the name 'Slovenia' was used as its official name of this federal unit. The new regime scored additional political points by introducing the changes that had already been de-

<sup>10</sup> Drago Jančar: *Temna stran meseca*. [The Dark Side of the Moon]. In: *Temna stran meseca : kratka zgodovina totalitarizma v Sloveniji 1945–1990* [A Brief History of Totalitarianism in Slovenia], Ljubljana 1998, p. 22.

manded in the previous Yugoslavia, but only implemented after the war. Among these were the agrarian reform and the emancipation of women, paving the way for the first Slovene lady minister.

The relatively wide public support enjoyed by the new authorities was also confirmed in the reports of those who would have preferred to see someone other than Tito and the communists in power. In Autumn 1945, the American embassy in Belgrade reported that, under Tito's dictatorship, Yugoslavia was turning into a totalitarian police state, and that, although its citizens did not enjoy any of the fundamental political liberties, no real opposition was on the horizon.<sup>11</sup> Few months later, in January 1946, the British Embassy relayed to London that, but for the partisans, Yugoslavia would have seen the end of the war in total ruin. The British ambassador blamed the old political parties and their misjudgement of the political situation for the fact that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which before the war was an insignificant underground party, was, by the end of it, at the head of the strong liberation movement and also of the country.<sup>12</sup>

The Slovene political parties, groups and politicians, who could have been the nucleus of a democratic opposition in 1945, were even weaker than their peers in Serbia or Croatia. There were no attempts to organise an opposition in Slovenia in the first post-war period, although this would have been possible, at least in principle, due to the pressure from western powers and the agreement between Tito and Šubašić. In 1945, nine political parties operated in Yugoslavia. Two of them, the Agrarian Party and the Communist Party were not even registered, since they entered the ruling People's Front as a whole; formally, the ruling Communist Party thus still operated illegally. Applications for the registration of the parties were mainly submitted by the denizens of Zagreb, Belgrade and larger Serbian cities. No Slovene politicians were among them.<sup>13</sup>

Apart from the members of the Liberation Front and the Slovene members who were part of the ruling People's Front of Yugoslavia, some Catholic and liberal politicians considered the possibility of organising themselves politically in the first months after the war in Slovenia. However, as written in a report by the Yugoslav secret police, OZNA, these were 'totally amateur and incoherent attempts to resume their political activity, which do not go beyond the area of

<sup>11</sup> Lorraine M. Lees: *Keeping Tito Afloat. The United States, Yugoslavia, and The Cold War*. The Pennsylvania State University, 1997, pp. 5–6.

<sup>12</sup> Katarina Spehnjak: *Javnost i propaganda : Narodna fronta u politici i kulturi Hrvatske : 1945–1952* [The Public and Propaganda: The Popular Front in the Croatian Politics and Culture : 1945–1952] Zagreb 2002, p. 26.

<sup>13</sup> Momčilo Pavlović: *Politički programi Demokratske narodne radikalne, Jugoslovenske republikanske, Demokratske, Socijalističke i Socijal-demokratske stranke Jugoslavije iz 1945. godine* [Political Programmes of the Democratic National Radical, Yugoslav Republican, Democratic, Socialist and Social Democratic Party of Yugoslavia from 1945]. In: *Istorija 20. veka*, 1985, No. 1, pp. 119–155; Zdenko Radelić: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941.–1950.* [Croat Peasant Party 1941.–1950.]. Zagreb 1996.

their permanent residence.<sup>14</sup> Several Catholic and liberal politicians had already emigrated, while some of those who had remained in Slovenia operated in the Liberation Front. Others again had been imprisoned, awaiting the so-called political judicial trials. The secret police had more work with the persecution of political adversaries in other urban centres, especially Belgrade and Zagreb, where the opposition was much more varied and active. In Slovenia, the negotiations between the remnants of the formerly most important Slovene parties bore no fruit.

With the communist regime exercising a total control over the police, army and mass media, the opposition in Belgrade and Zagreb had no real opportunities for work. Milan Grol, the leader of the most significant opposition party, the Democratic Party, wrote in his party paper *Demokratija (the Democracy)*: 'How can we speak of equality in the political struggle, promised by Tito and his clique, when the People's Front is holding one hundred and thirty papers, and the opposition only one,'<sup>15</sup> i.e. his *Demokratija*. On 20 September 1945, the paper published a joint statement by the opposition parties, announcing the boycott of the elections because of the government's failure to secure equal conditions for their operation. The statement was not as important for Slovenia, where no opposition parties were registered, as it was for Serbia and Croatia. Grol strengthened the postscript which read: 'Today's message will be followed by the decisions of the groups in Zagreb and Ljubljana' with the claim that agreements had been concluded with opposition leaders from other parts of the country: 'The exchange of thoughts with the progressive groups from Ljubljana also ensured this solidarity.'<sup>16</sup>

The problem with Grol's remarks is that he never explained who 'those from Ljubljana' were. Whereas the names of the opposition leaders from Belgrade and Zagreb were known to all, the 'Slovenes' remained without personal names or even party appurtenance. Even when the Croat Peasant Party considered forming a coalition of peasants' parties, it hoped that it would be joined by the Agrarian Party (a specific name) from Serbia and 'the representatives of the peasants from Slovenia',<sup>17</sup> again being unclear as to who these were. The 'Slovenes' remained nameless also after the elections, when, due to a landslide victory of the People's Front, the opposition leaders from all over the country tried to associate.

The reasons for such impotence among the opposition in Slovenia can be traced back to the wartime events on Slovene soil. The Liberation Front developed widely ramified activities, attracting many of those who, before the war, had supported the traditional Slovene parties. These, in turn, had been losing

<sup>14</sup> Iz arhivov slovenske politične policije [From the archives of the Slovene political police]. Ljubljana 1996, p. 169.

<sup>15</sup> *Demokratija*, 25. 10. 1945, No. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Demokratija*, 27. 9. 1945, No. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Radelić, Hrvatska seljačka stranka, p. 51.

power and influence due to their inactivity. Even before its first congress, held on 16 July 1945 in Ljubljana, the Slovene Liberation Front was a uniform political organisation led, behind the scenes, by the Communist Party of Slovenia. In the first post-war months, such a relationship between the Yugoslav Communist Party and the People's Front had not yet been established at the Yugoslav level, as the Party was still consolidating the Front as its transmission organisation.

Hence, it is much more difficult to identify opposition figures with a clear democratic vision of the future in Slovenia than in Serbia or Croatia. A possible organisation of the opposition in Slovenia was considered only by rare individuals who were in touch with the opposition in other parts of Yugoslavia. The group from Slovenia which kept contacts with the opposition leader Milan Grom was the circle of Črtomir Nagode, which had initially participated in the Liberation Front under the name of *Stara Pravda* (Old Cause), until its departure in 1942, due to differences regarding Yugoslavia's future. Ljubo Sirc, Nagode's political collaborator, who had also visited Grol, wrote in his memoirs, 'In Ljubljana we made another attempt at organising the opposition. Dr Nagode, another professor and myself met with two representatives of the Catholic Party and the Social Democrats. Our discussions were without result. The main reason for this, according to me, was the clear impossibility to organise any public activity, which scared the leaders and their potential followers.'<sup>18</sup>

Fear was not the only reason for the failure. There was also a lack of trust between those who were supposed to form a joint anti-communist opposition, especially those who had cooperated with the occupier during the war. Some opposition figures counted on their old friends who had already been in the Liberation Front in 1945, but such expectations proved unfounded. Črtomir Nagode wrote in his diary that his companion Leon Kavčnik in September 1945, after 'looking over the opposition came to the conclusion that it was best for us to wait passively.'<sup>19</sup>

Because of the inability to bring together a noticeable opposition party, the attention of the opponents turned towards the ruling party, i.e. the non-communist faction of the Liberation Front. On 24 October 1945, Nagode made the following entry in his diary, 'Apparently, Snoj, Kocbek and Vavpetič are about to organise an opposition.' However, Franc Snoj, the pre-war member of the Catholic Party, denied such allegations two days later, as diligently recorded by Nagode.<sup>20</sup>

Word of it reached the ears of the political police who shifted their attention from the impotent opposition to the anti-communist opposition within the Liberation Front, especially the Christian Socialists around Edvard Kocbek, the Catholic politician Franc Snoj and the liberal Vlado Vavpetič. Many believed,

<sup>18</sup> Ljubo Sirc: *Med Hitlerjem in Titom* [Between Hitler and Stalin]. Ljubljana 1992, p. 234.

<sup>19</sup> ARS, AS 1931, 80–1/IV, Nagodetov dnevnik [Nagode's diary], no. 0357.

<sup>20</sup> ARS, AS 1931, 80–1/IV, Nagodetov dnevnik [Nagode's diary], no. 0359.

both then and later on, that the one who could have done most for the pluralisation of Slovenia was Edvard Kocbek. However, as a professed anti-clericalist, he believed that the Liberation Front should remain a uniform organisation of a wide people's movement, which would ensure the ideological autonomy of its constituents. Rather than working on the formation of Christian socialists as an independent political group or even a party outside the Front, he concentrated his efforts on cultural-political work and ideological consolidation, which the Christian socialist group, as the bearer of Christian spiritual values, should possess in the Liberation Front. His main objectives were the reissuing of the *Dejanje* (*The Act*) journal, founding of an independent publishing house and care for religious education, i.e. cultural and political, rather than only narrow political tasks.<sup>21</sup>

Even after reading, and praising in his diary, the only opposition paper, Grol's *Demokratija*, or when criticising the pastoral letter by the Slovene Catholic bishops, Kocbek did not mention that this was an opposition, neither did he hint that such thinking was closer to him than that officially advocated by the Liberation Front. When discussing the inequality of non-communists in the Front and the excessive influence of the communists in it, he and Lado Vavpetič did not contemplate the breaking of the Front, but a greater autonomy of its constituents. Kocbek noted down in his diary the thought of Vavpetič that 'with his companions he felt part of the unrecognised, yet existing IDP (Independent Democratic Party). (...) He expresses the desire for ideological uniformity of the Liberation Front and the collective independence of its members.'<sup>22</sup>

The communists were well aware of their dominance in the Liberation Front. Explaining to Chuvachin, a counsellor in the Soviet Embassy in Yugoslavia, the reasons for the 'failure' at the November 1945 elections in the Maribor district, where most ballots were dropped in the so-called 'black box', belonging to the opponents of the People's Front, Edvard Kardelj, consistent with the communist doctrine, blamed foreign agencies, the influence of the British from their occupation zone right behind the border with Austria, and the activity of 'reactionaries' who, according to him, were supposed to have been imprisoned after the elections. Kardelj's explanation to Chuvachin, that in the Liberation Front there was no other party than the Communist, and that Christian Socialists (named Christian Democrats in the counsellor's report) posed no problem, was also interesting. Kardelj concluded that 'the election results would have been much the same, had the Communism Party ran instead of the People's Front.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> For more on this, see Aleš Gabrič: *Na ostrem robu med pozicijo in opozicijo* [At the Sharp Edge Between Position and Opposition]. In: *Krogi navznoter, krogi navzven : Kocbekov zbornik*. [Circles Inside, Circles Outside : The Kocbek Miscellaneous], Ljubljana 2004, pp. 146–159.

<sup>22</sup> Edvard Kocbek: *Dnevnik 1945* [The 1945 Diary]. Ljubljana 1991, p. 50.

<sup>23</sup> *Vostočnaja Evropa v dokumentah rossijskih arhivov 1944–1953 gg.* [East Europe in the Documents of the Russian Archives] Tom I, 1944–1948 gg. Moskva–Novosibirsk, doc. 117, p. 314.

Elsewhere in Yugoslavia, the People's Front and the Communist Party could not boast of such general support. Interestingly enough, Kardelj did not place the blame for the poor election results on the Roman Catholic Church which was considered the strongest opposition force in Slovenia. In Croatia, however, apart from the Church, the Croat Peasant Party was very strong and active too. In Slovenia, the Roman Catholic Church was the only major organisation that had not been subjected by the communist oligarchy (which had subjected almost all government and non-government institutions). Following its tradition, the leadership of the Slovene Catholic Church, in the absence of its supreme shepherd, Bishop Gregorij Rožman, who had fled abroad, declared loyalty to the new regime on 11 July 1945. This step was made by Canon Anton Vovk, accompanied by the representatives of the clergy of the Diocese of Ljubljana, during the visit of the primer minister Boris Kidrič. After expressing their loyalty, in their statement they undertook to make joint efforts in the restoration of the homeland and mentioned that during the war, the Church suffered as had all people, and that, amid the chaos, some priests and Catholics had sinned as well. They expressed hope that the new authorities would allow the performance of normal religious practice, given that the freedom of conscience was assured.<sup>24</sup>

In its statement, the Church leadership did not take a political stand towards the new regime, but accepted it as an indisputable fact. The Catholic Church throughout the whole of Yugoslavia responded to the regime's terror with the apostolic letter of the Yugoslav bishops, adopted at the Bishop's conference, held in Zagreb between 17 and 22 September 1945. Among the signatories of this letter were Ivan Tomažič, the Lavantine bishop (Maribor), Anton Vovk, Vicar General of the Diocese of Ljubljana and Ivan Jerič, Vicar General of Prekmurje.<sup>25</sup>

The bishops intentionally refrained from directly expressing their views on wider political issues and the new social order, adhering to the principle: 'Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God.'<sup>26</sup> Instead, they concentrated on the role of the Catholic Church in the new regulation of relations between the Church and the state, pointing out, in compliance with Canon Law, that the Vatican should have the last word on this (and not the government of the state in which a local Church operates). Quite justifiably, the Church leadership sharply warned about the crimes committed by the regime, the spirit of non-freedom and injustice which had spread to all spheres of life. However, in the face of numerous violations of the rights of the Catholic Church, its faithful and other people, and the exclusivism of the ruling ideology, the Catholic bishops did not voice their demands so that the diversity of beliefs

<sup>24</sup> *Resnici na ljubo : izjave ljubljanskih škofov o medvojnih dogodkih* [Let the Truth Be Known : Statements of the Ljubljana Bishops on Wartime Events]. Ljubljana 1998, pp. 17–21.

<sup>25</sup> Anton Vovk: *V Gospoda zaupam : iz zapisov nadškofa Antona Vovka* [I Trust in the Lord : From the Records by Archbishop Anton Vovk]. Ljubljana 2000, pp. 114–128.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

be respected but on the basis of the 'only salvific truth' of their own ideology. On the one hand, they criticised the new revolutionary spirit in the educational system (i.e. the imposition of an ideology), while, on the other, they warned about religious education being progressively eliminated from the curriculum (i.e. putting an end to their own imposed ideology) and the propagation of the 'theory of evolution of man from ape.' Instead of equalising the church and civil marriage, they attacked the latter as a foreign body in the new reality which deprived Christian marriage of holiness. The separation between ours (= correct) and yours (= wrong) is evident also in one of the final accentuations of the pastoral letter: 'We, the Catholic bishops of Yugoslavia, as teachers of truth and representatives of faith, firmly condemn the materialist spirit which brings no good to humanity. At the same time, we condemn all ideologies and social systems which do not build their human form on the principles of Revelation and Christianity but on the erroneous foundations of the materialist, i.e. atheist, philosophical doctrine.'<sup>27</sup>

Just like the leading communist ideologists, the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, as teachers of truth, referred to one and only truth. The difference between them, however, was that the communists were in power and that they enforced their truth by all available means. In their response to the pastoral letter, Tito and Kardelj mainly addressed the first signatory, Alojz Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb and President of the Yugoslav Bishop's Conference, thereby showing that they considered the letter as a mostly Croat issue. At the session of the Slovene government on 1 October 1945, the Interior Minister, Zoran Polič, said that he was told by Anton Vovk that 'most of the statements in the pastoral letter did not apply to Slovenia but to Croatia.'<sup>28</sup> The fact that the pastoral letter was issued on the same day as the declaration of the opposition parties to boycott the elections, gave it a strong political tone.

The reading of the pastoral letter in churches may be considered as the single most resolute public gesture against the communist regime in 1945. Nevertheless, given the said differences between anti-communism and democracy, the declaration was essentially more anti-communist than democratic. However, if there was anyone in Slovenia who really wanted to show western European democratic orientation and also made some concrete steps in this direction, it was an underground youth organisation whose activity did not leave much trace.

The word is about the League of the Democratic Youth, which was founded in the first months after the war and became more active in the pre-election period. Ivan Žigon, one of its leading members wrote in his memoirs, that 'the most probable hypothesis is that the opposition tandem Grol-Šubašič organised

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 126.

<sup>28</sup> ARS, AS 223, box 306, Zapisnik 5. redne seje Narodne vlade Slovenije, 1. 10. 1945. [Minutes from the Fifth Regular Session of the National Government of Slovenia, 1 October 1945].

it in order to win votes for the forthcoming elections.<sup>29</sup> Some Slovene leaders were related to notable politicians or public workers. The main organiser of the League was Vladimir Krek (in the sources, Lado, for short). He was a nephew of Miha Krek, the émigré champion of the Slovene People's Party. As it was common in clandestine organisations, the members of the League of the Democratic Youth only knew the next person in the chain of command, so as to minimize the risk of damaging the organisation if arrested by the political police. In Autumn 1945, the League started issuing its first modest publications and, towards the end of the year, its cyclostyle bulletin *Zarja svobode* (*The Dawn of Freedom*), which was supposed to voice the views of the Christian democratic and Christian socialist youth. Ivan Žigon wrote the following about the bulletin: 'Some time after New Year 1946, very undemocratic and provocative articles appeared in *Zarja svobode*. One even read, 'Death to Tito!' This disturbed me, because it smelled of the communist methods and when the publishing of *Zarja svobode* came into my hands, I eliminated such radical excesses or returned them to the author for correction. I did not want our paper to resemble the communist scrawls riddled with vulgarities and attacks.'<sup>30</sup>

The few preserved issues of *Zarja svobode* confirm Žigon's allegations that they wanted to stand up against the communists by advocating democracy. As an example, let us mention the introductory article of the Fifth Issue of *Zarja svobode* from 17 February 1946 entitled '*The Victory of Democracy in the United Nations Organisation*'. A summary from a UN session was published, at which Aleš Bebler, the Yugoslav delegate, demanded that 'all war émigrés be returned to the countries from which they had fled'. Apart from the expected support by the Soviet and Polish delegates, Bebler encountered equally anticipated opposition from Eleanor Roosevelt. She was the US delegate to the UN between 1945 and 1953, became President of the Human Rights Commission in 1946, and was one of the ideological authors of the 1948 UN General Declaration on Human Rights. According to *Zarja Svobode*, Roosevelt rejected Bebler's demands with the argument that a distinction should be made between war criminals who should be extradited to the countries where they committed crimes, and the political opponents of the existing regimes. She said: 'It would contradict the most fundamental democratic principles if political opponents were forcedly returned to the regime demanding their extradition.' The British delegate, in his turn, repudiated the demand of the communist Yugoslavia by taking the example of Karl Marx, the model of all communists, who was granted political asylum in Great Britain, where he wrote the works that became the basis for the ideology which turned to be one of the greatest opponents of the British political system. He presented this as evidence of the democratic orientation of the British, which they had no intention of relinquishing.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Ivan Žigon: *Življenjski izzivi* [Life's Challenges]. Ljubljana 1994, p. 77.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 80.

<sup>31</sup> ARS, AS 1799, box 192, *Zarja svobode* [The Dawn of Freedom], 17. 2. 1946, No. 5.



The preserved issues of *Zarja svobode* present the League of the Democratic Youth as an advocate of anti-communist and, also, democratic values. While it is not known whether they published a political programme (though some guidelines were published in the First Issue of *Zarja svobode*, which I could not find among the reviewed material and are probably not preserved), the existing papers in the party bulletin express clearly enough the demands for fundamental political rights. The leading members must have had good connections with the Slovene politicians abroad or with foreign representatives in Slovenia (a British Consulate operated in Ljubljana at the time), and probably with both, since the news and the details brought by the party bulletin could not be traced in the one-sided Slovene journalism of the time. When reporting on the session of the UN Security Council over the Greek issue, the editorial board of *Zarja svobode* annotated: 'The speech by Mr Bevin (the British Foreign Minister) is quoted more extensively because our daily papers did not report it.'<sup>32</sup>

In mid-February 1946, the party leadership was still quite optimistic about continuing its work, but the arrests of the leading members at the end of the month halted the organisation's operation, which had proved a decent rival to the communist youth organisation at some high schools in Ljubljana.

Not everyone in Slovenia, with the exception of some deceived individuals and foreign agents, unanimously hailed the new regime as the leading communists liked to brag. Searching for the answer why the disenchantment with the new regime did not find expression in the formation and support of a stronger opposition party, as was the case in Serbia and Croatia, requires a thoughtful analysis and not stereotypes, such as the elimination of the opposition by the political police of the new totalitarian regime. The reason will probably have to be sought also in the different development of the liberation movement in Slovenia from that in other parts of Yugoslavia. The call to resistance, which enticed oppressed nations, was propagated only by the Liberation Front behind which the communists hid. In the widely ramified resistance movement which, unlike in other parts of Yugoslavia, was not limited only to the liberated territory, succeeded in attracting also those who, before the war, had been the electoral basis of the traditional Slovene parties, which, due to their passivity, steadily lost the support of those who wanted some action taken, as they could no longer bear the humiliation of the occupation. After the 1945 liberation, the new regime in Slovenia had no need to establish a wide front organisation, behind which the communists could hide, as they had already done so during the war, unlike in other Yugoslav republics.

The scenario, whereby a small revolutionary group of people without moral reservations and with popular slogans, took advantage of the chaos and seized power had already been seen in history. Less understandable and more illogical, though, is the one whereby a political group claiming an eighty percent support

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<sup>32</sup> ARS, AS 1799, no. 192, *Zarja svobode* [The Dawn of Freedom], 6. 2. 1946, No. 3a, p. 1.

of the population, is unable to react appropriately in the same chaotic situation and whereby its circle of supporters shrinks to a minority.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Opozicija v Sloveniji v letu 1945*

Na moč politične opozicije v Sloveniji po letu 1945 sta bila dva različna pogleda. Prvega so po vojni oblikovali vodilni komunistični politiki in zatrjevali, da prave opozicije v Jugoslaviji ni in da gre le za "reakcionarne sile", ki so pripeljale prvo Jugoslavijo (Kraljevino Jugoslavijo) do poloma. Drugi pogled je nastal v času demokratizacije ob padanju komunističnega režima (konec osemdesetih in v začetku devetdesetih let 20. stoletja) in je v nasprotju s prvim govoril o močni opoziciji po letu 1945, ki naj bi jo uničil teror komunistične tajne policije.

Za razliko od Srbije in Hrvaške, kjer se je delovala tudi prava politična opozicija, združena in registrirana v več strankah, do tega v Sloveniji ni prišlo. V Sloveniji niso nasprotniki nove oblasti niti poskusili registrirati svojega delovanja ali izdajati lastnega opozicijskega časopisa. Večji del predvojnih politikov katoliške in liberalne usmeritve je bil tedaj že v emigraciji, manjši del v zaporih, nekaj pa jih je bilo tudi že v vladajoči Ljudski fronti Jugoslavije, katere del je bila na Slovenskem Osvobodilna fronta, ki so jo vodili slovenski komunisti. Od nekomunističnih politikov v Osvobodilni fronti so številni pričakovali, da bodo uspeli slovensko družbo pluralizirati ter prisiliti vodilne komuniste v to, da bi večstrankarski sistem tudi dejansko zaživel. Toda svetovnonazorsko od komunistov drugače usmerjeni politiki tega niso hoteli ali pa uspeli narediti. Kot edino pravo politično opozicijsko delovanje v prvem letu po drugi svetovni vojni v Sloveniji je tako mogoče označiti delovanje Zveze demokratične mladine, ilegalne mladinske organizacije, ki je uspela izdati tudi nekaj skromnih ilegalnih časopisov.

Razlik v političnem razvoju neposredno po koncu druge svetovne vojne v Sloveniji od tistega v Srbiji in na Hrvaškem ne moremo pripisati zgolj v terorju komunistične policije, saj je bil ta enak v vsej jugoslovanski državi in bi lahko, nasprotno, pričakovali, da bo ta prej opravila z opozicijo v Srbiji, ki je bila osvobojena pol leta pred Slovenijo. Vzroke za dokaj šibko moč politične opozicije v Sloveniji je treba zato iskati tudi drugje. Pomemben vzrok je bil tudi v svojevrstnem političnem razvoju dogodkov na Slovenskem v vojnih letih, saj so pred vojno tradicionalno najpomembnejše slovenske stranke ubrale pasivno politično držo, voljo ljudi do odpora pa je uspela v svoj prid usmeriti pred vojno nepomembna komunistična stranka. Za razliko od odporniških gibanj v ostalih

delih Jugoslavije je bila slovenska Osvobodilna fronta aktivna tudi na okupiranem ozemlju in je uspela v različne akcije, dejavnosti in organizacije pritegniti širok krog Slovencev, ki so bili še pred vojno tradicionalno navezani na katoliške ali liberalne stranke in društva. Ko je partizanska vojska maja 1945 vkorakala v Ljubljano, Osvobodilni fronti kot nosilki oblasti ni bilo šele treba začeti pisati političnega programa, plesti mrež množičnih organizacij in iskati somišljenikov, ker so to v dobršni meri opravili že med vojno (kar za večji del Jugoslavije ne velja). Na čas po koncu vojne se je namreč Osvobodilna fronta pripravila mnogo bolje kot vse druge politične organizacije v državi. To pa je pustilo bore malo manevrskega prostora drugačnim političnim opcijam. Te so se leta 1945 ob iskanju možnih zaveznikov v Sloveniji vsepovsod srečevale tudi s težavo, da je delovno področje, kjer so bili še pred vojno pomemben dejavnik, že uspela "prekriti" katera od organizacij v okviru Osvobodilne fronte. To so ugotavljali tudi tisti posamezniki, ki so menili, da je potrebno vzpostaviti opozicijo komunističnemu režimu, nato pa so ugotavljali, da za kaj takega ni realnih pogojev, da ni možno najti ljudi in ustreznega prostora za politično delovanje.

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Božo Repe\*

*Changes in Life Style and Social  
and National Structures  
in Slovenia after World War Two*

For Slovenians, World War Two, like World War One before it, represented an enormous rupture in the larger political, economic, social, cultural, and demographic currents. The victims of the war, according to research conducted by the Institute of Contemporary History, numbered approximately 90,000, or 6% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, in the minds of the majority of Slovenians (according to representative public polls), the end of World War Two remains a positive historical event, and Slovenians positively assess the accomplishments of the national liberation and anti-Fascist coalition. Such accomplishment include the survival of the Slovenian people, the liberation of Slovenian territory, the acquisition of statehood as one of the republics of the Yugoslav federation, the change of the western borders, and a number of important social transformations. What remains traumatic in the historical consciousness is the postwar reckoning, the complete and unselective purge of certain segments of society, and above all the postwar massacres, the primary victims of which were members of the *domobranci* (the home guard).<sup>2</sup>

After the war, authority was taken by the Communist Party of Slovenia which was a constituent part of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Until the conflict with Informbiro, the Slovenian Communist Party functioned in the legal shadows; the mobilization of people was carried out through the Liberation Front (which eventually became a constituent part of the Yugoslav People's Front), and through many women's and youth organizations. The same people held party and state offices, and the party dominated all the primary spheres of society. Although the ten members of the political leadership of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, the *politburo*, decided on everything of substance, there were 6,000 leading functionaries in the republic, and

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<sup>1</sup> *Žrtne vojne in revolucije* [Victims of War and Revolution]. Ljubljana 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Summary: Božo Repe: *Kaj Slovenci vemo o svoji preteklosti? Slovenska država, družba in javnost* [What Do We Slovenians Know About Our Past? The Slovenian State, Society and Public]. Ljubljana 1996. For later research, see also the annual report of Slovensko javno mnenje [Slovene public opinion]. Politbarometer : <http://www.adp.fdv.uni-lj.si/opisi/pbsi0005.xml>

on the lower committee level another 10,000 functionaries, that reported directly to the Central Committee of the Slovenian Communist Party.

The long wait for liberation triggered a wave of enthusiasm among most people, the expectation that it was possible to change their circumstances in a short time, and the willingness to sacrifice and work for the collective good. There was massive participation in economic renewal and construction. In the federal elections of 1945, the People's Front won 88.6% of the vote. The opposition boycotted the election (at polling stations a 'no-party box' or 'black box' on the ballot functioned as a replacement for any real opposition to the People's Front). There was some manipulation in these elections – more than an election it was a competition as to which districts would deliver the most votes – but most foreign diplomats confirmed that Josip Broz Tito received a majority of the vote and would probably have won in unmanipulated elections. In Slovenia, only the Liberation Front ran for election; the opposition was barred.

After the election, the constitutional committee of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia promulgated a new federal constitution on January 30, 1946. All members of the committee voted for the constitution. The constitution gave the state ownership of government property, the most important means of production, and all foreign capital; it introduced agrarian reform, and all property was deemed national, collective or private. According to the constitution, the governing authorities derived from the people and belonged to the people. The People's Assembly had two chambers: the Federal Chamber and the Chamber of Republics. In the first, the election of representatives was based on general voting rights (i.e. one representative per 50,000 citizens). For the Chamber of Republics, each republic selected 30 representatives, the autonomous region of Vojvodina 20 representatives, and Kosovo-Metohija 15 representatives. Yugoslavia was defined as a federal people's state in the form of a republic comprised of a collective of equal peoples each of which enjoyed the right to self-determination, including the right to secede. On the basis of an agreement among the various Yugoslav peoples that took place in Jajce in 1943, the federal entity would be comprised of the following six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Serbia also had in its territory the Autonomous Region of Vojvodina and the Autonomous Region of Kosovo-Metohija.

Taken as a whole, the constitution followed the Soviet model, though less so in the arrangement of intra-republic relationships than in other areas. For example, the Soviet constitution provided that each federal republic had the right to freely withdraw from the Soviet Union. This did not exist in the first draft of the Yugoslav constitution; the rights to self-determination and secession were included in the text only after the intervention of the Slovenian Liberation Front and after long negotiations with the constitutional assembly. The Soviet constitution also recognized (though this was more a formality in order to achieve certain international goals) two additional and significant rights that the Yugo-

slav constitution did not: that each republic had the right to independently enter into direct contact with foreign countries, to dispatch its own diplomatic representative, and to establish its own military formation.

The constitution provided the legal framework for a system of people's democracy that would be a transitional phase between capitalism and socialism. Formally it was a multiparty system (and there was legislation to support this until 1965), though in reality the parties (those that emerged independently and those that were part of the People's Front) were eliminated in the first two years after the war. Although the constitution guaranteed a kind of federalism, in reality the system was completely centralized and the principles of brotherhood and unity in the leading government bodies were simply a method of preserving balance.<sup>3</sup>

The new government began to introduce a number of modernizing processes that the previous political elite either had been unable or unwilling to carry out. The new government proceeded in a revolutionary manner with the introduction of agrarian reform including the confiscation of large estates,<sup>4</sup> the nationalization of the economy followed by accelerated renewal and industrialization according to the Soviet model, and the separation of church and state.<sup>5</sup> The Communist Party launched the rapid construction of a new society and the radical transformation of social structures. The emphasis was on the masses and egalitarianism. The cult of physical labour was promoted along with mutual competition and worker brigades. The favoured slogan was: "Once the war hero, now the work hero!" Despite the poor postwar conditions, the new authorities strived to guarantee a certain level of social and medical protection as well as childcare, equal educational opportunities for all levels of the population, and equality for women (women were given the right to vote for the first time).<sup>6</sup>

The new elite were comprised of leading people from the partisan and pre-war revolutionary movements who came for the most part from the working class and had not achieved a high level of education. The key criteria for participation in the government were political, not merit or training.

The meaning of culture changed in the new system; above all, its institutional situation was strengthened. (For Slovenians who lacked the tradition of statehood, culture had become an existential issue.) After the war, culture acquired a completely different content than it had before the war. It was some-

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<sup>3</sup> Božo Repe: Sistem ljudske demokracije v Sloveniji in Jugoslaviji [The System of People's Democracy in Slovenian and Yugoslavia]. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 1998, No. 2.

<sup>4</sup> For more about this see: Zdenko Čepič. *Agrarna reforma in kolonizacija v Sloveniji : 1945–1948* [Agrarian Reform and Colonization in Slovenia], Maribor 1995.

<sup>5</sup> For more about this see *Slovenska novejša zgodovina : od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848–1992* [Slovenian Contemporary History : from the Programme United Slovenia to the International Recognition of Slovenia 1848–1992], Ljubljana 2005.

<sup>6</sup> For more about this see *Naše žene volijo* [Our Women Vote]. Ljubljana 1999.

thing that should be available to all different classes of people. In Yugoslavia, a country of workers and peasants, the goal was to make it possible for the majority of the population to participate in cultural activities.<sup>7</sup> This meant that culture would not be aimed at only educated or upper class people. The primary task of the Yugoslav authorities was to eliminate illiteracy and educate the people; for this purpose, workers' or people's universities were established. The ultimate goal was to gradually create a united Yugoslav socialist culture. These policies were based on the average Yugoslav condition to which Slovenia did not belong, and for this reason cultural policy in Slovenia had to be adapted to Slovenian conditions, albeit with the same ideological assumptions. A number of organizations emerged with the purpose of promoting culture (for example, the People's Enlightenment); the network of libraries and theatres and cultural associations was expanded, and the situation of schools and universities enhanced. The Academy of Arts and Sciences was renamed the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences. A programme for the development of Slovenian-acted films was launched, and the first feature-length Slovenian film entitled *Na svoji zemlji* [On Our Own Land] was shot in 1948. All institutions and artists operated under the ideological control of the Communist Party and, in particular, of the agitprop sector (the Agitation and Propaganda Commission of the Slovenian Communist Party).

Socialist realism became the dominant artistic style. Writers were supposed to write about life in socialism, painters to paint workers and the great achievements of socialism. Artistic work should only praise the new order and present it in optimistic hues, the purpose of culture being the building of a socialist society. A strong emphasis was placed on Marxist literature and many works by western writers were discouraged. Abstract expressionism and other forms of modern art were frowned on. In the field of music, glorified revolutionary and classical music prevailed. Newer forms, such as jazz, were considered suspicious though less so in Slovenia where, thanks to the efforts of conductor and composer Bojan Adamič, jazz quickly became available. As early as 1945, the Dance Orchestra of Radio Ljubljana was launched and it played popular music. The radio, along with its musicians, singers, and actors, was in fact the most important medium for the dissemination of culture and entertainment. In the postwar period of reconstruction, many art groups and ensembles travelled across the country, staging concerts and other performances and providing entertainment. The travelling cinema was also popular and had screenings in the countryside.

Russian culture became a strong influence, replacing the prewar French influence. In school, the first foreign language was Russian with English coming second (in accordance with the wartime anti-Fascist coalition), though English was introduced more than a decade after the war. Russian works were translated, Russian films were shown in the cinema, Russian artists came to perform

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<sup>7</sup> For more about this see Aleš Gabrič: *Slovenska agitpropovska kulturna politika 1945–1952* [Slovenian Agitprop Cultural Policies 1945–1952]. Ljubljana 1991.

in Yugoslavia and Slovenia. And yet the period of a close link between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was too short and the western cultural tradition in Slovenia too strong for the Soviet cultural paradigm and Russian cultural influence to become predominant. In the theatre, for example, most of the repertoire was comprised of local plays. A variety of films were shown in the cinema. The holidays were officially changed.<sup>8</sup> Ideology was injected into child-rearing and education and at the centre of the ideology were the national-liberation struggle, the revolution, and the systematic construction of Tito's personality cult.

The takeover of power and the application of revolutionary policies were accompanied by a level of violence that needs to be evaluated in the light of the war, and, in particular, of crucial processes such as occupation, collaboration, resistance, and, on a part of Slovenian territory and under the specific circumstances of occupation, civil war as well. Various forms of violence arose from the tendency to settle accounts with the occupiers and those who cooperated with them (suspected and actual Slovenian collaborators and the German minority). These forms of violence were a constituent part of the revolutionary processes that the Communist Party began to implement after the war and in some cases before (for example, against class enemies, a campaign that partially overlapped with actions taken against collaborators).<sup>9</sup> Violence was directed against various segments of the population. This violence sometimes coincided with parallel legal actions taken against occupiers and collaborators, similar to processes that were taking place all over Europe at that time: purges, extrajudicial executions; condemnation of the entire German minority according to the notion of collective guilt; revolutionary actions against prewar holders of economic and political power (politicians, industrialists, the Catholic Church).<sup>10</sup> This settling of accounts took place against a background of intense emotion, overwhelming propaganda, calls to cleanse society, and an ongoing emphasis on the suffering imposed on Slovenians, and particularly on members of the National Liberation Movement by the occupiers and collaborators ('local traitors').

British military authorities sent the fleeing *domobranci* back from Koroška to Slovenia as quisling units. Upon their return, they were divided into three

<sup>8</sup> Franc Rozman, Vasilij Melik, Božo Repe: *Zastave vihrajo. Spominski dnevi in praznovanja na Slovenskem od sredine 19. stoletja do danes* [The Flags Flutter: Days of Commemoration and Celebration in Slovenia from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century until Today]. Ljubljana 1999. (German version: Franc Rozman, Vasilij Melik, Božo Repe: "Öffentliche Gedenktage bei den Slovenen von 1848 bis 1991". In: Emil Brix, Hannes Stekl, Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis: Öffentliche Gedenktage in Mitteleuropa, Wien, Köln, Weimar, Böhlau 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Božo Repe: *Poboji, zatiranja, preganjanja, izgoni in druge oblike represije po drugi svetovni vojni ter njihova vloga v nacionalni identiteti in kolektivnem spominu Slovencev* [Massacres, Oppression, Persecution, Expulsion and other forms of Postwar Repression and its Role in National Identity and the Collective Memory of Slovenians]. In: *Borec*, 2002, pp. 598–602.

<sup>10</sup> *Ključne značilnosti slovenske politike : znanstveno poročilo* [Research Report on Key Characteristics of Slovenian Politics]. Ljubljana 1995; *Temna stran meseca : kratka zgodovina totalitarizma v Sloveniji 1945–1990* [The Dark Side of the Moon : A Short History of Totalitarianism in Slovenia 1945–1990]. Ljubljana 1998, p. 11.



groups: Group A to be released, Group B to be handed over to military tribunals, and Group C to be executed. Most of those who were returned or who had been captured before were executed without trial. The executions took place in various regions, mostly in Kočevski Rog. The precise number of those executed has not been determined but various data indicate a figure around 13,500 people belonging to the anti-partisan camp, most of whom were *domobranci*. The execution of the *domobranci* was the most traumatic event in recent Slovenian history, cutting deeply into the collective memory, and remaining the crucial cause of division among Slovenians today. The new Yugoslav leader, Josip Broz Tito, gave a speech in Ljubljana on May 26, 1945 during which he said among other things: "As far as the traitors who remained in this country are concerned, in each of the individual republics, they are now a thing of the past. The hand of justice, the hand of vengeance of our people has already dealt with the vast majority of them, and only a few have succeeded in escaping to the protection of sponsors outside of our country. Those few will never again look on our beautiful mountains and our blooming meadows. And if they do, it will only be for a very short time."<sup>11</sup>

There are various interpretations of this speech in Slovenia. It is the opinion of some (for example, of the Slovenian writer Drago Jančar) that Tito's claim meant "that the political leadership of the time had already decided to kill their wartime opponents, that the massacres had already begun. It reveals the fact that there was a plan to shoot, without legal complications, the disarmed *domobranci* and civilian political opponents in secret locations. For this action they introduced the accounting term: to liquidate."<sup>12</sup> Another explanation is that the speech was intended to refer to the possibility of a war with the Allies, that is to the danger that the Western Allies would intervene in Yugoslavia with the help of Yugoslav collaborationist units, *domobranci* among them.

The judicial process was also used in dealing with the occupiers, collaborators, and other opponents of the new regime.<sup>13</sup> There were various systems, but the most common was based on revolutionary law, in accordance with which political trials represented a category that fell somewhere between trials against war criminals and traitors and trials against ordinary criminals. Political trials received a lot of publicity: public hearings with speakers broadcast on the radio, news articles and editorials in the daily papers, ongoing pressure on the 'defence attorneys' to stop defending 'enemies of the Slovenian people'. The tendency toward bitterness and anger and the desire to seek revenge against those who had committed war crimes found an outlet in trials against war criminals and collaborators, and also in other trials. The basis for an accusation was often po-

<sup>11</sup> Govor maršala Tita v Ljubljani [The Speech of Marshall Tito in Ljubljana]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1980, No. 1–2.

<sup>12</sup> Temna stran meseca, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Božo Repe: *Povojni sodni procesi* [Postwar Judicial Trials]. In: *Povojna zgodovina na Slovenskem*, Slovenj gradec 1992.

litical rather than unbiased expert opinion, and most of the proceedings took place quickly in extraordinarily convened courts. Judges who weren't prepared to put aside professional standards were forced to give up their positions. Some of those charged were tried in courts of Slovenian national honour, though these courts operated for only two months. They were set up to try people who had in some way harmed the honour of the Slovenian nation by collaborating with the occupiers in the fields of art, culture, economy or civil administration. In terms of punishment, these courts had the power to give long jail sentences, to take away the rights of citizenship, and to seize property. There were many other kinds of judicial trials: against former occupiers and politicians who had collaborated during the war, against political opponents (one group, the so-called Nagode group that tried to renew its activities as a political party, which was entirely legal, was tried and condemned), against kulaks (rich farmers), priests, various terrorist groups, spies, and saboteurs.

In 1948, a unique judicial action was carried out against important, though not leading Communists – former concentration camp prisoners. The Dachau trials as they were called occurred because of the alleged voluntary collaboration of the prisoners with the Gestapo during the war; 34 people were either given long jail sentences or sentenced to death (on the basis of confessions usually extracted with torture). The reasons behind the Dachau trials are still unclear. Some believe that they were part of an intraparty struggle and that the trials indirectly attempted to prove that certain Eastern European communist leaders cooperated with the Gestapo when they were in the camps. This is significant because the trials took place during the period of the Informbiro conflict. Others believe that the trials were just a reflex of an era that was permeated with violence.<sup>14</sup>

In the first decade after World War Two, somewhere between 20,000 and 25,000 people were convicted, not including those who received administrative punishments that were handed down by the police (community service for instance).<sup>15</sup> Conditions in prisons were poor, and prisoners were frequently humiliated, persecuted and beaten. There were also 17 camps holding some 14,479 prisoners of war who were frequently used for forced labour in the rebuilding and industrialization process. Most were released approximately three years after the end of the war.

One very important part of the judicial process was the seizure of assets and many sentences had as their primary goal the nationalization of property.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> *Dachauski procesi* [The Dachau Trials], (research report with documents. Ljubljana 1990.

<sup>15</sup> Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti* [The Takeover of Power]. Ljubljana 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Prinčič Jože, Zagradnik Maruša, Zupančič Marjan: *Viri za nacionalizacijo industrijskih podjetij v Sloveniji po 2. svetovni vojni* [Sources for the Nationalization of Industrial Companies in Slovenia after World War II]. Ljubljana 1992; Jože Prinčič: *Nacionalizacija na ozemlju LR Slovenije 1945–1962*, [Nationalization on the Territory of the People's Republic of Slovenia]. Novo mesto 1994; Milko Mikola: *Zaplembe premoženja v Sloveniji 1943–1952* [Confiscation of Assets in Slovenia 1943–1952], Celje 1999.

communist authorities introduced various forms of control over people: ideological, political police, etc. Between 18,000 and 20,000 Slovenians emigrated to foreign countries after the end of the war because of the new regime.

During the time of the conflict between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, the so-called Informbiro conflict (1948), there were also actions taken by Yugoslav authorities against real or suspected Informbiro sympathizers (those sympathetic to the Soviet Union). These actions were conducted in an extremely brutal fashion using Stalinist methods. Convicted Informbiro sympathizers were sent for 're-education' to Adriatic islands (the most renowned of which were Goli otok and Grgur in the northern Adriatic off Croatia) where prisoners were subject to physical and psychological torture. In Slovenia, very few people expressed sympathy for the Informbiro and yet 731 people were arrested, of which 334 received administrative punishments, and 157 were convicted and received more severe punishment.<sup>17</sup> Some of these (among them Mirko Košir, the prewar general secretary of the Communist Party) never returned.

