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*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.¹ 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).²

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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¹ *Žrtne vojne in revolucije* [Victims of War and Revolution]. Ljubljana 2005.

² 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.³

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,⁴ the nationalization of the economy followed by accelerated renewal and industrialization according to the Soviet model, and the separation of church and state.⁵ 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).⁶

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-

³ 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.

⁴ For more about this see: Zdenko Čepič. *Agrarna reforma in kolonizacija v Sloveniji : 1945–1948* [Agrarian Reform and Colonization in Slovenia], Maribor 1995.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.⁷ 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

⁷ 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.⁸ 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).⁹ 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).¹⁰ 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

⁸ 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 19th 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).

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ *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."¹¹

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."¹² 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.¹³ 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-

¹¹ Govor maršala Tita v Ljubljani [The Speech of Marshall Tito in Ljubljana]. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, 1980, No. 1–2.

¹² Temna stran meseca, p. 11.

¹³ 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.¹⁴

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).¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ The

¹⁴ *Dachauski procesi* [The Dachau Trials], (research report with documents. Ljubljana 1990.

¹⁵ Jerca Vodušek Starič: *Prevzem oblasti* [The Takeover of Power]. Ljubljana 1992.

¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ 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

¹⁷ 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).¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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

¹⁸ "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 20th Century]. Ljubljana 2004.

¹⁹ 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.²⁰ (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)

²⁰ 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.²¹ 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-

²¹ 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.²² 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

²² 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.²³ 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

²³ 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'.²⁴

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-

²⁴ Božo Repe: *Refleksija treh največjih jugoslovanskih povojnih znotrajpartijskih obračunov ("informbiroja", "đilasovščine" in partijskega "liberalizma") v Sloveniji* [Reflections on the Three Largest Yugoslav Postwar Intraparty Struggles (Informburo, 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.