The settling of accounts on the national (or ethnic) level also took place, mostly against German and Italian minorities. In the interwar period, the German minority was quite large (between 25,000 and 28,000 residents depending on whether one relies on official or private figures). Slightly less than half of these (around 12,500) were the so-called Kočevje Germans (Gottscheer Deutschen), a rural population that had lived on Slovenian territory since the fourteenth century. In the winter of 1941/1942, they moved to territory near the Sava and Sotla Rivers (Kočevje was settled by Italians) from which the Germans removed some 37,000 Slovenians. Other members of the German minority were mostly town dwellers (with the exception of a few small rural 'islands' of Germans). Indeed in the towns of Styria, most industry and stores were owned by the German minority. A large number of the German minority were 'Nazified', which is to say they belonged to Nazi organizations, took German citizenship, and participated in the occupation apparatus and the persecution of Slovenians. On the basis of a decree dated November 21, 1944 issued by the presiding anti-Fascist committee of the Yugoslav National Liberation Organization (AVNOJ), the property of the German minority was seized. This decree was analogous to the Beneš decree issued in Czechoslovakia. Most members of the German minority fled after the war and the remaining (according to Slovenian data some 9,474) were sent across the so-called 'green border' in organized transport. Before the transport, they had been interned in camps where many died, women and children as well, because of the extremely poor conditions. Approximately 100 members of the German minority (the precise figure is not known but it is estimated at roughly 10% of the number that did not flee) were either sentenced to death or executed extra-judicially. After the war, the German minority no longer existed. During the first post-war

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<sup>17</sup> Aleš Gabrič: *Informbirojevstvo na Slovenskem* [Informbiro in Slovenia]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1993, No. 1–2, pp. 163–174.

census of 1948, 2,406 individuals named German as their mother tongue (1,824 were Germans and 582 Austrians).<sup>18</sup> The regional and cultural legacy of the Kočevje Germans, especially churches, was deliberately destroyed after the war or allowed to disintegrate over time.

After World War Two, Friuli Giulia (the territory that had, according to the Rapallo Agreement, belonged to Italy during the interwar period) was first administered by a 'dual occupation': by Anglo-American and Yugoslav troops. Then in June 1945, the region was divided into two zones (Zone A and Zone B) and the Yugoslav army was compelled to retreat from one of the zones. During the 40 days under dual occupation, the Yugoslav Army controlled the administration and carried out arrests, trials, deportations and executions, mostly settling accounts with Fascists regardless of their nationality. There was also some cases of personal vengeance taken for what took place during the war. Massive arrests created an atmosphere of terror and uncertainty, especially since prisoners and interned persons were so poorly treated. Most prisoners were released after two or three days. Some of those arrested were summarily executed and their bodies dumped in Karst caves, known as *fojbe*. During the postwar decades, the question of the *fojbe* was exaggerated by neo-Fascist circles, rightwing politicians, and Trieste newspapers, and was characterized as being ethnically targeted (i.e. ethnic cleansing). Some said that there were 100,000 dead and efforts were made to equate the thirteen years of Fascist terror over Slovenians with the 'Communist' violence that took place during 40 days of occupation.<sup>19</sup>

The emergence of a new border between Italy and Yugoslavia also resulted in large population movements. The 1947 peace treaty with Italy and other agreements settling border disputes gave inhabitants of the former occupation

<sup>18</sup> "Nemci" na Slovenskem 1941–1955" ["Germans in Slovenia" 1941–1955]. Ljubljana 1998. See also: Slovensko-avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju. Slowenisch-österreichische Beziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert [Slovenian-Austrian Relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Ljubljana 2004.

<sup>19</sup> A mixed Slovenian-Italian commission was named to clarify relations in recent history. The work of the commission, which issued a joint report, lasted seven years, from 1993 to 2000. The result of the commission – or more accurately the results of Italian and Slovenian historiographical researchers regarding the questions of the *fojbe* – indicated that of those arrested and imprisoned in the region of Trieste and Gorica and in Koper (that is in the territory ceded to Yugoslavia in the 1947 peace treaty), approximately 1,600 people were shot or died as a result of other causes (for example, poor treatment in prison). Of the 1,600, 600 were killed in the Trieste region, 900 in the Gorica region, and 100 in Koper. Among the dead, more than half were from other parts of Italy (Fascist officials, police, etc) and a large part of the remaining were of non-Italian nationality. (See Nevenka Troha: *Komu Trst* [To Whom Trieste], Ljubljana 1999; Kacin-Wohinz Milica, Pirjevec Jože: *Zgodovina Slovencev v Italiji 1866–2000* [The History of Slovenians in Italy 1866–2000]. Ljubljana 2000; *Slovensko-italijanski odnosi 1880–1956: poročilo slovensko italijanske zgodovinsko-kulturne komisije = I rapporti italo-sloveni 1880–1956: relazione della commissione storico-culturale italo-slovena = Slovenian-Italian relations 1880–1956: the report of the Slovenian-Italian historical and cultural commission*. Ljubljana 2001. The estimated number of victims slightly changed with the publication of a report on the basis of research carried by Institute for Contemporary History from Ljubljana, though the change was not significant.

zones the right to choose between Yugoslav or Italian citizenship. The so-called *optanti* had to make a decision (to opt) one way or another within one year and then move. On the Yugoslav side, there were 21,323 people who opted out of Yugoslavia. Approximately 70% of these had come during the interwar period of Italian Fascist rule, a deliberate migration policy with the goal of denationalizing the ethnically pure Slovenian territory. Most of these fled in the first few months after the Italian capitulation in 1943. Those that remained were encouraged to leave by Italy's immigration policy and they departed in massive numbers. This policy was later regretted as it would have politically suited Italy to have a larger minority in Yugoslavia. The Italian government was responsible for the restitution of property, and Yugoslavia was required to provide financial compensation for the move. (Slovenia finished making these payments in 2002). The question of *optanti* property was reopened by Italy in the mid-nineties during the negotiations for Slovenian entry into the European Union. Ultimately, the Italians forced a so-called Spanish compromise, whereby former *optanti* were given certain advantages in real estate purchases. The Italian minority that remained in Slovenia and Croatia (according to the 1991 census there were 300 members of the Italian minority in Slovenia) were constitutionally and legally protected in Yugoslavia, had a representative in parliament, its own school, press, and television.

Another minority (though incomparably smaller than the German community) that disappeared entirely after the war were the Jews. Of the 452 interned Prekmurje Jews who survived the war, only 65 returned from the camps. Of these, 11 emigrated to Israel and the others slowly adapted to postwar everyday life, though over the years their numbers sharply declined. In 1981, only nine people in Prekmurje identified themselves as Jews.<sup>20</sup> (A higher number defined themselves as members of the Jewish community, slightly over 80 in Slovenia at that time, as compared to 150 today, though today approximately 500 to 1,000 Jews are said to live in the whole of Slovenia.)

These various forms of repression were reduced in Slovenia in the early nineteen fifties when Yugoslavia introduced its own specific form of socialism, the self-management system. Nevertheless, ideological control continued to some degree and occasionally court trials of individuals took place for political reasons. The bedrock of the prevailing value system continued to be national liberation struggle and revolution. The 'revolutionary tradition' was emphasized with new vigour after the liberal faction in the Communist leadership, which had a more pragmatic attitude toward the past and émigré political opponents, lost the intraparty struggle for power at the end of nineteen sixties.

In the early nineteen fifties, Yugoslavia (which, as a result of the Informbiro conflict at the end of the forties, had found itself facing economic bankruptcy)

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<sup>20</sup> Darja Kerec: *Judje v Murski Soboti v letih 1934–1954* [Jews in Murska Sobota from 1934–1954]. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 2000, No. 4.

began to receive aid from western countries. Together with more liberal domestic economic policies, this led to the end of Yugoslav economic stagnation.<sup>21</sup> In 1953, Slovenian industry experienced growth of 15% and would continue to see annual growth of more than 10% until the early sixties. Economic policy was redirected: heavy industry lost its privileged position, more emphasis was placed on manufacturing and other light industries, and trade in general attained greater significance. The agrarian sector began to recover with the abandonment of collectivization policies. In the mid-fifties, Slovenia experienced a decisive shift from farming to industry: more than 50% of the working population made a living outside of the farming sector. With the construction of the port at Koper, Slovenia also began to develop its maritime activities. Rapid industrialization had consequences: building over high-quality arable land, rapid construction of residential settlements without appropriate infrastructure, overcrowding in housing, the creation of a special class of mixed farmers/factory workers in the environs of industrial centres, economic migration from the less-developed regions of Yugoslavia, the emergence of a class of people residing in small urban apartments while maintaining the rural mentality. The latter created a particular set of habits: for example, travelling each weekend to the country side, the cultivation of garden plots. In the early fifties, Slovenia was already exporting to Western European countries and the United States, trade gained increasing prominence in the economy. The construction of private houses was no longer frowned on as it had been in the framework of stricter socialist morals. Many Slovenian companies began to manufacture goods under foreign licenses. Nevertheless the textile industry was stagnant and did not produce contemporary fashion trends and hardly manufactured children's clothing. The production of basic foodstuff, sweets, household appliances, and sundry products was much weaker than that of western countries. People eventually became aware of this when the country became more open at the end of the fifties. At first, citizens with border passes were allowed to travel back and forth to Austria and Italy. Later it became possible for nearly any citizen to obtain a passport without excessive difficulty (with the exception of those the government deemed to be political opponents). Travel for the purpose of shopping became extremely common. As a result of the postwar nationalization of the economy, the private sector had disappeared, with the survival of only rare and extremely persistent craftsmen. For this reason, both the service sector and the manufacturing sector for consumer goods were poorly developed. The managers of large industrial factories believed that such products didn't pay. Various craft cooperatives par-

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<sup>21</sup> For more about this: Mateja Režek: *Med resničnostjo in iluzijo : slovenska in jugoslovanska politika v desetletju po sporu z informbirojem 1948–1958* [Between Truth and Illusion : Slovenian and Yugoslav Politics in the Decade after the Informbiro Conflict]. Ljubljana 2005; Jože Prinčič: *V začaranem krogu : slovensko gospodarstvo od nove ekonomske politike do velike reforme: 1955–1970* [A Vicious Circle: The Slovenian Economy from New Economic Policies to Great Reforms: 1955–1970]. Ljubljana 1999.

tially made up for the shortfall, but mostly people simply did without. Many co-operatives failed and in the fifties there were new – and very limited – concessions made to the private sector, at first to small craft producers and restaurants. Toward the end of the fifties, the motorization of Slovenia began to grow. In 1958, a road was built connecting Ljubljana to Zagreb and there was a large increase in the number of cars. (In 1957, there were around 5,000 personally-owned automobiles in Slovenia; by 1962 that number had risen to 32,000.) Some young men from well-off families even were even able to purchase a Vespa or motorcycle in a nod to western fashion.

In the early fifties, a discernible relaxation in life and culture took place. Agitprop had been eliminated and politics did not strictly control the arts as it had before. As a result, we have a number of wonderful and not-politically restricted cultural products from that era, among them the film *Vesna* which was made by the Czech-born film director František Čap in 1953. The influence of western culture was becoming stronger in Slovenia, brought in through radio, cinema, and western literature, and at the end of the fifties through television as well. Toward the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, the first blue jeans and tennis shoes (that were named after one Italian brand name – *superge*) began to arrive in Slovenia, and the first jazz and popular music festivals were organized in Yugoslavia.

The changes in the fifties mostly affected the lives of a very small upper class of the population (the socialist businessmen and political elite). For the rest of the population, living in a state of egalitarianism, life remained extremely modest: an apartment was a rare asset, traffic connections and public transportation were poor, the availability of products for everyday consumption meagre and low quality. Automobiles were perks enjoyed by socialist authorities and business managers. Nursery schools and other establishments of social life were available only in large towns. Very few families in the fifties could afford to take a trip to the seaside or anywhere else. And yet the trend of moving toward a western life style continued and grew stronger especially from the sixties onward. The borders were opened. The government began to make more efforts to raise living standards. Apartments, private houses, and even summer houses were built. (Between 1953 and 1972, 152,400 housing units were built, of which 58,000 were private houses.) Banks began to extend loans to individuals. The hotel and tourist industries grew. More and more households were able to take holidays on the Adriatic Sea, mostly in union bungalows or camps. The supply of products improved, though remained much more modest than what was available in neighbouring western countries. Modern household appliances came on the market: washing machine, vacuum cleaners, etc. At first they were imported, but a few companies began to manufacture domestic products, mostly with foreign licenses (Gorenje and Iskra). Even the textile industry tried to meet the needs of consumers and to manufacture ready-to-made clothing, though for many years the emphasis was on quantity rather than quality. Fashion lagged

behind the West by many years. Slovenians who were better off supplemented local supplies with purchases made in Italy and Austria. Life in the sixties became more relaxed. The Slovenian standard of living slowly rose – more slowly than in the West but following an upward trend nevertheless: from barebones living quarters with no running water or toilet in the fifties to houses with bathrooms, washing machines, televisions in the sixties, and as the years passed with automobiles as well. Partially as a result of general growth trends throughout the world and partially as a result of the different kind of socialism practiced in Yugoslavia (as compared to the rest of the communist world), Slovenia lived "at the western end of the eastern spectrum".

Self-management socialism, or 'Titoism' as it is called in the west, was far from a parliamentary democracy, but at the same time different from Eastern European socialism.<sup>22</sup> As to how different it actually was, opinions vary depending on the ideological and political orientation of the one making the evaluation, and also on the context in which the evaluation is made.

In the first postwar years, there were few essential differences between the social arrangements in the various countries of the eastern bloc. Many Eastern European countries, with Stalin's permission, virtually copied the Yugoslav system of people's democracy, through in many ways (first in the brutal postwar settling of accounts against suspected and real opponents) Yugoslavia and Slovenia were no less Stalinist than the Soviet Union. In the first two years after the war, Yugoslavia was one of the most loyal allies of the Soviet Union, and it strived to introduce the Soviet model through revolutionary measures. The Yugoslav leadership's attitude toward the Soviet Union emerged from the expectation that relations would be equal, that the Soviet Union would offer protection to socialist Yugoslavia and help with the industrialization of the country. Individuals in the Yugoslav Communist Party even spoke of the possibility that Yugoslavia would become part of the Soviet Union. The beginning (and the core) of the conflict with Informbiro was differing notions of the equality between the two countries and the two parties, in other words (Tito's) insubordination to (Stalin's) hegemonic policies. The conflict was also fuelled by critical analysis within Yugoslavia of the Soviet system and of the possible development of an alternative model of socialism that would be neither capitalistic nor state-socialistic, and would be called self-management.

The starting point of this new model was Marx's thesis on the association of free producers and Lenin's on the authority of the soviets (articulated in his book *State and Revolution*). Based on the lack of success of social-ownership systems and the danger of the new bureaucratic class that had created the party, the decision to launch the new self-management system was made. The first resolution, passed in June 1950 stated that factories would be managed by

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<sup>22</sup> Božo Repe: *Rdeča Slovenija : tokovi in obrazi iz obdobja socializma* [Red Slovenia : Currents and Faces from the period of socialism]. Ljubljana 2003.



workers' collectives through the mechanism of a workers' council. The new system would respect notions of business independence and the market, and would strive to limit the influence of state planning. The role of the Yugoslav Communist Party would also change: it would no longer play a direct management role but would limit itself to an ideological role in designing social development. This change was reflected even in the name of the party which was changed to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia at the VI. Congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party (November 2–7, 1952 in Zagreb). Many in the leadership opposed the new direction and even Tito in later years said numerous times, in internal meetings, that the VI. Congress was a mistake.

There was a period of party 'liberalism' in the sixties that introduced elements of the market economy into social ownership and gave greater independence to the individual Yugoslav republics. This was followed by a swing back toward non-competitive economic policies in the seventies that some economists called a 'consent economy' (companies would agree among themselves rather than compete) and the introduction once again of more strict ideological social controls (among other things, moral-political criteria for state jobs, teaching positions, and other posts). The young 'liberal' generation of leaders was removed and leadership positions were taken over by old experienced hands.<sup>23</sup> In the new system of the seventies, socialist logic prevailed once again, with big industrial complexes, an unqualified labour force, egalitarianism, and a renewed emphasis on the class avant-garde of the party. But the system would not have been able to survive without financial injections from abroad (the cheap international credit of the seventies). The erosion of the deputy system (as elected deputies at all levels were being replaced by collective representation as a means of ensuring maximum participation of the people) meant more and more power was concentrated in the executive and administrative organs. These new policies were a 'silent' form of centralization. Compensation for the total ideological and administrative control of the communist party was social tranquillity. Nevertheless, a complete return to the old way was no longer possible. While on the one hand individual opponents of the regime were jailed during the seventies, on the other, a number of benefits from the period of 'liberalism' remained in place. In the public sphere, this period was called 'the leaden years'.

Conditions began to change again after Tito's death in 1980. These changes occurred under the pressure of a growing economic and political crisis, and transformations in the wider Eastern bloc, and ultimately led to the emergence of opposition parties, multiparty voting, and the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia.

To sum up, the essential historical differences between Yugoslavia and the other Eastern European countries resided in the waging of an independent war for national liberation, authentic revolution, and a relatively short period of Stalinism (though some residual elements of Stalinism remained). Yugoslavia was

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<sup>23</sup> Božo Repe: *"Liberalizem" v Sloveniji* ["Liberalism" in Slovenia]. Ljubljana 1992.

not a member of the Warsaw Pact and this allowed the country to search for independent alternatives. Other important differences, particularly from the sixties onward, were Yugoslavia's decentralization, the freer functioning of the economy and the market, the existence of mixed ownership (despite overwhelming state ownership), a tendency toward consumerism, some forms of pluralism in economic and cultural life and even in the ideology of the national party, relative openness of the information system, and the free movement of people.

The limitations of the Yugoslav model resulted from the leading party elite's dominant mode of thinking, which in turn emerged directly from the Leninist party school by which the party has the final word on all social arrangements. What Yugoslavia had in common with its Eastern European counterparts was the one-party system and the domination of the political elite over all other centres of power, economic centres of power for example. Titoism therefore appealed to Marxist ideology: power came through revolution led by professional revolutionaries in the name of the working class. The avant-garde role of the party was never questioned despite its formal renunciation of power.

Titoism in foreign policy was carried out according to the following principles: respect for sovereignty, independence, integrity, and equality, recognition and development of peaceful coexistence among nations regardless of ideological differences, mutual support and non-intervention in internal affairs. Thanks to its Titoism, Yugoslavia, in its international and interparty relations, was in a unique position compared to other Eastern European countries (which were constrained by their limited sovereignty). The development of the non-aligned movement strengthened Yugoslavia's position as an actor in foreign policy, to the extent that its influence considerably exceeded its territorial, economic and military power. In terms of domestic politics, from the nineteen fifties onward, Titoism allowed for decentralization, the gradual reduction of repression, the partial liberalization of the economy, the growth in the production of consumer goods and living standards, and the introduction of some elements of democracy. Some members of the leadership detected in these processes a revival of the capitalist system. As for democratization, each time it came to the point of breaking up the party monopoly, Tito himself put a stop to it. This happened for the first time in the early fifties. At that time, Tito rejected the proposal that the self-management system would include classic bourgeois rights, albeit with a socialist name (for example, Milovan Đilas' idea of a two-party socialist system). He also ultimately rejected the already mentioned 'party liberalism'.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless Titoism – especially in the sixties and seventies – became something essentially different from state socialism in other Eastern European countries. During these two decades, Tito, at times forcefully, succeeded in cre-

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<sup>24</sup> Božo Repe: *Refleksija treh največjih jugoslovanskih povojnih znotrajpartijskih obračunov ("informbira", "đilasovščine" in partijskega "liberalizma") v Sloveniji* [Reflections on the Three Largest Yugoslav Postwar Intraparty Struggles (Informbira, Đilasism, and "Liberalism") in Slovenia]. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 1999, No. 1–2.

ating the basic conditions for the modernization process, something the previous political elite had failed to do. This included agrarian reform, industrialization, separation of church and state, and, at least on the formal level, the emancipation of women. He much improved educational standards; all the Yugoslav republics and peoples acquired school systems (including universities), which they hadn't necessarily had before. Nevertheless the existing differences between individual republics and regions actually increased for a variety of reasons. In terms of housing, clothing, culture (especially music, theatre and film), and leisure, Yugoslavs tended to adopt western ways, while taking from socialism what suited them (free education, good healthcare, full employment).

Throughout the period of Titoism, Tito himself never renounced the leadership role of the party (i.e. the head of a small elite group of communists), which is why he could never cross the magical border between 'democratization' and real democracy. He was too ideologically restricted to bring about a true market economy (the communist leaders would have called it a return to capitalism) or to introduce political pluralism, which would have meant the party's loss of its monopoly on power.

What did the end of World War Two, through the prism of the changes described above, mean to Slovenians? Certainly it was one of the most significant breaks in Slovenian history. The Slovenian people, though earmarked for destruction, survived because of the partisan resistance movement. Though the nationalist goal of the unification of Slovenian lands was not entirely realized, the situation, as compared to conditions before the war, was greatly improved as the Littoral was returned to Slovenia (Paris Peace Conference 1947, London Memorandum 1954, and Osimo Agreements 1975). In terms of its role within Yugoslavia, Slovenia was first a federal unit, only later acquiring the status of federal republic with the right to self-determination and secession, a right which was exercised in 1991 with the attainment of independence. At the same time, the other major consequence of the war was the introduction of communism as the most radical social program within the Liberation Front. This 'duality' – on the one hand the survival of the nation as the result of the resistance movement, the unification of large parts of Slovenian ethnic territory in one federal unit, the establishment of statehood within the Yugoslav federation, and on the other hand, the introduction of communism and the brutal postwar settling of accounts – remains even today the fundamental dividing line between perspectives on the end of World War Two. In comparison with other Eastern and Central European countries, there are a number of specificities in the Slovenian case that complicate the interpretation of this period, chief among them the authenticity of the Slovenian (and Yugoslav) revolution. The postwar modernization process (industrialization, social and health protection, access to education, laicization of the country, emancipation of women...) was accomplished in a specific, communist way and largely by force, though also as a consequence of the incompetence and conservative nature of the prewar bourgeois elite. The

gradual softening of the system in subsequent decades, the opening of the borders, the acceptance of western consumerism and habits alongside socialistic egalitarianism, offered the generations born after the war a relatively unchallenging though comfortable childhood in the system known as Titoism. Slovenian perspectives on the consequences of the war are therefore divided: on the political level to the extent that nothing can be agreed on – from holidays to anniversaries to national celebrations – and on the personal level as a result of the specific experiences of individuals and families and their subsequent ideological persuasion.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Spremembe v socialni, nacionalni strukturi slovenske družbe in načinu življenja kot posledica druge svetovne vojne*

Za Slovence je bila kot prva tudi druga svetovna vojna ena od največjih zgodovinskih prelomnic z velikimi političnimi, gospodarskimi, socialnimi, kulturnimi in demografskimi spremembami (število vseh žrtev vojne je bilo okrog 90.000 ali 6% tedanjega prebivalstva). Po drugi svetovni vojni sta se temeljito spremenili socialna in nacionalna struktura družbe, kot tudi način življenja večine ljudi. Težko pričakovana svoboda je pri večini ljudi sprožila val navdušenja in prepričanje da je možno v kratkem spremeniti razmere ter pripravljenost na odrekanje in delo v korist skupnosti. Množično so sodelovali pri gospodarski obnovi in graditvi.

Konec druge svetovne vojne je na Slovenskem pomenil tudi začetek nastajanja nacionalne države. Idealni slovenski narodnoprogramski cilj, združitev v eni upravni enoti – državi vsa ozemlja, kjer so Slovenci (program Zedinjene Slovenije iz leta 1848) sicer ni bil v celoti uresničen. Bil je uresničen delno, saj je bilo k Sloveniji priključeno ozemlje ki je po prvi svetovni vojni pripadlo Kraljevini Italiji. V okviru jugoslovanske države je bila Slovenija federalna enota; v Jugoslavijo je bila vključena na osnovi pravice do samoodločbe narodov vključno s pravico do odcepitve, kar je bilo vneseno v ustavno ureditev.

Čeprav je ustava, sprejeta po zmagi Ljudske fronte na volitvah leta 1945, formalno zagotavljala večstrankarski sistem (v zakonodaji se je ohranil do leta 1965), je nova oblast s strankami (tistimi, ki so nastopale samostojno in tistimi, ki so se vključile v Ljudsko fronto) in z neformalno opozicijo v prvih dveh letih po vojni obračunala. Ustava je dajala pravni okvir sistemu ljudske demokracije. Komunistična partija je delovala v ozadju, vendar je s podvajanjem partijskih in državnih funkcij v celoti obvladovala vsa glavna področja v družbi. O vsem je odločal politični biro (politbiro) CK KPJ z desetimi ljudmi. Kadrovska uprava CK KPS je neposredno skrbela za 6000 vodilnih funkcij v republiki, komiteji na nižjih ravneh pa še za nadaljnjih 10.000.

Nova politična in gospodarska elita so postali vodilni iz partizanskega in predvojnega revolucionarnega gibanja. Večinoma so izšli iz nižjih slojev in so bili pomanjkljivo izobraženi. Ključni kriterij za dosego položaja v družbi je postal politični in ne strokovni. Ena glavnih novih značilnosti je postala egalitarnost. Pojem meščanstvo je dobil negativni prizvok. "Čiščenje" je zajelo različne poklice, skozi administrativne in sodne postopke pa je šlo po približnih ocenah več 20.000 oseb. Poleg "čiščenja" družbe na politični in upravni ravni, je nova oblast izvajala tudi fizično odstranjevanje nasprotnikov z izvensodnim pobijanjem; pobitih je bilo več kot 13.000 pripadnikov Slovenskega domobranstva.

Izvedena je bila agrarna reforma in nacionalizacija. Vpeljan je bil kult fizičnega dela, udarništvo in delovna tekmovanja. Na kulturnem in umetniškem področju se je povečeval sovjetski vpliv. Kulturni ustvarjalci so postali državni uradniki, organizirani v stanovskih društvih, prevladujoča smer v umetnosti je postal sorealizem. V šolstvu, ki je postalo dostopno vsem, so bile poudarjene pridobitve narodnoosvobodilnega boja in revolucije. Omejen je bil vpliv katoliške cerkve. V razmerah vsesplošnega pomanjkanja so oblasti oskrbo, še zlasti mestnega prebivalstva, skušale reševati s prisilnim odkupom pridelkov in živine pri kmetih (ti so se temu upirali) in z administrativnim razdeljevanjem živil (nakaznice) ter z mednarodno pomočjo UNRRA. Uvedena je bila večja socialna in zdravstvena zaščita.

Nova oblast je skušala zapoznel proces modernizacije slovenske družbe uresničiti v okviru uvajanja novega družbenega reda. Med modernizacijo je bila tudi ženska emancipacija. Pojmovana je bila na specifičen način; glavne nosilke enakopravnosti so bile revolucionarke, ki so se prebile med vojno v politični vrh in so svet dojemale "skozi Marxa in Lenina" ter z "ognjem svetega zanosa." Zasedale so okrog 10% vodilnih položajev v politiki. Ženske so dobile volilno pravico, večje možnosti zaposlitve, porodniški dopust (sprva zelo skromen, manj kot trimesečni). V vseh pogledih, tudi glede fizičnega dela, naj bi postale moškimi enakovredne.

Posledica vojne je bila tudi spremenjena nacionalna struktura. Slovensko ozemlje je med vojno in po njej zapustila nemška manjšina (okrog 25.000 ljudi), ki se je že pred vojno v glavnem nacificirala; okoli 15.000 jih je zbežalo še pred koncem vojne, ostali pa so bili izgnani konec leta 1945 in v začetku leta 1946. S slovenskega ozemlja, ki je po mirovni pogodbi z Italijo (februar 1947) in Spomenico o soglasju, t.i. londonski pogodbi (oktober 1954) pripadlo Jugoslaviji/Sloveniji, se je izselilo okoli 47.000 oseb, večinoma Italijanov. Okrog 17.000 ljudi pa je iz Slovenije emigriralo zaradi političnih razlogov.

"Dvojnost" posledic vojne – na eni strani preživetje naroda, kar je bila posledica upora okupatorju, vzpostavitev državnosti znotraj jugoslovanske federacije, združitev večjega dela slovenskega ozemlja v eni državi, na drugi pa vpeljava novega političnega sistema in drastičen obračun z nasprotniki – sta danes temeljna pogleda na konec druge svetovne vojne v Sloveniji. Slovenski pogled na posledice druge svetovne vojne je zato razdvojen.

UDK 355.425(437.6)"1939/1945"

Dušan Segeš\*

*The Slovak Question and its International Context during World War Two\*\**

During the seven years of World War Two, more concepts, drafts and projects dealing with Slovakia and the Slovak question were created than ever before. Some of them had no basis in reality and appeared to be little more than political science-fiction, while others deserve serious consideration. The latter may be placed into two categories: the first assuming a victory of Germany and the Axis powers and the second assuming a victory of the Allied troops over Nazi Germany and her satellite states.

First, it is necessary to explain what is meant by the term 'the Slovak question'. The Slovak question encompassed the various concepts and proposals regarding Slovakia generated by the British Foreign Office, the French Quai d'Orsay, the Polish Government (and particularly the Foreign Ministry led by Minister Spraw Zagranicznych), the Czechoslovak Government in Exile, and the German Auswärtiges Amt (insofar as the evaluation of Slovak 'independence' acquired on March 14, 1939 – the establishment of the Slovak Republic – was concerned). More specifically, the Slovak question deals with the evolution of the Slovak nation-building process in the twentieth century, with possibilities for preserving an independent Slovak state after World War Two, and last but not least, with the cultivation of diplomatic contacts with Slovak politicians in exile during World War Two. Opinions concerning the Slovak question and its possible solutions were as different as the political programs of individual Slovak leaders.

1. During World War Two, there were many Slovaks who collaborated with the German Third Reich; there were also many Slovaks who were leaders of the Slovak resistance abroad and fought alongside the Allied forces. A special phenomenon, sometimes referred to as the polarised historical memory of the Slovaks, emerged from this division. Let me start with the Slovak state, or the Slovak Republic. On March 14, 1939, Czechoslovakia was divided and the Slovak Republic was established as an independent state. The new entity was recognized by more than twenty countries, either *de jure* (by Poland and Hungary) or *de*

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*facto* (by France and Great Britain) and had become a subject of international law.<sup>1</sup> But the political reality in Slovak Republic was far beyond the recognition of any democratic regime. There was the ongoing persecution of political opponents, the establishment of the so-called 'Jewish Codex' in September 1941,<sup>2</sup> and the forcible deportation of nearly 80,000 Slovaks of Jewish descent to concentration camps despite the protests of the Holy See. The latter is one of the most tragic episodes in modern Slovak history. Nazi Germany concluded a series of 'protective' treaties with the Slovak government, thus creating a foundation to control all aspects of life in Slovakia. The Slovak Army joined the German Wehrmacht (and the Soviet Red Army) in the attack on Poland in September 1, 1939.<sup>3</sup> Though Slovak soldiers took an active part alongside the German Wehrmacht on both the Eastern and Western Fronts, at the end of the war there were more Slovaks fighting on the Allied side than on the German or Axis side. There were thousands of Slovak volunteers fighting against the Axis – with the Czech and Slovak Legion in Poland in 1939, with Czechoslovak troops in France, the Middle East and Great Britain, the First Czechoslovak Army Corps formed in the Soviet Union, the Slovak Platoon 535 fighting in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising against the Germans, and most importantly of all, the approximately 75,000 Slovak partisans fighting in the Slovak National Uprising that broke out on August 29, 1944.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For recognition by Great Britain: Edita Ivaničková: *Britská politika a Slovensko v rokoch 1939–1945* [British policy and Slovakia in 1939–1945]. In: *Slovensko na konci druhej svetovej vojny*, Bratislava 1994, p. 126; František Vnuk: British Recognition of Independent Slovakia in 1939. In: "Slovak Studies", *Historica*, Vol. IX, 6, p. 61. For recognition by Poland: Martin Holák: *Slovensko-poľské vzťahy od marca do septembra 1939* [Slovak-Polish Relations from March to September 1939]. In: *Slovenská republika očami mladých historikov IV* [The Slovak Republic as Seen by Young Historians, Vol. IV], Banská Bystrica 2005, pp. 317–318; Dušan Segeš: *Vojensko-politické aktivity Karola Sidora od 14. marca do 1. septembra 1939 na pozadí slovensko-poľských vzťahov* [The Military and Political Activities of Karol Sidor from March 14 to September 1, 1939 against the Background of Slovak-Polish Relations]. In: "Vojenská história", Bratislava, 2005, No. 1, pp. 3–6. For the attempts of the Slovak diplomacy to achieve the recognition of the Slovak Republic by the United States of America: Slavomír Michálek: *Vstup do niektorých problémov slovensko-amerických vzťahov (1939–1945)* [Introduction to Issues Concerning Slovak-American Relations (1939–1945)]. In: *Slovenská republika..., op. cit.*, pp. 144–155. Also: Pavol Petruf: *Vichystické Francúzsko a diplomatické uznanie Slovenskej republiky* [The Vichy-France and the Diplomatic Recognition of Slovak Republic in 1939–1945]. In: "Historický časopis", 2000, No. 1, pp. 131–152; *idem*: *Politické vzťahy medzi Francúzskom a Československom a Francúzskom a Slovenskom (1939–1948)*. Výber z dokumentov [Political relations between France and Czechoslovakia and France and Slovakia (1939–1948)]. Martin 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Nariadenie o právnom postavení Židov (Dokumenty). Edícia Judaica, Vol. 43, Bratislava 2000; Ivan Kamenec: *Po stopách tragédie* [Pursuing the Tragedy]. Bratislava 1991.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed description of this issue: Igor Baka: *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku* [The Slovak Republic and Nazi Aggression against Poland]. Bratislava 2006.

<sup>4</sup> See i.e.: *Slovenské národné povstanie. Dokumenty*. [Slovak National Uprising. Documents] Bratislava 1965; Jozef Jablonický: *Z ilegality do povstania* [From Illegality to Uprising], Bratislava 1969; *idem*: *Povstanie bez legend* [Uprising without Legends], Vol. 1, Bratislava

But what was the response of the officials of the Slovak government in Bratislava when faced with the military defeats of Wehrmacht and the Slovak Army on both the Eastern and Western Fronts and in North Africa? First of all, I would like to state that the persistent claim that Slovak authorities made no attempts during the war to contact the Allied governments is untrue. In 1943, a memorandum entitled "La Question Slovaque" was compiled by the Slovak Envoy to the Holy See, and by Karol Sidor, former Prime Minister of the Slovak independent government (during 1939), and sent to the State Department in Washington (for details see Point 2 and Supplement B). A year later, in July 1944, a similar attempt was made by General Ferdinand Čatloš, Slovak Defence Minister and Supreme Commander of the Slovak Armed Forces. General Čatloš' plan included a *coup d'état* and the installation of a pro-Soviet military dictatorship under his command. He offered the Red Army transit through the territory. When the memorandum was finally delivered to Stalin, the plan was already obsolete because of the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising.<sup>5</sup> Any other attempt by Slovak officials had no time to succeed as the Allies announced the unconditional surrender of the Axis states at the Casablanca Conference in February 1943. The restoration of the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic had already been assured by Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union.

There is another aspect of the situation that deserves mention: namely, the persecution of the political opposition in the Slovak Republic. In comparison with neighbouring states and especially Germany, the Slovak regime proceeded slowly dealing with its opponents – though it should be noted this is not true of the Jews and Roma who were summarily deported to concentration camps. The prosperity generated by the war all but eliminated unemployment, and supplies for the population were plentiful despite wartime conditions, a situation which later spawned the myth of Slovakia as a Central European Switzerland. Slovakia as a German *Muster Staat* was an attractive example to other countries in similar situations, such as the NDH (Independent State of Croatia), Lithuania (in the 1939–40 period), and even to some individual politicians (such as Slovene Anton Korošec who in the summer of 1940 visited his old friend, Jozef Tiso, who had been Slovak President since 1939). In this context, a few remarks concerning the political contacts between Slovenian and Slovak politicians during this period would be appropriate. Just a few days before the German and Hungarian invasion of Yugoslavia, Fran Kulovec and Miha Krek visited Ivan

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1990; Alan Clifford Brown: *The Czechoslovak Airforce in Britain, 1940–1945*, Southampton 1998, available under <http://www.ssci.freemove.co.uk/airmen.html>; Jiří Friedl: *Na jedné frontě : Vztahy československé a polské armády (Polskie Siły Zbrojne) za druhé světové války* [On one Battlefield : Relations between the Czechoslovak and the Polish Army during the Second World War]. Praha 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Rychlík: *Češi a Slováci ve 20. století : Česko-slovenské vztahy 1914–1945* [Czechs and Slovaks in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century : Czecho-Slovak relations 1914–1945], Bratislava 1997, Document No. 23, pp. 350–351; Václav Štefanský: *Generál Ferdinand Čatloš*. Bratislava 1998, pp. 58–73.



Milecz, the Slovak *chargé d'affaires*, in Belgrade in order to survey the attitude of the German government towards a possible declaration of an independent Slovenian state, which would eventually be a common state of Slovenians and Croats. The proposal was rejected by Adolf Hitler.<sup>6</sup>

There is no doubt that the degree of Slovak independence was absolutely dependent upon the will of Berlin. The attempts of Slovak leaders to reduce the overwhelming German influence in almost every sphere of quotidian life in Slovakia (by reaching out to the Allies, by trying to develop economic, cultural, and political ties with other states such as Poland and the Soviet Union) ultimately failed due to German pressure. This failure resulted in the participation of the Slovak Republic in Nazi Germany aggression against Poland in September 1939 and the Soviet Union in June 1941.<sup>7</sup>

Another point of interest is how the Slovak question was dealt with in exile. By late 1938, many Slovak politicians were active abroad. Some had been prominent figures and officials in the Czechoslovak State during the interwar period. These included Štefan Osuský, the Czechoslovak ambassador to France, Vladimír Hurban, the Czechoslovak ambassador in Washington, and Milan Hodža, a former Prime Minister. Later, a number of officials of the independent Slovakia became part of the political opposition and joined political movements in exile. They included Peter Prídavok, Rudolf Viest, the first Slovak General, Ján Lichner, Ján Pauliny-Tóth, and some diplomatic representatives of the independent Slovak state such as Ladislav Szathmáry (Slovak envoy to Poland until September 1939), and Milan Harminc (Slovak *chargé d'affaires* to Great Britain until September 1939). Many of these figures went through a complicated process, a kind of political metamorphosis and represented a number of different political options and programs along the way. Hodža regarded himself as the leader of Slovak political emigrés and tried to reach an agreement with Edvard Beneš, the former Czechoslovak president, in order to attain unity within the Czechoslovak foreign resistance movement. When this attempt failed, Hodža established the Slovak National Council that was reorganized into the Czecho-Slovak National Council (Česko-Slovenská národná rada) in January 1940. It is worth noting that the first diplomatic act confirming the legal continuity of the Czechoslovak Republic was an agreement signed by Štefan Osuský, ambassador to France, and the French government. This agreement, signed in October 1939, allowed the organization of Czechoslovak military troops on French territory and opened the door for the establishment of the Czechoslovak National Committee (Československý národný výbor). Despite the fact that the political position of Osuský

<sup>6</sup> Bojan Godeša: *Jozef Tiso a Anton Korošec – vzťahy medzi Slovákmi a Slovincami* [Jozef Tiso and Anton Korošec – Relations between Slovaks and Slovenians]. In: *Historický časopis*, 2005, No. 2, pp. 365–379.

<sup>7</sup> A detailed analysis of German policy in Slovakia is offered in the recent work of Tatjana Tönsmeier: *Das Dritte Reich und die Slowakei 1939–1945. Politischer Alltag zwischen Kooperation und Eigensinn*. Paderborn 2005.

within the Czecho-Slovak resistance was strong at the outset – this was largely because of his contacts at the Quai d'Orsay and the existence of Czecho-Slovak National Council headed by Hodža–Edvard Beneš managed to establish himself as the leader of the Czecho-Slovak resistance movement-in-exile. As Beneš had more influence in London than in Paris, one circumstance that led to this situation was the fall of France in June 1940. Furthermore, Beneš satisfied both the British and French governments by calling for an appropriate solution to the Slovak question in the exile community. This meant above all an agreement by the Slovaks led by Hodža. When members of Hodža's Czecho-Slovak National Council were arrested by British authorities upon their arrival from France (on the basis of information forwarded by the Czechoslovak Secret Service), Hodža lost his political platform and agreed to accept the office of Vice President of the State Council, a Czechoslovak quasi-parliament in exile, though he never took an active part in executing this function. In October 1941, he decided to leave London for the United States where he made several attempts to unify under his political programme both Americans of Slovak descent and Slovaks living in America. But Hodža's plans to establish a Slovak National Council in the United States failed and until his death in June 1944, he represented the political programme of an autonomous Slovakia with its own parliament and ministries within Czecho-Slovakia. Since the outbreak of World War Two, he had been advocating for a Central European federation (in 1942 he published a book entitled *Federation in Central Europe*<sup>8</sup>) and warned of the dangers of dividing the world into spheres of influence (in the memorandum "Europe at the Crossroads" delivered to the Department of State, to name one example<sup>9</sup>). Osuský was also in conflict with Beneš, criticizing his approach to the Slovak question and objecting to Beneš' insistence on calling himself president.<sup>10</sup> Beneš' conflict with Osuský ended in March 1942 when he resigned from the Czechoslovak provisional government. Later, in 1944, the Slovak National Council (Slovenská národná rada) also repudiated Beneš' ideas for a postwar settlement of the Slovak question.

Another issue requires attention: was the Slovak question an internal Czecho-slovak or an international one? While Edvard Beneš succeeded in convincing both the British and French governments in 1940 that unity between Czechs and Slovaks had already been achieved under his leadership, the Polish government in exile had a different response. Some historians suggest that at the end of 1939

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<sup>8</sup> Milan Hodža: *Federation in Central Europe. Reflections and Reminiscences*, London : Jarrolds Publishers 1942 (Slovak translation Milan Hodža: *Federácia v strednej Európe a iné štúdie*, Bratislava 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Pavol Lukáč: *K osudom Hodžovho memoranda* (Čo predchádzalo zaslaniu Hodžovho memoranda Europe at the Crossroads State Departmentu v zime 1944). In: *Střední Evropa*, 1996, No. 62.

<sup>10</sup> Osuský published some pamphlets criticizing Beneš' theory of legal continuity, his presidency, and his attitude to the Slovak question. Štefan Osuský: *Beneš a Slovensko* [Beneš and Slovakia], London 1943. Some of Osuský's pamphlets were translated into English. Štefan Osuský: "Truth Conquers" (A Glance into the Mirror of the Second Revolution), New York 1943.

and beginning of 1940, Hodža enjoyed broader support among Polish officials than Beneš.<sup>11</sup> One of the main goals of the Polish government, as can be read in an official proclamation from October 1939, was the liberation of 'Czech lands and Slovakia' – not Czechoslovakia.<sup>12</sup> When the Poles recognized the Czechoslovak National Committee as the Czechoslovak provisional government in July 1940, they emphasized that the problem of Slovakia should be settled only in accordance with the wishes of Slovaks and in the interest of Central European stability after the war. On the other hand, Milan Hodža, in a memorandum dated November 1939, expressed his conviction that the Slovaks could play a crucial role in minimizing the traditional animosities between Czechs and Poles that had rendered impossible neighbourly relations in the interwar period. He forwarded this memorandum to the Polish and British governments.<sup>13</sup> To the contrary, Beneš, during talks with Polish Prime Minister General Władysław Sikorski and Count Edward Raczyński, Polish Ambassador in Great Britain, emphasized that under no circumstances would he give another 'Pittsburgh Agreement' to the Slovaks (signed in 1918 by the first Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk and Americans of Slovak descent and promising the Slovaks political autonomy within Czechoslovakia, a situation which wasn't realized until November 22, 1938). The Poles—said Beneš—must understand that there are only Czechoslovaks, no Czechs or Slovaks.<sup>14</sup> This thesis was accepted by Polish officials in exile and was the general line of Polish policy during the negotiations on Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation that began in November 1940. This changed, however, when the Czechoslovak government-in-exile cancelled negotiations in May 1943, three weeks after Stalin's decision to break off diplomatic relations with Poland. In 1943, Slovakia began to appear as an independent unit in the plans of an anti-Soviet and anti-Bolshevik Central European federation considered by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It also came up during secret Polish-Hungarian negotiations in Lisbon and Stockholm toward the end of 1943.<sup>15</sup> However, the possibility that this plan would become reality was greatly reduced by the

<sup>11</sup> Maria Turlejska: *Spór o Polskę. Szkice historyczne* [Dispute about Poland. Historical Sketches]. Warsaw 1981, p. 107; Tadeusz P. Rutkowski: Stanisław Kot 1885–1975. Biografia polityczna, Warsaw 2000, p. 208.

<sup>12</sup> *Sprawa polska w czasie drugiej wojny światowej na arenie międzynarodowej : Zbiór dokumentów* [The Polish question in the international arena during the Second World War : Collection of documents], Warsaw 1965, Document No. 79, pp. 125–126.

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum by Dr. Hodza on Collective Security in Central Europe, 28. 11. 1939. *Dokumenty československé zahraniční politiky, Od rozpadu Česko-Slovenska do uznání československé prozatímní vlády 1939–1940* (16. března 1939–15. června 1940), Vol. B/2, Praha 2002, Document No. 152, pp. 320–324.

<sup>14</sup> Sikorski-Beneš talk, September 5, 1940. *Czechoslovak-Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of the Confederation and Alliance 1939–1944*, Praha 1995, Vol. 1, Document Nr. 23, p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> See also Hungarian memorandum by Károly Schrecker and Aladár Szegedy-Maszák delivered to the Allies in 1943. Gyula Juhász: *Hungarian Foreign Policy 1919–1945*. Budapest 1979, pp. 243–245.

decision of the Allies to invade Italy rather than the Balkans. The decision meant that Central European countries would be liberated by the Soviets. Nevertheless, the plan emphasized the importance of Slovakia and the attention given to it by its neighbours in their hopes of creating a defensive north-south vertical axis (from the Baltic to the Black Sea). This geopolitical concept intersected the horizontal line that President Beneš (motivated by the so-called 'Munich complex') considered the direct shared frontier with the Soviet Union, his *conditio sine qua non* being the viability of a restored postwar Czechoslovakia. Hence his feverish efforts to secure a political alliance with the Soviet Union.

Because of his specific political orientation, Edvard Beneš was unable to understand the evolution of the Slovak question and the stage it reached during World War Two. Despite the authoritarian regime ruling the country, the reality of an independent Slovakia had become important to most Slovaks. It played a crucial role in the process of national emancipation. Beneš, therefore, staked his political and ethnic positions on a 'Czechoslovakism' that the majority of Slovaks did not accept. All the same, in the context of the international political situation at the end of World War Two, Beneš' political program put forth the possibility of a positive territorial solution for Slovakia. This laid the groundwork for one of the great paradoxes of the whole controversy surrounding the Slovak question as it was perceived by Czecho-Slovak exiles. Hodža, whose political program concerning the political future of Slovakia was based on a fully autonomous Slovakia within a reconstituted Czecho-Slovakia, was prepared to accept as the basis for a postwar settlement the frontiers established during the Vienna Arbitration in November 1938 (which meant the loss of one-third of Slovakia's territory and more than 850,000 of its inhabitants). On the contrary, Beneš, long suspected of being 'anti-Slovak', stated that the restoration of pre-Munich Czechoslovakia was his most important political goal, which in effect meant the restoration of Slovakia's frontiers as they existed prior to September 1938.

2. Taking into consideration the international political situation during World War Two, opinions concerning the Slovak question and possible solutions to it were generated in two separate and antagonistic camps, in other words in two different worlds.

The concept of the National-Socialist 'New Order', sometimes called 'New Europe', appeared in the summer 1940 and was based foremost on economic considerations. First in the deliberations of the committee for Southeast Europe of Reichsgruppe Industrie (headed by Wilhelm Voss) and later in the outlines of the planning board of the Gesellschaft für Südosteuropa, Slovakia figured not as an independent state but as an affiliated region of the Grossdeutsches Reich. Two approaches prevailed in the general assessment of the Slovak political situation among the German officials and their advisers in the Slovak ministries: the first called for the preservation of Slovakia as an independent state that would occupy the position of *Hilfsnation* (helping nation), and the second emphasized the importance of assimilation of suitable Slovak national elements

into the German population, a process that would last several generations.

However, these were not the only approaches to Slovakia and its territorial issues discussed in the Axis camp. In late December 1939, Arthur Bliss-Lane, the American Ambassador in Belgrade, had a talk with Tibor Eckhardt, the leader of the Hungarian Smallholders Party. Eckhardt informed Bliss-Lane about the plans of Italy to build – together with Hungary – a "union of Roman Catholic peoples, i.e. Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and Slovakia, the end of the axis being in Rome."<sup>16</sup>

There were other plans generated and discussed in exile as well as in the framework of the resistance movement in Slovakia. Edvard Beneš' point of departure was based on the legal continuity of the pre-Munich Czechoslovak Republic. This point of departure was shared by many Slovak ministers in the Czechoslovak National Committee (that had become the Czechoslovak government-in-exile following recognition of the British government), including Juraj Slávik, former Czechoslovak Ambassador in Poland (later Minister of the Interior), General Rudolf Viest, and others. This meant that anything that happened after the Munich Agreement was void, the consequence being that Slovakia would have no special position as far as local political autonomy was concerned within the reconstituted Czechoslovak Republic. However, a number of prominent Slovak politicians in exile (including Milan Hodža and Štefan Osuský) and the Slovak National Council constituted in December 1943 by the representatives of almost all resistance groups in Slovakia (including the Communists) insisted on granting broad political autonomy to the Slovaks in a reconstituted Czecho-Slovak Republic. Last but not least, Slovak political organizations acting in the West were making demands for an independent Slovak state after the war. This included the Slovak League in the United States which represented the majority of Americans of Slovak descent (see Supplement A) and the Slovak National Council in London established on January 9, 1944 and headed by Peter Prídavok (see Supplement C). Insofar as the postwar European security system was concerned, a number of advanced political talks took place between the Czechoslovak and Polish governments in exile that might have led to the creation of a Czechoslovak-Polish federation, or – as Edvard Beneš preferred to call it – a *confederation sui generis*. The Slovak question played an important role in these negotiations. These ambitious plans were followed by the Kremlin with a keen eye and both governments were on the receiving end of Soviet pressure. In the end, Beneš decided to drop these plans and signed a political agreement with the Soviet Union in December 1943.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Memorandum on the conversation between Bliss-Lane and Eckhardt, Budapest, December 23, 1939. National Archives and Record Administration (NARA), Washington, Microcopy 59 (Decimal Files), roll 3, file 760H.64/199. Eckhardt, who emigrated in 1941 to the United States, also discussed with Bliss-Lane the talks he had in Yugoslavia with Vladko Maček, the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS).

<sup>17</sup> For detailed information concerning the Czechoslovak-Polish confederation plans Piotr

After 1942, another possibility for a postwar European settlement was discussed – namely, a Catholic Federation that would include Poland, Czech lands, Bavaria, Hungary, Austria, Croatia, and an independent Slovakia. Though it was said at the time that the plan enjoyed the support of the Vatican, it was always more of a journalistic notion than a real political project.

Another aspect that deserves mention is the political contacts between Slovak politicians acting in opposition to the Czechoslovak government, the diplomatic representatives of the Slovak Republic, and the Polish government in exile. In March 1943, Karol Sidor, the Slovak Envoy to the Vatican, who maintained close contact with Polish Ambassador Kazimierz Papée, received a message from Count Edward Raczynski, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, demanding a political declaration supporting the idea of a Central European federation.<sup>18</sup> The declaration should be submitted to the Allies. In this context, it should be noted that the Polish Ambassador to the Holy See served as an intermediary between Sidor and the American officials – similar to the role that Polish diplomats played in neutral states such as Portugal and Turkey and as mediator between Hungarian officials and the Allies.<sup>19</sup> In June 1943, Sidor re-

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Wandycz.: *Czechoslovak-Polish Confederation and the Great Powers*. Bloomington 1956; Detlef Brandes: *Großbritannien und seine osteuropäischen Alliierten 1939–1943 : Die Regierungen Polens, der Tschechoslowakei und Jugoslawiens im Londoner Exil vom Kriegsausbruch bis zur Konferenz von Teheran*. München 1988; Tadeusz Kisielewski: *Federacja środkowoeuropejska. Pertraktacje polsko-czechosłowackie 1939–1943* [Central European Federation. Polish-Czechoslovak Negotiations 1939–1943]. Warsaw 1991; *Czechoslovak-Polish Negotiations of the Establishment of the Confederation and Alliance 1939–1944*. Praha 1995; Jan Němeček: *Od spojenectví k roztržce : Vztahy československé a polské exilové reprezentace 1939–1945* [From Alliance to Discord : The relations between the Czechoslovak and Polish Governments in Exile 1939–1945]. Praha 2003; Marek Kazimierz Kamiński: *Edvard Beneš kontra gen. Władysław Sikorski : Polityka władz czechosłowackich na emigracji wobec rządu polskiego na uchodźstwie 1939–1943* [Edvard Beneš versus General Władysław Sikorski : Policy of the Czechoslovak Emigré Authorities towards the Polish Government-in-Exile 1939–1943]. Warsaw 2005. The most recent work on the 1943 Beneš-Stalin agreement is Dušan Segeš: *Edvard Beneš a sprawa polska w kontekście podpisania układu czechosłowacko-sowieckiego z 1943 r.* [Edvard Beneš and the Polish question in the context of signing of the Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement in 1943]. In: *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 2006, No. 3, pp. 17–55.

<sup>18</sup> Dušan Segeš: *Wspólna droga Kazimierza Papée z Karolem Sidorem – z historii stosunków polsko-słowackich w okresie II wojny światowej*. [The Common Way of Casimir Papée and Karol Sidor – from the Unknown History of the Polish-Slovak Relations during the Second World War]. In: *Niepodległość*, Warsaw-New York, 2005, pp. 284–316. The Sidor-Papée talks in the Vatican City were like a *déjà-vu*: it should be mentioned, that the plan for a Slovak-Polish union has already been discussed in September 1938, in Prague, when Papée was Polish Envoy to Czechoslovakia. Pavol Čarnogurský: *Deklarácia o únii Slovenska s Poľskom z 28. septembra 1938* [Declaration of union between Slovakia and Poland from September, 28, 1938]. In: *Historický časopis*, 1968, No. 3, pp. 407–423; Valerián Bystrický: *Slovenská otázka v medzivojnovom Československu* [The Slovak question in inter-war Czechoslovakia]. In: *Národnostná otázka v strednej Európe v rokoch 1848 – 1938*. Prešov 2005, pp. 245–246.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Gyula Juhász: *op. cit.*; Laura-Louise Veress, Dalma Takacs: *Clear the Line: Hungary's Struggle to Leave the Axis During the Second World War*. Cleveland 1995.

sponded to the demand with a memorandum titled "La Question Slovaque" (see Supplement B) delivered to Harold C. Tittmann, American *chargé d'affaires* to the Vatican (and chief Assistant to Myron Taylor, Franklin D. Roosevelt's personal representative to the Vatican) and, was addressed to the Department of State in Washington. In the document, Sidor defended Slovakia's right to self-determination and left the door open to the possibility of a confederation of Slovakia, Poland and Czech lands.<sup>20</sup> But Sidor received no answer from the American State Department. His further political efforts with the Polish government aimed at finding a common political platform failed because of differences concerning territorial issues (specifically the Slovak-Polish frontier). Talks between the Slovak political opposition and the Polish government in London resulted in a memorandum by the Slovak National Union (a political organisation headed by Peter Prídavok) and delivered to Minister E. Raczynski in June 1943.<sup>21</sup> These contacts continued after the war in the context of the Central European Federal Club (CEFC) that met in London.<sup>22</sup> All of these initiatives were carried out with the goal of preventing the communisation of Central European states, including Slovakia.

But Slovak Communists had their own plans and political ideas. One of them was the creation of a Soviet Slovakia that would be an integral part of the Soviet Union. The Slovak communist resistance drew on the slogans coming out of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Komunistická strana Československa) acting in Moscow, and Comintern, which was formally abolished by Stalin in May 1943. Nevertheless, the 'Baltic scenario' (i.e. the occupation and annexation of the Baltic states by the Soviet Union) was more of a political gambit to put Beneš under pressure than a real program to be realized after the war.<sup>23</sup>

### Supplemental material

Documents submitted to the governments of the Allies during World War Two by prominent Slovak organizations and politicians for the creation of an independent postwar state of Slovakia.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Pavol Petruf, Dušan Segeš: *Memorandum Karola Sidora Slovenská otázka z júna 1943* [Memorandum by Karol Sidor Slovak Question from June, 1943]. In: *Historický časopis*, 2005, No. 1, pp. 123–150.

<sup>21</sup> Memorandum by Prídavok to Raczynski, June 16, 1943. Hoover Institution Archives (HIA), Stanford, Collection Poland. Poselstwo Czechoslovakia [Polish Legation to Czechoslovakia], box 14.

<sup>22</sup> Prídavok was the President of the CEFC, an organisation of Slovaks, Czechs, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Croats and Serbs.

<sup>23</sup> Dagmar Čierna-Lantayová: *Pohľady na Východ (Postoje k Rusku v slovenskej politike 1934–1944)* [The View to the East. The Attitudes to Russia in the Slovak Politics in 1934–1944]. Bratislava 2002; Toman Brod: *Československo a Sovětský svaz v letech 1939–1945* [Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in 1939–1945]. Praha 1992, p. 264.

<sup>24</sup> Some parts of the presented documents may seem naive, and some of the premises or expectations they include, unrealistic; nevertheless, they allow us to penetrate the mental and

*Supplement A)*

*Memorandum "Slovaks and Their Right to Nationhood" issued by the Slovak League of America and addressed to Cordell Hull, American Secretary of State, on May 10, 1943 (excerpt).*

*(...) Conclusion*

To the majority of Americans of Slovak descent the problem of the future of Slovaks abroad is only one of many problems that will have to be solved after the war is won. We are engaged in a monumental struggle for survival and for the preservation of democratic principles. We are determined to end once and for all the imperialism and tyranny that have brought so much suffering and anguish to individual nations and to humanity as a whole. We make sacrifices, willingly and cheerfully, in order that truth and justice may prevail in this world, despite (and contrary to) the selfish aims of one or more particular groups. We know that only in this way can the peace and happiness of mankind be assured.

The present war is a war of Principles: Liberty against Tyranny; Freedom against Oppression and Persecution; Peace against constant Strife. No exception can be made in the application of the principles for which we are fighting. If we should fall into this trap, our victory will turn into defeat. Seeds of discord and the foundation for more devastating future wars will be planted.

For us, the Slovak question is not one of whether or nor Czecho-Slovakia should be reconstituted. It is not a question of whether Slovakia should be formed into a politically independent state. Higher and more sacred aims concern us; aims which are important not only to us because of our Slovak descent, but which are important to every man and woman prepared today to make the supreme sacrifice in order to assure the happiness of future generations.

"Every nationality, no matter how small, has the inherent right to its own nationhood". This was the pronouncement of our President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. This principle, so clearly setting forth one of the aims of the present struggle, is embodied in the Atlantic Charter. It has been reiterated time and again, in the public utterances made by our leaders and statesman.

We, Americans of Slovak descent; we, who sacrifice and fight today side by side with all peoples who have dedicated their lives to the cause of freedom, appeal to leaders in the name of this sacred cause,

That, considering the fate of Slovakia, they will not permit themselves to be led by those who would deny and who have denied Slovaks the right to their national existence;

That, liberty and freedom and the means to a democratic life be granted to the Slovaks in the same full measure as they shall be granted to other nations. (...)

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moral framework of the authors, who represented an important part of Slovak political thought at that time.



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*Supplement B)*

*Memorandum "La Question Slovaque", issued by Karol Sidor, Slovak Envoy to the Holy See, and submitted to Harold C. Tittmann, American chargé d'affaires, and to the Polish Government-in-Exile, June 1943 (excerpt translated from the French).*

(...) Slovakia after the War

Slovak patriots know very well that a small nation cannot always determine the forms of its future life entirely in accordance with its own will and wishes. For a small nation, it is necessary to adapt itself to the general trends of development in Europe. Nevertheless it is hoped that the future of Europe will be just and honest, and that it will be able to find a place for the small nation of Slovakia. Slovaks regard an independent Slovak State as the best guarantee of satisfactory national development in the future. For this reason, they act in a way that would not give any reason to the Germans to destroy the independent Slovak state by force. In several areas – for example, the Jewish question and the question of racism – Slovaks must consider directives coming from Germany; otherwise they risk angering the Germans, the armed forces of which surround Slovakia along its frontiers with Austria, Moravia and Poland.

Thus the Slovaks are forced to act this way in order to retain their small state and to exist as an independent state after the war.

To organize sabotage against the Germans or begin to kill them would mean the end of Slovak independence.

There is the hope that Slovakia can survive the war by pursuing its present policy.

If the small states of Europe build a greater coalition in the future, Slovaks would be pleased to enter such a coalition as an independent political unit, that is to belong to a federation with their Slavic brothers, the Poles and Czechs, and even with other neighbouring nations, to create a federation. (...)

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*Supplement C)*

*Open Letter from the Slovak National Council in London to Anthony Eden, January 1944 (excerpt)*

Sir,

WE, the undersigned, Slovaks living in Great Britain, who are in the position to speak independently, make in the name of the SLOVAK NATIONAL UNION in London, of which we are members, and in our own name, the following Declaration:

Whereas we certify that we agree to all arrangements made to attain the victory of the Allies in this war, to secure a lasting peace and freedom in Europe, delivered from the constant threat of German aggression, emphasise the un-

avoidable necessity of a new European organisation (especially in Central Europe) in the closest cooperation with the Allied Nations and under the leadership of the Allied Great Democracies, welcome everything which could bring together all the nations of Central and Southeast Europe with the Great Democratic Powers, we declare most solemnly that the "Treaty of friendship, mutual help and postwar cooperation between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Czechoslovak Republic", agreed in Moscow on December 12, 1943, by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and M. V. M. Molotov on the one side and by the "President of the Czechoslovak Republic" and M. Zdeněk Fierlinger on the other side, *is null and void and does not bind the Slovak nation at all.*

(...) We insist that Dr. Edvard Beneš and M. Zdeněk Fierlinger acted as unauthorized negotiators and attached the seals illegally.

Neither of these persons can be regarded in any way whatsoever as authorized negotiators with juridical or political title to represent the Slovak nation.

(...) Our reasons for defending the maintenance of the Slovak State as a unit in a future federation – apart from the reasons mentioned above,<sup>\*</sup> which led to total internal disruption of former Czecho-Slovakia – are as follows: The Slovak State – as has already been said – was proclaimed by a body of legal representatives of the Slovak nation, the Slovak autonomous Parliament. The day that the foundation of the Slovak State had been proclaimed, there had not been on Slovak territory any foreign army under whose pressure this proclamation might have been made. The Government of the new State had from the very beginning maintained an uninterrupted course of administration as well as legal order and security. The Slovak people, though disapproving of the totalitarian methods of the present Government, are wholeheartedly in favour of a State of their own. They see full well that the new Slovak State, in spite of the present totalitarian régime imposed on it by the Germans, has many positive features, having proved its fitness to live in the most difficult period of history and realize that it is in any case better to live under a Slovak Government than under a foreign one. The best proof of this attitude of the Slovak people is that Dr. Beneš's propaganda has found so far no response at all in Slovakia. It is true that today the Slovak people have to endure many political and economic limitations imposed by the war, but in spite of all these limitations they have under the present régime more national freedom than they had ever dreamed of in Czecho-Slovakia. (...)

According to information at hand, though there are many differences of opinion among the leading Slovaks – especially the totalitarian form of government is being strongly resented by the overwhelming majority of them – they are unanimous in demanding that Slovakia should continue as an independent State, as a free and equal partner of a greater community of Central European nations. (...)

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\* Not published.

## *Povzetek*

### *Slovaško vprašanje v mednarodnem kontekstu v času med drugo svetovno vojno*

Znano je, da je po padcu Češkoslovaške marca 1939 in proglasitvi Slovaške republike (imenovana Slovaška država) nova država prišla delno pod nemški vpliv, kjer je ostala skozi večino druge svetovne vojne. A vlada Slovaške države je predstavljala le en del slovaške politične miselnosti tistega časa, saj so obstajale tudi opozicijske skupine (posamezniki in organizacije), ki so delovale v izgnanstvu. V tem prispevku, ki se osredotoča predvsem na slovaško vprašanje v izgnanstvu, so obravnavana naslednja vprašanja:

- dejavnosti in politične programe Slovakov, ki so sodelovali pri češkoslovaškem odporu v izgnanstvu: Milan Hodža proti Edvardu Benešu pri vprašanju vodstva češkoslovaških političnih emigrantov – Češkoslovaški nacionalni svet proti Češkoslovaškem nacionalnem odboru;
- Štefan Osuský proti Edvardu Benešu; razlikovanja glede pravne kontinuitete Češkoslovaške;
- slovaško vprašanje: Češkoslovaška notranja zadeva ali mednarodno vprašanje? Mnenja britanskega zunanjega ministrstva, ameriškega zunanjega ministrstva in poljske vlade v izgnanstvu;
- stiki med poljsko vlado v izgnanstvu in slovaškimi politiki v izgnanstvu (Milan Hodža, Peter Prídavok, Štefan Osuský);
- neodvisna Slovaška republika, slovaška samouprava znotraj Češkoslovaške, Slovaška-Poljsko-Češka federacija, ali Sovjetska republika? Politični načrti in koncepti poveljne Slovaške;
- slovaško vprašanje in načrti za Češkoslovaško-Poljsko konfederacijo;
- "Musterstaat" Tretjega rajha ali "neubogljiv" nemški satelit? Poskusi predstavnikov Slovaške države da bi prišli v stik z zavezniki med drugo svetovno vojno, Slovaška nacionalna vstaja leta 1944;
- Slovaška in druge srednje evropske države – načrti za poveljno obdobje med drugo svetovno vojno. Možnosti, paralele in razlike.

UDK 32.195(497.5)"1945"

Mario Jareb\*

*Illusions of a 'Final Victory'  
and the 'Fate of Small European Nations'.  
Media and Propaganda of the Independent State  
of Croatia in 1945*

This paper deals with the media and propaganda generated by Nezavisna Država Hrvatska (the Independent State of Croatia) or NDH in 1945.<sup>1</sup> The NDH media and propaganda system was created in 1941.<sup>2</sup> Although it followed the basic organizational patterns established by the propaganda system of the Third Reich,<sup>3</sup> NDH did not have its own independent propaganda ministry. In 1945,

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<sup>1</sup> Research on NDH propaganda and media is still in its nascent phases. There are a number of interesting books and articles published, but no single monograph that would deal with the entire NDH media and propaganda system. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fadil Ademović published a book entitled *Novinstvo i ustaška propaganda u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj. Štampa i radio u Bosni i Hercegovini (1941–1945)* [Press and Ustasha Propaganda in the Independent State of Croatia. Press and Radio in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1941–1945)], Sarajevo 2000. The author collected various documents, published articles, and other contributions but failed to write a consistent, well-structured, and scholarly monograph. His book is more a collection of essays on different topics related to various aspects of NDH media and propaganda. There is no doubt that Ademović's book contains useful data. However, it also contains many factual errors and those who use it for research should be cautious.

<sup>2</sup> The foundation and organizational development of the entire NDH media and propaganda system is described and explained in the brief text entitled "*Državni izvještajni i promičbeni ured kod Predsjedništva vlade*" [The State Information and Propaganda Office in the Presidency of the Government], in *Spomen-knjiga prve obljetnice Nezavisne Države Hrvatske 10. IV. 1941.–10. IV. 1942.*, Zagreb, 1942, pp. 37–48. The NDH propaganda system was briefly described by Snježana Pavičić in the catalogue of an exhibition entitled *Hrvatski politički plakat 1940–1950* [The Croatian Political Poster 1940–1950], Zagreb 1991, pp. 31–33.

<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt that German propaganda had a strong influence on the organization and content of NDH propaganda. Various German institutions and their propaganda offices were active in NDH. German propaganda was delivered directly (by German institutions, press, film, radio, etc.) and indirectly (through Croatian media and NDH propaganda institutions) to the Croatian public. More on German propaganda and media in NDH can be found in three of my articles, "Njemačko novinstvo i periodika u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj 1941–1945" [German Press and Periodicals in the Independent State of Croatia from 1941 to 1945], *Godišnjak Njemačke narodnosne zajednice / VDG Jahrbuch 2000*. Osijek 2000, pp. 139–172; "Njemačka promidžba u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj od 1941. do 1945. godine", *Godišnjak Njemačke narodnosne zajednice / VDG Jahrbuch 2001*. Osijek 2001, pp. 171–197. "Pro-

the Main Propaganda Directorate of the Ministry for Popular Education was responsible for the entire media and propaganda system.<sup>4</sup> Its general director, Ivo Bogdan, was a professional journalist and a dedicated member of the ruling Ustasha Movement. The comments he published in the press and in speeches he gave at mass meetings and on radio broadcasts served as guidelines for the creators of NDH propaganda.<sup>5</sup> Propaganda material was disseminated to the Croatian public through newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, posters, fliers, radio broadcasts, and newsreels.<sup>6</sup>

At the time, the leading newspaper in NDH was Zagreb's daily *Hrvatski narod, Glasilo Hrvatskog ustaškog pokreta* [Croatian People, Herald at the Croatian Ustasha Movement].<sup>7</sup> War conditions and limited transportation capabilities prevented distribution of *Hrvatski narod* throughout the country. Consequently, the daily and weekly newspapers and magazines of other cities remained of great importance to the spread of public propaganda in other regions. The most important regional newspapers were *Hrvatski list* in Osijek and *Sarajevski novi list* in Sarajevo. They were continuously published until mid-April 1945 when Tito's partisans liberated both cities.

During the period from 1941 to 1943, Hrvatski krugoval (Croatian Radio) created a network of five radio stations on the territory of NDH. (Only Radio Zagreb existed in 1941). In 1945, there were four radio stations under the control of Hrvatski krugoval.<sup>8</sup> All film production in NDH was controlled by

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midžba Njemačke narodne skupine u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj" [Propaganda of the German Volksgruppe in the Independent State of Croatia ], *Godišnjak Njemačke narodnosne zajednice / VDG Jahrbuch 2005*. Osijek 2005, pp. 207–223.

<sup>4</sup> The Main Directorate for Propaganda was founded in October 1942. In reality, the new directorate merely continued the activities of the State Information and Propaganda Office.

<sup>5</sup> Most of his 'important' speeches were also published in the NDH press or as separate booklets.

<sup>6</sup> NDH political posters are well known to the Croatian public and to scholars. This is due to the fact that two exhibitions of Croatian political posters were held in Zagreb at the beginning of the nineteen nineties. Many of the posters were described and analyzed by Snježana Pavičić in *Hrvatski politički plakat* [The Croatian Political Poster]. Zagreb 1991, and by Predrag Haramija in his catalogue of one of the exhibitions entitled *Stoljeće političkog plakata u Hrvatskoj 1940–1950* [A Century of Political Posters in Croatia 1940–1950]. Zagreb 1992.

<sup>7</sup> The first issue of the daily *Hrvatski narod* in NDH was published on April 10, 1941. However, it was presented to the public as the resurrected prewar pro-Ustasha weekly of the same title. In spring 1939, Mile Budak, a leader of pro-Ustasha elements in Croatia, began to publish *Hrvatski narod*, which soon became a leading pro-Ustasha paper in Croatia. Due to its harsh criticism of the ruling Croatian Peasant Party and the conditions in the Banovina region of Croatia, the Banovina authorities banned *Hrvatski narod* in 1940. More on *Hrvatski narod* during the period from 1939 to 1940 can be found in Mario Jareb: *Ustaško-domobranski pokret od nastanka do travnja 1941. godine*. Zagreb 2006, pp. 525–538.

<sup>8</sup> 'Hrvatski krugoval' started to build the network by renovating and expanding the technical and human capabilities and resources of Radio Zagreb. Soon thereafter, radio stations in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Dubrovnik, and Osijek were established and joined the 'Hrvatski krugoval' system. Reporters and journalists from *Hrvatski krugoval* magazine closely followed the growth of the Hrvatski krugoval system. Any researcher interested in NDH media and propaganda

Hrvatski slikopis (Croatian Film).<sup>9</sup> In 1945, its activities were limited to the production of the newsreels entitled *Hrvatski slikopisni tjednik* (Croatian Weekly Movietones).<sup>10</sup>

NDH media and propaganda in 1945 provides a unique and important example of Axis propaganda. Military operations during 1944 forced many German allies to surrender: Romania, Bulgaria and Finland surrendered to the Soviets; the Vichy regime in France collapsed soon after D-day; advancing Soviet and Yugoslav Partisan troops destroyed the Serbian regime of General Milan Nedić in October of 1944.<sup>11</sup> At the beginning of 1945, active propaganda and media systems were still operating in countries occupied by the Third Reich, including Norway, Denmark, southern Slovenia, and the Netherlands. Some domestic

machine cannot avoid that magazine. It was launched in 1940 when it was published as a bi-weekly magazine with the title *Radio Zagreb, Hrvatski radio list*. After the establishment of NDH, it continued to be published as a weekly magazine with the title *Hrvatski radio list*. In the summer of 1941, its title was changed to *Hrvatski krugoval*. Dubrovnik Radio stopped working in October 1944 when the city was liberated by Tito's partisans. Other stations continued to air into April and May 1945. The cities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Osijek were liberated in April 1945. It was Zagreb Radio Station who remained the sole radio station under the control of *Hrvatski krugoval*, operating until the very end in May 1945.

<sup>9</sup> At the moment, the most comprehensive book on 'Hrvatski slikopis' and its film production is a memoir by Marijan Mikac entitled *Film u Nezavisnoj Državi Hrvatskoj* [Film in the Independent State of Croatia], Madrid 1971. He was general director of *Hrvatski slikopis* during the period from 1941 to 1945.

<sup>10</sup> *Hrvatski slikopis* primary task was the production of newsreels. Its first newsreel entitled *Hrvatska u riječi i slici* [Croatia in Word and in Image] was released at the end of August 1941. Newsreels were released bi-weekly through December 1941, a total of 100 newsreels during the period from August 1941 to December 1943. These newsreels were composed of shots and reports from Croatia, about Croatia, and about Croats. German and Italian newsreels were also shown to the Croatian public. *Hrvatski slikopis* started the production of weekly newsreels entitled *Hrvatski slikopisni tjednik* in December 1943. They were composed of both Croatian and German footage and reports. Croatian cinemas ceased showing German newsreels after the conclusion of an agreement between 'Hrvatski slikopis' and *Deutsche Wochenschau*. Italian newsreels were abandoned after the surrender of Italy in September 1943. Copies of *Hrvatska u riječi i slici* and *Hrvatski slikopisni tjednik* can be found in the Hrvatska kinoteka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva (Croatian Film Archives of the Croatian State Archives) in Zagreb.

<sup>11</sup> The Serbian puppet government of General Milan Nedić was formed on August 29, 1941 and included a propaganda department. As far as I know, there have been no monographs or studies dedicated exclusively to Serbian war propaganda. However, newspapers (*Novo vreme* and *Srpski narod*) and numerous books, booklets, posters, and fliers have been preserved. Drawing on these, it would be possible to analyze the content of Serbian propaganda and to compare it to NDH propaganda. In Croatia, numerous Serbian war propaganda booklets can be found in Zagreb's Hrvatski povijesni muzej (Croatian Historical Museum), Dokumentarna zbirka II. (Documentary Collection II). Serbian propaganda products can be found in other institutions as well, but primarily in Zagreb's Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica (National and University Library).

The German propaganda in Serbia during the WWII was presented and analyzed by Kosta Nikolić: *Nemački ratni plakat u Srbiji 1941–1944* [The German War Poster in Serbia 1941–1944]. Beograd 2001.

propaganda and media activities were present in what was left of Tiso's Slovakia, Szalasi's Hungary, and in the Mussolini's Republic of Salò. The only fully operational pro-Axis media and propaganda system was in the Independent State of Croatia. NDH had already lost almost half of its territory, and Tito's partisans were operating on territories still under its control. However, the capital of Zagreb and other major cities remained firmly in the hands of NDH authorities. Though Allied bombers occasionally targeted them, these cities had been mostly spared the ravages of war. Propagandists in these cities continued conducting their activities until the end of the war in May 1945. Consequently, the NDH media and propaganda system represents the most intact example of pro-Axis media and propaganda in 1945, and an analysis of its activities and propagandists should prove interesting to researchers interested in World War Two media and propaganda. The 'blindness' of the NDH propaganda of the time is striking. In April 1945, only a month before Germany's surrender, NDH was still predicting an Axis victory. It would be interesting to study the impact of these predictions on the public, and to establish the extent to which NDH propaganda was responsible for loss of life in combat during the last month of the war. It would also be interesting to compare the content of NDH propaganda with its German counterpart in 1945, and the latter's impact on the German public.

The basic elements of NDH propaganda were similar to those produced by other Axis states. Above all, praising the 'virtues' of Ante Pavelić (the *Poglavnik*, the head of state and leader of the ruling Ustasha Movement) was a daily theme of NDH propaganda.<sup>12</sup> During the period from 1941 to 1945, Pavelić was celebrated as the figure whose wisdom and charisma would 'save' the Croatian nation from all perils. The establishment of the NDH in April 1941 had been presented as the natural outcome of Pavelić's strength and vision. The media portrayed him as a 'visionary' who, long before the outbreak of the World War Two, 'predicted' German victory and was determined to ally the fate of the Croatian nation with the 'victorious' side. The ruling Ustasha Movement was presented to the public as the backbone of the Croatian nation, the only path that

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<sup>12</sup> There are numerous articles in NDH press, posters, books, and fliers that glorified the virtues of the 'Poglavnik'. Probably the most interesting propaganda product of this kind was a short film titled *Poglavnik i narod* [The Poglavnik and his People], produced by 'Hrvatski slikopis' in 1943. A copy of the film can be found in the Hrvatska kinoteka Hrvatskog državnog arhiva in Zagreb. Pavelić is depicted in the film as the 'father of the nation', dedicated to the protection of his people. He stands with the people and works with them in good times and bad. He is portrayed as a wise, determined, and beloved ruler that the entire nation adores. The printed equivalent of the film is a book titled *Narod i njegov vođa* [The People and its Leader], Zagreb 1943?. It contains a short introductory text titled *Poglavnik i narod* The Poglavnik and his People (pp. 1–3), and 60 large photographs, each published on a separate page. Still, the best known propaganda book on Pavelić is the one by Danijel Crljen entitled *Naš Poglavnik* [Our Poglavnik], Zagreb 1943. That book contains Crljen's essays on Pavelić, on his role in the past, and the 'bright' future he would bring to Croats.

could guarantee a 'bright future'.<sup>13</sup> NDH propagandists were 'fighting' for a 'New European Order', the victory of the Axis against 'Bolshevism'.<sup>14</sup> Anti-Semitic elements were also prominent,<sup>15</sup> as well as the rejection of the Western Allies. There were also several unique elements. In 1941 and 1942, hostility towards the former Yugoslavia, the Yugoslav idea, and Serbs was dominant. From the very beginning of the campaign, concern for the fate of small European nations was an important issue.

The German armies began a retreat on all fronts in 1943; by early 1944, it was clear that the Allies would win the war. Axis propaganda indirectly expressed concern over the outcome of the war, and NDH propaganda warned that should 'barbaric Bolshevism' prevail in Europe, it would bring small European nations to the edge of extermination. The solution was a simple one – only a victory of the Third Reich would 'save' Europe and European culture. Ignoring the dire situation on the battlefields, NDH propaganda continued to preach the victory of the 'New Europe, if anything becoming even more enthusiastic in promoting its themes. For NDH press outlets, the beginning of 1945 appeared promising. Hitler's optimistic New Year's proclamation was published in leading newspapers, and the upbeat spirit prevailed in several articles that predicted the future of the 'New Europe. The weekly *Novine* published a proclamation under the title "Rat će biti dokrajčen njemačkom pobjedom" [The War Will End

<sup>13</sup> Some writers, for example Franjo Bubanić: *Seljaštvo i ustaški pokret* [Peasantry and the Ustasha Movement]. Zagreb 1942, p. 91 even equated the Ustasha Movement and Ustashes with the Croatian nation: "(...) this is a Movement that is closely connected to the Croatian consciousness and the term Ustasha is now identical with the term Croat". The following sentence can be found on page 98 of the same book: "By founding the Independent State of Croatia (...), Ustasha became bearers of the Croatian state, guarantors of its existence and eternity".

<sup>14</sup> Since NDH sent its volunteers (legionnaires) to fight on the Eastern Front alongside the German Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine, NDH propaganda focused on them. Their presence on the battlefields was presented as the Croatian contribution to the all-European struggle against Bolshevism and for the New Europe. There were many books and articles in newspapers and magazines about the Croatian legionnaires. The title of M. Zvonimirović's book *Hrvatski junaci na Istoku* [Croatian Heroes on the East]. Zagreb 1942, shows how the legionnaires were treated in the NDH. The fate of legionnaires that fought in Stalingrad was a special concern of NDH propaganda.

<sup>15</sup> Anti-Semitic elements were present in NDH media and can be detected in papers, magazines, posters, books, and booklets of the time. Probably the most important example of NDH propaganda regarding the "struggle against Jewry" was the exhibition organized in Zagreb in May 1942 under the title "Židovi – Izložba o razvoju židovstva i njihovog rušilačkog rada u Hrvatskoj prije 10. IV. 1941. – Rješenje židovskog pitanja u NDH" [Jews – Exhibition about the Development of Jews and their Destructive Activities in Croatia before April 10, 1941 – The Solution to the Jewish Question in the Independent State of Croatia]. The State Information and Propaganda Office organized the exhibition and published a small booklet and special poster. Preparation of the exhibition was shown to the public in the documentary film produced by Hrvatski slikopis under the title *Kako se stvaraju izložbe* [How to Create Exhibitions]. A copy of that film can be found in the Croatian Film Archives of the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.



with German Victory].<sup>16</sup> NDH propaganda also preached German optimism. Ivo Bogdan, director of propaganda, announced that "after two years of retreat and defense, Germany has shown such strength under the leadership of the genial Führer that good luck is deserting the West and moving to the German side. We are deeply convinced that this is just the beginning and that the new battles and sacrifices of the future will be crowned with meritorious success".<sup>17</sup> He also reminded the Croatian public of Pavelić's statement that: "Croatia must not take the path of treason and surrender".

Numerous articles published in NDH press outlets at the very beginning of 1945 provided analyses of the situation on the battlefield. Following the official enthusiastic line, the authors of these articles attempted to convince readers that the German army had reorganized and strengthened its ranks in order to stop the advance of Allied forces. According to them, 'fortress Germany' was ready to fight back and bring the war to a victorious end. Terms such as 'fanatical will' and 'ultimate determination' were employed to illustrate German readiness to fight and its will to triumph. In January and February 1945, several minor local German successes were used to illustrate the alleged German recovery and success. But even to the readers of NDH newspapers, it became obvious in February 1945 that there would be no more news of German success on the battlefield. Still, NDH propaganda continued to talk about the 'iron will' of German fighters and the 'persistence that would bring victory'. Even at the beginning of May 1945, it was still trying to conceal the obvious defeat of the Axis. Fantastic stories about 'new German secret weapons' and the 'bravery of European fighters against Bolshevism' aimed to convince those still loyal to NDH and to keep them fighting.

The victory of the Axis was presented as the *conditio sine qua non* for the existence of the Croatian state and for the survival of the Croatian nation. Propaganda aimed to convince the Croatian public that the 'wise' Poglavnik knew how to solve these problems and to save Croats and Croatia. Following German patterns, NDH propaganda persistently presented the internal NDH situation as optimistic. There were numerous articles the authors of which strive to convince their readers that the profound crisis that brought NDH to the edge of extinction in 1944 was past. In January 1945, one of the leading Ustasha propaganda officials, Danijel Crljen, wrote that by autumn 1944 "Bolshevik hordes had opened the road to the Balkans, and it was a general conviction that the extermination of the 'satellite' Independent State of Croatia was the order of the day".<sup>18</sup> Crljen acknowledged that a devastating crisis had occurred but insisted that "its enemies underestimated the strength" of "Ustashism". Therefore:

<sup>16</sup> *Novine*, January 2, 1945, No. 168, pp. 1–2, "Rat će biti dokrajčen njemačkom pobjedom".

<sup>17</sup> These quotes are from Bogdan's speech on Radio Zagreb, January 1, 1945. The entire speech was published in *Novine*, January 2, 1945, pp. 3–4.

<sup>18</sup> Danijel Crljen: Ustaški put Hrvatske [The Ustasha path of Croatia]. In: *Hrvatski narod*, January 6, 1945, No. 1228, p. 7.

"Croatia will cure the crisis with unimaginable ease and Ustasha thought will become an unbreakable defense against defeatism and panic".

Although official optimism and courage persisted in propaganda messages, numerous articles were published warning Croats of what would happen in the case of a 'Bolshevik' victory. During the previous years, the Croatian public had been regularly frightened by stories of the cruelty and bestiality of the Soviet Army and Tito's partisans. The 1943 Katyn Forest massacre and the victims of Vinnitsa in Ukraine were used as examples to illustrate the horrors that would become reality for the small nations of Europe.<sup>19</sup> Tito's partisans were described both as a menace to the existence of the Croatian nation and as Stalin's puppets. Consequently, an Allied victory was equated with the extinction of Croats and their certain subjugation to 'barbaric Bolshevism'. The United States and Great Britain were accused of the 'betrayal of Europe' because they had allegedly agreed to hand over all of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union and the 'Bolsheviks'. In 1945, these accusations were not so resolute, and in the last days of war some media expressed the hope that Western countries would act to stop the 'spread of Bolshevism'. The main proof that Anglo-Americans had 'betrayed Europe' came with news of the Yalta conference. Stalin was depicted as the winner, while Churchill and Roosevelt were uninterested and ignorant. Numerous articles also warned of 'secret' arrangements made at Yalta.<sup>20</sup> Though most of these arrangements were reportedly oriented towards the subjugation of small nations to the Soviets, hopes remained that the Allies might intervene on their

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<sup>19</sup> NDH media and propaganda did not present these two crimes exclusively due to the fact that German propaganda also exploited them. Croatian pathologists (forensic experts) participated as members of international expert committees for both incidents. Images and other materials provided by German propaganda services were presented to the Croatian public. Professor Ljudevit Jurak from the University of Zagreb was the Croatian member of the Vinnitsa committee. Professor Eduard Miloslavić from the same university participated on the Katyn committee. A Croatian-American born in California, he succeeded in leaving Croatia at the end of the war and returned to the US. In spring 1943, when he returned from Katyn, Miloslavić published an article titled "Znanstvena izraživanja grobova u šumi kod Katyna" [The Scientific Research of Graves in the Forrest near Katyn] in *Hrvatski narod*, May 16, 1943, No. 733, p. 3. In 1951, he testified in Chicago about the massacre before the Congressional Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation and Study of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre. His testimony was published in *Hearings before the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forrest Massacre, Part 3* (Chicago, Ill.), March 13 and 14, 1952, (United States Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, n. d.), pp. 310–334. I also analyzed how NDH authorities and propaganda personnel exploited the Katyn Forest massacre in an article entitled "Odjek zločina u Katynskoj šumi u tisku Nezavisne Države Hrvatske od travnja do lipnja 1943" [Reactions to the Katyn Forrest Massacre in the NDH Press from April to June 1943]. In: *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1998, No. 1, pp. 117–130.

<sup>20</sup> For example, insinuations that the United States and England secretly promised to annex Poland to the Soviet Union can be found in an article entitled "Sporazum o pripojenju Poljske SSSR-u?" [Was an Agreement on the Annexation of Poland to the USSR Concluded?], *Hrvatski narod*, February 24, 1945, No. 1269.

behalf. These hopes mostly came from the Anglo-American refusal to accept the pro-Soviet Polish government as the representative of Poland in San Francisco, as well as ongoing disputes about the organization of the United Nations. Still when news of Yalta reached NDH, the authorities and propaganda agencies reacted with fury. On March 9, 1945, the Croatian Government issued a statement in which it condemned and rejected the restoration of the Yugoslav state.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned earlier, Tito's partisans and a Communist Yugoslavia were regularly described as a threat to the survival of the Croatian nation. Pavelić himself characterized the partisans as an integral part of the Red Army. He said that the NDH was the only bulward against the 'Bolshevik Army.'

The Bolshevik horde is standing in our neighbourhood, on our eastern borders, though it bears the official name and title of the 'Yugoslav Army'. Brothers and sisters, these Bolshevik hordes are an integral part of the same Bolshevik hordes that are standing on the battlefronts from the Northern Sea to the gates of Istanbul.

Against these heartless and inhuman hordes, against these hordes of the worst kind that have ever arrived from the East, we are now standing with our ally, the Greater German Reich (...). Our Croatian Army is standing shoulder to shoulder with the German army and our other allies to fight and defend Europe, to defend Germany and Croatia, to defeat these hordes from the East (...).<sup>22</sup>

However, this was not enough to convince soldiers and officials still loyal to NDH to persist and keep fighting. What was needed was the presentation of the 'true character' of the 'Bolshevik menace' to the Croatian public, which is why numerous articles containing horror stories about communist crimes in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina were published in NDH press outlets during 1945 (with titles such as "Croatian Territories Temporarily Occupied by Partisan Gangs"). All of them dealt with actual events, but, since these were primarily propaganda products, their main intention was not to provide facts but to manipulate the feelings of ordinary people. Generally, the largest part of each article presented the alleged bestiality of Tito's partisans. There were two kinds of victims: most were Croats loyal to NDH<sup>23</sup> that were persecuted for their patri-

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<sup>21</sup> The entire statement was published under the title "Hrvatski narod za svoju državu" [The Croatian Nation for its Own State], *Hrvatski narod*, March 9, 1945, No. 1280, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> This quotation was part of speech Pavelić gave at a mass meeting in Zagreb on March 10, 1945. The speech and a detailed report from the meeting were published under the title "Hrvatski narod borit će se svim sredstvima za svoju samostalnu Hrvatsku Državu" [The Croatian Nation Will Use all Means in the Struggle for its own Independent State], *Hrvatski narod*, March 11, 1945, No. 1282, pp. 1–4.

<sup>23</sup> A good example of such an article is one by Dragutin D. Došen entitled "Sedlarica – Podravsko slavonski Katyn" [Sedlarica – The Katyn of Slavonian Podravina], *Hrvatski narod*, January 11, 1945, No. 1231, p. 3. It is interesting to note that Došen equated partisan rule in Sedlarica with Soviet crimes in the Katyn Forest. He presented testimony of a Croat, K.V., from Podravina who spent several weeks in partisan captivity. According to his testimony, partisans blamed prisoners for their loyalty to NDH.

K.V. reports that partisans shot Croats for membership in the Hrvatska Seljačka Stranka (the

otism by 'Communist, greater-Serbian and Yugoslav' partisans. The intention of such stories was to convince the Croatian public that partisans were not fighting against the NDH regime but against all Croats in order to establish a 'greater Serbian' and Communist Yugoslavia. These stories were also intended to warn all those 'seduced by Communist propaganda'. In some stories, the Croats who supported partisans were actually portrayed as their victims. They were depicted as naive innocents who nursed the illusion that the partisans and Soviets would bring freedom and prosperity. One such Croat from Virovitica, propagandists reported, even joined partisans in 1944, leaving his pregnant wife and old mother at home.<sup>24</sup> When the partisans and Soviets entered Virovitica in the fall 1944, he returned home with great optimism only to discover that the 'Bolsheviks' had looted everything of any worth in his house, and, worse, had raped his wife. The 'Bolsheviks' cared nothing for the fact that he was their ally and partisan fighter. At the end of the article, readers were advised to take note of how the example "reveals what the Bolsheviks and partisans are capable of doing even to their sympathizers, and anyone can foresee what are they capable of doing to Croats who are 'politically suspicious'". This is why: "the town of Virovitica, free again, (...) and proud in its pain and suffering, (...), continues to fight with the rest of the Croatian nation to the final victory!"

In most of these stories, Ustasha troops defeated the communist 'beasts' and Croats in 'liberated' areas were joyous and determined to fight for NDH. It is difficult to know with any certainty, but it seems reasonable to assume that at least some of the consumers of this propaganda recognized that many of the stories were untrue. Still, partisans did commit war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia-

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Croatian Peasant Party). HSS had been the major Croatian party before the foundation of NDH in April 1941. NDH authorities banned the HSS in the spring of 1941 and soon thereafter imprisoned its president, Vladko Maček. Though he was an ardent anti-Communist, he also opposed the NDH Ustasha regime and spent the entire war as a prisoner of the Ustasha. From the fall of 1941 to the spring of 1942, he was an inmate at the notorious Jasenovac concentration camp. Most former HSS members remained opposed to the Ustasha regime. Many of them were also ardent anti-Communists and opposed the partisan movement as well. Because they were not corrupted by association with NDH, the Communists viewed them as politically dangerous and many of them became victims of communist terror. NDH authorities anticipated this and attempted to attract some HSS members. This is why, during the last months of the war, NDH media outlets also tried to present HSS members as victims of partisan terror.

It is interesting to note that even some of the HSS members who joined the partisan ranks during the war were imprisoned or killed. Most of these had joined the partisans to fight against Italians and Germans, but were against the introduction of a communist regime. More on the HSS during World War Two can be found in Zdenko Radelić: *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1940–1950* [The Croatian Peasant Party 1941–1950], Zagreb 1996.

<sup>24</sup> *Hrvatski narod*, March 20, 1945, No. 1289. p. 2, Kamilo Domović: "Ruska 'braća'" [Russian 'Brethren']. The descriptive title of this article is interesting as well: "The Suffering of the Virovitica Citizens during the Bolshevik and Partisan Reign of Terror – The Rape of Women – How the Brief Joy of Seduced Citizens Ended with Resentment".

Herzegovina, and in many cases the victims had no link to the NDH regime.<sup>25</sup> Some of them escaped and found refuge in places under the control of NDH authorities and armed forces. They, as well as numerous refugees from earlier periods of the war, told their stories of suffering. This close contact with the misery of refugees must have had a strong impact on those who lived under the control of NDH authorities. Therefore, they were more amenable to NDH propaganda messages and some remained determined to support and even fight for the Ustasha regime. Some of those civilians and common soldiers, impressed by the stories created by NDH propaganda, decided to follow Pavelić and his regime into exile.

As noted above, Tito's partisans were portrayed as part of a 'Bolshevik horde' whose intention was to conquer Europe. In contrast, the NDH alliance with Germany was portrayed as a Croatian struggle for a 'New Europe' and the survival of small nations. Therefore, NDH propaganda sought to show what would happen to Croatia and Croats if the Soviet Union and its Yugoslav allies won the war. Numerous articles analyzed the situation in countries already 'betrayed and handed over to Bolsheviks'. They were portrayed as small nations, whose future under 'Bolshevik slavery' would be uncertain and miserable. Stories about the bestiality of Soviet soldiers in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and other Eastern European countries were numerous and were frequently equated with crimes committed by Tito's partisans. Both Soviets and partisans were charged with attempting to annihilate all patriotic elements in these small nations, Croatia among them. There were two groups of 'Bolshevik' victims in these countries, just as there were in Croatia. The first group was composed of anti-Communist and nationalist elements, usually former German allies and collaborators. But there were also many 'naïve' and 'corrupted' members of leading elites, the ones who handed their countries over to the 'Bolsheviks'. According to NDH propaganda, they naively hoped that they could save their countries by reaching an agreement with Soviets and that they would be able to retain their privileged positions within society. Of course, the 'Bolsheviks' ended up turning against them and subjecting the whole of the 'betrayed' countries to their communist dictatorship. In January and February 1945, *Hrvatski narod* published a series of articles on all of the former German allies that had 'betrayed' the Axis and surrendered in the fall of 1944.<sup>26</sup> NDH propagandists paid special attention to the Polish case. During the entire war, NDH propaganda presented the mar-

<sup>25</sup> As noted above, some were members of HSS.

<sup>26</sup> *Hrvatski narod* and other newspapers published articles on Bulgaria, Romania and Finland. For example, in January 1945, *Hrvatski narod* ran a series of articles entitled "Boljševici u Finskoj" [Bolsheviks in Finland]. Conditions in Italy were also presented in a series of articles published in *Hrvatski narod* in January 1945 under the common title "Sjaj i bieda Bonomieve Italije" [The Glance and Misery of Bonomi's Italy]. The major part of Italy was then in the hands of Western Allies. Still, NDH media attempted to convince the Croatian public that Italians were suffering from poverty and miserable living conditions.

tyrdom of the Polish nation. Poles were taken as an example of a state and a nation opposed to Germany and the Axis from the beginning of the war that was then 'betrayed' by the West.<sup>27</sup> The intention was to reveal how the alliance of an East European country with the West could only harm the interests of small nations. Those who shaped NDH propaganda clearly hoped that a majority of the people would agree that only by supporting Germany could Europe could remain 'free'. They persisted in this effort until the very end.<sup>28</sup>

Only the collapse of NDH in May 1945 silenced its propagandists. NDH leadership, including Pavelić and his family, along with hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians, attempted to leave Croatia and surrender to the Western Allies. Pavelić and many of his associates were well aware that the new communist authorities would punish them for their roles during the war. But while many in the Ustasha hierarchy escaped, others were less fortunate. Thousands of common soldiers and civilians perished after May 1945. It is reasonable to assume that at least some of them accepted the stories created and disseminated by NDH propaganda as true, and therefore decided to leave their homes. I hope that future researchers will find the answers to these and other questions related to the nature and consequences of NDH propaganda.

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<sup>27</sup> Numerous articles about the fate and miserable future of Poland were published in *Hrvatski narod* from January to May 1945.

<sup>28</sup> In fact, the content of the final issues of Zagreb's daily newspapers *Hrvatski narod* and *Nova Hrvatska* (May 6, 1945) was completely different from everything that had been published during the period from April 1941 to May 5, 1945. For the first and last time, democracy and the Western Allies were given a positive treatment. On the other hand, the foundation and existence of NDH was also described in some articles as an act of democracy. The most important article published on May 6, 1945 was the one by the general director for propaganda, Ivo Bogdan, entitled "Na kraju Drugoga svjetskog rat" [At the End of the Second World War]. This article appeared in both *Hrvatski narod* (pp. 1–2) and *Nova Hrvatska* (p. 3). In it, the Ustasha movement was presented as the true representative of the Croatian people in the democratic sense of the word.

The Soviet Union and Tito's Yugoslavia continued to be portrayed as enemies, that is as a menace to the existence of Croatia and other small European nations. The main difference was that the Western Allies replaced the Third Reich as the external force that would protect small nations from Bolshevism and extinction.

## Povzetek

### *Iluzije o "dokončni zmagi" in "usodi malih evropskih narodov" – mediji in propaganda v Neodvisni državi Hrvaški v letu 1945*

Prispevek obravnava medije in propagando v Neodvisni državi Hrvaški (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* – NDH) v letu 1945. Sistem medijev in propagande je bil v NDH vzpostavljen v letu 1941, in sicer je sledil osnovnim organizacijskim vzorcem propagandnega sistema v Tretjem rajhu. Na splošno so bili elementi propagande podobni tistim v drugih silah Osi. Propagandisti v NDH so se zavzemali za "Nov evropski red", za zmago Osi nad "boljševizmom". Prav tako pomembni so bili tudi elementi anti-semitizma in zavračanje zahodnih zaveznikov. Propaganda pa je vsebovala tudi nekaj specifičnih elementov. V letih 1941 in 1942 je prevladovala predvsem sovražnost do nekdanje Jugoslavije, jugoslovanske ideje in Srbov. Pomembna značilnost pa je, da je bila od vsega začetka skrb za usodo malih evropskih narodov eno najpomembnejših vprašanj. Leta 1943 je nemška vojska na vseh frontah začela s postopnim umikom. Že do začetka leta 1944 je bilo jasno, da bodo zavezniki dobili vojno. Propaganda sil Osi je izražala zaskrbljenost nad izidom vojne. Propaganda NDH pa je govorila predvsem o strahu pred prevlado "barbarskega boljševizma" v Evropi, ki naj bi male evropske narode pripeljal na rob izumrtja. Masaker v gozdu pri kraju Katyń se je prikazoval kot primer grozot, ko bi za male evropske narode lahko postale realnost. Rešitev, ki so jo predlagali, je bila enostavna – zmaga Tretjega rajha bi "rešila" tako Evropo kot evropsko kulturo. V nasprotju z precej slabimi rezultati na bojiščih je propaganda NDH še naprej pridigala o zmagi "nove Evrope", pri promoviranju svojih idej je postala še celo bolj zagnana. Še do konca maja 1945 so si prizadevali prikriti informacije o neizogibnem porazu sil Osi. Izmišljene zgodbe o "novem nemškem orožju" in "hrabrosti evropskih borcev proti boljševizmu" so bile namenjene tistim, ki so še ostali zvesti NDH in ki naj bi nadaljevali boj proti boljševizmu. Titovi partizani so predstavljali nevarnost za obstoj hrvaškega naroda in so veljali za Stalinove marionete. Zmaga zaveznikov pa se je enačila z izumrtjem Hrvatov in njihovo podreditvijo "barbarskemu boljševizmu". Združene države in Velika Britanija so bile obtožene "izdaje Evrope", saj naj bi pristale na predajo celotne Vzhodne Evrope Sovjetski zvezi in boljševikom. Te obtožbe v letu 1945 vendarle niso bile tako dokončne in pojavilo se je upanje, da bi zahodne države lahko preprečile "širjenje boljševizma". Propaganda NDH pa se je kljub temu osredotočala na t. i. "križev pot" tistih malih narodov, ki so že bili "izdani in predani Boljševikom". Krožile so zgodbe o domnevni zverinskosti sovjetskih vojakov v Romuniji, Bolgariji, na Madžarskem in v drugih srednje evropskih državah. Enačili so jih z nekaterimi zločini Titovih partizanov. Tako Sovjetsko zvezo kot partizane so obtoževali poskusa zadušitve patriotskih elementov pri teh narodih in na Hrvaškem.

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Damijan Guštin \*

*Satisfaction of the Victors and Confirmation  
of the Defeated. Persecuting War Criminals  
in Slovenia 1945*

*"Fascist criminals and their collaborators must be punished properly,  
so that similar crimes are never again repeated in the history of humanity.  
But our nations must get full moral and material satisfaction."<sup>1</sup>*

*"Do not forget us, avenge us!"<sup>2</sup>*

When the war ended in Europe with the unconditional capitulation of Germany on 9 May 1945, the victorious military alliance of the United Nations initiated an extensive program of seeking out and persecuting those responsible for the war and its deviations, especially for mass executions of civilian population in the concentration camps. The question of punishing those responsible for the global slaughter was one of the most urgent new questions brought about by the military victory. The search for those responsible was only aimed at the losing side – Germany, Japan, partly Italy and the other members of the Tripartite Pact.

The manner of sanctioning the war crimes, in regard to the persons involved in the proceedings as well as to the methods and procedures involved in the persecution of these crimes, had already been mostly agreed upon among the Allies until May 1945, because the discussions in the United Nations coalition had already yielded most fundamental answers since the first resolution of January 1942. During the process of forming the standpoints and procedures, which lasted for more than three years, new conflicts among the most important members kept arising, and what had already been agreed upon kept changing, because the opinions of the great powers about who to punish and how to punish them were very different. After the victory these differences became even more

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<sup>1</sup> Ljudska pravica [People's Justice] (hereinafter LP), 17 May 1945, No. 19, Report the crimes of the occupiers. The Ljudska pravica newspaper was the paper of the Communist Party of Slovenia, one of the two main newspapers in Slovenia in 1945.

<sup>2</sup> LP, 16 June 1945, No. 46.



pronounced. As the front line moved towards the west and as it liberated more of its western territories, the Soviet Union had already started carrying out the war crime trials. In France the new authorities initiated an action for the national cleansing.<sup>3</sup> However, the three superpowers managed to agree on how to deal with this problem. The United Nations coalition confirmed the basic principle that the punishment of the war crimes in the territories of the members would be up to the internal legislations of those countries; however, it supplemented this principle with the obligation that the members help each other find and extradite the wanted criminals.<sup>4</sup> This standpoint, reached in Moscow in October 1943, sufficed until the end of the war. The United Nations War Crimes Commission, established at the same time, brought these activities in line and facilitated them at the international level.<sup>5</sup>

The only remaining question was what to do in order to legally persecute the Nazi regime itself. Military law only represented limited foundations for any possible solutions. At the first conference of the leaders of the three victorious superpowers in Potsdam, a decision on extending the basic legal categories with the crimes against peace and crimes against humanity was finally reached, and the procedures of dealing with war criminals were agreed upon. The solution – a compromise between several trends – included the establishment of an *ad hoc* international court, which would, under the supervision of all four great powers, carry out the proceedings against the German state leadership, responsible for war and extreme forms of violence against the citizens of the occupied states. The establishment of the international court in Nuremberg, where the trials against a group of the Nazi Germany leaders took place, provided the basic foundations for the retribution against the war criminals.<sup>6</sup> The court in Tokyo,

<sup>3</sup> Alenka Šelih: *Kazenskopravni in upravnopravni vidiki obravnavanja kolaboracije v francoskem pravnem sistemu* [Criminal Law and Administrative Law Aspects of Dealing With Collaboration in the French Legal System]. In: *Časopis za zgodovino in narodopisje*, 2004, No. 2/3, pp. 515–528.

<sup>4</sup> Archive of the Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter ARS), collection Izvršni odbor Osvobodilne fronte slovenskega naroda [Executive Board of the National Liberation Front of the Slovenian Nation] (AS 1670), file 8/IV, Moskovska deklaracija [the Moscow Declaration] 1. November 1943.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes (later renamed to The United Nations War Crimes Commission) was a special commission of the United Nations Coalition with the purpose of supervising the proceedings in regard to the war crimes of Germany and its allies. It started its work in 1943. Its task was to draw up the procedures for the determination of war crimes, collect evidence and set up the register of war crime suspects. They were suggested by the members of the United Nations. It was presided over by the British delegate, Judge Robert Alderson Wright. Later the Commission came under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Organization and then cancelled in 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Comp. *Der Nürnberger Prozess : aus den Protokolen, Dokumenten und Materialien des Prozesses gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof. Ausgewählt und eingeleitet von prof. dr. P. A. Steiniger*. Berlin 1952; Joe J. Heydecker, Johannes Leeb: *Nürnberski proces*. Ljubljana 1960.

where the trials against the Japanese military and political leadership took place later, also followed the Nuremberg example.

## II.

Through its government in emigration, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia became a member of the United Nations coalition on 1 January 1942 and took part in the first Alliance conference. Thus in the eyes of the Allies it strengthened the continuity of a state, occupied and divided among the invading forces, while a large part of its territory was occupied by the unrecognised Independent State of Croatia. On 12 January 1942, eight governments of the occupied members of the coalition, including Kingdom of Yugoslavia and the Committee of Free France, agreed that they would insist that all the crimes of Germany and its allies, breaking the international military law in the occupied states, be tried and the sentences carried out.<sup>7</sup> The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was also one of the first countries to join the new UN War Crimes Commission, established in 1943. Due to the internal political reasons, the Yugoslav government was very interested in sanctioning war crimes; it especially wanted to emphasize the crimes of the Independent State of Croatia against the Serbian population.<sup>8</sup> It succeeded in that – the punishment of war crimes in Yugoslavia was pointed out in the Moscow Declaration as well as at the Teheran Conference in November 1943; on both occasions the Alliance confirmed that war crimes in the territory of Yugoslavia would be investigated thoroughly.<sup>9</sup> At the same time a strong resistance movement formed in Yugoslavia, which declared itself against the government in emigration and against the sovereign – king, and denied them the right to represent the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Due to the pressure from the Allies, negotiations among these two sides took place in June 1944 and resulted in an agreement. The central part of the so-called Treaty of Vis discussed the joining of the forces in the struggle against the enemy under the resistance movement leader Josip Broz Tito. In the autumn of 1944, the establishment of a joint government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia was agreed upon, which would settle all the remaining questions (about the system of government) until the fi-

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<sup>7</sup> See Text of resolution on German war crimes signed by representatives of nine occupied countries. London, January 12, 1942. and: <http://www.sunsite.unc.edu/pha/policy/1942/420112a.html>; Michael R. Marrus: *The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial 1945–46*. Boston 1997, pp. 18–19.

<sup>8</sup> The government already discussed this in the second half of 1941. Comp. *Jugoslavenske vlade u izbjeglištvu : 1941–1943 : dokumenti*. Beograd 1981, doc. 81, 89, 93, 118, 123, 163 ("pokrenulo se i pitanje intimidacije okupatora, da će posle rata biti svirepo kažnjeni", pp. 318).

<sup>9</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 8/IV, Moskovska deklaracija [the Moscow Declaration] 1 November 1943; Heydecker Leeb, Nürnberški proces, pp. 492–493.

nal decision after the war. This Treaty also arranged the representation of Yugoslavia in the international organisations, including the International War Crimes Commission.<sup>10</sup>

The Democratic Federal Yugoslavia saw the punishment of war crimes as equally important. The intensity of the resistance movement in the country and the fight of the German, Italian, Bulgarian and Hungarian occupiers against the partisans, which included mass violence against the civilian population as its integral part, brought about so many frustrations that the new authorities believed they should compensate for the suffering and the casualties in the social and psychological sense and provide the population, which supported the resistance movement or took part in it, with a sense of satisfaction with quick and rigorous punishing of the criminals.<sup>11</sup> The key question for Yugoslavia was the punishment of the Independent State of Croatia's crimes against the Serbs, since this was the condition for the existence of a state, reformed as a federation.

Another basic reason for Yugoslavia's interest in this was that the judicial and also moral sanctions against war criminals contributed a lot to the condemnation of those who opposed the victorious resistance movement, since during the war these opponents largely started collaborating with the occupiers; by collaborating with the occupiers, the adversaries of the resistance movement wanted to eliminate the threat of the mounting influence and power of the communists, who led the resistance movement. Such polarisation led to armed conflict, which in many aspects had all the characteristics of a civil war.<sup>12</sup> Thus

<sup>10</sup> Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti: 1944–1946* [The Takeover of Power, 1944–1946]. Ljubljana 1992, (hereinafter Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*), pp. 157–158; *Dokumenti iz istorije Jugoslavije : Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njegovih pomagača iz drugog svetskog rata*. Beograd 1996 (hereinafter Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina), doc. Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača, 12 April 1948, pp. 25, 65–67.

<sup>11</sup> Comp. Damijan Guštin: *Tisk narodnoosvobodilnega gibanja 1944–1945 o organih za ugotavljanje vojnih zločinov* [The National Liberation Movement Press 1944–1945 on the Authorities for the Determination of War Crimes]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1993, No. 1/2, (hereinafter Guštin, *Tisk NOG*) pp. 111–127.

<sup>12</sup> The discussion about referring to the conflict between the collaborators and the resistance movement as a civil war is still ongoing. It especially has to be emphasised that the contents of the interpretation of the Yugoslav civil war is a bit different from that of the Slovenian civil war. Comp. Boris Mlakar: *Kolaboracija in državljanska vojna: kratek oris problematike s posebnim ozirom na Slovenijo 1941–1945* [Collaboration and Civil War: A Short Overview of the Issue with a Special Consideration of Slovenia 1941–1945]. In: *Zgodovina v šoli*, 1992, No. 2, pp. 9–15; *Kolaboracija in državljanska vojna v Sloveniji 1941–1945* [Collaboration and Civil War in Slovenia 1941–1945]. In: *Zgodovina v šoli*, 1995, No. 4, pp. 3–10; 1996, No. 1, pp. 3–8; Janko Pleterški: *Državljska vojna v Italiji in Sloveniji : ob knjigi Claudia Pavoneja: Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza. Bollati Boringhieri* [Civil War in Italy and Slovenia: On the Book by Claudio Pavone: Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza. Bollati Boringhieri]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1994, No. 2, pp. 221–230; *Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848–1992*, pp. 629–631, 656–661, Tamara Griesser Pečar: *Razdvojeni narod: Slovenija 1941–1945: okupacija, kolaboracija, državljanska vojna, revolucija* [Divided Nation: Slovenia 1941–1945: Occupation,

the liberation movement started consciously relating the question of punishing the war crimes with the issue of punishing the collaborators, even though legally this was not the same thing. All those who collaborated with the authorities of the occupiers as well as the opponents of the partisans were qualified as people's / national traitors, and the military courts were authorised to institute the proceedings against both groups of people on the basis of very incomplete legal regulations.<sup>13</sup>

Besides, in the aspect of foreign policy, active participation in the persecution of war criminals was an argument against the neighbouring Austria and Italy, which occupied and even annexed large parts of Yugoslav (and Slovenian) territory between 1941 and 1943. Yugoslavia sought and needed the recognition of its foreign policy, especially because of its demands for new state borders in the north and west.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the persecution of war criminals became one of the mechanisms which the victorious regime used to outwardly and symbolically confirm its victory and rise to power. However, the authorities used the same simple logic as was used among the people. It allowed making the connections and even the likening between the categories "national traitor", "collaborator" and "war criminal" in the Slovenian and the wider Yugoslav space, intentionally or because due to the lack of understanding. This resulted in combining a purge based on the Western European example and the persecution of war criminals. In 1944 the authorities gave up the thought that special proceedings and institutions for the realisation of the purge should be established, while the registering of these issues was carried out by the state authority for the investigation of war crimes.<sup>15</sup> Despite that, in the spring and summer of 1945, Courts of National Honour were established within the federal units, dealing exclusively with the cases of unarmed collaboration.

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Collaboration, Civil War, Revolution]. Ljubljana 2004; Miloš Minič: *Oslobodilački ili građanski rat u Jugoslaviji : 1941–1945*. Novi Sad 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Comp. ARS, collection Glavni štab narodnoosvobodilne vojske in partizanskih odredov Slovenije [Headquarters of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia] (AS 1851), Uredba o vojaških sodiščih [Military Courts Regulation], 24 May 1944; Uradni list Demokratične federativne Jugoslavije, 1945/22, Zakon o vojaških sodiščih [Official Gazette of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, 1945/22, Military Courts Act].

<sup>14</sup> Comp. Nevenka Troha: *La liberazione di Trieste e la questione del confine : la politica del movimento di liberazione sloveno nei confronti dell'appartenza statale di Trieste: settembre 1944 – maggio 1945*. In : *Qualestoria*, 2006, No. 1, pp. 46–66; Nevenka Troha: *Boj za meje: Slovenci in Italijani na Primorskem – v Julijski krajini v letih 1945–1954* [The Fight for the Borders: Slovenians and Italians in the Primorska Region – Venezia Giulia in the Years 1945–1954]. In: *Preteklost sodobnosti*. Ljubljana 1999, pp. 143–154.

<sup>15</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 23–24.

### III.

Until the spring of 1945 the organisational framework for the mass persecution of war crimes in the country was already in place. Already on 30 November 1943, the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators (Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača), whose task was to register the evidence and the perpetrators, was established, and it started its work in the middle of 1944. Essentially its tasks were the same as those of the United Nations War Crimes Commission. Unlike the term "war crimes", consistent with the terminology of the international military law, which the United Nations used, the Yugoslav term "crimes committed by the occupying forces and their collaborators" was far more emotional and legally less precise.<sup>16</sup> So the very name of this Commission already pointed at the criminals and thus clearly defined the scope of the investigated activities. At the same time, the founders of the Commission thus suggested that collaboration was a part of war crimes, or at least criminalised the actions of those who joined the occupiers as different kinds of collaborators in the civil war against the resistance movement. This initial idea was corrected by the basic decree on the persecution of war crimes – the Military Courts Regulation of May 1944 – and the difference between joining the collaborating military formations and taking part in the actual crimes was established.<sup>17</sup>

The victory in the war provided the repressive state structures of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia (still the authorities of the resistance movement in the occupied half of the state) with the possibility of physically removing a lot of the collaborators in the spring of 1945, during and immediately after the military operations for the liberation of the western half of the state territory, without having to determine their (individual) responsibility for war crimes. It looks as if the execution of the captured collaborators partly functioned as a vent for the Yugoslav Army units, which nobody wanted to put a stop to. However, at least twice the Supreme Commander Tito released a directive that the prisoners should not be executed and that those responsible for war crimes should be turned over to military courts, established in all army units larger than bri-

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<sup>16</sup> Fedor Košir: *Delo in pomen komisije pri Predsedstvu SNOS za ugotavljanje zločinov okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev* [The Work and Relevance of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators]. In: *Slovenski pravniki v narodnoosvobodilni borbi*. Ljubljana 1985, pp. 131–135.

<sup>17</sup> ARS, AS 1851, file 117/IV, Uredba o vojaških sodiščih [Military Courts Act], 24 May 1944; comp. Damijan Guštin: *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva slovenskega odporniškega gibanja 1941–1945* [The Development of Military Judicial Administration of the Slovenian Resistance Movement 1941–1945]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2004, (hereinafter Guštin, *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva NOG*), No. 1, pp. 49–62.

gades.<sup>18</sup> This situation even resulted in such absurdities as, for example, the execution of half of the NDH government's ministers without any court proceedings, even though at the same time Yugoslavia went to great lengths to prove the war crimes of NDH and the depravity of the Ustashe regime. This can be ascribed to two coinciding facts: the administration of justice was not very highly valued in the Balkans, where the ordinary retaliatory justice still had a great influence; and the new state structures kept avoiding judicial proceedings, since extrajudicial affairs were significantly simpler and quicker. Thus the practice from the war period, when the actions against the opponents were mostly adopted in extrajudicial proceedings and only a small portion of them ever saw the courts, continued.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore the persecution of collaborators as war criminals was a minor issue among other methods of their social elimination or even physical removal. At the same time such procedures were one of the most socially acceptable ways in which the victorious authorities could behave. They gave the people an impression of strictness, firmness, but at the same time justice and validity. The feeling of the people, afflicted and frustrated by the war, repression and loss of their loved ones, that it was time for revenge and payback for the vicious actions against the members of the resistance movement in the past, was not a rare sight.

The Yugoslav military courts regulation, adopted in May 1944 and also introduced in Slovenia until the autumn of 1944, set out that the military courts were exclusively competent for the persecution of war criminals, which remained in force until the amendment of these regulations in 1946.<sup>20</sup> It defined war crimes as: participation (in any way) in the acts of mass killings, torture, relocation, deportation of people to concentration camps or forced labour, burning, pillaging or exploiting people as work force. The administrators of the occupiers' apparatuses and armies were also held responsible. A special category of criminals, the so-called public enemies, were defined with the cooperation in the collaborating formations, as supporters and opponents of the people's authorities.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Josip Broz Tito: *Sabrana djela* [Collected Works]. Book 28, Beograd 1988, p. 43; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> During the war the Yugoslav and also the Slovenian resistance movement rarely used court proceedings against its opponents and its own members. When it did use them, these were short proceedings at military courts. The rest was left up to the executions carried out by the security authorities, established by the resistance movement already in 1941 (the Liberation Front Security Intelligence Service, and especially the Department for the Protection of People – OZNA, which spread over the entire Yugoslav space since its establishment in May 1944; OZNA also carried out the "cleansing" after the liberation since April until June 1945). Comp. Vodušek, pp. 24–27; D. Guštin, *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva NOG*, pp. 49–62; Ljuba Dornik Šubelj: *Oddelek za zaščito naroda za Slovenijo*. Ljubljana 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Guštin, *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva NOG*, pp. 49–62; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>21</sup> ARS, AS 1851, file 117/IV, 24 May 1944; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 35–36.

Such division of competences was not problematic until the security service and political police OZNA (the Department for the Protection of People) started initiating the proceedings after claiming power. In the end of August 1944, when it was expected that the Allies would soon invade Istria, the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators prepared the first plan of measures after the liberation. The plan envisioned that all crimes would be identified and that criminals with Yugoslav citizenship would be immediately tried at civilian criminal courts or at the special war crimes courts (the Penal Code would still have to be drawn up). Foreign citizens, extradited from abroad, would be tried immediately, while the rest of them would be entered into registers in order to demand their extradition.<sup>22</sup> The idea that special courts would be competent for war crimes issues was still present in the Commission in the autumn of 1944.<sup>23</sup>

Since then the OZNA, with the support of the resistance movement, of course, kept putting pressure on this area, which at the same time involved the question of its own and the Commission's competences. The proceedings against the members of the collaborating formations were especially controversial. The State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators had to give up its competences in this questionable area. On 25 November 1944 the President of the Commission informed its member Vida Tomšič, who was also responsible for the monitoring of its work at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia, that the representatives of OZNA came to the seat of the Commission and claimed "most of the documents in regard to the crimes of the occupiers' collaborators, people who were under the protection of the occupiers, partisans who gave themselves up to the Italian authorities, and various moderate politicians".<sup>24</sup> The conference on 12 December 1944 was decisive in regard to the new definition of the proceedings against war criminals in Slovenia, and it defined the competences of key authorities, with the exception of the State Commission, in the area of war crimes proceedings.<sup>25</sup> "There is no doubt", the OZNA representative emphasised, "that the main task of OZNA should be to track down and persecute war criminals and national traitors, and that the penalties and penal measures are not its concern. On the other hand, the task of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators is to establish who belongs among the war criminals, while mili-

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<sup>22</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 496/III, Predlog za prve nujne ukrepe pri prevzemu oblasti [The Proposal for the First Urgent Measures After Taking the Power], 5 September 1944.

<sup>23</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 496/III, session minutes of the Commission, 31 October 1944.

<sup>24</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 496/III, letter by V. Tomšič, 25 November 1944.

<sup>25</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 52/IV, Božo Kobe, dr. Vito Kraigher: O organizaciji in izvrševanju sodne oblasti v Sloveniji in Jugoslaviji, pp. 39; Vodušek Starič, Prevzem oblasti, p. 47.

tary courts should pronounce sanctions against this scum of the nation".<sup>26</sup> The representatives of other institutions, present at the conference, accepted such an interpretation. In their resolutions they wrote that in the future a "live connection" between the judicial instances and OZNA should be set up, and that the details should be taken care of in the future meetings.<sup>27</sup> Thus the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators was only limited to registering and collecting the evidence on the war crimes, perpetrated by foreign citizens. Ever since the initial preparations for the persecution of war crimes in Yugoslavia in the middle of 1944, the division between the investigation procedures, which should be carried out by the Commission, and the work at the courts, which the judicial apparatus was competent for, was unclear; the ideas about the system were still in their initial stage.<sup>28</sup> The judicial system was also in its infancy, the legal norms were less than rudimentary, and so the military courts as they were set up during and immediately after the war were not appropriate for a more qualified treatment of war crimes.<sup>29</sup>

The Commissions for the Determination of Crimes introduced the organised collection of materials from witnesses or victims (criminal complaints) as the basis for the procedure of taking evidence, while the evidence based on the documentation of the opposing side could only be acquired in exceptional cases, for example in the confiscated materials of the occupiers' authorities and units. The statements of the witnesses and victims had full credibility for the preliminary procedure of determining the war criminals, since the purpose of the commission was to draw up the lists of people – the potential perpetrators of crimes against military law.<sup>30</sup> Due to the lack of integral legal qualifications of war

<sup>26</sup> ARS, AS 1851, file 155/III, minutes of the conference of the institutions, participating in the persecution of war crimes, 12 December 1944.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> However, there was some uncertainty when in the decree on the designation of the Commission members of 6 May 1944 the task of punishing the war criminals was explicitly stated as one of the tasks of the Commission. Accordingly, the Croatian Country Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Croatia included the task of punishing the war criminals into the Rules of Procedure as one of the Commission's tasks; furthermore, it included the inflammation of international hatred among war crimes. Comp. Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 24, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Guštin, *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva NOG*; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 11–26, 34–50, 266–273; comp. Lovro Šturm: *Ozadje slovenskega pravosodja 1945–1950: prispevki k zgodovini in pojasnjevanju ozadij sodnih procesov na Slovenskem po komunističnem prevzemu oblasti leta 1945 (zbirka dokumentov iz obdobja 1945–1950)* [The Background of the Slovenian Justice Administration 1945–1950: Contributions to the History and Explaining of the Background of Court Proceedings in Slovenia after the Communist Takeover of Power in 1945 (a collection of documents from the period between 1945 and 1950)]. I., II. Ljubljana 1995; *Brezpravje: slovensko pravosodje po letu 1945* [Lawlessness: Slovenian Justice Administration after 1945]. Ljubljana 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina, pp. 445–446, Pravilnik o radu Državne komisije za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača, donesen na sednici NKOJ od 8. maja



crimes, the Commission itself, on the basis of international military and humanitarian law, drew up a classification of offences, belonging to the category defined as war crimes. This classification contained 14 categories from murder, denationalisation, to the destruction or confiscation of property.<sup>31</sup> In this way the Commission attempted to classify the crimes, gathered from the statements of witnesses and victims, and release decisions on the proclamation of persons as accused of war crimes. Such systematic work during the war, which involved the majority of lawyers who had joined the resistance movement, resulted in around ten thousand collected criminal complaints as well as in around 8000 decisions on the proclamation of war criminals. Approximately half of them were foreigners – citizens of three occupying countries.<sup>32</sup>

The narrowing of the scope of work of the Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators, which also included an OZNA representative,<sup>33</sup> to only those crimes perpetrated by the members of the occupiers' armies and authorities, contributed to the rationalisation of the work, even though the evidence was still collected non-selectively. In the last months of the war, the work of the Commission had to be very limited due to unfavourable circumstances.<sup>34</sup> Even the Commission itself complained about the domineering attitude of OZNA, worried that after the liberation OZNA would confiscate all the materials and information about war crimes, just like it had already done with the materials about the Home Guard and Voluntary Anti-Communist Militia (*Milizia volontaria anticomunista, MVAC*).<sup>35</sup>

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1944 godine; ARS, collection *Komisija za ugotavljanje zločinov okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev pri Predsedstvu Slovenskega narodnoosvobodilnega sveta (Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators at the Presidency of the Slovenian National Liberation Council)* (AS 220), box 1, Navodila za prijavljanje zločinov okupatorjev in njegovih pomagačev [Instructions for the Reporting of Crimes Committed by the Occupiers and Their Collaborators], (1944).

<sup>31</sup> ARS, AS 220, box 1, Vojni zločini po Haaški konvenciji [War Crimes According to the Hague Convention], (1944).

<sup>32</sup> Comp. D. Guštin: *Gradivo KUZOP kot podlaga za proučevanje problema žrtev med drugo svetovno vojno na Slovenskem* [The Materials of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators as the Basis for Researching the Issue of Victims of World War II in Slovenia]. In: *Borec*, 1989, No. 5–6, pp. 601–606.

<sup>33</sup> Such connection between the Commission and the Intelligence Service was proposed by one of the leading officials of the resistance movement, Edvard Kardelj, in October 1944. Comp. Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 116.

<sup>34</sup> ARS, collection *Predsedstvo Slovenskega narodnoosvobodilnega sveta [Presidency of the Slovenian National Liberation Council]* (AS 1643), box 6/V, session minutes of the Commission, 6 April 1945.

<sup>35</sup> Dušan Biber: *Zavezniške in sovjetske misije ter obveščevalne službe v NOB* [Allied and Soviet Missions and Intelligence Services in the National Liberation Struggle]. In: *Borec*, 1990, No. 1–3, p. 115; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, p. 208.

## IV.

The process of persecuting war crimes involved the whole country and was in fact organised on the state level, taking into account the Yugoslav federal system. In its first announcement the provisional government of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia, established in March 1945, also emphasised the endeavour for punishing war crimes as soon as possible, "in order to prevent the criminals and national traitors, stained with the blood of the people, from escaping just punishment. (...) The Government believes that the guiding principle in the realisation of this task should be justice and aspiration for peace and order in the country, safe from anti-democratic elements." The proclamation stressed that since "only the wish for revenge cannot be the right way to ensuring the internal order and rebuilding the country constructively, the Government will provide all those who were led astray with a chance to make up for their past sins with hard labour".<sup>36</sup> The international situation itself led to the responsibilities being transferred onto the State Commission, since the countries (the coalition within the United Nations) as subjects of international law negotiated at the international level about how to deal with war criminals. Thus the persecution of and retribution against war criminals on the Slovenian level was definitely under a strong influence of the events at the Yugoslav level, regardless of the fact that each of the new Yugoslav federal units (or Republics since the autumn of 1945) kept its Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators. However, in regard to the persecution of war crimes in Slovenia, a paradoxical process took place – the State Commission essentially adopted the system of work of the Slovenian Commission.<sup>37</sup> The State Commission was superior to the Commissions of the federal units, and its task was, above all, to represent the country internationally and to carry out the state policy about the persecution of war criminals.<sup>38</sup> Immediately after the war ended, the Belgrade head office started sending demands for the immediate forwarding of information and evidence, for they were interested in establishing the state level statistical basis.<sup>39</sup> However, the Commissions of the federal units themselves carried out most of the investigative and collection work in regard to crimes, evidence and the identification of perpetrators. However, most of the other federal Commissions only undertook the collection of crime reports as late as in the summer of 1945.<sup>40</sup> In

<sup>36</sup> ARS, AS 1670, file 8/I, Postavljena je začasna vlada Jugoslavije [The Provisional Government of Yugoslavia Established], 9 March 1945.

<sup>37</sup> Comp. ARS, AS 1643, file 6/V, session minutes of the Commission 17 April 1945.

<sup>38</sup> Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina, pp. 21, 23, 30–38.

<sup>39</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, p. 251; ARS AS 1643, file 6/V, letter of the State Commission (M. Šnuderl) 15 March 1945.

<sup>40</sup> Arhiv Srbije i Crne gore, Beograd, collection Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njegovih pomagača [State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators] (collection 110), box 1/II, Uputstvo br. 2 Državne komisije, julij 1945; box 2, minutes from the federal Commissions session 18 June

the territory of federal Slovenia and in the area of the Yugoslav Army Military Administration (the eastern part of Venezia Giulia), the collection of reports was already organised in 1944 and added to in the summer of 1945, also with the action of collecting information around the school districts.

## V.

Simultaneous liberation of the Slovenian territory, the end of the war in May 1945 and the rise to power over the whole Slovenian ethnic territory, which was, due to the pressure of the Allies, reduced to the territory up to the so-called Morgan Line in the west and the pre-war Austrian-Yugoslav border in the north immediately in June 1945, allowed the authorities to carry out an even more thorough and systematic investigation of the war crimes which took place during the war. However, the investigation had to be carried out a bit differently in the occupied zone in the Primorska region, which was under the military administration of the Yugoslav Army, than in the territory of the federal Slovenia.<sup>41</sup>

With the systematic collection and investigation, including every settlement, the number of files of the persons suspected of war crimes rose to around 18.000. All of this was achieved in the first six months after the end of the war.<sup>42</sup> Such efforts were only possible because the population was willing to offer assistance. The promise made during the war about the physical compensation for war efforts, losses and suffering – that is, the reparation of war damages – had a lot of influence; however, the authorities organised that as a separate project under a special authority, the Commission for War Damages.<sup>43</sup> With the victory in the war, the people's fear of cooperating with the Commissions for the Determination of Crimes, which was especially evident in the areas where the occupiers' and partisan authorities kept struggling for power, was gone. Thus the campaign for the collection of war crime evidence had to rely on mass

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1945, conclusions of the consultation of 18–20 June 1945 of the State Commission with the Federal Commissions, 21 June 1945.

<sup>41</sup> Damijan Guštin: *"Kronika naše Kalvarije pod Italijo": gradivo Komisije za ugotavljanje zločinov okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev o obdobju 1918–1941* ["Chronicles of Our Suffering Under Italy": the Materials of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators for the period 1918–1941]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2000, No. 1, pp. 239–254; Nevenka Troha: *Epuracija v coni B Slovenskega primorja in koprskem okraju cone B Svobodnega tržaškega ozemlja (1945–1950)* [The Purge in the Zone B of the Slovenian Primorska Region and the Koper District of Zone B of the Free Trieste territory (1945–1950)]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2003, No. 2, pp. 91–104.

<sup>42</sup> ARS, AS 220, box 24–60.

<sup>43</sup> Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848–1992, pp. 795–799; LP, 9 June 1945, No. 39, Navodilo za zbiranje in oddajanje prijav komisiji za ugotovitev vojne škode.

mobilisation and on presenting the reports as a civil duty.<sup>44</sup> The extensive evidence collection was covered by newspapers, and they kept publishing individual statements.<sup>45</sup> The gathering of information was encouraged and managed by the state centre, where they were under pressure to ensure the information about the victims as soon as possible. Thus the slogan of the propaganda in the name of the dead – "Do not forget us, avenge us!"<sup>46</sup> only had a limited scope and effectiveness. However, the sheer amount of the reports on the losses and damages, perhaps not always very significant and thorough, relativises the assumption that the only motive of the new authorities was propaganda.<sup>47</sup>

Soon after its establishment, the Commission encountered the problem of the so-called systemic war crimes, where many citizens were affected in the same manner as a consequence of a single action of the occupiers' authorities. In the Slovenian case several such actions were committed: the forced deportation of the population from the area of the German occupation, affecting approximately 64.000 people, the internment of the people in the German concentration camps (around 18.000 people) and the internment in the Italian concentration camps, where around 30.000 people ended up. In these cases special joint investigations were launched, which determined the circumstances and those responsible for the realisation of such actions, defined as inhumane internment, while individual investigations were carried out as the basis for the issuing of individual decisions.<sup>48</sup> An action of gathering the information about the violence of the fascist regime against Slovenians, living in the region which had belonged to Italy since 1918/1920, was also initiated.

The collection of satisfactory materials, appropriate for the use in courts, was especially problematic. However, such material was nevertheless collected, especially in regard to the war crimes of the Italian occupiers in the Ljubljana province, and to a lesser extent in regard to the actions of the German occupiers. The confiscated material was very important for the long studies and preparations, which the Commission undertook in order to more thoroughly comprehend the system of occupation and the individual categories of war crimes, but

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<sup>44</sup> LP, 8 June 1945, No. 38, Zberimo podatke o zločinih okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev v Sloveniji.

<sup>45</sup> LP, 20 June 1945, No. 49, Prijavljeni zločinci bodo omogočili izročitev vojnih zločincev; 17 June 1945, No. 47, Sv. Urh – belogardistična klavnica.

<sup>46</sup> LP, 16 June 1945, No. 46.

<sup>47</sup> See footnote 42; State Commission for the Determination of Crimes, p. 42. The final official results of the State Commission in regard to the victims of war crimes in Yugoslavia are the following: 505.182 dead (Slovenia 35.488), 384.049 injured (Slovenia 32.747), 1.750.032 imprisoned and interned (Slovenia 264.054).

<sup>48</sup> See footnote 42. As a curiosity, note that the special investigation of the forced relocation of the Slovenian population from the Štajerska and Gorenjska regions by the Germans was undertaken by the State Commission, not the Slovenian Federal Commission. ARS, AS 1643, file 6/V, Instruction No. 2 of the State Commission, 1 March 1945.

it was less important for the short-term effect the authorities sought as they rose to power.<sup>49</sup>

## VI.

The public effect, especially while taking over the state, was most significant politically. It depended mostly on the punishment (in the form of judicial proceedings), not as much on the investigation. As early as in June 1945, the leadership of the Communist Party of Slovenia discovered that in terms of propaganda the upcoming court proceedings should be supported. However, these were not yet proceedings against war criminals – they took place at the courts of national honour, based on the Western European and Serbian example, in hope for a speedy and more satisfactory resolution of various forms of collaboration, cooperation with the occupiers in the field of economy, culture, supplies and politics. The basic premise is also obvious in the use of propaganda – to kindle the wrath of the people against the defeated by constantly bringing the attention to the suffering endured.<sup>50</sup> The President of the Government Boris Kidrič in his inauguration speech of 5 May 1945 may have emphasised the fight against quislings and traitors of the people, but without the revenge against the misled masses.<sup>51</sup> However, the first articles with the slogan "Speak, punish, avenge!", rigidly focused on retorsion, appeared already in the second half of May 1945, and they continued to demand the extradition and the punishment of war criminals from the defeated Slovenian formations.<sup>52</sup> Even in the occupied Trieste the persecution of war criminals was demanded immediately.<sup>53</sup> The campaign against war criminals was, as the higher state prosecutor put it in July 1945, necessarily also a propaganda campaign, which had a special meaning for the establishment of new social relations. "The first process was the one against the members of the Gestapo and the White Guard, which was the first group to be mentioned in the propaganda and dealt with a bit, but never completely explored. Why this process did not take place in a more positive manner? Proba-

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<sup>49</sup> Comp. ARS, AS 220, box 1, the studies on the Director of the Civilian Administration Dr. Uiberreither; box 3, Italijanska okupacijska politika in zločini [Italian occupation policy and crimes]; box 4, Interniranje državljanov pod nehumanimi pogoji [The Internment of Citizens Under Inhumane Conditions]; Nasilno izseljevanje Slovencev [Forced Relocations of Slovenians].

<sup>50</sup> *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS /ZKS 1945–1954* [the Minutes of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia / League of Communists of Slovenia 1945–1954]. Ljubljana 2000, p. 27, session of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia, 2 June 1945; comp. LP, 6 June 1945, Naloge naše propagande danes.

<sup>51</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 213–214.

<sup>52</sup> LP, 20 May 1945, Grobovi obtožujejo; Spregovorite, kaznujte, maščujte; LP, 24 May 1945, Krvniki, našli vas bomo!; LP, 6 June 1945, Belogardistična zverstva po Dolenjski : zahtevamo izročitev in kaznovanje vseh vojnih zločincev.

<sup>53</sup> LP, 19 May 1945, No. 21, Trst ima svojo ustavno skupščino.

bly because of the extent of the issue, which cannot be dealt with by one or two descriptions of the process in the daily press in such a manner that the public could thoroughly comprehend it. For this reason I asked Dr. Maks Šnuderl, the president of the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes, to describe the issue in a booklet. He has already prepared it and handed it over to the Government. The foundation of this process is emphasised in this publication, namely that fascism in its essence is the same, indivisible, regardless of whether we discuss the Italian fascists, the German Nazis or the members of the White Guard. That is why the members of the Gestapo as well as the members of our own White Guard were tried at the same proceeding. This aspect was not exploited by the propaganda, although it was obvious in the proceeding. (...) However, it is important to take advantage of it as soon as possible, because now the campaign of punishing the war criminals is taking place; on one hand, the information about such proceedings would benefit the public, while on the other hand it would allow the courts to initiate the current proceedings transparently and in the same manner, with the same goal in all cases."<sup>54</sup>

Such coordinated actions were only possible due to the complete control over the media in Slovenia, since all the newspapers and the radio<sup>55</sup> were directly controlled by the new political authorities (Liberation Front, Communist Party of Slovenia), and the information was ensured by the Agitation and Propaganda Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovenia (Agitprop) in accordance with the directives from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia Agitprop.<sup>56</sup>

The defeated side was no longer a political or an actual opposing factor. With the physical elimination of around 14.000 people (around 11.000 members of collaborating Home Guard formations and approximately 3000 civilians) and the escape of around 25.000 people, who fled to the occupation zones of the American and British armies in Austria and Italy, the active part of wartime political and military opponents of the liberation movement was removed from the Slovenian territory. A lot of important politicians and military personnel of the opponents of the resistance movement, including the Ljubljana Bishop, were among the fugitives. The Liberation Front and, more secretly, the Communist Party of Slovenia were actually the only functional political force in the federal Slovenia.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> ARS, AS 1931, the intelligence service microfilms, Lm series, film 96, recording 0176854-55, the press conference of the public prosecutor, 20 July 1945.

<sup>55</sup> The main media in Slovenia in 1945: two main newspapers (Ljudska pravica and Slovenski poročevalec), Partizanski or Primorski dnevnik daily newspaper in Trieste and the Radio Ljubljana radio station.

<sup>56</sup> Ljubodrag Dimić: *Kulturna politika u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji : 1918–1941*. Beograd : Stubovi kulture, 1996–1997, Part 1: Društvo i država; part 2: Škola i crkva; part 3: Politika i stvaralaštvo.

<sup>57</sup> Comp. Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848–1992, pp. 844–852; Vodušek Starič, Prevzem oblasti, pp. 251–256.

Therefore war crimes also became a part of the fight against the remaining opposition, which was especially important until the Constituent Assembly elections in the autumn of 1945. Regardless of the fact that political opposition to the so-called people's authorities was not articulated in Slovenia, a part of the population remained reserved or even opposed the victors and the new authorities.<sup>58</sup> Very clear connections were evident in the political struggle against the opposition; for example, when the President of the National Government, Boris Kidrič, the leading enforcer of the policy, attacked the wartime actions of the Catholic clergy at the Congress of the Liberation Front in the middle of July 1945, on the next day the newspapers wrote about the proclamation of the Ljubljana Bishop Rožman as a war criminal.<sup>59</sup>

However, the court proceedings related to war crimes were initiated by the new authorities already during the period of the so-called cleansing. The proceedings were the most evident proof that the "natural" right of the people to satisfaction has been served. Since the territorial division of the competencies of military courts had already been completed and courts were relatively numerous, the trials were fairly equally distributed across the Slovenian territory (Ljubljana, Celje, Maribor, Novo mesto, Murska Sobota) and thus related more closely to the regions where the public was especially interested in them.<sup>60</sup> As soon as in June, the newspapers could report about the first trial; 11 less important but accessible members of the German occupation administration were tried at the military court in Ljubljana.<sup>61</sup> "It is not possible to describe all the crimes, committed in the Slovenian territory by the victory-drunk German hordes and their Slovenian helpers. For their actions, the enemy brought with them the divisions of the infamous secret police and gendarmerie, various SS detachments and other selected refuse of the human society, in order to carry out its hangman's duties over the peaceful Slovenian nation and to take power."<sup>62</sup> Strict punishments confirmed the impression of rightful satisfaction. The claim "Merciless punishment of war criminals guarantees our peaceful future!"<sup>63</sup> can be understood in several ways, from the confirmation of mass executions to the means of preventing a (future) war. We can also see it as a deeper interest of the authorities to ensure their legitimacy and actual power.

<sup>58</sup> Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti*, pp. 289–293, 297–298.

<sup>59</sup> LP, 19 July 1945, 74, *Zločinsko delo škofa dr. Gregorja Rožmana*.

<sup>60</sup> The authorities gave the military courts exclusive jurisdiction for carrying out the war crime processes as early as in 1944. Comp. ARS, AS 1670, box 52, Božo Kobe, Vito Kraigher: *O organizaciji in izvrševanju sodne oblasti v Sloveniji in Jugoslaviji*, pp. 39; Guštin, *Razvoj vojaškega sodstva NOG*, p. 60; Žarko Bizjak: *Sodstvo narodnoosvobodilnega gibanja 1941–1945* [Judicial Administration of the National Liberation Movement 1941–1945]. In: *Pravo, zgodovina, arhivi*, 1, *Prispevki za zgodovino pravosodja*. Ljubljana, 2000, pp. 233–240.

<sup>61</sup> LP, 24 June 1945, No. 53, *Prva javna razprava proti vojnim zločincem v Ljubljani*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> LP, 24 June 1945, No. 53.

Who were the war criminals for the population and especially for the propaganda? They were opponents, perpetrators of crimes against military law, but in a more general sense also the collaborators of the occupiers in any area. "Not only military leaders are war criminals; economic leaders are guilty of even bigger crimes" was one of the typical propaganda connections of this kind.<sup>64</sup>

The promises about firm, speedy but just trials were kept in the summer of 1945. "Murderers, we will find you!" the newspaper *Ljudska pravica* (People's Justice) cried out two weeks after the liberation.<sup>65</sup> Of course, the trials were not at the level of today's understanding of a fair trial. Not so much because they took place in military courts, but because the court proceedings were so superficial. They were swift, the evidence was not always sufficient; they were more like improvisations of court proceedings. The military court judges were only partly qualified, some of them were not even lawyers. Military courts were overwhelmed with the quantities of matters they had to consider, so they mostly focused on the accusations on the basis of interrogations carried out by the OZNA personnel, and led the proceedings accordingly. The defenders were limited in their function, not only with the provisions on criminal proceedings, but also during trials themselves.<sup>66</sup> However, presented in public they definitely fulfilled their purpose.

The question of extraditions was depended even more on the global political situation. A lot of suspected war criminals were abroad, where they could not be reached by the Yugoslav authorities. At least not directly. The most important people among the national traitors as well as Germans were among them. It was most important for the media and symbolically to put such people to justice. So it is not a coincidence that the demands for the extradition of the suspects were among the first and most frequent topics. These demands were based on the agreement the Allies already reached during the war. As early as in the autumn of 1944 the first media offensive of the resistance movement put Italy in a difficult position with the demand for the extradition of the most prominent Italian military commanders and leaders of civilian authorities in the occupied Yugoslav territories.<sup>67</sup> However, meanwhile, the differences among the allied superpowers and the consequent beginnings of the Cold War started to hinder heavily the international cooperation in the extraditions of suspects. Yugoslavia started more openly allying with the Soviet Union, especially due to severe humiliation it experienced when it was forced to retreat from Carinthia and Trieste. Its ex-

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<sup>64</sup> LP, 15 July 1945, No. 71, Zgodovinski obračun.

<sup>65</sup> LP, 24 May 1945, No. 25.

<sup>66</sup> See footnote 29; Božo Repe: *Povojni sodni procesi* [Post-War Court Proceedings]. In: *Povojna zgodovina na Slovenskem*. Slovenj Gradec 1992, pp. 54–63; Rožmanov proces, p. 21; ARS, AS 1931, box 1078, 1079.

<sup>67</sup> Comp. Guštin, Tisk NOG, pp. 123–125; Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina, pp. 58, 59, 75–81, Saopštenje br. 2 Državne komisije za utvrđivanje zločina okupatora i njihovih pomagača; pp. 82–86, Saopštenje br. 4 Državne komisije.



pectations of success at the peace conference were mostly supported by the Soviet Union, which became the main foreign policy partner of Yugoslavia. The tensions in mutual relations also influenced the readiness of the Western Allies to extradite the Yugoslav as well as Slovenian suspects.<sup>68</sup> For example, one of the most prominent people, the Ljubljana bishop Rožman, who fled to the British occupation zone in Austria, was proclaimed a suspected war criminal on 15 July 1945. Already since May 1945 the press accused him of being responsible for the civil war and for the clergy taking part in it.<sup>69</sup> His extradition was demanded immediately after that and it became one of the constants; it also became the cause of an increasing resentment against the Western Allies.<sup>70</sup>

As early as on 6 June 1945, the demand of the Yugoslav authorities for the extradition of all war criminals appeared in the Slovenian press for the first time; in that concrete case the demand related to those members of the collaborating Slovenian Home Guard who murdered civilians.<sup>71</sup> Technically speaking, the majority of that work was carried out far from public eye, through the contacts between the State Commission for the Determination of Crimes Committed by the Occupying Forces and Their Collaborators, the UN War Crimes Commission, as well as the occupation authorities in Germany and Austria, which had to approve any extraditions. In the summer of 1945 the situation was still very chaotic, and often everything depended on the resourcefulness and personal initiative of the individual emissaries of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia in the occupied zones themselves. However, the great majority of the most wanted criminals, whose extradition was demanded first by the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia and then also by the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, could not be traced and, above all, were not extradited before 1946 and 1947. Namely, the investigating authorities of the Allies mostly wanted to interrogate these people themselves first before turning them over.<sup>72</sup> Besides, extraditions in many ways depended on the relations between the Allies and their plans about Italy, Austria and Germany. That is why the public emphasis of the demands for the extradition of numerous people suspected of war crimes (Yugoslav citizens as well as members of the invading countries) did not only stress the expectations that the war criminals would be convicted; it was also a form of the Yugoslav pressure against the Western Allies, in whose occupation zones these wanted people were. Newspapers informed the Slovenian public about the meeting of the UN War Crimes Commission, where it was explained for the

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<sup>68</sup> Comp. ARS, AS 220, Commission, box 3, a list of Slovenian war criminals who escaped to the Koroška region.

<sup>69</sup> LP, 26 May 1945, No. 27, Krivda škofa dr. Rožmana za zverinsko klanje poštenih Slovencev.

<sup>70</sup> LP, 7 June 1945, No. 37, Kaj dela mednarodna komisija za izsledovanje vojnih zločincev?; 16 June 1945, No. 46, "Ne pozabite nas, maščujte nas!"; comp. Rožmanov proces, pp. 316.

<sup>71</sup> LP, 6 June 1945, No. 36, Belogardistična zverstva po Dolenjski: zahtevamo izročitev in kaznovanje vseh vojnih zločincev.

<sup>72</sup> Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina, pp. 56. Until the spring of 1948, 142 Yugoslav citizens and 258 German and Hungarian citizens were handed over to Yugoslavia. (Ibid., p. 61).

first time that Yugoslavia is a part of this process at the international level; however, that was supposedly a slow process. Even though supposedly the Yugoslav State Commission has already registered more than 10 000 people suspected of war crimes, the process came to a halt because of the international commission, which "has not found a way to turn even one war criminal to the courts of the Yugoslav people, despite the fact that almost all of them are being held by the Allies". The article then went on to indicate the agreement on the extradition process.<sup>73</sup> The question of entries into the international war criminals register and the extradition of war criminals with Italian citizenship – members of the Italian occupation forces in Yugoslavia – was especially political. Yugoslav authorities, through a public campaign, already pursued this issue in March 1945, and later repeatedly on several levels: in the UN War Crimes Commission, in the relations with the Italian government and also publicly. However, these demands for the extradition of the "Italian criminals" have not resounded very much with the public before the autumn of 1945, especially because the authorities expected the extradition demands would ultimately be successful.<sup>74</sup>

Court proceedings, not only those against war criminals, were presented to the population in detail and continuously, usually in a form where the facts spoke for themselves. The newspapers contained mostly short but noticeably biased reports about indictments and even more often about verdicts, which were harsh. Of course, there were no reports about hosts of convicts, lined up in front of military courts one after another, when they were sentenced to their two or for years in prison because of their participation in the collaborating formations or desertion from the partisan units<sup>75</sup> – they reported on the processes against important or at least moderately known suspects. The first such trial, worthy of public attention, already took place on 31 May 1945,<sup>76</sup> while three weeks later the public found out about the trial and the sentence to death after an appeal of the tycoon Benko in Murska Sobota.<sup>77</sup> After that the media commented on the process against a group of collaborators in Ljubljana,<sup>78</sup> and then the so-called Hlebič process already took place (with Jože Hlebec as the first of the accused), which represented an efficient judicial persecution of the murderers of the so-called Turjak victims (a group of national liberation movement members, imprisoned at the political police prison of the Police Directorate in Ljubljana,

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<sup>73</sup> LP, 7 June 1945, No. 37, Kaj dela mednarodna komisija za izsledovanje vojnih zločincev? Comp. LP, 21 July 1945, No. 76, Jugoslavija pričakuje odločitve o vojnih zločincih.

<sup>74</sup> Državna komisija za utvrđivanje zločina, pp. 58, 59; LP, 23 June 1945, No. 52, Jugoslavija zahteva enako postopanje z italijanskimi in nemškimi zločinci; Bastianini – registriran kot italijanski vojni zločinec; LP, 8 September 1945, No. 118, O odgovornosti Italije.

<sup>75</sup> ARS, AS 1931, file 1078, 1079.

<sup>76</sup> LP, 31 May 1945, No. 31, Na smrt obsojen zločinec in izdajalec slovenskega naroda.

<sup>77</sup> LP, 10 June 1945, No. 40, Izdajalci slovenskega naroda so prejeli zasluženno kazen; 20 June 1945, No. 49, Za obsojena veleizdajalca ni bilo milosti.

<sup>78</sup> LP, 24 June 1945, No. 53, Prva javna razprava proti vojnim zločincem v Ljubljani.

with a very important liberation movement official Vito Kraigher among them). Since the slaughter of this group took place on 5 May 1945; since they were taken from the central prison of the Slovenian political police in Ljubljana, whose members also killed them; and since this was a question of "betrayal in Ljubljana", the public interest in this process was extraordinary.<sup>79</sup> Almost simultaneously the so-called "Pajdaš process", the trial of those less important officials of the German occupation administration that OZNA managed to capture, took place in Celje.<sup>80</sup> These first processes occurred at the same time as the final "cleansing" period and the declaration of amnesty for all members of collaborating formations who did not personally engage in war crimes.<sup>81</sup> Court proceedings were organised in such a way that the judicial authorities followed the general reconstruction of the wartime events and strived to connect the occupation authorities with the Slovenian collaborators in the indictment material; more concretely they strived to ensure joint trials for both of them. For the first time such a process was carried out on 23 June 1945 against a group of eleven members of Gestapo and the Slovenian Home Guard. This process was even announced by the Slovenian public prosecutor with a press release.<sup>82</sup>

Regardless of the confirmed right to satisfaction and the right to punishing the war crimes, the reports that other countries also punish their war criminals was a very important confirmation that Slovenia was on the correct side. The negotiations of the three superpowers in the United Nations about realising their decision to punish war crimes received great attention.<sup>83</sup> Frequent articles about the trials of Petain, Quisling, as well as the reports about the trials in Hungary, in the occupied Vienna and elsewhere, surely importantly complemented the extensive reports about the trials at home.<sup>84</sup> They especially identified with the situation in

<sup>79</sup> LP, 30 June 1945, No. 58, Proces proti dvajsetim vojnim zločincem; 1 July 1945, No. 59, Pravici je zadoščeno. About the background see Lojz Tršan: *Razbitje OF in partije v Ljubljani v zadnjem obdobju nemške okupacije* [The Shattering of the Liberation Front and the Communist Party in Ljubljana in the Last Period of the German Occupation]. Ljubljana 1996.

<sup>80</sup> LP, 7 July 1945, No. 64, Obsodba vojnih zločincev v Celju.

<sup>81</sup> LP, 8 July 1945, No. 65, Seja predsedstva Avnoj-a; 15 August 1945, No. 97, Amnestija; 26 August 1945, No. 107, Amnestija, Zakon o podeljevanju amnestije in pomilostitve za dejanja, kazniva po zakonih federalne Slovenije; Ukaz o pomilostitvi oseb, obsojenih po zakonu o kaznovanju zločinov in prestopkov zoper slovensko narodno čast.

<sup>82</sup> LP, 14 June 1945, No. 44, Krvniki slovenskega naroda pred sodiščem; ARS, AS 1931, the intelligence service documents, Lm 0176853-55; press conference of the higher state prosecutor Jernej Stante, 20 July 1945. Comp. Rožmanov proces, pp. 20–21.

<sup>83</sup> LP, 4 August 1945, No. 88, Sklepi "velikih treh" v Potsdamu; 7 August 1945, 90, Zgodovinski sklepi berlinske konference; 13 June 1945, No. 43, Vse napredno človeštvo zahteva kaznovanje vojnih zločincev; 17 June 1945, No. 47, Vojne zločince je treba hitro kaznovati.

<sup>84</sup> LP, 24 July 1945, No. 78, Smrtna obsodba madžarskega fašista; 27 July 1945, 81, Vojne zločine je treba obsoditi; 16 August 1945, 98, Finsko ljudstvo zahteva obsodbo vojnih zločincev; 21 August 1945, 102, Prvi vojni zločinci obsojeni na Dunaju; 22 August 1945, 103, Proces proti norveškemu izdajalcu Quislingu; 26 August 1945, 107, Norveški izdajalec Quisling pred sodiščem; Avstrijski tisk o obsodbi fašističnih zločincev, Finsko ljudstvo zahteva kaznovanje vojnih zločincev.

France, where the court proceedings against Petain took place as early as in July 1945, while in August the Prime Minister Laval returned from Spain where he had sought refuge.<sup>85</sup> When the Nuremberg Trials began, the frequency of the reports about these central court proceedings increased, regardless of the fact that the reporters were not completely satisfied with all of its aspects.<sup>86</sup>

In the autumn of 1945 the number of media reports about war crimes decreased. In the late autumn of 1945, life in Federal Slovenia started to normalise, and everyday problems became more important for the media than the moral satisfaction for the horrors of war. Mounting tensions at the western border influenced the actual and the Agitprop-influenced public interest.<sup>87</sup> After the Constituent Assembly elections in November of 1945, war crimes almost disappeared from the media. They only turned up in the form of court proceedings reports, but it was still hard to discern which trials were about war crimes and which about "enemies of the people". That did not mean that the work of the State Commission ended and that the struggle of the Yugoslav authorities for the extradition of the important persons from the former invading countries ceased, but its propaganda power was only renewed during the preparations for individual trials – as long as until 1946 and 1947, when the two most important proceedings against those accused of war crimes took place in Slovenia.<sup>88</sup> However, these processes already took place in a new social and political environment, which focused on shaping the socialism, so this was given precedence over the wartime period. The wartime period became nothing but a new evolving myth of the (self)liberation by means of national liberation struggle, which made socialism possible.

## Conclusion

The persecution of war crimes oscillated between contradictory goals, just like many other processes in the turbulent times immediately after the war. It was

<sup>85</sup> LP, 24 July 1945, No. 78, Razprava proti Petainu; 26 July 1945, 80, Proces proti Petainu je proces proti vsej peti koloni; 28 July 1945, 82, Proces proti izdajalcu Petainu; 31 July 1945, 84, Nadaljevanje Petainovega procesa; 1 August 1945, 85, Herriot priča proti Petainu; 2 August 1945, 86, Vojni zločinec Laval v francoskih rokah; 3 August 1945, 87, Zaslišanje prič v Petainovem procesu; Laval v pariških zaporih; 4 August 1945, 88, Ali se je sodni proces proti Petainu sploh začel?; 12 August 1945, 95, Javni tožilec zahteva za Petaina smrtno kazen; 14 August 1945, 96, Javni tožilec je utemeljil zahtevo za smrtno kazen; 16 August 1945, 98, Izdajalec Petain obsojen na smrt.

<sup>86</sup> LP, 31 August 1945, No. 111, Prvi seznam glavnih vojnih zločincev, ki jim bo v skladu s sklepi moskovske deklaracije sodilo mednarodno vojaško sodišče.

<sup>87</sup> Comp. Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848–1992, pp. 915–922.

<sup>88</sup> More details: Rožmanov proces; Dušan Željeznov: *Rupnikov proces* [The Rupnik Trial]. Ljubljana 1980; Alfred Elste, Michael Koschat, Hanzi Filipič: *Nacistična Avstrija na zatožni klopi: anatomija političnega spektakularnega procesa v komunistični Sloveniji* [Nazi Austria in Court: The Anatomy of the Political Spectacle Process in the Communist Slovenia]. Celovec, Ljubljana, Dunaj 2002.

fuelled by justice, the wish to prevent a future war and to ensure payback for horrors, which seemed to have reached such extents and forms that they could no longer get any worse. But at the same time it took place in the post-war period when the wounds were still fresh and revenge was morally just, almost a natural state of mind. Moral satisfaction with harsh punishment in such circumstances was not controversial. At the same time, in the complicated Slovenian situation where a new political elite came to power with a long and complex resistance movement, retribution against war criminals, especially relating and even equating them with "the enemies of the people", represented a handy instrument for the strengthening of the authority. Regardless of the social context we should not lose sight of the basic message which the persecution of war criminals sent in Slovenia as well as the whole of Europe. By persecuting and punishing war criminals, the rules of military and humanitarian law, complemented by the new definitions of the Nuremberg Court in regard to crimes against peace and crimes against humanity, finally started functioning as an actual instrument of the international community. War in fact became more limited, since the perpetrators of crimes against military law and humanity were more likely to be punished. Unfortunately all of this was only true for the defeated.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Zadostitev zmagovalcem in potrditev premaganih. Pregon vojnega hudodelstva v Sloveniji 1945*

Kazensko in politično sankcioniranje vojnih hudodelstev (k čemur sodijo tudi zločini proti miru in zločini proti človeštvu) je bilo eno od najbolj očitnih vprašanj neposredno po koncu vojne. Sprožila ga je zmaga koalicije Združenih narodov, da bi tudi na pravno in politično sankcionirala hude kršitve pravil vojne in množičnega uničenja Judov, Romov ter Slovanov. Ko se je v Evropi vojna končala, so države Združenih narodov imele že veliko razčiščenega glede samega načina in postopkov glede preganjanja vojnih zločinov (Komisija za vojne zločine), dokončno pa so izvedbo izoblikovali v prvih mesecih po vojni; najbolj viden izraz le-te je bila ustanovitev Mednarodnega vojaškega sodišča.

Jugoslavija in z njo Slovenija kot ena od njenih federalnih enot je bila poseben del zmagovite protifašistične koalicije. Poseben zato, ker je odporniško gibanje preraslo v veliki meri v zavezniško državo Demokratično federativno Jugoslavijo, ki pa je hkrati izvajala projekt velike družbene transformacije. Drugi vidik posebnosti je bila hkratna notranja državljanska vojna, med odporniki in kolaborantskimi formacijami, ki so hoteli v sodelovanju z okupatorji odstraniti ogrožajočo jih rast vpliva in moči komunistov, ki so bili najpomembnejši vodilni v odporniškem gibanju. To je obeleževalo tudi problem poveljnega ob-

računa z storilci in osumljenimi vojnih hudodelstev. Zato je imel pregon vojnega hudodelstva svojstvene poteze in značilnosti, saj je bil širše vpet v menjavo oblasti in družbenega sistema.

Do spomladi 1945 je bil organizacijski nastavek za izpeljavo množičnega obračuna z vojnim hudodelstvom v Sloveniji in na državni ravni že pripravljen. Podobno mednarodni komisiji Združenih narodov za vojne zločine se je odločila, da bo kršitve vojnega prava proučevala in zbirala dokaze posebna komisija pri izvršni oblasti, pravosodni organi pa naj bi na podlagi zbranega dokaznega gradiva izvedli sodne procese. Organizacijsko je že delovala Državna komisija za ugotavljanje za ugotovitev zločinov okupatorjev in njihovih pomagačev, ki je na slovenski, bodoči federalni ravni imela enako komisijo, razpelo tudi na nižje upravne ravni do krajevnih referentov. Vsebinsko je bilo že opredeljeno, da bo komisija obravnavala vsa vprašanja kršitve mednarodnega vojnega prava, izdelala pa je tudi natančno operacionalizacijo vsebine in načina popisovanja, zbiranja dokaznega materiala za načrtovane sodne procese. Pri tem je komisija v jeseni 1944 bila omejena predvsem na zbiranje dokazov o zločinih okupacijskih armad in okupacijskih uprav, manj pa na domače, ki jih je prevzela v svojo pristojnost varnostna služba odporniškega gibanja Organizacija za zaščito naroda (t. j. Ljudstva) – Ozna.

Po koncu vojne je široko organiziran proces pregona vojnega hudodelstva zajel celotno državo. Kazal se je v vrsti hitro pripravljenih sodnih procesov proti zajetim pripadnikom okupacijskega aparata in njegovih domačih sodelavcev, pri čemer je bila Komisija za ugotavljanje zločinov okupatorja kvečjemu postranski sodelavec, glavno vlogo pa so imele varnostna služba Ozna (ki je posredovala obtežilno gradivo) in Jugoslovanska vojska, saj so tovrstni procesi potekali izključno pred vojaškimi sodišči. Pregon in obračun z vojnim hudodelstvom na slovenski državni ravni je bil pod močnim vplivom dogajanja na državni ravni, manj pa pod vplivom mednarodnega dogajanja. Komisije federalnih enot so tedaj izvedle večino preiskovalnega in zbiralnega dela, tako glede dejanj, dokazov kot identifikacije storilcev. Tako zbiranje je bilo mogoče le s sodelovanjem prebivalstva, zlasti pa žrtev nasilja. Oblasti so si močno prizadevale, da bi mobilizirale javnost k sodelovanju, ki so ga smatrale za moralno pomembnega in hkrati tudi mobilizirajoče navznoter ter z žrtvami legitimirajoče v mednarodni javnosti. Posebej uspešno je to prizadevanje bilo po koncu vojne, ko je odpadel strah prebivalstva pred sodelovanjem s komisijami za ugotavljanje zločinov.

Tako je bilo zbranih nad deset tisoč izjav, ki so ob zaplenjeni dokumentaciji okupatorjev omogočili vzpostavitev nekaj deset tisoč dosjejev osumljenih vojnega hudodelstva in izoblikovanje več kot 500 zahtevkov za izročitev zavezniškimi vladam (10% od jugoslovanskih zahtevkov), enako kot tudi sojenja več stotinam obtoženih vojnih hudodelstev, v katerih so bile dosojene kazni eksemplarično stroge.

Obljuba oblasti o nadomestilu za vojne napore, izgube in trpljenja (popis vojne škode in obljava povračila) je imela veliko odzivno moč, ki je deloma la-

hko prekrila tudi težave v upravljanju in vodenju države, ki so se pokazale v po-vojnem času. Hkrati je vodstvo posredno napeljalo prebivalstvo k moralnemu zadovoljstvu – maščevanju oziroma zadoščenju s tem, da bodo krivci, povzročitelji mnogih zločinov, v prenesenem pomenu pa tudi vsega hudega, "trdo, a pravično kaznovani", s propagando so torej skušali vzbuditi srd javnosti proti premaganim z opozarjanjem na prestano trpljenje. Takšna javna usmeritev oblasti je bila hkrati dvolična, saj je podrobno sodno obravnavo v veliki meri nadomestila z hitrim in prikritim izvensodnim pobjem večine zajetih kolaborantov pred objavo amnestije, sodno obravnavala pa je le posamezne bolj izpostavljene osumljence, kjer je procese tudi močno propagandno izrabila.

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*Mitja Ferenc*\*

*Absent from Public Memory.  
Hidden Grave Sites in Slovenia 60 Years  
After the End of World War Two*

In 2005, celebrating 60 years since the fall of fascism and the end of World War II, us Slovenians still face a heritage of the past – the consequences of conflicts, which left behind numerous hidden grave sites on our land. These grave sites are the result of post-war mass and individual extrajudicial executions between 1945 and 1946, and they include the sites containing the remains of the members of the armed formations which opposed the partisans, as well as civilians. In a broader sense, hidden grave sites are all grave sites from the aforementioned period containing the remains of soldiers and civilians who could not or were not allowed to have their own graves.<sup>1</sup>

According to official information there are 3986 military burial grounds and grave sites dating back to World War II in Slovenia,<sup>2</sup> but the hidden grave sites, which are the topic of my article, do not count among them. Until now more than 400 such sites have been discovered.

Like in many other countries fighting in the war, the post-war retaliation of the victorious side against the defeated also took place in Slovenia. Here these confrontations were especially bloody, since many different military formations opposing the National Liberation Movement ended up in the Slovenian territory. These formations were also accompanied by multitude of civilian refugees.

More than ten thousand people lost their lives without any legal proceedings, and subsequently they were also erased from public memory. Namely, the crimes committed by the new Yugoslav authorities against their own citizens

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<sup>1</sup> The author presented the issue of hidden graves more elaborately at the exhibition *Prikrito in očem zakrito: Prikrita grobišča 60. let po koncu 2. svetovne vojne* [Out of Sight: Hidden Grave Sites 60 Years After World War Two] from May to September 2005 in Celje, from September to October 2005 in Ljubljana, and in the treatise with the same title.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of Republic of Slovenia (hereinafter referred to as Ministry of Labour or ML), Information on the state of military grave sites for the session of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, 29 July 1999. Official sources refer to even higher numbers.



with mass extrajudicial executions were made even worse by the authorities commanding silence and denying these citizens the right to their own graves. Mass grave sites, individual graves and the victims they contained simply "did not exist". The grave sites were levelled with the ground, covered up, destroyed. The Directive that the graves of German and other invaders and their collaborators should be removed, levelled, every trace of them wiped out was issued by the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs as early as on 18 May 1945 and passed on by the individual Federal Ministers to their subordinates, unchanged or adapted. The conclusion of the research in the other parts of the former common country will enable an analysis of how precisely and how long this directive was being carried out elsewhere. Already the comparison between the instructions of the Slovenian and Croatian Ministers of Internal Affairs shows that in Croatia the graves of the members of the Croatian Home Guard were not included among those to be erased and removed,<sup>3</sup> while the Slovenian instructions did not mention any exceptions; that means that all the grave sites of those included in the group of national traitors were wiped out.

This Directive was also implemented in the following years; namely, it was repeated at the federal as well as the republic level in August 1946, and up to a degree it was also preserved, as far as its contents are concerned, every time new legislation on cemeteries and burial services was passed.<sup>4</sup>

But the destiny of these victims could not remain hidden from the general population. Prisoners who escaped from camps and prisons and, above all, people who saved themselves from the chasms in the Kočevski Rog<sup>5</sup> forest and the mines of Stari Hrastnik<sup>6</sup> described their destiny to relatives and friends. Due to extensive material written by political emigrants more was known and discussed about the post-war massacres outside Slovenia than at home. However, this topic was off limits in the Slovenian public. Even as late as in 1980s

<sup>3</sup> *Partizanska i komunistička represija i zločini u Hrvatskoj 1944.–1946.* [Partisan and Communist Repression and Crimes in Croatia 1944–1946]. Slavonski Brod 2005, document No. 63.

<sup>4</sup> Uradni list Socialistične republike Slovenije, 1984, št. 34 [The Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, 1984, No. 34]; Article 35 of the Cemeteries and Burial Services Act, abolished a few days before the reconciliation ceremony in the Kočevski Rog forest in 1990, set out that "no markings, inscriptions, pictures or symbols pertaining to the casualties' affiliation with enemy organisations fighting against the Yugoslav National Liberation Army or the casualties' hostile activities in order to undermine the social structure of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia shall be allowed at the grave sites."

<sup>5</sup> *Ušli so smrti : poročila treh rešencev iz množičnega grobišča v Kočevskem Rogu* [Avoided Death : the Report of Three People Rescued from the Mass Grave Site in the Kočevski Rog Forest]. Klagenfurt – Ljubljana – Vienna 2004, pp. 102–157; compare the dates in *Kočevski Rog*. Maribor 1990, pp. 65–74, recapitulated from *Tribuna*, 22. December 1989.

<sup>6</sup> Franc Ižanec [Niko Jeločnik]: *Odprti grobovi*, I, [Open graves]. Buenos Aires 1965, document No. 19 (Lojz Opeka); document No. 20 (Anton Petkovšek), IV, Buenos Aires 1971 (Ižanec, *Odprti grobovi*, IV), document No. 18 (Janez Ozimek); F. Žakelj: *Revolucija okrog Limbarske gore* [Revolution around Limbarska gora]. Buenos Aires 1979, pp. 287–295 (Jože Cerar).

the Slovenian State Security Service lurked in the proximity of grave sites, especially bigger ones and those visited more frequently, observed who came to the spots where the remains of these victims were supposedly buried and prevented any possible markings of the graves. The Security Service was especially active every year before All Saints' Day.

History shows that no amount of covering up can hide such crimes forever. But if the Slovenian public only whispered about these crimes 20 years after the events, for the first time discussed them publicly after 30 years, knew about 3 or 4 mass grave sites after 40 years, knew about ten times as many after 50 years, then in 2005 already more than 400 hidden grave sites were known. From 1990 to 2002 the exploration of hidden grave sites was in the domain of individuals and associations outside responsible national authorities – these authorities, more or less unsuccessfully, only dealt with the people ordering the massacres. Since the reconciliation ceremony in the Kočevski Rog forest it was expected that the country would become more decisive in its efforts to finally set the records about this traumatic point in the Slovenian history straight.

The first occasion when the State got more actively involved in the problem of finding the grave sites and setting them in order, at least in theory, was the discovery of the mass grave site in Zgornja Bistrica in September 2001, where 431 skeletons were dug up from two pits.<sup>7</sup> The question of when the state would acquire a list of these sites and when and how it would start arranging them was becoming more and more important. The Government of the Republic of Slovenia undertook that the national authorities would do everything in their power to find and mark the grave sites and, where necessary, also rebury the remains elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> However, the political will was not followed by the technical, financial, staff and other conditions.

Not before 2002 were the most basic conditions for establishing the records of the hidden grave sites met.<sup>9</sup> In cooperation with experts on individual grave sites, crime investigators, the victims' relatives and others, 410 burial locations were found and registered by the end of 2004.<sup>10</sup> However, we know that at least another 160 sites exist, containing the remains of very different numbers of victims of war and post-war massacres.

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<sup>7</sup> Public announcement of the Office of the District State Prosecutor of Maribor, 22. January 2002.

<sup>8</sup> The statement of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia at the presentation of the comprehensive plan of arranging the post-war casualties' grave sites and adoption of the War Grave Sites Act, 22. November 2001.

<sup>9</sup> The registering by the government commission begun already in 2000, but only continued until the new commission was established by the so-called Bajuk government. For more information about this see Mitja Ferenc: Ministrstvo za kulturo in evidentiranje prikritih grobišč v RS. [Ministry of Culture and the Registering of Hidden Graves in the Republic of Slovenia. In: *Varstvo spomenikov* [Conservation of Monuments]. 2005, 41.

<sup>10</sup> Mitja Ferenc, Mateja Bavdaž: Evidentiranje prikritih grobišč v RS, stanje 31. 12. 2004 [Registering Hidden Graves in the Republic of Slovenia, the state on 31 December 2004].

The completed research took into account all the grave sites hidden during and after the war, including the grave sites of the casualties of the final battles which had not been taken care of or remained unknown. In accordance with the War Grave Sites Act we have also recorded those rare grave sites which were already moved during the war (for example Jelendol) or after the war (for example Orlov vrh). We took into account the sites where the remains were partly dug out and buried elsewhere (for example, the remains from the karst abysses in the Koper region were reburied at the city graveyard in Koper).<sup>11</sup> One eighth of the 410 locations (54 of them) registered until now dates back to the wartime period.<sup>12</sup>

### **The categories of grave sites**

The locations where human remains are buried can be divided into four groups. The largest group of hidden grave sites are pits which had to be excavated before they were used to cover up the crimes after the executions. There are almost 300 of those among the registered sites. They can be found all over Slovenia, even in very inappropriate places. They are mostly located in sparse forests, forest clearings or the edges of meadows, but also in the locations where ponds, dumps and parking lots were later built, in orchards, by the outer walls of graveyards, at river banks, by the streams, on steep slopes, even near small chapels, etc. Some grave sites were uncovered by nature, others were discovered during construction works or found by the victims' relatives or associations searching for them; only a few of them were opened on purpose. The grave sites of German and Italian soldiers, whose reburials take place continuously in agreement with these countries, are the exception. But we seem not to know how to take care of our own citizens. Or cannot or will not take care of them.

Mine shafts (ten of them) and dugouts are another group of hidden grave sites. The Sv. Barbara mine shaft near Laško is the most infamous example, while the largest number of victims – Bosnian and Montenegrin Chetniks and members of the Slovenian Home Guard – can be found in the mines of Stari Hrastnik.

The third group includes anti-tank and other previously excavated ditches. 15 of these are recorded, but despite them being mentioned frequently, only two

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<sup>11</sup> Mestna občina Koper, Urad za gospodarske in javne službe in promet, Poročilo o organiziranju in pomoči pri iznašanju človeških posmrtnih ostankov iz kraških votlin socerbsko-podgorškega Krasa, avtor Franc Malečkar, 22. 7. 1992 (dalje Koper, Poročilo); Uradni zaznamek, 25. 3. 2004 [The Koper Municipality, Office of Public Services and Transport, Report on the organisation and assistance with the exhumation of human remains from the karst caves in the Socerb-Podgorje Karst region, author Franc Malečkar, 22 July 1992 (hereinafter Koper, Report); official memorandum, 25 March 2004.

<sup>12</sup> This number does not include 17 locations which I have already determined were not grave sites, 38 grave sites without chronological information, and the grave sites dating back to May 1945.

have been partially explored: the one at Tezno near Maribor and the other one in Celje. The known sites include ditches between Brežice and Dobovo, the ones near Mislinja and Slovenj Gradec, the trench in Bistrica ob Sotli, etc. The biggest grave site in Slovenia is probably the one in Tezno near Maribor, which mostly contains the remains of Croatian citizens. A part of this ditch was systematically explored during the construction of the highway, but some of it was left undisturbed by the examiners. More than 1100 corpses were dug out over the length of 60 metres.<sup>13</sup>

The last group of hidden grave sites are the karst abysses. The speleologists recorded human remains in almost 100 karst abysses and they are in various conditions. Some of them are completely open and anyone who would climb inside could step on human bones; while others were blown up in order to cover the tracks.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately some of these chasms also contain garbage which covered the remains.<sup>15</sup> The remains were brought out of some ten abysses, partially or completely.

### The status of the victims

In regard to their status and nationalities, the victims buried at these grave sites are classified on the basis of direct and indirect oral sources and literature. Therefore this is just approximate information, since barely any exhumations and analyses took place. But even when exploring these grave sites in detail we soon stumble upon obstacles when trying to determine whether the remains are soldiers or civilians. Research carried out until now shows that the grave sites in the territory of Slovenia are mostly hidden military grave sites (134). 79 of the sites contains civilians, while soldiers and civilians were buried together at 72

<sup>13</sup> Policijska uprava Maribor, poročilo ODT v Mariboru o spremljanju izkopavanja posmrtnih ostankov žrtev povojnih pobojev na lokaciji tankovskega jarka v trasi bodoče avtoceste v k.o. Bohova, 12. 7. 1999 [The Maribor Police Directorate, the report of the Office of the District State Prosecutor of Maribor on the monitoring of the exhumation of post-war casualties' remains at the location of the anti-tank ditch at the future highway construction site in Bohova, 12 July 1999]; some sources mention the length of 70 metres and 1179 corpses.

<sup>14</sup> The explosions sometimes brought down only a part of the entrance, while at other locations the entrances collapsed completely. The most widely known hidden graves in the Kočevski Rog forest are such an example: the Jama pod Macesnovo gorico cave and the Jama pod Krenom cave, where the reconciliation ceremony also took place in 1990.

<sup>15</sup> For additional information on karst caves – grave sites see Andrej Mihevc: *Množična grobišča v jamah v Sloveniji* [Mass Grave Sites in Slovenian Caves]. In: Brez milosti : ranjeni, invalidi in bolni povojni ujetniki na Slovenskem. [No Mercy: Wounded, Injured and Unhealthy Post-War Captives in Slovenia]. Ljubljana 2000 (hereinafter Mihevc, Brez milosti). In: *Brez milosti. Ranjeni, invalidni in bolni povojni ujetniki na Slovenskem*, Ljubljana 2000, pp. 331–349; same author: Identifikacija žrtev pobojev v breznih na Kočevskem Rogu in Matarskem podolju s pomočjo novcev [Identifying the Post-War Casualties in the Kočevski Rog Forest and the Matarsko podolje. Abysses on the Basis of Coins]. In: *Naše jame*, [Our Caves], 1995, pp. 85–89.

sites; we do not have any information whatsoever about a quarter (109) of them. The hidden sites where Slovenians were buried have a different status from the burial sites containing the remains of people of other nationalities, since most of them are civilian grave sites (69). We especially find Slovenian civilians near the camps of the OZNA (Department for the Protection of People) security agency (Strnišče, Hrastovec in Slovenske gorice, Brestrnica, etc.) or near its local prisons. However, as far as the numbers are concerned, the military grave sites containing the remains of Slovenians are larger.

### The nationality of the victims

Without exhumations and other research it is not suitable nor professional to give detailed estimates about how many casualties of different nationalities were buried in the Slovenian territory. However, in accordance with the partial information collected by the Institute of Contemporary History, we could come to a conclusion, as far as Slovenians are concerned, that at least 13.556 soldiers and civilians, who disappeared during the post-war massacres, were denied their own graves, and so were approximately 6.300 civilians, village guards, Chetniks and members of the Slovenian Home Guard killed during the war fighting against the partisans.<sup>16</sup>

People of other nationalities were also executed extrajudicially in Slovenia, most of them were members of the NDH (Independent State of Croatia) armed forces (the Croatian Ustashe and Croatian Home Guard), members of the Serbian Volunteer Corps, Montenegrin and other Chetniks as well as civilians, who accompanied these armed forces over the Slovenian territory, retreating to the Koroška region. The rejection of refugees, captured around Bleiburg (Pliberk) and the river Drava valley towards Croatia, was accompanied by mass executions, especially of the Ustashe and the Home Guard officers, and these events remain known in the Croatian collective memory as the "Bleiburg Tragedy", the "Way of the Cross" or the "Death Marches".<sup>17</sup> Many soldiers and civilians were captured already before that, while retreating from the Croatian to the Austrian border, by the Yugoslav Army. Croatians, Serbians and Montenegrins who

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<sup>16</sup> Tadeja Tominšek – Rihtar, Mojca Šorn: *Žrtve druge svetovne vojne in zaradi nje (april 1941 – januar 1946)* [The Victims of World War II April 1941 – January 1946]. In: *Žrtve vojne in revolucije* [Victims of War and Revolution]. Ljubljana 2005.

<sup>17</sup> The highest estimates refer to as many as 600.000 people; *Hrvatski holokaust* [The Croatian Holocaust], p. 110. The Croatian demographer Vladimir Žerjavić calculated that around 49.000 Croatian Ustashe, Home Guard and civilians supposedly lost their lives, as many as 30.000 of the 40.000 captured at Bleiburg and another 10.000 soldiers and approximately 7.000 civilians from the Vetrinjsko taborišče camp and other camps. Certainly not all of them were executed in Slovenia, since mass graves of "the Way of the Cross" were also discovered in Croatia in the past years, for example in the Maceljški gozd forest; Vladimir Žerjavić: *Operacije i megalomanije oko Jasenovca i Bleiburga*. Zagreb 1992; Vladimir Žerjavić: *Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu*. Zagreb 1989.

reached the Koroška region before the middle of May were returned to Yugoslavia from the camps by the English authorities.

It looks that more grave sites contain the remains of other nationalities than of Slovenians. In the coming years, when the agreements on reburial and arrangement of the grave sites are also concluded with other countries except Germany and Italy, especially with Croatia and Serbia, a list and a basic arrangement of the grave sites is going to be required, as set out in the Geneva Convention.<sup>18</sup> Associations and individuals from Croatia, Republic of Srpska, Serbia and Montenegro are already inquiring about the grave sites and their relatives. Among registered grave sites 108 of them contain the remains of Slovenians,<sup>19</sup> 84 are the grave sites of Croatian victims and 61 are the grave sites of Germans. 59 grave sites contain casualties of various nationalities,<sup>20</sup> while for 62 of them no information in regard to the nationality is known.

### Mass grave sites

Only estimates can be given about the number of victims buried at individual grave sites, since the remains at just a few of the sites have been exhumed and counted in their entirety. Both abysses in the Kočevski Rog forest count among the larger sites, considered to contain more than a thousand or several thousands of victims: the Jama pod Macesnovo Gorico cave, containing mostly Slovenian victims, and the Jama pod Krenom cave, where victims of other nationalities besides Croats and Serbs could also be buried. The Stari Hrastnik and the Sv. Barbara v Hudi jami mines, containing Chetniks and members of the Slovenian Home Guard, are also among the larger sites. The grave sites in Bistrica ob Sotli, the Krakovski gozd forest, Poljana and the anti-tank ditch near Tezno

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<sup>18</sup> Sporazum med Vlado Republike Slovenije in Vlado Italijanske republike o urejanju vojnih grobišč [Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and Government of the Republic of Italy on arranging the war grave sites]. In: Uradni list Republike Slovenije, Mednarodne pogodbe, 1997, št. 10 [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, International Treaties, 1997, No. 10]; Sporazum med Vlado Republike Slovenije in Zvezno republiko Nemčijo o vojnih grobovih [Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and Federal Republic of Germany on war graves]. In: Uradni list Republike Slovenije, Mednarodne pogodbe, 1999, št. 6 [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, International Treaties, 1999, No. 6]; Sporazum med Vlado Republike Slovenije in Vlado Republike Hrvaške o urejanju vojnih grobišč [Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and Government of the Republic of Croatia on arranging the war grave sites], draft.

<sup>19</sup> I have not taken into account the 16 sites where Slovenian civilians were supposedly buried which I determined were not grave sites.

<sup>20</sup> There are two grave sites of Slovenians and Serbs, seven grave sites of Slovenians and Italians, six sites of Slovenians and Croats and ten sites of Croats and Serbs. 35 sites contain victims of more than two nationalities, most of them Slovenians, Croats and Germans (21) or other combinations, mostly Slovenians and Germans (5), etc. Russians are supposedly buried at five grave sites, Hungarians also five, Italians in three, Serbs in two, Roma and Ukrainians also two.

mostly contain the remains of Croats. The chasms at the Trnovska planota plains mostly contain the remains of Italians and Slovenians from the Gorica region. Casualties from the Trieste and Koper regions were also transported into karst caves. ("Larger" mass grave sites, containing several hundred victims, include: the Kucja dolina valley near Ljubljana, Košnica near Celje, the anti-tank ditch at Mostec near Dobova, five grave sites at Crngrob, Žančani near Slovenj Gradec, Jevnik near the Sidol village near Kamnik, Lancovo near Radovljica, Mošnje in the Gorenjska region (the grave sites Zgoša, Senožeta, Lisičji rep), Zgornja Bistrica, Hafnarjev graben in Brestanica, Golo on Krim, the grave sites in Celje (Mlinarjev Janez, Lipovškov travnik, Bežigrad, Teharje – under the Cinkarna Celje factory dump), the Gorice nad Šoštanjem hill (six locations), etc.) Especially the karst abysses are shrouded in mystery as far as the number of victims is concerned, particularly those that were blown up and the ones that have not been excavated yet, for example the Ušiva jama cave in the Kočevski Rog forest.

Thanks to the recently discovered list of grave sites in the Ilirska Bistrica municipality, drawn up by the State Security Administration for its internal purposes a couple of years after the war, we know that more than 1300 German soldiers are buried in 120 spots around that region.<sup>21</sup>

### **The state of the grave sites**

The state of the grave sites corresponds to the fact that they were hidden and were not allowed to be marked or set in order. Almost none of these sites have been arranged. After 1990 the victims' relatives, associations, municipal commissions and other individuals set up various markings nearby, mostly wooden crosses. Since the mid-1990s more permanent markings have been put up, even memorial chapels at certain sites. The Slovenian state only allocated financial resources for the establishment of the Teharje Memorial Park and the chapel in the Kočevski Rog forest, while it has not yet undertaken to set other hidden grave sites in order and it does not know what to do with them. Thus, unfortunately, as many as two thirds of hidden grave sites remain completely unmarked, without any visible signs of their existence. With the exception of erecting or building crosses, there have never been any other arrangements. The only exceptions are Lajše, which was set up as the central grave site and a memorial for the Primorska region and is completely finished, and the ossuary for the victims from Slovenska Bistrica, built in October 2004. Due to the fact that the grave sites remain mostly unknown, there are barely any signposts to point

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<sup>21</sup> Mitja Ferenc: "... Grobovi so zravnani in zaraščeni" : seznam grobov sovražnikovih vojakov, padlih v času NOV na območju občine Ilirska Bistrica ["... The graves are levelled and overgrown : The list of graves of enemy soldiers who lost their lives during the National Liberation War in the Ilirska Bistrica region."] In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 2004, No. 1, pp. 160–168.

out the sites to potential visitors. Only two of all locations have been proclaimed a cultural monument – the Brezarjevo brezno abyss, where the remains were dug out as early as in June 1945, and the nearby Kucja dolina valley, where these remains were transported to.<sup>22</sup> However, not even it being proclaimed a cultural monument could not protect the Brezarjevo brezno abyss from becoming a refuse pit.

The bronze bell, which was chosen at the open competition for the uniform marking of hidden graves, was only set up by the state in five locations. Namely, the National Assembly set out in the 2003 legislation that the monuments would bear the inscription "Žrtve vojne in povojnih usmrtitev" ("Victims of war and post-war executions").<sup>23</sup> The inscription is very controversial and because the opinions about the selected monument design are also very different, it looks that the monuments are never going to be put up at all.

The numbers and nationality of victims were also supposed to be inscribed on these monuments. From the professional and scientific point of view just inscribing estimates on the monuments without completing any research is disputable. This task is easier at those locations where these procedures have been carried out but failed to yield precise information (not many of them) than at the locations where no research has ever been completed. Marking and arranging the grave sites also depends on research.

In conclusion I shall describe an example of research at one of the registered grave sites, which underlines the problems we could come across and demonstrates that research can lead to results completely different from what we have expected.

In the context of the local peoples' committee Šmarjeta, an OZNA security agent ordered a group of mobilised boys to track down and catch so-called absconders and other people. They arrested around 19 individuals, who were later released or transferred to the prisons in Novo mesto. However, local people as well as the surviving members of the group thought that seven of them, who had gone missing, were murdered in the nearby Jelenca forest. When the police

<sup>22</sup> Odlok o razglasitvi Velikega Brezarjevega brezna in grobišč žrtev povojnih pobojev za kulturni in zgodovinski spomenik ter naravno znamenitost ["Decree on the proclamation of the Veliko Brezarjevo brezno abyss and the grave sites of post-war casualties as the cultural and historical monument and natural site"] In: Uradni list Republike Slovenije, 1994, št. 67 [Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, 1994, No. 67].

<sup>23</sup> The memorial inscription on the military grave sites, referred to in Article 2 of this Act, except for the grave sites of foreign armies, would read: "*Padel(li) v vojni, Republika Slovenija*" ["Lost his/her/their life/lives during the war, Republic of Slovenia"]; the inscription at the grave sites of war casualties, referred to in Article 3 of this Act, would read "*Umrli(i) kot žrtve (žrtve) vojne, Republika Slovenija*" ["Died as a victim/victims of war, Republic of Slovenia"], while the inscription at the grave sites of the people executed after the war, referred to in Article 4 of this Act, would read: "*Žrtev (žrtve) vojne in povojnih usmrtitev, Republika Slovenija*" ["A victim/victims of war and post-war executions, Republic of Slovenia"]. The changed legislation proposes the following inscription on the grave sites of the latter victims: "To the victims of revolutionary violence, Republic of Slovenia".



found some human bones on the surface on 2 April 2003, they discovered that five people could have been executed there. The names and surnames of the supposed victims were known.<sup>24</sup> Because their relatives were still alive, the investigating judge ordered them to be exhumed (order carried out on 10 June 2003). However, only the remains of two persons were found. The experts, on the basis of the comparison between the photos of the supposed victims and the skulls discovered, thought that the skeletons are most likely the remains of the supposed victims.<sup>25</sup> However, DNA analysis showed no relation between the skeletons of the two persons and the eight assumed relatives.<sup>26</sup> Thus instead of the presumed seven known persons we ended up with two unidentified individuals.

Even 60 years after the end of World War II we still only grudgingly or just on a theoretical level agree that everyone who lost their lives during or because of the war have a right to their name and grave, that the grave sites should be discovered and marked, the victims buried, death certificates given out, and that it is necessary to deal with other issues of pious and humanitarian nature. However, on the practical level there are far too many reproaches that this is simply the past and that it has nothing to do with today's generations. In the fifteen-year period after the reconciliation ceremony in the Kočevski Rog forest, when the knowledge about the extent of murders and number of grave sites was revealed to all Slovenians, and while the politics have many times expressed interest in dealing with these issues, every government was nevertheless reluctant to carry out these tasks, expressed apparent helplessness and pushed these issues aside. The post-war massacres remained the subject of political conflicts and calculation. But the victims' relatives, the public and the researches are entitled to more.

Whether we want them to or not, the questions of finding, researching and marking the hidden graves are often intertwined with the questions of guilt and sin – who committed these crimes, who will answer for them, who is guilty of murder, etc. We can understand that these issues continue to inflame political conflict and are subject to different opinions. But the issue of setting the hidden graves in order should be separated rigorously from all these topics. Namely, the right to a grave is a question of humanity and civilisation and it cannot depend on who was on the winning or the losing side. As long as these graves remain hidden and the current situation continues, the question of winners and losers can soon turn into a condemnation of the descendants – that all of us were losers. Also because even though 60 years have passed since the end of World War II, we still have not brought together the political will, the emotions of the

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<sup>24</sup> A discussion with Pavel Jamnik. In: Jože Dežman: *Moč preživetja – sprava z umorjenimi starši*. Celovec, Ljubljana, Dunaj 2004, pp. 314.

<sup>25</sup> Institute of Forensic Medicine, expert opinion, 14 July 2003.

<sup>26</sup> General Police Directorate, Forensic Research Centre, expert opinion, 7 November 2003.

relatives and the scientific effort in order to change the situation and finally deal with these grave sites.

Thus even today the hidden grave sites only with difficulty get the first modest markings. Despite the fact that written sources about the post-war killings are rare and almost non-existent as far as the hidden grave sites are concerned, the historical science has prepared the information about 410 grave sites and submitted it to the competent national authorities. So there are no tangible reasons anymore why the hidden grave sites should not finally be set in order.

### *Povzetek*

#### *Odsotni iz javnega spomina. Prikrita grobišča v Sloveniji 60 let po koncu druge svetovne vojne*

V letu 2005 ko se spominjamo 60 let zmage nad fašizmom in konca druge svetovne vojne, se Slovenci še zmeraj soočamo z dediščino preteklosti – s posledicami spopadov, ki so na naših tleh pustili številna množična prikrita grobišča. To so tista grobišča, ki so posledica povojnih množičnih in posamičnih izvensodnih usmrtitev v letih 1945–46, pa tudi grobišča iz časa vojne, v katerih ležijo posmrtni ostanki pripadnikov oboroženih formacij okupatorjev in iz protipartizanskega tabora in tudi civilistov. Širše pa prikrita grobišča imenujemo vsa tista iz omenjenega obdobja, kjer so pokopani vojaki in civilisti, ki niso mogli, oziroma niso smeli imeti svojega groba.

Tako kot v drugih vojskujočih se državah je tudi na Slovenskem dogajanje po koncu vojne vključevalo obračun zmagovalcev s poraženci. Na slovenskih tleh so bili ti obračuni še posebej krvavi, saj so se na našem ozemlju znašle najrazličnejše skupine vojaških formacij, ki so bile narodnoosvobodilnemu gibanju nasprotni. Poleg tega so z njimi bežale še trupe civilistov. Brez sodnega postopka je življenje izgubilo več deset tisoč ljudi. Tisto kar je za slovenske razmere specifično pa je njihovo brisanje iz javnega spomina. Zločin, ki ga je nova jugoslovanska oblast storila nad lastnimi državljani z množičnimi zunajsodnimi pomori se je namreč stopnjeval še z zaukazanim molkom in odvzemom pravice do groba. Množična grobišča, posamezni grobovi ter žrtve v njih "niso obstajali".

A če se je v slovenski javnosti dvajset let po zločinu o njem le šepetalo, po tridesetih letih prvič javno spregovorilo, po štiridesetih letih vedelo za 3 ali 4 množična grobišča, in se je po petdesetih letih njihovo število podeseterilo, se v letu 2005 ve že za prek 400 zamolčanih grobišč.

Dosedanje raziskave kažejo, da je na našem ozemlju največ vojaških prikritih grobišč. Le za slovenske žrtve velja, da po številu grobišč prevladujejo civil-

na, medtem ko so vojaška grobišča po številu žrtev množičnejša. Glavnino prikritih grobišč, okoli 300, predstavljajo jame, ki leže na najrazličnejših krajih. Druga skupina po številčnosti so kraška brezna (86), protitankovskih jarkov je 15, rudniški jaški in zaklonišč je 10. Nekatera grobišča je razkrila narava, druga so se pokazala ob gradbenih izkopih ali ob iskanjih bližnjih sorodnikov in društev, le redka pa so se odpirala načrtno. Izjema so grobišča nemških in italijanskih vojakov, katerih prekopi potekajo kontinuirano po sporazumih z obema državama.

Podajati podrobne ocene, koliko žrtev različnih narodnosti leži na naših tleh, je brez izkopov in drugih raziskav neprimerno in v veliki meri tudi nestrokovno. Po delnih zbirnih podatkih Inštituta za novejšo zgodovino imamo – kar zadeva Slovence – pomorjenih po vojni okrog 13.500 domobrancev in civilnih žrtev in ta skupina sestavlja večino tistih, ki leže v prikritih grobiščih.

Po šestdesetih letih od konca druge svetovne vojne se tudi le s težavo in zgolj na načelni ravni strinjamo, da imajo vsi, ki so izgubili življenje v vojni ali zaradi nje, pravico do imena in groba, da je potrebno odkriti in zaznamovati grobišča, pokopati žrtve, izdati mrliške liste ter rešiti druga vprašanja pietetne in humanitarne narave. Na praktični ravni pa je še vse polno očitkov, da gre zgolj in samo za preteklost in da to ne zadeva današnjih generacij, ki s tem nimajo nič. V petnajstletnem obdobju po spravi slovesnosti v Kočevskem Rogu, ko se je vedenje o razsežnosti pomorov in grobišč lahko dotaknilo slehernega Slovenca, je bil s strani politike že mnogokrat izražen interes po ureditvi teh vprašanj, a je bilo pri vsaki vladi čutiti pomanjkanje volje za izvajanje teh nalog, navidezno nemoč in odpiranje teh vprašanj na stranski tir. Povojni pomori so še naprej ostali predmet političnega obračunavanja in preračunavanja. Svoji in javnost pa so upravičeno pričakovali več.

Še danes prikrita grobišča le s težavo dobivajo prve skromne oznake. Kljub dejstvu, da so pisni viri o povojnih pomorih redki, o prikritih grobiščih pa jih skorajda ni, je zgodovinska stroka v dveh letih pripravila podatke o 410 grobiščih in jih predala pristojnim državnim organom. Tako ni nobenega oprijemljivega razloga več, da se urejanje zamolčanih grobišč ne bi pomaknilo z mrtve točke.

UDK 323.12(430:497.4)

*Michael Wedekind\**

*German Scholarly Elites and the Social-Ethnic  
Reorganization of Occupied Slovenia  
by the Third Reich*

In 1935, the then 30-year-old geographer Helmut Carstanjen (1905–1990) published a research study called "Language and Nationality in Lower Styria" in which he attempted to verify the number and distribution of German populations in the southern part of the former Austrian crown land of Styria. The study, the author's Ph.D. thesis, was funded by the German Foreign Ministry. Carstanjen concluded that the region, attached to Yugoslavia after the First World War, had "as much as ever a German appearance", mostly due to the fact that the great majority of the population is either German or 'Windisch'. According to Carstanjen, the 'Windisch', although speaking a Slovenian dialect, were culturally and racially strongly influenced by Germans whom they consider their "natural and historic leaders". Carstanjen tried to prove that similar groups with 'transitional' or 'fluid' ethnicity (so-called *Zwischen- or Übergangsvölker*) could even be found on the eastern border of Germany, and concluded that, "taking into consideration the [German] national soil as a whole, [Lower Styria] has in fact to be considered a German borderland."<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1)

Six years after the publication of his book, the author held key positions that impacted on German nationality policy in occupied Lower Styria. Indeed, his previous research might be viewed as a preliminary study for the National Socialist ethnic policy carried out by the German occupation regime after the war in Yugoslavia began in 1941. A closer glance at the staffs of the various German offices indicates that several other scholars holding administrative and consulting functions were directly involved in socially and ethnically 'rebuilding' the semi-annexed Slovenian territories of Lower Styria and neighbouring Upper Carniola. In addition to the German administration and resettlement offices in Maribor and Bled, a network of scholarly institutions with similar purposes operated in Vienna, Graz, Klagenfurt, and Innsbruck.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerhard Werner (i.e. Helmut Carstanjen): *Sprache und Volkstum in der Untersteiermark*, Stuttgart 1935, p. 161.

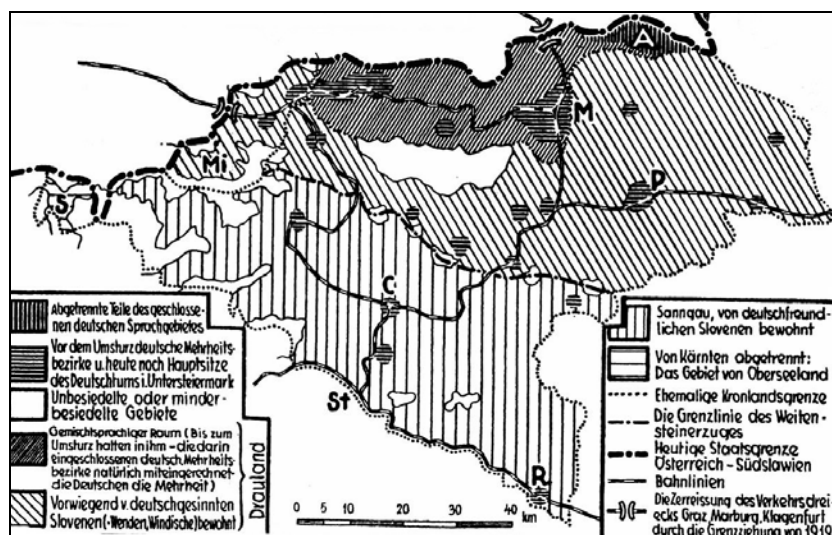


Figure 1: Germans, 'Windisch', and 'pro-German Slovenes' in Lower Styria, according to Helmut Carstanjen. Otto Maull, Helmut Carstanjen: *Die verstümmelten Grenzen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, 1931, No. 1, pp. 54–63.

What impact did these scholarly elites have on German occupation policy and especially on the social and ethnic 'reconstruction' policies in the occupied territories?<sup>2</sup> How did they influence the process of political decision-making within the regime? How was the relevant academic knowledge from these 'cognitive pools', mostly drawn from cultural and social sciences, transferred to the administrative bureaucracy of the Third Reich? And to what degree were these elites involved in ethno-political procedures such as German resettlement, denationalization, and ethnic assimilation policies, in strategies of registration, selection, and mass deportation, and even in the physical destruction of what were considered 'undesirable' ethnic groups?

In more general terms, these questions are linked to the relationship between politics, administrative bureaucracies, and social sciences in planning and executing National Socialist population policies in German-occupied Europe. The present article, which will deal with these issues, thus refers to a current debate in German historiography on the role and responsibilities of the social sciences in providing the Nazi regime with techniques and academic knowledge needed to exercise social power, especially in matters of ethnic policy.

<sup>2</sup> For bibliographical references on German occupation and ethnopolitics in Slovenia and neighbouring Northern Italy, see Michael Wedekind: *Ethnisch-soziale Neuordnungskonzepte im besetzten Europa (1939–1945). Forschungsperspektiven von Fallstudien zum Alpen-Adria-Raum*. In: *Das Konstrukt 'Bevölkerung' vor, im und nach dem 'Dritten Reich'*, Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 371–385.

Beyond revisionist claims and internal resettlement programs in the ethnically mixed or non-German areas of Carinthia, Styria, and the Burgenland,<sup>3</sup> genuine Austrian imperialist concepts regarding the Alpine and Adriatic area had emerged in the mid-1920s. Shortly after the 1938 'union' of Austria with Germany, Hugo Hassinger (1877–1952), a prominent scholar of historical, political, and anthropological geography, stated that "here in the Ostmark, due to its geographical position, as well as its nature and history, pursuing matters of spatial and demographic reorganization necessarily implies going beyond the German national space and considering greater Central European areas."<sup>4</sup> In fact, the claim to the south-eastern Alpine foothills and access to the Adriatic Sea as well as the establishment of German hegemony in Central Europe in order to expand to East-Central and Southeast Europe, was a remake of traditional, pre-1918 models. Indeed, aggressive settlement strategies already played a role in German nationalistic associations in Austria that had begun to establish colonies of German settlers (for example, in Lower Styria) and contemplated such activities in Carniola and in the Littoral in order to establish a German corridor to the Mediterranean. During the interwar period, expansionist projects were propagated by geographers as well as by publicists and nationalistic activists. Kurt Trampler, then assistant at the Southeast Institute in Munich, stated in 1934 that "in the south, the border of [German] culture stretches significantly beyond the ethnic border: incontestably it includes [...] the Slavic foreland of Carinthia and Styria".<sup>5</sup> (Figures 2–3) This idea was inspired by the thesis of 'German national and cultural soil' (a theory that in pre-war Germany had opposed the etatistic concept of the nation) in order to draw future German borders. As early as 1931, Otto Maull (1887–1957), professor of geography at the University of Graz, one of the leading experts of ethnocentric geopolitics and author of a standard work on political geography, had, together with Helmut Carstanjen, demanded "more thorough scientific research" of the German borderland questions and a "more precise specification of [territorial] claims."<sup>6</sup> In 1932, Carstanjen also requested a concerted study of the southern settlements and national frontiers, thus "passing from the former position of defence [...] to a position of offence" by "decisively opposing the German idea of 'unredeemed Lower Styria' to the Slovenian nationalist idea of 'unredeemed southern Carinthia'."<sup>7</sup>

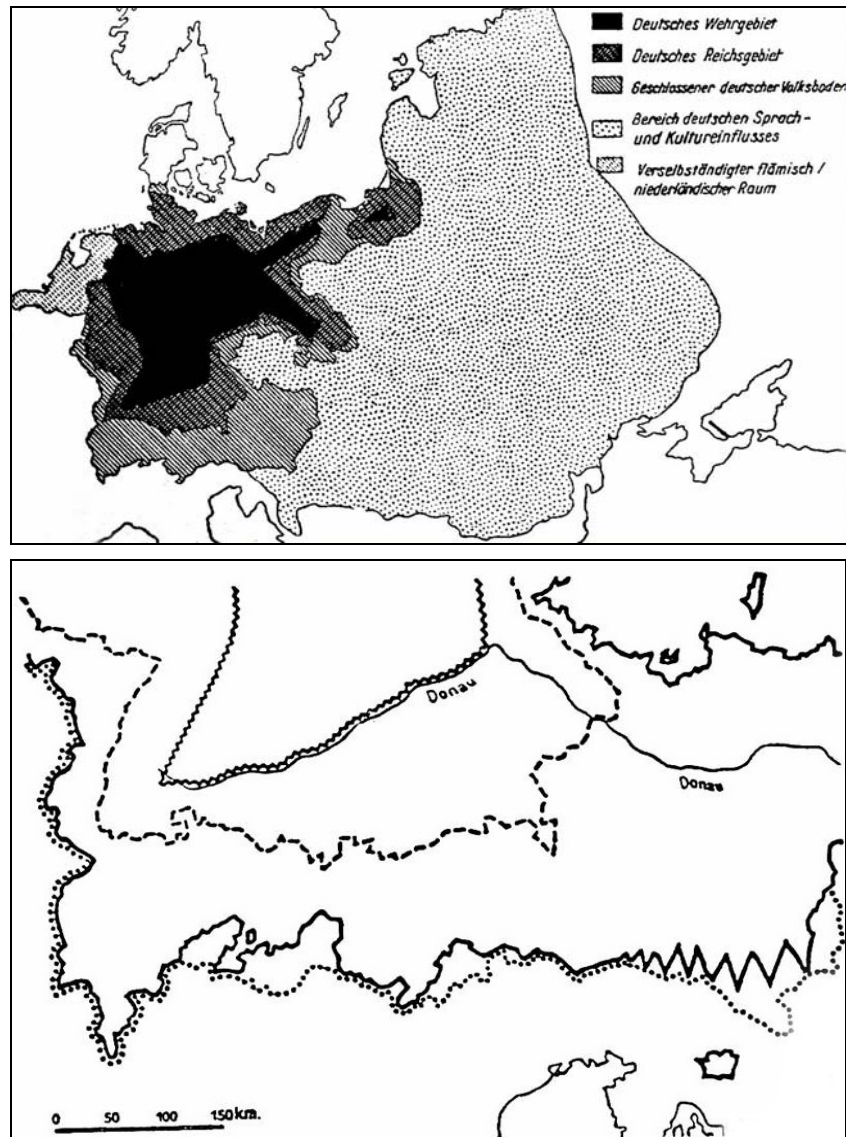
<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Alois Maier-Kaibitsch: *Reichsdeutsche Siedler in Kärnten*. In: *Die Welt. Zeitschrift für das Deutschtum im Ausland*, 1933, No. 10, pp. 690–692; Karl Stuhlpfarrer, Leopold Steuerer: *Die OSSA in Österreich*. In: *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938*, Vienna 1975, pp. 35–64.

<sup>4</sup> Hugo Hassinger: *Die Ostmark*. In: *Raumforschung und Raumordnung*, 1938, No. 3, pp. 391–397, especially pp. 396 f.

<sup>5</sup> Kurt Trampler: *Deutsche Grenzen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, 1934, No. 1, pp. 15–71, especially p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Otto Maull, Helmut Carstanjen: *Die verstümmelten Grenzen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, 1931, No. 1, pp. 54–63, especially p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> Helmut Carstanjen: Account on the present situation, scientific problems, and studies con-



Figures 2, 3: Cartographic illustrations of the 'national and cultural soil thesis' ('*Volks- und Kulturbodenthese*') showing the supposed area of German cultural and linguistic influence in Europe (*above*) and in the Alpine area (*below*). Kurt Trampler: *Deutsche Grenzen*. In: *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik*, 1934, No. 1, pp. 15–71.

cerning Germanism in Lower Styria and Carniola. Annex to: Working Group for Research on the German Alps (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für alpendeutsche Forschungen): Report on a conference held in St. Paul i[m] L[avanttal] on May 26 and 27, 1932 (Bundesarchiv, Berlin: R 153/1703).

In the years to come, the Southeast German Research Community, the Alpine Research Community and the Southeast German Institute in Graz (in particular since 1938) took a decisive role in this research. They focused on preliminary studies of ethnic cleansing in Carinthia and territorial revision in northern Yugoslavia. The cognitive interests, themes, and methods of the involved scholars – whether they were oriented to *Volkswissenschaften* or to multidisciplinary demographic and spatial planning and 'socio-technical' population research – overlapped with the Third Reich's designs for a radical transformation of the social structures of (occupied) Europe. Indeed, statistical, socio-demographic, socio-geographic, and cartographic techniques were inherent to their studies on Lower Styria. Manfred Straka (1911–1990), social and demographic historian, had been concerned since the mid-thirties with verifying the numbers and the property of the German population in Lower Styria and analyzing the land register of the city of Maribor.<sup>8</sup>

In the summer of 1940, when German expansionist and annexationist plans regarding Yugoslavia began to take shape, the abovementioned institutions assumed consultative functions in the process of political decision-making. Along with peripheral party offices in Styria and Carinthia, these institutions produced minutes, memoranda, and other documents that laid claim to Slovenia by emphasizing linguistic, historical, cultural, and economic aspects. These documents were submitted to leading representatives of the regime. The Southeast German Institute<sup>9</sup> in particular was engaged in expansionist planning in Lower Styria. In 1940, Manfred Straka, on behalf of the institute, produced two ethnic maps of Yugoslavia that were attached to the "Military Geographic Description of Yugoslavia" published by the German Army General Staff in June 1940. Later, he and Wilhelm Sattler elaborated a repertory of place names to be used in the future annexation of the territories of Lower Styria, Mežiška Valley, and the Prekmurje region. In June 1940, Hermann Ibler (1905–1986), lecturer at the University of Graz, prepared a study, again on behalf of the Southeast German Institute, on the question of the southern borders of Styria. This study was presented to Adolf Hitler and Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop by the Styrian Gauleiter, Siegfried Uiberreither (1908–1984).

Helmut Carstanjen, a fellow member of the NSDAP, was appointed Director of the Southeast German Institute. He embodies to a striking degree the mental and cognitive vicinity of these scholarly circles to bureaucratic registration techniques, as well as their will to influence politics or even to intervene immediately in the administrative sphere. Carstanjen had worked with the League for

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<sup>8</sup> Raimund von Klebelsberg: Report on the activities of the Alpine Research Community (Alpenländische Forschungsgemeinschaft) in 1935–36, [Innsbruck], undated [1936?] (Bundesarchiv, Berlin: R 153/1508).

<sup>9</sup> See Christian Promitzer: *Täterwissenschaft: das Südostdeutsche Institut in Graz*. In: *Südostforschung im Schatten des Dritten Reiches: Institutionen – Inhalte – Personen*, Munich 2004, pp. 93–113.



Germans Abroad, and, prior to 1941, had regularly informed the Reich Security Main Office on Slovenian issues.

As head of the Styrian main office of the Ethnic German Liaison Office, a principal instrument of the German population policy, and in his additional functions as national-political consultant not only to the chief of the civil administration in Lower Styria but also to the leadership of the Styrian Popular League and, temporarily, to the Maribor office of the Reich Commissioner for Strengthening Germandom, Carstanjen in 1941 was personally engaged in the Third Reich's efforts to racially restructure Slovenia. (Figure 4) He was directly involved in the deportation of Slovenians and in the Germanization of Lower Styria. In the autumn of 1941, he lost his influence over the Reich Commissioner's office in Maribor, but retained partial authority over commissions established to examine, from a racial as well as a political point of view, all Slovenians and Germans who, mainly induced by intimidation, appealed for membership in the Styrian Popular League, the preliminary National Socialist party organization and the main instrument for the Germanization of the annexed territory.

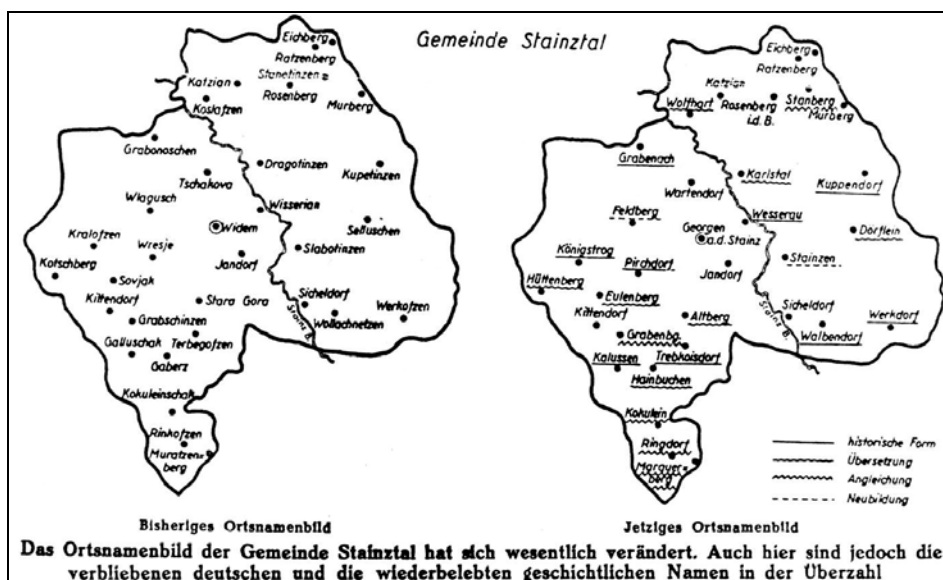


Figure 4: Techniques of Germanizing place names in Lower Styria: former (*left*) and Germanized place names (*right*) in the township of Videm ob Ščavnici / Georgen an der Stainz (*Marburger Zeitung* June, 30, 1943).



- Bis zum Umsturz deutsche Sprachinseln, auch heute in den Hauptsitzen des Deutschtums.
- \* Untersteirische Gemeinden südlich des gemischtsprachigen Raumes mit deutschen Minderheiten über 20% (1910)
- |-| Zerreißung des innerösterreichischen Verkehrsdreiecks (Bruck—Marburg—Villach) und der Verbindung Graz—Klagenfurt durch die gegenwärtige Staatsgrenze.
- Grenzen der Kärntner Abstammungszonen
- ▨ Vom geschlossenen deutschen Sprachgebiet abgetrenntes Land in Untersteiermark und im Übermürgebiet.
- Der südlich der heutigen Staatsgrenze gelegene Teil des gemischtsprachigen Raumes in Steiermark, in dem einschließlich der in ihm gelegenen deutschen Sprachinseln die Deutschen bis zum Umsturz die Mehrheit innehatten.

Figure 5: Map attached to Carstanjen's study on *Language and Nationality in Lower Styria*, showing German settlement regions and ethnically mixed areas in Lower Styria. Gerhard Werner: *Sprache und Volkstum in der Untersteiermark*, Stuttgart 1935.

In 1943, Carstanjen elaborated a precise settlement strategy, based on previously accumulated socio-demographic and statistical data, for the extension of German linguistic frontiers in Lower Styria. (Figure 5) Following the model of the Südmark Nationalist Association, which had launched a German settlement program around Šentilj in the hills of Slovenske Gorice in 1906, Carstanjen proposed the strengthening of a German linguistic 'bridgehead' in that same area. This would allow for the gradual establishment of a German-speaking strip between Styria and the city of Maribor. The creation of other 'bridgeheads' was planned along the axis of Eibiswald in Styria–Radlje–Muta in the upper Drava Valley, and between the large cities in order to weaken the existing linguistic frontiers. As a symptom of the times, Carstanjen's plan marks the juncture between rational scholarly research and its perversion and exploitation for expansionist spatial planning, denationalization, mass deportation, and resettlement.

Almost immediately after the German occupation, a vast project of ethnic cleansing and resettlement aiming at the complete alteration of the regional population structures according to political and 'racial' criteria was started in Lower Styria and Upper Carniola. This project was determined by aggressive expansionism and anti-Slavism, and based on bureaucratically designed scenarios of population transfers and demographic planning. The deportation of Slovenians had already been decided on during a conference in Graz on April 8 and 9, 1941. During the conference, Wilhelm Stuckart (1902–1953), secretary of the Ministry of Interior and an "ambitious SS officer with a strong geopolitical bent and keen interest in Grossraumverwaltung",<sup>10</sup> met with the future chiefs of the civil administration, Siegfried Uiberreither and Franz Kutschera (1904–1944). It was decided that 14,634 Slovenians and Serbs from Lower Styria would be deported to Serbia and Croatia in two phases, and 2,337 Slovenians would be simultaneously expelled from Upper Carniola and transported mostly to Serbia. Additionally, as already determined in May 1941, 107 people from the former Carinthian Mežiška Valley would be transferred to Germany and another 2,631 would be otherwise 'evacuated'. The largest deportation project, the expulsion of some 36,000 Slovenians from the area along the Sava and Sotla rivers in Lower Styria and their transfer to several camps in Germany where they were employed as forced labourers, took place between October 23, 1941, and July 30, 1942. Although by that time, deportations in the rest of Slovenia had been almost completely stopped due to the intervention of Heinrich Himmler, the Sava-Sotla plan was carried out in order to facilitate the resettlement of Germans from the Kočevje region. According to Himmler, this area would be "the most Germanized [...] of all Styria."<sup>11</sup> (Figures 6, 7)

<sup>10</sup> Arnold Toynbee, Veronica Marjorie Toynbee: *Hitler's Europe*, London, New York, Toronto 1954, p. 108.

<sup>11</sup> Special order of Heinrich Himmler, April 18, 1941 quoted from: Tone Ferenc: *Le système d'occupation des Nazis en Slovénie*. In: Les systèmes d'occupation en Yougoslavie 1941–1945. Rapports au 3<sup>e</sup> Congrès international sur l'histoire de la Résistance européenne à Karlovy Vary, les 2–4 septembre 1963, Belgrade 1963, pp. 47–133, especially pp. 61 f.



Figure 6: 'Resettlement Area A' in Lower Styria (so-called 'Sava-Sotla-Strip').

The deportations were preceded by the work of racial examination teams that inspected and classified the population, assigning each person to one of four scaled categories on the basis of presumed racial criteria and an evaluation of political attitudes. These racial examination teams, classifying 433,934 people in Lower Styria and 63,334 people in Upper Carniola between April 23 and September 15, 1941, decided the destiny of hundreds of thousands of Slovenians. The head of the examination commission in both territories was SS-Obersturmbannführer Bruno Kurt Schultz (1901–1997),<sup>12</sup> a physical anthropologist who in the late thirties had composed, on behalf of the Race and Settlement Main Office, a set of racial criteria for SS candidates with the intention of forming a racial elite. He was involved in research on the genetic and sociological conditions of rural populations, the goal being to acquire a picture of hereditary factors. In April 1941, Schultz took over Division II (Racial Examination) of the Resettlement Staff in both Upper Carniola and Lower Styria. While the deportation of Slovenians was under way, the first German settlers arrived in Lower Styria. By the end of October 1943, 10,666 people from the Kočevje region, 156 South Tyroleans, 297 Germans from Bessarabia, and 247 from Dobrogea (Romania, Black Sea Littoral) had been transferred, though by mid-May 1943, only 1,200 Germans, originating from Ljubljana, Kočevje, the Kanal Valley, and South Tyrol, had been moved to Upper Carniola.

Vary, les 2–4 septembre 1963, Belgrade 1963, pp. 47–133, especially pp. 61 f.

<sup>12</sup> On the central importance of Schultz for National Socialist racial science, see Benoît Massin: *Anthropologie und Humangenetik im Nationalsozialismus, oder: Wie schreiben deutsche Wissenschaftler ihre eigene Wissenschaftsgeschichte?* In: *Wissenschaftlicher Rassismus: Analysen einer Kontinuität in den Human- und Naturwissenschaften*, Frankfurt am Main 1999, pp. 12–64.



Greifelt (1896-1949), as well as by different Carinthian party officials. As early as May 1941, at the time when Styrian Gauleiter Uiberreither was filing complaints about the "incomprehensible German restraints"<sup>13</sup> on deportation affairs, historian Karl Starzacher (1913–1945),<sup>14</sup> chief of staff of the Reich Commissioner's office in Upper Carniola, criticized the Germanization program in a memorandum. His reservations concerning the German deportations had to do with efficiency – he believed the mass expulsion of the Slovenians to be technically impossible. While not renouncing the deportation of intellectuals and the physical liquidation of "racially inferior people", SS-Obersturmführer Starzacher pleaded for Germanization through increased German acculturation and education: "Our primary goal is the formation of a middle class which considers itself both part of the Reich and of Carinthia as a smaller regional entity. [...] This goal should be achieved through the same systematic denationalization process that made it possible [in 1918/19] for the Windisch population of Carinthia to fight, in a communion of destiny, beside the Germans in the defensive battle [against Yugoslavia]. [...] This apparently moderate, but in fact much more clear-sighted method, is more likely than any other method to achieve successful Germanization."<sup>15</sup>

The foundation of the Institute for Carinthian Regional Studies<sup>16</sup> in October 1942, was at least partially a result of giving up systematic mass deportations in favour of denationalization measures. As the Slovenian historian Tone Ferenc (1927–2003) points out, the German occupation regime in Lower Styria was far more effective in realizing its Germanizing goals than in Upper Carniola. Several factors contributed to this success: first, the German-speaking minority of Lower Styria acted, to some extent, as the regime's base and thus it was easier to gather a larger public consensus, and second more systematic and far-reaching studies were carried out that helped the regime operate in a more effective way. In fact,

<sup>13</sup> Siegfried Uiberreither to the Ministry of Interior, Maribor, May 12, 1941 (Bundesarchiv, Berlin: R 43 II/1503).

<sup>14</sup> Between December 1939 and February 1943, Starzacher was also in charge of the SS-dependent German expatriation office (Amtliche Deutsche Ein- und Rückwandererstelle) in Tarvisio/Trbiž in the Val Canale/Kanalska dolina and was thus responsible for 'technical and bureaucratic' aspects of the resettlement. In September 1943, Starzacher became German Adviser to the prefect of the Italian province of Udine in the German Occupied Adriatic Littoral. He was shot by Italian partisans in Pordenone on April 27, 1945.

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum by Karl Starzacher, May 22, 1941, quoted from: Tone Ferenc: *Quellen zur nationalsozialistischen Entnationalisierungspolitik in Slowenien 1941–1945 / Viri o nacistični raznarodovalni politiki v Sloveniji 1941–1945*, Maribor 1980, (hereinafter Ferenc, *Quellen*) pp. 115–119.

<sup>16</sup> See Michael Wedekind: *Institut für Kärntner Landesforschung*. In: Handbuch der völkischen Wissenschaften: Personen, Institutionen, Forschungsprogramme, Stiftungen, Munich 2008, pp. 266–275; Martin Fritzl: "...für Volk und Reich und deutsche Kultur". *Die 'Kärntner Wissenschaft' im Dienste des Nationalismus*, Klagenfurt 1992, (hereinafter Fritzl: *Volk und Reich*) p. 119 ff.; Michael Wedekind: *Nationalsozialistische Besatzungs- und Annexionspolitik in Norditalien 1943 bis 1945: Die Operationszonen 'Alpenvorland' und 'Adriatisches Küstenland'*, Munich 2003, pp. 261 ff.

SS-Obersturmbannführer Alois Maier-Kaibitsch (1891–1953), the central figure of National Socialist denationalization and deportation of Slovenians in Carinthia (who in Upper Carniola had been chief of the Reich Commissioner's office in Bled and national-political consultant to the chief of the civil administration since October 1941) complained about "the total deficiency of German scientific studies"<sup>17</sup> on the recently occupied region. In sum, Styria had the institutions of intellectual guidance for German expansion that Carinthia lacked. Additionally, Carinthian borderland scholars had been predominantly engaged in what could be called 'internal colonization' until the end of the thirties. The studies themselves were inspired by the leitmotif of German cultural superiority and focused mainly on the linguistically-mixed and Slovenian-speaking areas of Lower Carinthia. They were targeted toward 'defending' the supposed geographic and cultural 'unity of the province' and toward constructing a 'Carinthian national identity' – a concept intended to subject the local Slovenian minority to German socio-economical and political guidance and supremacy, and, ultimately, to denationalization. In the process of German assimilation, the invention of a distinct linguistic and ethnic identity, the so-called 'Windisch', artificially separating the Slovenians of Carinthia from those south of the Karavanke mountains, was a decisive instrument developed by the Carinthian historian Martin Wutte (1876–1948). In 1932, Wutte stated: "One of the most important problems in all the German borderland regions is the relationship between language and nationality. It is increasingly acknowledged that linguistic group-membership is not necessarily congruent with national group-membership [...]. Not only language but other forms of identity are important: native region, culture, economy, commonly experienced destinies, kinship, and sentimental notions. [...] This is also true for the Slovenian-speaking population of Carinthia. In the linguistically-mixed area, there are thousands who, in addition to German, also speak Windisch and who strongly oppose the Slovenians and demonstrate by their attitude that they do not want to be Slovenians."<sup>18</sup> In 1941, this strategy of denationalization was applied to the Germanization process in occupied Upper Carniola.

The task of the Institute for Carinthian Regional and Cultural Studies, whose foundation had been ventilated since mid-1941, was to guide and support the National Socialist Germanization policy and to ensure the 'mental conquest' of Upper Carniola. In June 1941, Franz Kutschera, a hard-liner in Germany's policy of oppression in Slovenia and a believer that "now as ever, science must stand by the side of the sword", defined a catalogue of essential research topics: archaeological and historical studies on the migration of peoples, Lombard and German

<sup>17</sup> Notice by the SS-Ahnenerbe (Hans Schwalm) on a conference held in Bled on October 6, 1941, dated Bled, October 8, 1941, quoted from Ferenc, *Quellen*, pp. 295–300.

<sup>18</sup> Martin Wutte: Account of the state of scientific studies on the Carinthian question. Annex to: Working Group for Research on the German Alps (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für alpendeutsche Forschungen): Report on a conference held in St. Paul i[m] L[avanttal], on May 26 and 27, 1932 (Bundesarchiv, Berlin: R 153/1703).

settlements, racial composition of the population, "German achievements and creations in all sectors of public and cultural life",<sup>19</sup> and German linguistic influences on Slovenian dialects. Maier-Kaibitsch, however, called for more 'practical' support for the German goal of "creating and awakening a specific Upper Carnolian identity": "Up until now, scientific evidence is lacking for such a national-political orientation regarding the Slovenians in Upper Carnolia. [...] To accomplish this, the employment of an entire team of scholars will be needed."<sup>20</sup>

Although annexed to the University of Graz, the Institute for Carinthian Regional and Cultural Studies depended mostly on the directions of the Carinthian Gauleiter. This, together with its collaboration with the SS-Ahnenerbe, introduced a strong political influence to the scientific activities of the institute, which became an instrument of the political leadership. As was officially recorded in September 1942, the task of the institute was "to establish an irrefutable ideology for the German claim to Upper Carniola as a land of ancient Germanic settlement."<sup>21</sup>

Eberhard Kranzmayer (1897–1975), who, after having been a lecturer at the University of Munich, held the chair for Dialectology and Borderland Studies at the University of Graz since October 1, 1942, was appointed director of the institute. Kranzmayer was an expert in German linguistic history, geolinguistics, minority languages, and dialects, in settlement history of the Eastern Alps as well as folklore, borderland, and place name studies. Wounded in the First World War, he had participated in borderland struggles in Carinthia in 1919 and in Upper Silesia in 1921. Kranzmayer considered his scholarly studies a continuation of these ethnic conflicts by other means. His mostly philological contributions regarding the southern German-speaking borderlands, and especially his works on cultural and linguistic influences on the Slovenians, made him believe in "the enormous cultural superiority of the German nation compared to the whole East."<sup>22</sup> With "unsurpassable clarity," Kranzmayer could finally present "the long-established Slovenians as an adaptive component of the German cultural community."<sup>23</sup>

Pervaded by the concept of German cultural expansionism, the other Carniola-related studies of the institute dealt with historical aspects of settlement geography, with racial and folkloristic issues and various characteristics of the regional civilization. Karl Dinklage (1907–1987) from the University of Graz, head of the pre- and early history section of the institute, contributed

<sup>19</sup> Franz Kutschera to Minister Bernhard Rust, Klagenfurt, June 17, 1941, quoted from Ferenc, *Quellen*, pp. 181–183.

<sup>20</sup> Notice by H. Schwalm, October 8, 1941 (same as note 17).

<sup>21</sup> *Kärntner Zeitung*, September 30, 1942, quoted from Fritzl: *Volk und Reich*, p. 134.

<sup>22</sup> Eberhard Kranzmayer: *Der bairische Sprachraum*. In: *Jahrbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 1944, No. 2, pp. 169–180, especially p. 179.

<sup>23</sup> Eberhard Kranzmayer: *Die deutschen Lehnwörter in der slowenischen Volkssprache*, Ljubljana 1944, p. 38.



studies on early medieval settlements in Carinthia, Lower Styria, and Upper Carniola<sup>24</sup>; the geographer Günter Glauert (1905–1982) published on the historic settlement geography of Upper Carniola;<sup>25</sup> Georg Graber (1882–1957) treated racial and folkloristic questions,<sup>26</sup> and Viktor Paschinger (1882–1963) studied the geographical aspects of the annexed territory.<sup>27</sup> The general thrust of these studies was to demonstrate "that Upper Carniola is a province of ancient German civilization in the fullest sense of the word and had been mainly a German settlement territory, though, due to ongoing Slovenization, German bonds have been deliberately cut or even reversed."<sup>28</sup> (Figures 8, 9, 10)

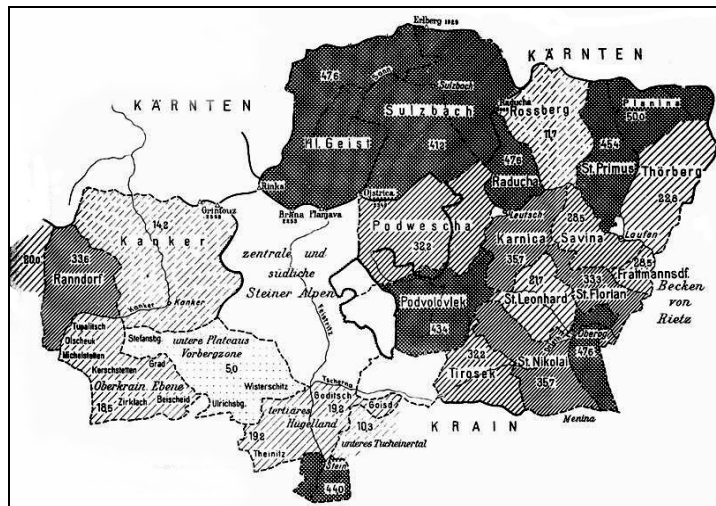


Figure 8

<sup>24</sup> Karl Dinklage: *Frühdeutsche Volkskulturen im Spiegel der Bodenfunde von Untersteiermark und Krain*. In: *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft Wien*, 1941, pp. 235–259; id.: *Oberkrains Deutschtum im Spiegel der karolingischen Bodenfunde*. In: *Carinthia*, 1941, pp. 360–391; id.: *Frühdeutsche Volkskultur in Kärnten und seinen Marken*, Ljubljana 1943.

<sup>25</sup> Günter Glauert: *Die Entwicklung der Kulturlandschaft in den Steiner Alpen und Ostkarawanken*, Graz 1936; id.: *Zur Besiedlung der Steiner Alpen und Ostkarawanken (das Gebiet Freibach, Kanker, Sann und Miess)*. In: *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung*, 1937, No. 1, pp. 457–486; id.: *Landschaftsbild und Siedlungsgang in einem Abschnitt der südöstlichen Kalkalpen (Ostkarawanken und Steiner Alpen) und seinen Randgebieten*. In: *Südost-Forschungen*, 1938, No. 3, pp. 457–524; id.: *Ein Kärntner Grenzmarkt in den Karawanken im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. In: *Südost-Forschungen*, 1939, No. 4, pp. 643–683; id.: *Grundherrenschaftsbesitz und Rodung im karantanisch-alkrainischen Grenzgebiet*. In: *Südost-Forschungen*, 1940, No. 5, pp. 864–943; id.: *Kulturlandschaftliche Veränderungen im Gebirgslande zwischen Drau und Save bis zum Beginn der deutschen Südostsiedlung*. In: *Südost-Forschungen*, 1942, No. 7, pp. 9–52; id.: *Siedlungsgeographie von Oberkrain*, Munich 1943.

<sup>26</sup> Georg Graber: *Volkskundliches*. In: *Oberkrain*, Kranj 1942, pp. 67–95.

<sup>27</sup> Viktor Paschinger: *Land und Wirtschaft*. In: *Oberkrain*, Kranj 1942, pp. 7–35.

<sup>28</sup> Karl Starzacher: *Oberkrain: deutscher Kulturboden*. In: *Deutsche Volkskunde. Vierteljahresschrift der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für deutsche Volkskunde*, 1943, No. 5, pp. 69–71, especially p. 69.

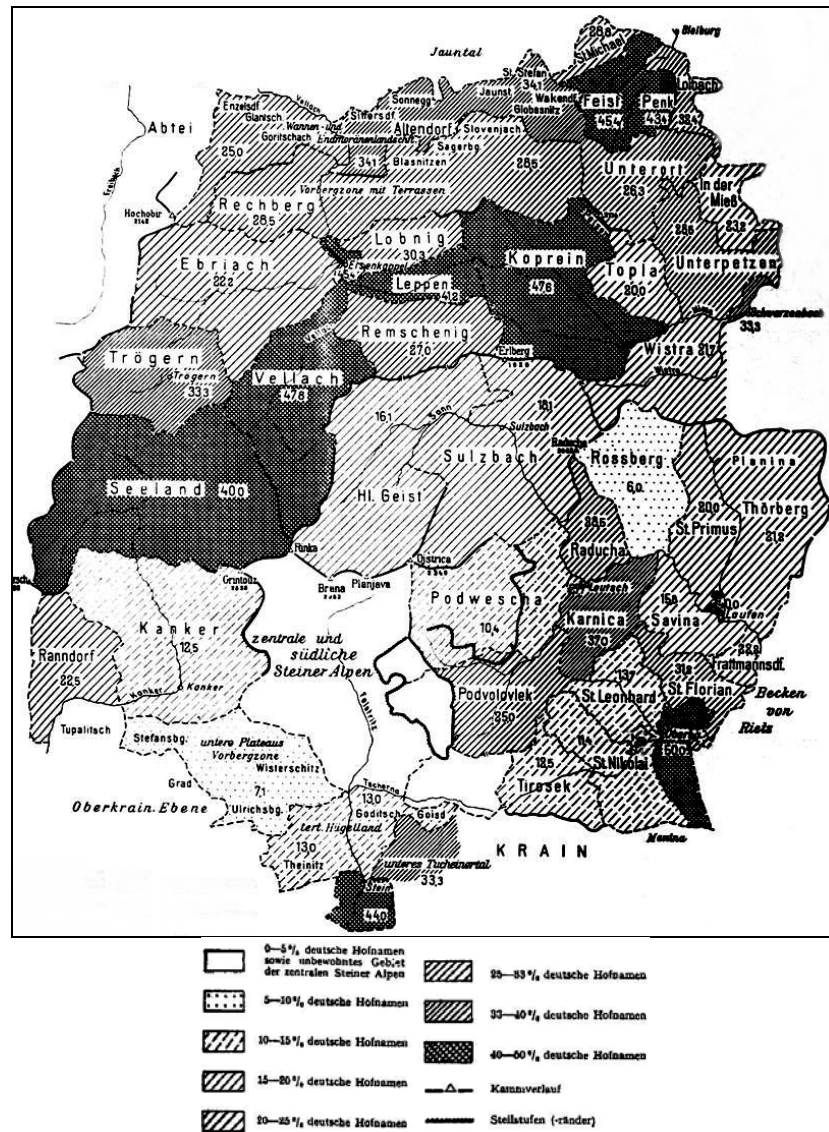


Figure 9: Frequency of German farm and family names in the Steiner Alps (Kamniške Alpe) and their southern foreland, as well as in the Eastern Karawanke mountains, in 1426–1458 (p. 290) and in 1535–1573 (p. 291 this is page 291), considered to be a proof of German presence and later Slovenization of German populations. (Günter Glauert: *Zur Besiedlung der Steiner Alpen und Ostkarawanken: Das Gebiet Freibach, Kanker, Sann und Miess*. In: *Deutsches Archiv für Landes- und Volksforschung*, 1937, No. 1, pp. 457–486).

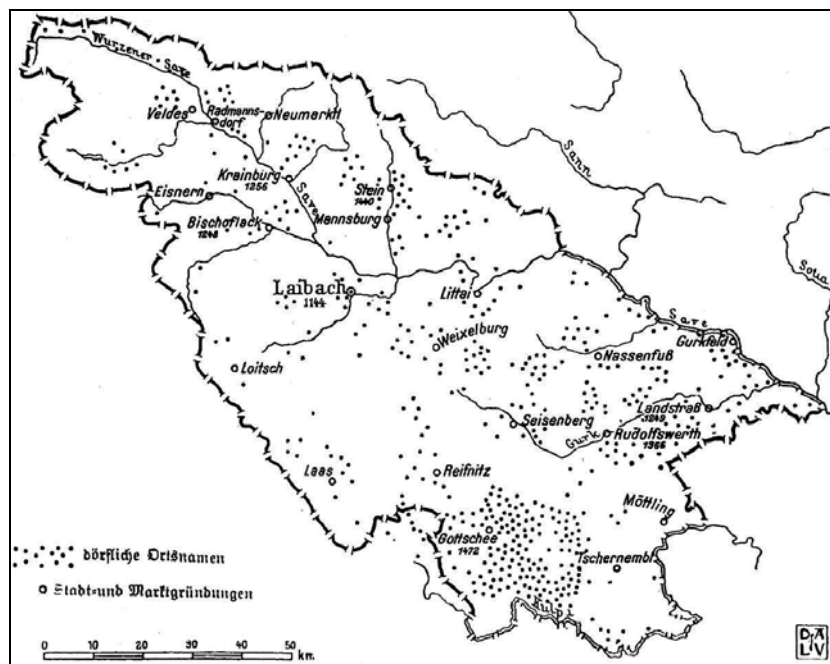


Figure 10: Upper Carniola: German place names and the foundation of German cities and market-towns, as illustrated by Herbert Otterstädt. Herbert Otterstädt: *Vom deutschen Blutsanteil in Krain*. In: *Deutsches Archiv für Landes und Volksforschung*, 1941, No. 5, pp. 39–57.

Though deportations of Slovenians had been stopped in 1941, National Socialist rule in Upper Carniola was nevertheless characterized by a climate of increasingly brutal repression. The struggle against the partisan movement, which had been perverted to an arbitrary terrorization of the civil population, continued to be part of the German settlement policy: namely, the deportation of insurgents and their relatives, the shooting of hostages, and the devastation of entire villages. Deportations and Germanization measures persisted despite internal criticism. They continued even after Franz Kutschera was replaced by Friedrich Rainer (1903–1947) on November 18, 1941. Yet in September 1943, only days after the installation of Friedrich Rainer as Supreme Commissioner in the Adriatic Littoral, a semi-annexed territory in northeast Italy, Martin Wutte (the main promulgator of Carinthian historiography and 'inventor' of the 'Windischen theory' who had spearheaded the anti-Slovenian denationalization policy of the regime in Carinthia and in Upper Carniola) directed a written appeal to Rainer recommending a more moderate nationality policy in his sphere of responsibility and especially in the province of Ljubljana. After the excesses of 1941 and 1942, Wutte, though still convinced of German cultural superiority,

asked that Slovenians be conceded autonomy in the cultural and, to some extent, administrative sector in order to demonstrate that "henceforth the Slovenian nationality will be recognized and that security will be given to support and preserve it within the German Empire."<sup>29</sup> Like the political leadership, Wutte intended, following the German occupation of Italy, to unite the territories of former Carniola as a German protectorate. Although no doubt a courageous act, his intervention was primarily meant to assure the realization of National Socialist spatial and demographic planning goals and to make German occupation policy more dynamic and effective.

In autumn 1944, Ulrich Greifelt, the chief of the Main Staff Office of the Reich Commissioner for Strengthening Germanism, recommended a complete stop to deportations, proposed autonomy for Upper Carniola and the province of Ljubljana and the establishment of an independent Slovenia under German control. His recommendation was influenced by the Reich's general military situation, the increasing power of the resistance movement, and doubts regarding the success of the German denationalization policy "in such an [ethnically] complex settlement area as the Slovenian". For Greifelt, abandoning the 'Windischen theory' and other pseudo-scientific constructs on German acculturation of the Slovenians, the collaborative aspect prevailed over Germanizing the region "as the preponderance of German resettlement will not be in the South, but in the East."<sup>30</sup> Rainer, though he made insignificant concessions to the Slovenians regarding autonomy in the cultural and administrative field, showed no inclination to alter his political line in Upper Carniola. Driven by the spirit of ethnic intolerance, Rainer considered deportations to present "the last possibility of laying our hands on Slovenian soil".<sup>31</sup>

### *Povzetek*

#### *Nemški družboslovci in kulturologi ter družbeno etnična preobrazba jugovzhodne Srednje Evrope s strani "Tretjega rajha"*

Prispevek prikazuje ekspanzionistične politične projekte o prostorskem planiranju in etnično družbene reorganizacijske strategije nacistične Nemčije na zasedenih in preselitvenih ozemljih na prostoru Alpe-Jadran med letoma 1939 in 1945. Pri tem nas predvsem zanima, kako so sociologi, demografi, "raso-

<sup>29</sup> Quoted from Wilhelm Neumann: *Martin Wutte und sein Urteil über die nationalsozialistische Slowenenpolitik in Kärnten und Krain aufgrund seiner Denkschrift vom 19. September 1943*. In: Carinthia I, 1986, No. 176, pp. 9–40, especially p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> Wilhelm Greifelt to Heinrich Himmler, Enclosure I: "Nationality Policy towards the Slovenians", Schweiklberg, October 20, 1944 (Bundesarchiv, Berlin: NS 19/2661).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

slovci", geografi, geopolitiki, zgodovinarji, etnografi in lingvisti razvili in za praktično uporabo pripravili teorijo o gospodovanju nad zasedenimi ljudstvi in ozemlji. S tem so v Sloveniji in severovzhodni Italiji šele omogočili izvajanje populacijsko političnih ukrepov (strategije raznarodovanja in etnične asimilacije, praktike popisovanja, selekcije in uničevanja, prisilne preselitve in deportacije).

Na splošno do sedaj v zgodovinskih raziskavah nismo bili pozorni na področje raziskovanja vidikov teoretsko populacijskega političnega zakulisja nacističnih reorganizacijskih konceptov. To velja prav tako za vprašanje o genezi in dejanski realizaciji, o gonilnih silah in možnostih uveljavitve takšnih predlogov v notranjih strukturah nacističnega režima ter končno o njihovem konkretnem vplivu na *decision* in *policy making*. Z ozirom na raziskovanje populacijsko političnih intervencij nam manjkajo tudi analize institucionalnega prepletanja, soodvisnosti in pristojnosti pri odločanju kot tudi povsem splošne analize osebnih popisov, s katerimi so na zasedenih ozemljih izpeljevali reorganizacijske ukrepe.

S pomočjo posameznih primerov v kontekstu nemške naselitvene politike oriše prispevek nazorski in znanstveni način mišljenja miljeja "nacionalno pristnih" družboslovcev in kulturologov kot tudi njihove metode, raziskovalne strategije in programe. Pri tem se prispevek obrača predvsem na pretežno avstrijsko raziskovanje alpskih dežel in jugovzhodne Evrope, katero se je odvijalo na Dunaju v okviru *Südostdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* in *Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft*, v Gradcu predvsem na *Südostdeutsche Institut*, v Celovcu na *Institut für Kärntner Landesforschung* in v Innsbrucku v okviru *Alpenländische Forschungsgemeinschaft*. Te miselne skupnosti privržencev "etnopolitike", z njihovim očitnim zanimanjem za uravnavanje rezultatov socioloških in demografskih raziskovanj v praktične namene, niso ponudili le naselitvenih ekspertiz in rezultatov socialno geografskih in socialno tehničnih raziskav prebivalstva ter raziskav rasno-zdravstvenega stanja prebivalstva, marveč so dali na razpolago tudi koncepte o obvladovanju ozemelj in strategije za etnično družbeno preobrazbo zasedenih ozemelj. Hkrati so razvili tudi postopke za etnično razkosanje in raznarodovanje, naredili so osnutke specifičnih prostorskih in identitetskih konstruktov za vključitev, asimilacijo in politično vodenje t. i. Nemcem prijaznih ljudstev. Ti znanstveni krogi so bili naposled dejavni tudi pri "praktični" realizaciji družbeno etičnih reorganizacijskih intervencij, pri čemer so bili institucionalno in funkcionalno tesno povezani z nosilci nacistične populacijske politike. Za to je značilna vloga Helmuta Carstanjena, saj ga je ena izmed njegovih nalog v Gradcu in Mariboru pripeljala na vmesno-posredniški položaj med politično posvetovalnim omrežjem znanstvenih ekspertov in etnopolitičnimi funkcionalnimi elitami nacističnega režima. Poleg njega je končno potrebno izpostaviti še tisto skupino "rasoslovcev", ki so zaradi priprave biologičnih kriterijev selekcije odgovorni za prisilne preselitve in uničevalne praktike.

UDK 001.89:321.64(437.3)"1939/1946"

Michal Šimůnek\*

*"German Science Committed an Offence".  
German Life Sciences and Czech Post-War  
Reflections, 1945–1948\*\**

Immediately after the end of World War Two, debates began in Europe regarding the involvement and collaboration of German scientists with the Nazi regime. Confronted with reality of the horrific atrocities, the shocking testimony of survivors, and the growing number of concentration camp victims, the issue became a burning one during the postwar years. For a time, medical experiments on human beings conducted under the Nazi regime occupied the centre of attention.<sup>1</sup> A new category of deadly medical experiments and crimes against humanity was put forward. Between 1946 and 1947, some of the main perpetrators of this crime were tried in Nuremberg and yet only a handful of those who had participated were ever convicted.<sup>2</sup>

The use (and misuse) of scientific knowledge under modern totalitarian regimes such as German Nazism and Soviet Stalinism had already been discussed in a broader context at the beginning of the war.<sup>3</sup> These discussions concerned not only the humanities but also the life sciences and particularly the biological disciplines of genetics and anthropology.<sup>4</sup> The tragic reality became clear only in

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<sup>1</sup> Max Weinreich: *Hitler's Professors: The Part of Scholarship in Germany's Crimes Against the Jewish People*. New York 1946; František Bláha: *Medicina na scesť* [Medicine on the Crossroad]. Praha 1946; Alice Platen-Hallermund: *Die Tötung Geisteskranker in Deutschland* [The Killing of Lunatic Insane People in Germany]. Frankfurt/Main 1948; Gustav Blume: *Rasse oder Menschheit : Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der nationalsozialistischen Rassenlehre* [Race or Humanity: A Confrontation With the Nazi Racial Science]. Dresden 1948, Alexander Mitscherlich, Fred Mielke: *Medizin ohne Menschlichkeit: Medizinische und eugenische Irrwege unter Diktatur, Bürokratie und Krieg* [Medicine Without Humanity: Medical and Eugenic Excesses Under Dictatorship, Bureacracy and War], Heidelberg 1949.

<sup>2</sup> Paul J. Weindling: *Nazi Medicine and the Nuremberg Trials: From Medical War Crimes to Informed Consent*, Basingstoke 2004. For complete documentation in English see Klaus Dörner, Angelika Ebbinghaus, Karsten Linne (eds.): *The Nuremberg Medical Trial 1946/47: Material of the Prosecution and Defense: Related Documents*. Munich 1999.

<sup>3</sup> For example Use and Misuse of Science. *Nature* 144/3644, 1939: 40; The Voice of Science. *Nature* 144/3645, 1939: 455 or Waldemar Kaempffert: *Science in the Totalitarian State*. In: *Foreign Policy* 19/2, 1941, pp. 438–439.

<sup>4</sup> Explicitly by John B. S. Haldane: *Heredity and Politics*. London 1938 or Geoffrey M. Mo-

1945: namely, that leading representatives of the mainstream German academic community had actively participated in the conceptualization and implementation of Nazi racial theories and the murderous science that emerged from them.<sup>5</sup>

Current research indicates that immediate postwar investigations and reflections were influenced, and indeed limited, by a number of circumstances. First, there was the enormous and almost inconceivable dimension of the Nazi crimes that complicated the investigation. Today it is obvious, for example, that subsequent investigations were restricted to evidence from concentration camps and links to the SS medical community. Second, the Allies brought a variety of interests and calculations with them when it came to the potential exploitation of the results of Nazi research programmes.<sup>6</sup> For these and other reasons, the complex of what today is called 'Nazi (pseudo)science' was actually not reflected in its totality for a long time to come. Moreover, what analysis took place was extremely fragmented. This was also the case in the many Central European countries in which academic and social elites had been the subjects of Nazi occupational policy for many years. These issues became current in many of these countries, including the former Czechoslovakia, only around the Communist takeovers of the late nineteen-forties.

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rant: *The Races of Central Europe: A Footnote to History*. London 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Benno Müller-Hill: *Murderous Science: Selection of Jews, Gypsies and Others in Germany 1933–1945*. New York, Oxford. 1988; Robert N. Proctor: *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*. Cambridge/Mas., London 1988; Paul J. Weindling: *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*. Cambridge 1989; Michael Burleigh, Michael Wippermann: *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*. Cambridge 1991, Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll, Kurt Bayertz: *Rasse, Blut und Gene: Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland*. Frankfurt/Main. 1992. See also Katrin Weigmann: *In the Name of Science: The Role of Biologists in Nazi Atrocities – Lessons for Today's Scientists*. In: *EMBO Reports* 2/10, 2001, pp. 871–875, Dieter Kuntz (ed.), *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race*. Washington, D.C. 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Bower: *The Paperclip Conspiracy: The Hunt for the Nazi Scientists*. Boston 1987; Tom Bower, Linda Hunt: *Secret Agenda: The United States Government, Nazi Scientists, and Project Paperclip, 1945 to 1990*. New York 1991; Herbert Mehrrens: *Kollaborationsverhältnisse: Natur- und Technikwissenschaften im NS-Staat und ihre Historie* [The Ways of Collaboration: Technical Sciences in the Nazi State and Their History]. In: *Medizin, Naturwissenschaft, Technik und Nationalsozialismus* [Medicine, Natural Science, Technology and National Socialism], Stuttgart 1994, pp. 13–32; Herbert Mehrrens: *"Missbrauch": Die rhetorische Konstruktion der Technik in Deutschland nach 1945* ["Misuse": The Rhetoric Construction of the Technology in Germany After 1945]. In: *Technische Hochschulen und Studentenschaft in der Nachkriegszeit* [Universities of Technology and Students in the Nazi Period] [= Projektberichte zur Geschichte der Carolo-Wilhelmina, Bd. 10], Braunschweig 1995, pp. 33–50; Mitchell G. Ash: *Denazifying Scientists – and Science*. In: *Technology Transfer Out of Germany After 1945*, Amsterdam 1996, pp. 61–80; Carola Sachse: *"Persilscheinkultur": Zum Umgang mit der NS-Vergangenheit in der Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* [The Culture of "Persilschein": About the Confrontation With the Nazi Past at the Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max-Planck Society]. In: *Akademische Vergangenheitspolitik* [Academic Past Policy] [= Beiträge zur Wissenschaftskultur der Nachkriegszeit], Göttingen 2002, pp. 217–246; Dennis Piszkiwicz: *The Nazi Rocketeers: Dreams of Space and Crimes of War*. Mechanicsburg, PA 2007.

## 1. Occupational Scientific Policy and the Life Sciences

World War Two and the German occupation of Czech lands (1939–1945) ushered in a period of new scientific policy to the region. The leading goals of the policy were to secure German domination in the field of scientific research, negate scientific universalism, suppress local non-German academic institutions, exploit their financial sources and integrate them into the scientific infrastructure of the emerging Nazi empire. Another important element of the policy was the persecution of non-German scientists and their exclusion from established international networks.

The first step of the German authorities was the expulsion and persecution of politically and racially 'undesirable' scholars and scientists.<sup>7</sup> According to ongoing research, it can be assumed that more than 150 academic professionals lost their lives between 1939 and 1945 and hundreds more were persecuted.<sup>8</sup> The second step of the policy, the elimination of research and academic institutions governed by local Czech authorities, was carried out only six months after the beginning of the occupation. It began with the sudden closure of Czech universities on November 17, 1939. This event was widely reported in foreign media: "The repression by German authorities of Czech students and intellectuals for their participation in the October 28 Independence Day demonstrations has been ruthless. Many measures were taken in the following days in the city of Prague but none gave rise to a deeper resentment, nor had more far-reaching effects, than the closing of the university and technical schools."<sup>9</sup> At the outset, it was announced that the closure would remain in force for three years but in fact, the university and technical schools remained closed until the end of the war in May 1945.<sup>10</sup> The closure also marked the beginning of the material and financial exploitation of Czech university property. This process reached its climax in early 1944 with the embezzlement of university bank accounts, foundations,

<sup>7</sup> Ute Deichmann: *Biologists Under Hitler*- Cambridge/Mas., London 1996, pp. 10–59 and for the German University in Prague Alena Míšková: Německá (Karlova) univerzita od Mnichova k 5. květnu 1945: Vedení univerzity a obměna profesorského sboru [German (Charles) University From Munich to May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945: Leadership of the University and Changes in the Professor Staff]. Praha 2002, pp. 37–83. See also Prager Professoren 1938–1948: Zwischen Wissenschaft und Politik [Prague Professors, 1938–1948: Between Science and Politics] [= Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte im östlichen Europa, Bd. 17]. Essen 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Preliminary results of the ongoing research programme of the Dpt. for the History of Sciences and Humanities of the Institute for Contemporary History of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic in Prague; estimated research period is from 2007 to 2009.

<sup>9</sup> *Germanization and the University of Prague*. In: *Nature* 144/3655, 1939, p. 892. For comparison with the situation in occupied Polish territories see "*Sonderaktion Krakau*": *Die Verhaftung der Krakauer Wissenschaftler am 6. November 1939* ["Special Action Krakau": The Imprisonment of the Scientists from Crakow on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1939]. Hamburg 1997.

<sup>10</sup> *Dějiny Univerzity Karlovy (IV. 1918–1990)* [History of Charles University, Vol. IV. 1918–1990], Praha 1998.



and other organizations. Making matters worse, Czech students were barred from attending universities in Germany. This restriction was applied until 1942 when a limited number of young Czechs were allowed to study at a number of specially selected Germany universities (*Altreich*). The selected institutions included technical, medical, and natural sciences, but none for the humanities.

At the same time they suppressed Czech institutions, Nazi occupational authorities took a great interest in supporting local German research institutes and universities. These included the former German University in Prague and both technical universities in Prague and Brno. In autumn of 1939, the 'takeover by the Reich' was carried out. At that point, the German University in Prague became an exclusive part of the German research infrastructure. After the Czech universities were closed, the German Charles University took over the leading position in the academic landscape not only in the Czech Protectorate but also in Sudetenland.<sup>11</sup> Other institutions, such as the German Academy of Sciences in Prague (Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften) established in 1941 as the successor to the Society for the Promotion of Science, Arts and Literature, were heavily supported as well.<sup>12</sup> A close connection was established with the leading research institution in Sudetenland that in 1941 was transformed into the so-called Sudeten German Institute for Regional History and Geography (Sudetendeutsche Anstalt für Landes- und Heimatforschung).<sup>13</sup> During the war years, new and politically-oriented research institutions such as the Reinhard Heydrich

<sup>11</sup> For comparison see Maria Zarifi: *Das deutsch-griechische Forschungsinstitut für Biologie in Piräus, 1942–1944*. In: *Autarkie*, pp. 206–232.

<sup>12</sup> Jana Mandlerová: *K založení Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur* [Foundation of the Society for the Promotion of Science, Arts and Literature]. In: *Dějiny věd a techniky* 15, 1982, pp. 13–27; Michael Neumüller: *Přehled dějin Společnosti pro podporu německé vědy, umění a literatury v Čechách, resp. Německé akademie věd v Praze od jejího založení do roku 1945* [Overview of the History of the Society for the Promotion of Science, Arts and Literature in Bohemia and German Academy of Sciences in Prague Since Its Foundation Until 1945]. In: *Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen 1891–1945: Materialien zu ihrer Geschichte und Inventar des Archivbestandes* [Society for the Promotion of Science, Arts and Literature in Bohemia 1891–1945: Historical Materials and Overview of the Archives File] [= *Studia historiae Academiae scientiarum bohemoslovacae*, Seria B/7]. Praha 1994, pp. 19–33; Alena Míšková: *Die Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutscher Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen 1891–1945: Unterstützungstätigkeit – Fachorientierung, soziale und regionale Herkunft der Antragsteller, zeitliche Entwicklung* [Society for the Promotion of German Science, Arts and Literature in Bohemia, 1891–1945: Area of Support, Orientation, Social and Regional Origin of the Applicants and Development in Time]. In: *Germanoslavica* II (VII), 1995, pp. 65–72, Alena Míšková: *Postavení lékařů ve Společnosti pro podporu německé vědy, umění a literatury v Čechách 1891–1945* [The Position of Physicians Within the Society for the Promotion of Science, Arts and Literature]. In: *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis* 35/1–2, 1995, pp. 61–73 esp. pp. 69–71.

<sup>13</sup> See František Roubík: *Sbírký bývalého německého vlastivědného ústavu v Liberci* [Collections of the former German Institute of National History and Geography in Liberec]. In: *Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností*, 1949, pp. 139–144.

Foundation (Reinhard-Heydrich-Stiftung) were created in Prague.<sup>14</sup> After 1943, leading basic research institutions such as the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut tried to expand into the Czech Protectorate, an example being the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institute for the Breeding of Tree Varieties (Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Baumrassenkreuzung).

Today it is a well-established fact that in Nazi Germany a strong favouritism was shown in the natural sciences for eugenic, racial, and racial biological disciplines such as hereditary hygiene (*Erbhygiene*), racial hygiene (*Rassenhygiene*), racial science (*Rassenkunde*), and racial biology (*Rassenbiologie*).<sup>15</sup> These disciplines had been continuously developed since the turn of the twentieth century and were used to after 1933 provide a theoretical foundation for the official Nazi doctrines of protection of hereditary health (*Erbgesundheitspflege*) and protection of the race (*Rassenpflege*).<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the several state and political institutions, new institutes were also established between 1939 and 1945 at three faculties of the German Charles University in Prague and these acquired central and exclusive status. One was the Institute for Hereditary and Racial Hygiene (Institut für Erbund Rassenhygiene) at the Faculty of Medicine created in 1939 under Dr. Karl Thums (1904–1976), a former student of Munich Professor Ernst Rüdin (1874–1952).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Andreas Wiedemann: *Die Reinhard-Heydrich-Stiftung in Prag (1942–1945)* [The Reinhard-Heydrich-Foundation in Prague, 1942–1945]. Dresden 2000.

<sup>15</sup> See Benno Müller-Hill: *Genetics After Auschwitz*. In: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 1987, pp. 3–20; Kristie Macrakis: *The Survival of Basic Biological Research in National Socialist Germany*. In: *Journal of the History of Biology*, 1993, pp. 519–543; Kristie Macrakis: *The Ideological Origins of Institutes at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft in National Socialist Germany*. In: *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, Cambridge, New York 1994, pp. 139–159; Ute Deichmann, *Fluchten, Mitmachen, Vergessen: Chemiker und Biochemiker im NS-Staat*. Frankfurt/Main 1995; Ute Deichmann: *Biologists Under Hitler*. Cambridge/Mas., London 1996; Notker Hammerstein: *Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich: Wissenschaftspolitik in Republik und Diktatur 1920–1945*. München 1999; Susanne Heim: *Autarkie und Ostexpansion: Pflanzenzucht und Agrarforschung im Nationalsozialismus*, Göttingen 2000; Susanne Heim: *Research for Autarky: The Contribution of Scientists to Nazi Rule in Germany*. Berlin 2001; Ulrike Kohl: *Die Präsidenten der Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft im Nationalsozialismus: Max Planck, Carl Bosch und Albert Vögler zwischen Wissenschaft und Macht*. Stuttgart 2002; *Rassenforschung an Kaiser-Wilhelm-Instituten vor und nach 1933*. Göttingen 2003; Alexander von Schwerin: *Experimentalisierung des Menschen: Der Genetiker Hans Nachtsheim und die vergleichende Erbpathologie 1920–1945*. Göttingen 2004; Uwe Hoßfeld: *Geschichte der biologischen Anthropologie in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen bis in die Nachkriegszeit*. Stuttgart 2005, pp. 267–341.

<sup>16</sup> Christoph Beck: *Sozialdarwinismus, Rassenhygiene, Zwangssterilisation und Vernichtung "lebensunwerten" Lebens: Eine Bibliographie zum Umgang mit behinderten Menschen im "Dritten Reich" – und heute*. Bonn 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Michal Šimůnek: *Ein neues Fach: Die Erb- und Rassenhygiene an der Medizinischen Fakultät der Deutschen Karls-Universität Prag 1939–1945*. In: *Wissenschaft in den böhmischen Ländern 1939–1945*, Praha 2004, pp. 190–316 and Gerhard Baader, Veronika Hoffer, Thomas Mayer (Eds.): *Eugenische Dispositive der Biopolitik in Österreich: Methodische und strukturelle Aspekte der Eugeniken von 1900 bis 1945*. Wien 2007.

The second was the Institute for Racial Biology (Institut für Rassenbiologie) established in 1941 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences.<sup>18</sup> The latter was chaired by one of the most prominent racist practitioners of the Third Reich, SS-Colonel (Standartenführer) Dr. Bruno K. Schultz (1901–1998), professor of physical anthropology and head of the Racial Office (Rassenamt) within the Main Racial and Settlement Office of the SS (Rassen- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS) between 1942–1944.<sup>19</sup> One year later the Institute for Social Anthropology and Folk Biology (Institut für Sozialanthropologie und Volksbiologie) was established at the DKU Faculty of Arts and chaired by sociologist and racial hygiene theorist Dr. Karl V. Müller (1896–1963).<sup>20</sup>

Only after these institutions had hired professional staff, commenced work, and established themselves as the main academic centres of racial hygiene, racial biology and hereditary biology (or social anthropology and folk biology as they called it), did academics and administrative professionals in these newly established and state-promoted disciplines in the occupied territories begin to carry out targeted expert interventions policies that were part of the official Nazi health, population, social, and racial policies.<sup>21</sup> These applications required political control and regulation, in particular in medical and social spheres, and were primarily supported and promoted by representatives of specific professional academic groups, such as German physicians. The analysis of the relations between considerably diversified fields of genetic science (population genetics, medical genetics, hereditary pathology, chromosomal heredity, etc.) and racial-biological constructs based on the traditional descriptive methodology of physical anthropology of the period, was crucial especially to the situation in Germany, the main concepts being race (*Rasse*) and population (*Bevölkerung*). There was a distinction between the race system (*System-Rasse*) on the one hand and the vital race (*Vital-Rasse*) on the other hand, recognized in eugenic discussions in Germany from the very beginning (Alfred Ploetz).<sup>22</sup> This distinction reflects differences in the promotion and understanding of Mendelian classical paradigm of the time. From this point of view, it would be justified to discuss not only the situation in Bohemia and Moravia and the development of German eugenics, but also the development of the so-called German 'special way' or the *Sonderweg* (Weindling)

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<sup>18</sup> Šimůnek, *New Discipline*, p. 212.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 239–251.

<sup>21</sup> Götz Aly, Susanne Heim: *Vordenker der Vernichtung: Auschwitz und die deutschen Pläne für eine neue europäische Ordnung*. Hamburg 1991, Isabel Heinemann: *Rasse, Siedlung, deutsches Blut: Das Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS und die rassenpolitische Neuordnung Europas*. Göttingen 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Paul J. Weindling: *Health, Race and German Politics between National Unification and Nazism, 1870–1945*. Cambridge, New York 1989; Peter Weingart, Jürgen Kroll, Kurt Bayertz: *Rasse, Blut und Gene: Geschichte der Eugenik und Rassenhygiene in Deutschland*. Frankfurt/Main 1992, Peter Weingart: *Biology as Society, Society as Biology: Metaphors*. Dordrecht – Bost 1995.

that resulted in the murderous science (Müller-Hill) of the totalitarian Nazi political regime and became an unprecedented political instrument.<sup>23</sup> After 1939, the connection with politics became a casual necessity not only as a means to attain the general acceptance of the central constructs of racial hygiene and racial biology, but for the implementation of utopian visions of a 'hereditarily healthy' population in connection with the strategies of Germanization.<sup>24</sup> This mutual cooperation and collaboration between the racially-based (natural) sciences and political ideology (with its highly visible and fundamentally irrational racial myths) created a new leading science (*Leitwissenschaft*) and became the foundation of a new biologicistic view of the world (*Weltbild*). The effort to provide systematic support to this transformation contained both fragmenting and synthesizing tendencies and was crucial to academic networks connected to the German University in Prague. At a certain point, the effort was also closely related to the formulation and gradual technocratic elaboration of wider occupation strategies and this in turn resulted in the preparation and implementation of "measures" that after World War Two were referred to as genocide.<sup>25</sup>

## 2. Reflections and Postwar Legacies

In May 1945 there was no doubt that the German scientific infrastructure in Bohemia and Moravia will be completely abolished. Such trend was closely connected not only with the idea of national scientific autarky in renewed Czechoslovak state but also with the collaboration with the newly raising power in Central Europe, that means Soviet Union. This process ended by the closing of German universities in Prague and Brno in October 1945.<sup>26</sup> The dean of the Charles University of that period, professor of general biology Jan Bělehrádek (1896–1980), was charged by the president of the Republic with the elaboration of a special decree. Its content was discussed among the professors' staff of the Charles University and the Ministry of Education in Prague. The argumentation used in this decree was obviously historical and political. It should secure

<sup>23</sup> Paul J. Weindling: *The Sonderweg of German Eugenics: Nationalism and Scientific Internationalism*. In: *British Journal for the History of Sciences* 1989, pp. 321–333.

<sup>24</sup> Michal Šimůnek: *Race, Heredity and Nationality: Bohemia and Moravia, 1939–1945*. In: Kjersti Ericsson, Eva Simonsen, *Children of World War II: The Hidden Enemy Legacy*, Oxford, New York 2005, pp. 190–211.

<sup>25</sup> Götz Aly: *Endlösung: Völkerverschiebung und der Mord an den europäischen Juden* [Final Solution: Displacement of Populations and Murder of the European Jews], Frankfurt/Main 1995; Henry Friedlander: *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution*. Chapel Hill, London 1995; Paul J. Weindling: *Eugenics and Medical War Crimes after 1945*. In: Annual Report – Tartu University History Museum 1999, Tartu 1999, pp. 86–99.

<sup>26</sup> Dekret prezidenta Československé republiky č. 122 ze dne 18. října 1945 týkající se zrušení Německé univerzity v Praze [Decree of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic No. 122 from October, 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945 that Concerns the Abolishment of the German University in Prague]. In: *Sbírka zákonů a nařízení Československé republiky, částka 53, 15. 11. 1945*, p. 295. See also A. Míšková, *Německá (Karlova) univerzita*, p. 186.

the total supremacy both to the Czech Charles University and Technical Universities in Prague and Brno as it was expressed already during the revolution in May 1945. All German universities were abolished back to November, 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 and all academic degrees conferred by these institutions were declared null and void.<sup>27</sup> The first postwar minister of education, who was member of the communist exile in the Soviet Union during the war, professor of musical history Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962), presented this total abolishment of the German universities as logical consequences of the war against Germany, Germans and fascism.<sup>28</sup> In an interesting way, he accused these institutions and their staff not only from systematical preparations for destruction of Czech "*national science and culture*", but also of "*fysical destroying of [Czech] nation*".<sup>29</sup> In his argumentation the use of scientific knowledge was understood as the crucial aspect of "Germanization" programmes. Another important point was, however, the embezzlement of the Czech university property after November 1939.<sup>30</sup>

As far as the role of science concerns it was often reflected in connection with the "methodicalness" and "sophistication" of Nazi terror. This moment was pointed out also by leading Czech biologists and physicians. Some of them spoke even about special branche of "police science" [Polizeiwissenschaft] that had used knowledge of many disciplines including psychology, physiology or dieticy.<sup>31</sup> All in all it was described as "*the products of a diseased mind, but scientific thinking brain*".<sup>32</sup>

About nine professors of medicine of the Charles University in Prague presented their views and reflections on the Nazi science publicly since June 1945; all of them stayed in the Protectorate during the German occupation.<sup>33</sup> They

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Zdeněk Nejedlý: *Kulturní politika třetí republiky* [The Cultural Policy of the Third Republic]. In: *Věda a život*, 1945, 11/7, pp. 277–279.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 278.

<sup>30</sup> Jan Bělehrádek: *Německá věda se prohřešila* [German Science Committed an Offence]. In: *Věda a život*, 1945, 11/7, pp. 284–290, see p. 285.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 286. and from own autopsy also František Bláha: *Zločin a trest* [Crime and Punishment]. Praha 1946, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, p. 289 and Josef Charvát: *Škody na národním zdraví, zaviněné válkou* [Damages on National Health Caused by War]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/19, pp. 641–646.

<sup>33</sup> Vilém Laufberger: *Dějiny fyziologie na Karlově univerzitě* [The History of Physiology at the Charles University]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/22, pp. 778–780; Karel Hynek: *Zahajovací přednáška 11. června 1945* [Introductory Lecture on June, 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 84/23, pp. 811–814; Karel Klaus: *Za války ve všeobecné nemocnici* [During the War in the General Hospital]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých* 84/24 1945, pp. 846–849; Antonín Přechectěl, *Vzpomínky a časové úvahy* [Memories and Contemplations]. *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/26, pp. 932–937; Kamil Henner: *Úvodní slovo při zahájení přednášek 11. června 1945* [Introductory Word on June, 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/27, pp. 968–970; František Hájek: *Proslov* [Speech]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/28, pp. 1009–1011; Bohumil Prusík: *Propedeutická klinika za válečných 6 let* [Propaedeutic Clinics During Six War Years]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/43, pp. 1569–1571; Hy-

concentrated mostly on their own experiences from the academic sphere. The most frequently used issue was the closing of the institutes in 1939, exploitation of the property, and the role of German scientists in the planning of Germanization measures.<sup>34</sup> Also the Czech biologists presented similar views in 1946.<sup>35</sup> This argumentation was usually extended into the "moral consequences", that were considered very seriously especially in medicine. Following this argumentation there was no doubt, that there will be no more place for German medical science in Bohemia and Moravia in the future. As the former dean of the faculty in 1939, physiologist Vilém Laufberger (1890–1986) stated, it would be unacceptable even to think about employment of German physicians, "who felt not embarrassed to conduct the vivisection on man".<sup>36</sup> Professor of psychiatry Otakar Janota (1898–1969) postulated very close connection between German scientists on one side and Nazi medical killing programme ("euthanasia") on the other. He considered this connection as "simply something unprecedented".<sup>37</sup> But Nazi "euthanasia" was not explicitly mentioned in the first general reviews of the damages on the "national health". These damages were divided into i. moral and psychological area, ii. nutrition problems, and iii. infectious diseases.<sup>38</sup> Special attention was also devoted to the new achievements in the area of military medicine.<sup>39</sup>

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nek Šíkl: *Hlavův ústav za okupace* [Hlava's Institute During Occupation]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/32, pp. 1153–1156; František Ninger: *Český medik a česká otolaryngologie* [Czech Physician and Czech Otolaryngology]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/30, pp. 1079–1084; František Hájek: *Soudní lékařství za války* [Forensic Medicine During War]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 85/117 1946, pp. 199–205; Kamil Henner: *Lékařská fakulta univerzity Karlovy v prvním roce obnovené svobody* [Medical Faculty of the Charles University in the First Year of Renewed Liberty]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1946, 85/18, pp. 618–620.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> J. Mělka: *Osudy biologických ústavů na Masarykově universitě v Brně za válečných let 1939–1945* [The Fates of Biological Institutes at the Masaryk University in Brno During War Years 1939–1945]. In: *Biologické Listy*, 1946, 27/1–2, pp. 5–7; J. Babička: *Ústavy přírodovědecké fakulty university Karlovy za německé okupace* [The Institutes of the Faculty of Science of the Charles University During German Occupation]. In: *Biologické Listy*, 27/1–2, pp. 7–10. See also *Konec hrůzy* [The End of Horror]. In: *Vesmír*, 1944–1945, 23/8–10, p. 151–152.

<sup>36</sup> V. Laufberger, *Dějiny*, p. 780.

<sup>37</sup> Otakar Janota: *Druhá světová válka a duševní poruchy* [The Second World War and Mental Deficiencies]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/31, pp. 1096–1101, see p. 1101.

<sup>38</sup> J. Charvát, Škody, pp. 641–646; Josef Mašek: *O poruchách výživy za války* [About the Defects of Nutrition During War]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1946, 84/21, pp. 713–717, 1946, 84/22, pp. 767–772; O. Janota, *Druhá světová válka*, pp. 1096–1101; Josef Charvát: *The Influence of War on Health Conditions in Czechoslovakia*. In: *Medical Science Abused: German Medical Science as Practised in Concentration Camps and in the so-called Protectorate – Reported by Czechoslovak Doctors*, Praha 1946, pp. 5–13; *ibid*, *Vývoj lékařství v poslední válce* [The Development of Medicine in the Last War]. Praha 1947.

<sup>39</sup> J. Liškutín: *Lékařské zkušenosti z druhé světové války* [Medical Experiences from the Second World War]: Inter-Allied Conference on War Medicine Convened by the Royal Society of Medicine. Praha 1948.

Pointing out the systematical importance of science and expert knowledge, the collective responsibility of the German scientists was postulated as well. For sure, the local experience was of eminent importance: *"Did the university professors, this 'elite' of German nation, sentence all what was happened in the concentration camps and what they accepted by being silent, or what they were also part of? First they will be aggrieved, then they will be silent, then they will tell us lies and after that oppose. As we know from experience, many around the world will believe them."*<sup>40</sup> According to the brutal treatment of Czech intelligentsia, especially university staff and students, almost every postwar comments dealt with the commemoration of colleagues or friends who did not survive the Nazi treatment in concentration camps or prisons. Some of them were even appointed to professorships *in memoriam* shortly after the end of war because of their survived colleagues. Immediately after the end of war, the series of special articles commemorating them were published too. In this way the process of postmortal satisfaction on one side and a very close tie of the Czech scientific community with the collective memory of Czech society on the other was created.

Another important and central topic was the Nazi racism. Especially biologists demonstrated the absurdity of Nazi racial theories (natural inequality, racial hierarchy, inbreeding etc.) on the examples of population genetics.<sup>41</sup> This position can not surprise because of the same position before the war in the late 1930s.<sup>42</sup> The role of racism was seen very central and significant as far as the German science and Nazi crimes concerned. According to these critics the Nazi life sciences could be called "pseudoscience", because it was primarily driven by ideology and political power: *"The Nazi researchers began to deal with a new kind of science. This science should vindicate all their violence and atrocities. Many of German physicians and biologists served to this Nazi pseudoscience."*<sup>43</sup> Politics (and ideology) of German national socialism was seen as the reason for the misuse of life sciences in Germany from 1933 to 1945.<sup>44</sup> As its main components were seen i. the extension of physical (racial) and hereditarily based differences into the mental (psychological) sphere and ii. the thesis about the supremacy of one race over the another.<sup>45</sup> But on the other hand the variability of mankind and hereditary (genetic) predispositions for the physical traits of man were considered as scientifically based, relevant facts.<sup>46</sup> As the ob-

<sup>40</sup> *Konec hrůzy* [The End of Terror]. In: *Vesmír*, 1944–45, 23/8–10, pp. 151–152, see p. 151. See also F. Bláha, *Zločin*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>41</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, p. 286–288, Jiří Malý: *Rasy a rasismus* [Races and Racism]. In: *Vesmír*, 1945, 24/1, pp. 1–8, see pp. 2 and 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Rovnocennost evropských plemen a cesty k jejich ušlechťování* [The Equality of the European Races and the Ways of Their Betterment]. Praha 1934. See J. Malý, *Rasy*, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, pp. 290. See also J. Malý, *Rasy*, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> J. Malý, *Rasy*, pp. 1 and 6–8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid* and for psychology see Vladimír Tardy: *Německá psychologie za nacismu* [German Psychology During Nacism]. In: *Věda a živo*, 1947, 13/4, pp. 170–176.

<sup>46</sup> J. Malý, *Rasy*, pp. 1–2.

jects (and victims) of this "new science" were mentioned Jews at the first place and Slavs at the second.<sup>47</sup> Another very present motive were the nationalistic tendencies, opportunism and sadism of German scientists.<sup>48</sup> All together was regarded as "unbelievable, until recently unknown and to the next generations only hardly understandable invention of means and whole systems used for mass bestial tortment and murdering of humankind".<sup>49</sup>

Concerning the role of Darwinism, especially social Darwinism, only few remarks occurred. If it happened, then the Nazi scientists were mostly accused of making "improper analogies".<sup>50</sup> The most concrete proofs were presented by the practical physicians who gathered their own experiences with the practical measures of the Nazis against tuberculosis.<sup>51</sup> As one of the practical consequence was directly mentioned the method of segregation [Ausschaltung] of the ill and – in the most extreme form – also "euthanasia".<sup>52</sup>

However, as by many other contemporaries the relation between eugenics and racial theories was usually not further explored. In some cases eugenics was still understood as a kind of applied science, mostly in the area medicine.<sup>53</sup> Only exceptionally the "Nazi eugenics", or "racial eugenics" and "racial hygiene" was mentioned.<sup>54</sup> The British concept of "social biology" or "social genetics" was understood as leading for the future.<sup>55</sup> For example its prominent figure, biologist John B. S. Haldane (1892–1964) hold a lecture called "About Fascism in Biology" on September, 18<sup>th</sup>, 1946 in Prague; he was invited by J. Bělehrádek.<sup>56</sup> In the same year also his book "Marxism and Natural Science" was translated into Czech and published in Prague.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>47</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, p. 287.

<sup>48</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Věda*, pp. 18–21 and Jan Konopík: *Zpráva o činnosti zdravotně-sociální komise při Zemském národním výboru* [Report on the Activities of the Health and Social Commission by the Regional National Committee]. In: *Věstník Československých Lékařů*, 1945, 57/17–18, pp. 227–228.

<sup>49</sup> Jan Florián: *Kěž osud nás i lidstvo uchrání! Politicko-lékařská úvaha* [May We and Mankind be Protected by Faith!: Political and Medical Essay]. In: *Věstník Československých Lékařů*, 1945, 57/33–34, pp. 435–436.

<sup>50</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, p. 287.

<sup>51</sup> Vladimír Pospíšil: *Rasismus a tuberkulóza* [Racism and Tuberculosis]. In: *Věda a život*, 1947, 13/10, pp. 450–457.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 451 and 453–455 and see also Marie Vopršálová: *Pathologie práva* [Pathology of Law]. In: *Věda a život*, 1947, 13/2, pp. 49–52, see p. 451.

<sup>53</sup> Bohumil Sekla: *Dědičnost v přírodě a ve společnosti* [Heredity in Nature and Society]: Praha: Život a práce 1948, pp. 264–282. See also Karel Hrubý: *Tvoříme s přírodou: Praktická genetika* [We Are Creating Together With the Nature: Practical Genetics], Praha 1946 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

<sup>54</sup> J. Malý, *Rasy*, p. 7 and V. Pospíšil, *Rasismus*, p. 452.

<sup>55</sup> J. Bělehrádek, *Německá věda*, pp. 248–263 and 282.

<sup>56</sup> *O fašismu v biologii: Přednáška prof. J. B. S. Haldane* [About the Fascism in Biology: The Lecture of Professor J. B. S. Haldane]. In: *Lidová Demokracie*, 18. 9. 1947, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> J. B. S. Haldane: *Marxistická filosofie a přírodní vědy* [The Marxist Philosophy and the Sciences]. Praha: 1946.



Between 1945 and 1948 the most radical criticism of the Nazi life sciences came from communist or strongly left oriented thinkers and intellectuals. Very special position among them took professor of philosophy at the Moscow university, called also "red professor", Arnošt Kolman (1892–1979). In 1915 he became the prisoner of war in Russia, after 1917 joined the Red Army, became a member of Russian Bolshevik party and worked in the 1920s and 1930s in propaganda division of the Central Committee of the Soviet communist party. Immediately after the end of war he was ordered to Prague. In this period he also systematically dealt with the topic of science and Nazism, however his explanations were strongly ideological and in many ways contradicting. For example, he saw Darwin as the great "revolutionary thinker" (sic!) in communist sense and Darwinism as a necessary part and partial of the "socialist scientific world view" championed by the Soviet Union.<sup>58</sup> But in the same year he was able to describe Darwinism as "*created for the intellectuals, who are craftily calling for the modern natural science*".<sup>59</sup> According to the doctrine of dialectic materialism any usage of biological, especially genetic knowledge was rejected as an expression of "fascist biology or medicine", that was misused "*for killing of children, elderly, and ill people*".<sup>60</sup> Although he was able to make difference between "fascist German biology", shortly after that he generally declared anthropology, psychology, and social hygiene to be "*disciplines through and through forged by the fascists*".<sup>61</sup> In relation to the Nazi racism and antisemitism, central role played to him "*pseudoscientific formal genetics*" that postulated general validity of the Mendel principles lead from the forced sterilizations to the Nazi "euthanasia" programme.<sup>62</sup> He even did not hesitate to call them as "*beastly principles*".<sup>63</sup> Racism together with the state sovereignty and imperialism were the main foundations of "fascist imperialism" that he made responsible for all killing and perversions during the WW2.<sup>64</sup> But he was not able to present any further and sophisticated analysis of the connections between modern life sciences, especially medicine and biology, and Nazi racism. At one time he declared that "*racism has nothing to do with science*", and at the another time he considered that the Nazi ideology was "*rugged mixture including matter-of-fact 'scientific' thinking*".<sup>65</sup> Similar views were presented also by another authors. Some of them were physicians who openly spoke about the crimes

<sup>58</sup> Arnošt Kolman: *Sovětská věda* [The Soviet Science]. In: *Tvorba*, 1946, 22/15, pp. 228–230; *ibid*, *Přednášky a diskuse* [Lectures and Discussions]. Praha 1947, pp. 8–9.

<sup>59</sup> A. Kolman, *Přednášky*, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> Arnošt Kolman: *Věda a společnost* [Science and Society]. In: *Tvorba*, 1946, 22/1, p. 2–3, see p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 2; *ibid*, *Ideologie německého fašismu* [Ideology of German Fascism]. Praha 1946, p. 52.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 87–89.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 82.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 54, 36, 39, 65. See also Karel Hoch: *Pangermanismus* [Pangermanism]. Praha 1946.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 42, 65, 81, 86.

committed by the German physicians in the name of their class, race and "racial science".<sup>66</sup>

During the war many thousands of citizens of the interwar Czechoslovakia passed through the gates of the Nazi concentration and annihilating camps. Special category of postwar reflections were the testimonies of persecuted experts who were among them. Undoubtedly the most famous was former physician of the city of Jihlava [Iglau], František Bláha (1896–1979). Being arrested in 1939 and held in several prisons (Prague, Brno, Terezín, Dresden, Plauen, Regensburg, Munich), he became in April 1941 to Dachau. After short time he was allowed to serve as the physician and surgeon. In this position he was forced to carry out more than 12000 "obductions". This was the reason why he could deliver very worth description of the horrible and deadly conditions in Dachau concentration camp after the end of WW2 from the medical point of view.<sup>67</sup> His testimonies were of such an importance that he was brought as a major witness at the IMT in Nuremberg.<sup>68</sup> He synthesised and presented his autopsy in several papers and publications. As a sort of synthesis may be considered his more than 230 pages book called "Medicína na scestí" [Medicine Abused] that was published in Prague in 1946 for the first time.<sup>69</sup> He dealt with the topic from several perspectives including the general description of the conditions in Dachau concentration camp,<sup>70</sup> particular etiology of local typhus epidemic,<sup>71</sup> tuberculosis,<sup>72</sup> the role of German medical staff and "experts",<sup>73</sup> carrying out of inhuman experiments,<sup>74</sup> the horrible treatment of old and invalid people,<sup>75</sup> killing of lunatic prisoners,<sup>76</sup> the official visits of Nazi authorities<sup>77</sup> etc. Becoming "killers –

<sup>66</sup> Aleš Salich: "Vědecké" kořeny fašismu [The "Scientific" Roots of Nazism]. In: *Tvorba*, 1945, 14/8, p. 119.

<sup>67</sup> František Bláha: *Medicina na scestí* [Medicine Abused]. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/29, pp. 1043–1050; *ibid*, *Zločin a trest* [Crime and Punishment]. Praha 1946, *Jací byli* [How They Were]. Praha 1946. See also Alena Maturová: *Německá lékařská věda je vinna* [The German Medical Science Is Guilty]. In: *Tvorba*, 1946, 15/50, p. 795.

<sup>68</sup> *Německá věda ve službách zločinu: Český lékař z Jihlavy generálním svědkem o koncentračních táborech* [German Science in Service of Crime: The Czech Physician From Jihlava Gaves General About Concentration Camps]. In: *Lidová Demokracie*, 8. 1. 1946, p. 2; *Bláhovo otřesné svědectví v Norimberku: Frick a Rosenberg drze popírají* [Bláha's Horrible Testimony at Nuremberg: Frick and Rosenberg Are Denying Cheekily]. In: *Lidová Demokracie*, 13. 1. 1946, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> František Bláha: *Medicina na scestí* [Medicine Abused]. Praha 1946, second Czech edition in 1948, and in Slovak version, *Medicína na šikmej ploche* [Medicine on the Slippery Slope]. Bratislava 1964.

<sup>70</sup> F. Bláha, *Medicina*, pp. 11–34.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 97–103.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 118–126.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 34–43.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 60–90.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 43–46.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 116–117.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 46–49.

*experimentators and torturers in the name of their German science*", he explained, was first of all the result of *"betrayal of medical ideals"*.<sup>78</sup> Especially after 1947 he pointed out the approach of the American and British investigators very critically.<sup>79</sup>

Similar testimony was left by professor of surgery and head of the Surgical Clinic at the Faculty of Medicine of the Masaryk University in Brno [Brünn] Josef Podlaha (1893–1975). He was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp.<sup>80</sup> Similarly to Bláha, he presented his witness shortly after the end of war; he was one of the several Mauthausen prisoners who witnessed before the American Criminal Investigation Committee (C.I.C.) in 1945.<sup>81</sup> He focused mostly on the nature and methodology of Nazi mass killing, gave the overview about particular diseases in Mauthausen and their treatments methods, and dealt with the Nazi experiments (hormonal experiments, diet experiments and of prophylactic sera) in Mauthausen as well.<sup>82</sup> For 1944 he mentioned also the action "14f13", obviously in accordance with T4-killing centre in Hartheim bei Alkoven in Lower Austria [Niederösterreich]: *"In 1944 some 2973 patients were taken to the Ybbs Nursing Home for Tubercular Patients. In course of time all of them were listed as dead."*<sup>83</sup> His assessment of the German medical staff was as follows: *"In the light of my experience from the concentration camp of Mauthausen as a prisoner-surgeon I hereby certify, that the German doctors were intentionally and trained to deprive the prisoners of life. This they did, in general, brutally, without medical ethics and deliberately. Some methods were dictated directly from Berlin, such as the intracardial injections of different constitution. The German doctors in most cases lacked conscience and responsibility, worked in a slipshod way and their medical knowledge was comparatively poor. None of them ever raised objection to the commanders' orders for medical reasons, and the orders were blindly carried out, even though they were against medical principles. Their conduct of life was mostly immoral and disagreed with the most primitive principles of professional ethics."*<sup>84</sup>

Also another Moravian academician, Václav Tomášek (1893–1962), who was professor of bacteriology at the same university gave very worth overview

<sup>78</sup> F. Bláha: *Medicina na scestí*. In: *Časopis Lékařů Českých*, 1945, 84/29, p. 1043, *ibid*, *Zločin*, pp. 28–29, 31.

<sup>79</sup> F. Bláha, *Medicina na scestí*, pp. 1043–1049, *ibid*, *Zločin*, p. 13, 31 and *Vědci*, pp. 86–91, see pp. 86–87, 90. See Ulf Schmidt, *Justice at Nuremberg: Leo Alexander and the Nazi Doctors' Trial*. New York 2004.

<sup>80</sup> Josef Podlaha: *Surgery and Medical Care of the Prisoners in the Mauthausen Concentration Camp*. In: *Medical Science Abused: German Medical Science as Practised in Concentration Camps and in the so-called Protectorate – Reported by Czechoslovak Doctors*. Praha 1946, pp. 58–75.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 62.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 64–72.

<sup>83</sup> J. Podlaha, *Surgery*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 74–75.

of the conditions in several Nazi concentration camps, especially about the existence of the Hygienic Institute of the SS in Auschwitz.<sup>85</sup> He was arrested by the German secret police in 1941 and became first the prisoner in Mauthausen and after that (end of 1943) in Auschwitz. He served as a bacteriologist both in the local so called hospital. When the Hygienic Institute [Hygiene Institut] of the SS was formed, he was assigned to it as an expert in the field of bacteriology.<sup>86</sup> In January 1945 he was "evacuated" back to Mauthausen where he was liberated by the U.S. Army in May 1945. As a member of its staff he described equipment, structure, as well as the diagnosis and illnesses and activities of the SS-physicians.<sup>87</sup> He commented their erudition and motivation like this: "*Young German doctors, headed by a 27-years old, were in charge of this institute... The German doctors were in constant fear of sabotage and therefore put rough SS-men in charge of each department. These men, lacking any scientific education, were unable to control the scientific work but could make life very unpleasant by the use of their fists, bullying and all sorts of cunning tricks.*"<sup>88</sup>

As far as the the Czech daily press concerns the use (and misuse) of science in Nazi Germany as a topic was not extensive between 1945 and 1948. It was mostly medicine that was usually mentioned in connection with the inhuman experiments and their investigation.<sup>89</sup> Especially the German physicians became in the center of attention during the medical process in Nuremberg in 1946 and 1947.<sup>90</sup> But even in this case the Nazi "euthanasia" was not mentioned separately. For example, Karl Brandt (1904–1948) should be charged, according to the news, because of "*medical experiments that caused death of several hundreds thousand people*".<sup>91</sup> The most sophisticated information gave one member of Czechoslovak delegation at the IMT, even though his data were very inaccurate.<sup>92</sup> According to him Nazi "euthanasia" programme was part of a "*huge plan for annihilation of races and nations*".<sup>93</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Václav Tomášek: *Bakteriologie v Mauthausenu a v Osvětimi* [Bacteriology in Mauthausen and Auschwitz]. In: *Věda a život*, 1945, 11/8, pp. 402–413; *ibid*, *Oswieczim*. In: *Medical Science Abused: German Medical Science as Practised in Concentration Camps and in the so-called Protectorate – Reported by Czechoslovak Doctors*, Praha 1946, pp. 76–90.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 407–412.

<sup>87</sup> V. Tomášek, *Bakteriologie*, pp. 76–81.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, p. 83.

<sup>89</sup> *Nacisté zneužívali i vědu* [Even the Science Was Abused by the Nazis]. In: *Beseda naší rodiny*, 1945, 1/8, p. 2 (10. 8. 1945); *Dantovo "Peklo" ožívá: Sterilizace a trhy s lidským masem: Francouzská komunistka svědčí v Norimberku* [Dante's Hell Is Coming to Life: Sterilizations and Market With Human Meat: The French Communist Witnesses in Nuremberg]. In: *Lidová Demokracie*, 29. 1. 1946, pp. 1–2.

<sup>90</sup> See footnote 70.

<sup>91</sup> *7 německý lékařů odsouzeno k trestu smrti* [7 German Physicians Sentenced to Death]. In: *Lidová Demokracie*, 21. 8. 1947, p. 2.

<sup>92</sup> Bohdan Donner: *Názory nacistického lékaře* [Opinions of the Nazi Physician]. In: *Věstník Lékařů Českých*, 1947, 59/14/ p. 280 (11. 11. 1947).

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*, p. 281.

## Povzetek

### *"Nemška znanost je storila prekršek": Nacistična zloraba znanosti (antropologije in genetike) in razlogi za ukinitev nemških znanstvenih ustanov na češkem ozemlju, 1945–1946*

Še do nedavnega se je večina zgodovinskih študij osredotočala predvsem na nacistično uničevanje znanosti, izgon judovskih znanstvenikov z univerz in drugih znanstvenih ustanov ter spodkopavanje intelektualnih in demokratičnih ali liberalnih vrednot. Potreben pa je tudi pogled z druge perspektive. Podrobnejši pogled na zgodovino znanosti v času nacizma namreč pokaže, da so nekatere discipline, kot sta na primer fizika in matematika, zaradi politične situacije res trpele, so pa druge discipline v tem času cvetele, na primer antropologija, človeška genetika in razne izpeljane oblike rasnih znanosti.

V času okupacije čeških ozemelj med letoma 1939 in 1945 je postala Praga s svojo znanstveno infrastrukturo nov pomemben center na zemljevidu znanosti "nove" Evrope pod nacistično vladavino. Ključno vlogo je imela predvsem Nemška Karlova univerza (Deutsche Karls-Universität), ki se je po letu 1939 začela prikazovati kot "najstarejša nemška univerza".

Tako v skladu s "praktičnimi" genocidnimi ukrepi nacističnega režima kot z novo vrsto dolgoročnega strateškega načrtovanja na področju rasne, populacijske in narodnostne politike [Rassen-, Bevölkerungs- und Volkstumspolitik] je bilo v okviru univerze DKU v letih med 1939 in 1942 ustanovljenih več novih inštitutov, na katerih naj bi se združevali izsledki bioloških raziskav.

Leta 1939 (1940) je bil na Medicinski fakulteti DKU ustanovljen *Inštitut za dednostno in rasno higieno* [Institut für Erb- und Rassenhygiene], katerega glavni namen je bilo izvajanje "dednostne in rasne nege" [Erb- und Rassenpflege]. Temeljlil je na a) *Zakonu o preprečevanju potomcev z dednimi boleznimi* iz leta 1933 in na b) protijudovskih *Nüremberških zakonih* iz leta 1935. Za direktorja inštituta je bil imenovan Dr. Karl Thums (1904–1976), bližnji sodelavec profesorja Dr. Ernsta Rüdina (1874–1952), takrat vodilnega nemškega psihiatra, iznajditelja programa "evtanazija" in guruja nemške šole rasne higiene.

Leta 1942 je bil na Filozofski fakulteti ustanovljen *Inštitut za socialno antropologijo in narodnostno biologijo* (Institut für Sozialanthropologie und Volksbiologie). Za direktorja je bil postavljen sociolog Dr. Karl Valentin Müller (1896–1963), ki si je v uporabno sociologijo prizadeval vključiti rasne in dednostne komponente, hkrati pa je delal tudi kot strokovni svetovalec na Uradu *Reichsprotectorja* [Amt des Reichsprotectors] v Pragi.

Leta 1942 je bil na Fakulteti za znanost ustanovljen še tretji in hkrati najmanjši *Inštitut za rasno biologijo* pod vodstvom vodje *Rasnega urada* v okviru *Glavnega urada za rase in naseljevanje SS* (Rassen- und Siedlungshauptamt der SS), profesorja fizične antropologije, Dr. Bruna Kurta Schultza (1901–1998).

Glavna naloga inštituta je bila izpopolnitev meril za rasno selekcije z antropološkega vidika.

Po letu 1942 so vodje teh inštitutov tesno sodelovali pri več projektih v okviru fundacije Reinhard-Heydrich-Stiftung in šole varnostne policije (Reichsschule der Sicherheitspolizei und SD) ter tako postali neke vrste "think-tank" skupina nacističnih obveščevalcev in akademikov.

V tem prispevku želim glede na institucionalni razvoj in osebne zveze i) osvetliti vlogo, ki so jo ti znanstveniki igrali ali poskusili igrati pri sprejemanju, upravljanju in izvajanju nacističnih rasnih programov in programov rasne higiene, ii) obravnavati reakcijo čeških znanstvenikov in oblasti takoj po koncu vojne v letih 1945 in 1946. Osredotočil pa se ne bom na uradne povojne preiskave, temveč na različne načine splošnega utemeljevanja tega grozljivega novega zagona zlorabe biomedicinske znanosti s strani nacistov v obdobju med letoma 1939 in 1945.

## List of Authors

**Artico, Davide** (1966) wrote his PhD thesis at the University in Torino in 2004 on the topic of degermanisation and Polonisation of the Lower Silesia after World War II ("*Terra riconquistata*". *De-germanizzazione e polonizzazione della Bassa Slesia dopo la II Guerra Mondiale*, 2006). He is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Arts of the Wrocław University. He is a Polish and Italian citizen, and he argues for good relations between the states, convinced that history should be a place of contacts, not conflicts between nations. He is also the editor of the publication *Il viaggio come realtà e come metafora (Journey as Reality or as a Metaphor)*, where the most important Polish Italianists published their contributions.

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**Ferenc, Mitja** (1960) graduated in 1985 and wrote his PhD thesis in 1999 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He worked at the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for the protection of cultural heritage where he was responsible for the conservation of the heritage from the period of World War Two. Since 2001 he has lectured on history of the Southeast Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. Mostly he is concerned with the protection of cultural heritage, especially in the area abandoned during the World War Two by the German minority, which had lived there since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. (*Cerkve na Kočevskem nekoč in danes / The Gottscheer Churches in the Past and Today*, 1993; *Sakralna dediščina na Kočevskem / Sacral Heritage in Gottscheerland*, 2006; *Kočevska. Izgubljena kulturna dediščina kočevskih Nemcev / Gottchee. The Lost Cultural Heritage of the Gottscheer Germans*, 2001; *Kočevska – pusta in prazna / Gottchee. Dreary and Deserted*, 2006). Lately he has devoted his work to the research of grave sites from the World War II in Slovenia, particularly to locating graves and grave sites of people killed after the war which were hidden for political reasons (*Prikrita hrvaška grobišča v Sloveniji / Hidden Grave Sites of Croats in Slovenia*, 2007).

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**Michálek, Slavomír** (1961), a historian, an employee since 1986, and a director of the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava since 2006. He is concerned with American foreign policy and the Czechoslovak and American relations after WWII, historical figures out of Slovaks active in the Czechoslovak diplomacy service, and the second and third Slovak and Czechoslovak democratic exile in America. He has written several tens of papers on the specific topics, and he has actively participated in various international conferences abroad. He has taken part in foreign internships at universities and scientific institutes in Great Britain (Oxford University), USA (New York Public Library, Woodrow Wilson Center, Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies, History Research Immigration Center, National Czech and Slovak Museum & Library, George Washington University, Stanford University) and in Canada (University of Toronto). He is a co-author and editor of representative books: *Ján Papánek, portrét* (1998), *Vlastimil Patrick Lichner, z Brezovej do Ameriky* (2000), *Andrew Valuchek – As They Knew Him* (2002), *Do pamäti národa, osobnosti slovenských dejín prvej polovice 20. storočia* (2003) and *Juraj Slávik Neresnický, od politiky cez diplomaciu po exil* (2006), and an author of monographs *Nádeje a vytriezvenia, československo-americké hospodárske vzťahy v rokoch 1945–1951* (1995), *Ján Papánek, politik, diplomat, humanista* (1996), *Ján Papánek, za vojny Edvardovi Benešovi* (1997), *Diplomat Štefan Osuský* (1999), *Brezová pod Bradlom, osobnosti /ne/známe* (1999), *Prípád Oatis, československý komunistický režim verzus dopisovateľ* Associated Press (2005).

He is a double holder of the prestige international *Egon Ervín Kisch Award* (1999 and 2003) and *The American Eagle award* (1996).

**Nečak, Dušan** (1948) graduated in 1971 and wrote his PhD thesis in 1978 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. In the period 1972–80 he was a researcher of the history of Slovenians in Austria at the Institute for Ethnic Studies (*Volitve na Koroškem po letu 1945 / Elections in Carinthia after 1945*, 1982; *Koroški Slovenci v drugi avstrijski republiki / The Carinthia Slovenians in the Second Austrian Republic*, 1985). Since 1980 he has lectured on the 20<sup>th</sup> century history at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana (since 1989 as a Full Professor). As a visiting professor he gave various lectures at the universities in Klagenfurt, Vienna, Cologne and Berlin. His scientific work is dedicated to the contemporary Slovenian, Yugoslav and also world history (*Prelom. 1914–1918. Svet in Slovenci v I. svetovni vojni / Turning Point. 1914–1918. The World and Slovenians in World War I* (co-author), 2005) as well as national issues, e.g. the national-socialism in 1934 in Austria (*Avstrijska legija II / Austrian Legion II*, 1995 (German issue 1996), especially the period after the World War II, particularly the Hallstein doctrine and its application to Yugoslavia (1955–1957), (*Hallsteinova doktrina in Jugoslavija, Tito med Zvezno Republiko Nemčijo in Nemško demokratično republiko / The Hallstein Doctrine and Yugoslavia, Tito Between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic*, 2002) as well as the period of Willy Brandt's Eastern Politics towards Yugoslavia (1966–1974). He has also been researching the Yugoslav/Slovenian – German relations after World War Two and Germans in Slovenia ("*Nemci" na Slovenskem 1941–1955 / "Germans" in Slovenia 1941–1955*, 1998, 2002).

**Promitzer, Christian** (1962) studied history, German and Slovenian language at the University in Graz, where he was awarded his PhD in 1997. Since 1997 he has been employed at the Institute of History at the University in Graz (the Department for the History of Southern Europe). He focuses on the national questions in South-Eastern Europe (*Menschenrechte in Bosnien und Herzegowina*, 1999; *Grenzenlos zweisprachig: die Erinnerungen des Keuschlersohnes Anton Šantel (1845–1920) an seine Kindheit in Leutschach und Jugend in Marburg*, 2002), with national communities and their problems, as well as with the social history of medicine in the Balkans.

**Radelič, Zdenko** (1954) graduated in history in 1979 and wrote his PhD thesis in 1994 at the Faculty of Arts in Zagreb. Since 1984 he has been employed at the Croatian Institute of History in Zagreb, where he has been researching the period after World War II, particularly the functioning of the political parties in the opposition (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka : 1941.–1950. / Croatian Peasant Party: 1941–1950*, 1996; *Križari : gerila u Hrvatskoj 1945.–1950. / "Crusaders" : Croatian Guerrilla 1945–1950*, 2002); he is a co-author of a comprehen-

sive study on the history of the complete period after World War II in Croatia in relation to the Croatian situation in Yugoslavia (*Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji 1945.–1991. Od zajedništva do razlaza – Croatia in Yugoslavia 1945–1991. From Unity to Dissolution*, 2006).

**Repe, Božo** (1956) graduated in 1972 at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana, and in 1985 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where he wrote his PhD thesis in 1992. Between 1992 and 1995 he lectured on contemporary history at the Faculty of Education, University of Maribor, and after that he has lectured at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana (since 2002 as a Full Professor) on the Slovenian 20<sup>th</sup> century history. He researches the contemporary Slovenian, Southern Slavic and Central European history, and is also concerned with issues of history education in schools. The emphasis of his research work is the period after the World War II, particularly the sixties (*"Liberalizem" v Sloveniji / "Liberalism" in Slovenia*, 1992), and the period of democratisation and gaining the independence of Slovenia (*The Repluralization of Slovenia in the 1980s* (co-author), 2000; *Slovenci v osemdesetih letih / Slovenians in the Eighties*, 2001; *Jutri je nov dan. Slovenci in razpad Jugoslavije / Tomorrow is a New Day. Slovenians and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, 2002; *Rdeča Slovenija. Tokovi in obrazi socializma / Red Slovenia. The Course and Faces of Socialism*, 2003). He published a collection of sources on this issue in three volumes (*Viri o demokratizaciji in osamosvojitvi Slovenije / Resources on the Democratisation and Independence of Slovenia*, 2002–2004).

**Romsics, Ignác** (1951) is Professor of Modern Hungarian History at the University of Budapest (ELTE). Since 2001 he has been Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and from 1999 to 2007 he was General Secretary of the Hungarian Historical Society. Between 1993 and 1998, and in the academic year of 2002–2003 he held the Hungarian Chair at Indiana University, Bloomington (USA). In the Spring Semester of 2006 he taught at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland). He has authored and edited several books including *Wartime American Plans for a New Hungary* (1992), *István Bethlen* (1995), *20<sup>th</sup> Century Hungary and the Great Powers* (1995) *Hungary in the Twentieth Century* (1999), *Geopolitics in the Danube Region. Hungarian Reconciliation Efforts, 1848–1998* (1999) *The Dismantling of Historic Hungary* (2002) and *From Dictatorship to Democracy. The Birth of the Third Hungarian Republic 1998–2001*. (2007)

**Segeš, Dušan** (1977), studied in Faculty of Philosophy, Comenius University, Bratislava (Department of History, Department of German Language) and finished 2001, and 2006 finished PhD Studies at the Department of Contemporary History – Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Science; 2002–2004 he studied at the Warsaw University (Centre for East European Studies) – the re-

search project *The historical experience of federalism in Central Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of European Integration*. Since 2006, he is working in the Department of Contemporary History in the Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava. His fields of interests are diplomacy in the Interwar-period and during World War II, History of Central Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Slovak Question and its International Context, Political Relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia/Slovakia in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Šimůnek Michal** (1976) PhD is scientific researcher affiliated at the Institute of Contemporary History/Centre of Sciences and Humanities of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague. He studied history and philosophy and history of science at the Charles University in Prague. He deals with the history of bio-medical sciences in the late 19th and early 20th century. He focuses mainly on the development of genetics in the Czech Lands and other related issues.

**Tyszkiewicz, Jakub** (1966) professor of history at the University of Wrocław since 1996, visiting professor at the University of Massachusetts (2007–2009) and at the University of Illinois at Chicago (1997), the author and co-author of 10 books about Polish-American relations since 1956, March 68 in Poland in the Eyes of American Intelligence and Diplomacy, history of Lower Silesia and Wrocław since 1945, propaganda of Recovered Territories aftermath the World War Two.

**Troha, Nevenka** (1951) graduated in 1980 and wrote her PhD thesis in 1996 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. From 1974, before graduation, she worked in the museum in Trbovlje (as director since 1977) and from 1986 in the Historical Archives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia. She has been employed at the Institute for Contemporary History in Ljubljana since 1997. She researches the period after World War II with the emphasis on the relations between Slovenians (Slovenia) and Italians (Italy), particularly the issue of the Slovenian territory under Italy before the war and also the history of Slovenians in Italy and Italians in Slovenia (*Politika slovensko-italijanskega bratstva – Slovenian-Italian Brotherhood Policy*, 1998; *Komu Trst. Slovenci in Italijani med dvema državama – Who Gets Trieste. Slovenians and Italians Between Two States*, 1999). She is one of the writers of momentous book of new Slovene historiography *Slovenska novejša zgodovina : od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848–1992 / Slovenian Contemporary History : from the Programme of United Slovenia to the International Recognition of Slovenia 1848–1992*, 2005.

**Vodušek Starič, Jerca** (1950) graduated in 1975 and wrote her PhD thesis in 1991 at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. Since her graduation to 1996 she has been employed at the Institute for Contemporary History where

she researched World War II history and the post-war Slovenian and Yugoslav issues with the emphasis on the introduction of self-government (*Začetki samoupravljanja v Sloveniji 1949–1953 / The Beginnings of Self-Government in Slovenia 1949–1953*, 1983) and the takeover of power by the Communist Party in the period 1944–1946 (*Prevzem oblasti 1944–1946 / Takeover of Power 1944–1946*, 1992). Since 1996 she has lectured on the 20<sup>th</sup> century history (since 2002 as a Full Professor) at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor. In her latest research work she emphasises the persecution of the opposition, particularly from the liberal side, and the collaboration of Slovenia liberals with British intelligence services during the pre-war and wartime period (*"Dosje" Mačkovšek / "Dossier" Mačkovšek*, 1994; *Slovenski špijoni in SOE, 1938–1942 / Slovenian Spies and SOE, 1938–1942*, 2002). From October 2005 she is the director of Institute for Contemporary History in Ljubljana. She is the holder of prestige Slovene state award for scientifically work (1993).

**Wedekind, Michael** (1960), specialized in ethnic and nationality studies in Central and Eastern Europe. He has worked extensively on the involvement of German scholars in the ethno-politics of the Third Reich as well as on German occupation during the World War II (*Nationalsozialistische Besatzungs- und Annexionspolitik in Norditalien 1943 bis 1945*; Munich 2003). His research fields include population policy in the Balkans and in the Alpine and Adriatic region. He is the co-author and co-editor of two monographs on mountaineering as a social practice of European bourgeoisies in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries published in Italy (Trento 2003; Treviso 2007). He has been a visiting professor at the universities of Trento and Bucharest, and is currently working as a research fellow at the University of Münster.