

COMMUNISM IN SLOVENIA - HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Let us bring into focus the fundamental destruction of Slovenian space because of totalitarian interventions of national socialism and communism in the Slovenian society in the context of the Second World War, the occupation, the fight against the oppressors, the Bolshevik revolution with the forced civil war between 1941 and 1945, the permanent communist civil war waged against their own people, the god complex and racism between 1945 and 1991, which have all influenced the independent Slovenia after 1991.

We can conclude from the start that the Slovenes – as an ethnical community, as well as the population of today's state of Slovenia, that in mid 20th century amounted to approximately 1,450.000 – were the subject of three totalitarian regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism. Today, Slovenia is the only member of the European Union to have gone through all three types of totalitarian regime in the twentieth century.

The Slovenians saw the extremes of the totalitarian drama of the 20th century. On one side they experienced an extraordinary national rise from in the beginning of the century a community connected by a language and cultural peculiarities, to the start of national formation in First Yugoslavia to limited statehood in the socialist republic in Second Yugoslavia. In 1991, the democratic and independent state was created.

The former Yugoslavia (Slovenia included) was besides the former Soviet Union the only country, where the so called authentic revolution was carried out. Communism wasn't brought by Soviet tanks; it was established by local communists, trained by Kominternu.

The leadership of the communist party of Yugoslavia became extremely Stalinistic before the Second World War. The communist party of Slovenia was

created in 1937. The German attack on The Soviet Union in June 1941, provoked Slovenian communists to start fighting against the occupation and to enact the Bolshevik revolution. The first goal of the communists was to win the civil war, which was achieved with mass murders of Slovenians. During the Second World War the national, social, religious and worldview revolutionary processes were in motion in Slovenia. The fighting sides were the partisan movement on one side and the opposition of the partisan movement on the other. The partisan movement was characterized by the resistance against the occupator, and the Bolshevik revolution and its international allies were characterized by anti-Nazism. The adversaries of the partisan movement are the occupators, characterized by genocidal racism and the Slovenian co-operators with the occupator, characterized by anti-communism and collaboration.

At the end of the Second World War, the communist partisan movement was a part of the victorious anti – fascist coalition and it won the civil war against the Slovenian anticommunists. The basic goal of the victorious communists was to execute the Bolshevik revolution.

From 1941 to 1945, more than 90 000 Slovenians living in the area of present-day Slovenia were killed (around six percent of the population). The consequence of the occupators' violence was: more than 100 000 exiles and refugees, more than 50 000 prisoners (not counting the exiles), more than 55 000 people were interned, tens of thousands forcibly mobilized to work, more than 200 000 Slovenians were mobilized into the occupators' armies and paramilitary formations. The partisan army led by the communists consisted of at most 30 000 soldiers - in the autumn of 1944. Altogether 100 000 people have served in the partisan army, and the partisans had even more civil coworkers and supporters of the partisan movement; more than 25 000 Slovenians joined the anti-communist units, and they too had numerous civil coworkers and supporters. The victims' legacy was hundreds of thousands of grieving parents,

widows and orphans, hundreds of thousands of confiscations and property damage.

The communist victory, won by the blade of the Yugoslav and Soviet Bayonets, caused numerous offensives in the fight against their own people in May 1945. The bloody reckoning after the Second World War was deadly for around 18 000 inhabitants of the area of present-day Slovenia. Around 20 000 fled abroad and were later, as political emigrants, treated as “national traitors”. Many political trials were staged, processing around 25 000 people in a few years after the war. Alongside the political, the communists also enacted ethnic cleansing; they exiled or drove away more than 50 000 German and Italian inhabitants of Slovenia. A class war against private property was started – in the years 1945 to 1952 there were more than 27 000 cases of seizures of private property. A special emphasis was put on the front for the collectivization of agriculture. The farmers were being heavily burdened by the compulsory delivery of goods for purchase by the state and high taxes. The Catholic Church was also to be destroyed.

According to Bolshevik revolutionary justice, in 1945 the Communist powers committed judicial slaughter outside the courts on Slovene territory, about which it was forbidden to talk. In June 1945, group trials began against actual and imaginary opponents of the Communist system, particularly against representatives of cooperatives, banks and the economy. The authorities carried out numerous trials to compromise representatives of political opposition and the Catholic Church. Following the Soviet example, in summer 1947 the Slovene Party staged a great Stalinist political trial, the so-called Nagode trial (named after the first accused, dr. Črtomir Nagode) in which fifteen people were accused of treason and spying for Anglo-Americans.

In the period from 1945 to 1955, the worst offensives in the party’s civil war against Slovenia and its inhabitants take place, it is the time of the implementation of the Leninist – Stalinist revolutionary model. Many core

turning points are reached. In the second half of the 1950s, the hard revolutionary model could no longer sustain its development, characteristic Yugoslav crises began and the centre of the development/disintegration of Yugoslavia in the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties was moved to the deterioration of relations among Yugoslav nations and economic crises. The pillar of communist terror was the secret political police UDBA. It expended boundless amounts of energy to control and even create internal and external enemies. The system of dossiers included, as the controllers or as the controlled, almost all adult population of Slovenia.

The communist system of maintaining and developing of revolutionary tradition was a quasi-religious basic principle about the creation of the (party) world. The doctrine was the basis for the quasi-demiurgic division of people to different positions in the party society. The basic division was into party-privileged and party-discriminated subjects.

The party assumed the role of god. The dead and the alive were segregated into party heaven and party hell - that is into caste system, ranging from the beloved “national heroes” to the despised “national traitors”.

In spite of the fact that from the mid fifties the former Yugoslavia was considered more democratic as other eastern European communist countries, in the period from 1945 to 1990 the following crimes were committed and human rights violated:

- instalment of a single party system/autocracy from 1944 onwards and absence of independent legislative, government and judicial branches;
- early enforcement of a soviet model legal system that implied a number of violations of civil rights in legal actions, among others: absence of rules and regulations pertaining to criminal procedures, arrests and interrogations by secret police, night time interrogations and other means of coercion, absence of counsel, absence of witnesses of defence on court, extraordinary courts without

appeal in 1944–45, introduction of a law for the protection of the state, secret rulings and official gazette etc.;

- mass killings in summer 1945;
- concentration camps and forced labour;
- persecutions and psychological pressures: one night arrests and interrogations, coercion into becoming a secret police agent or informant (executed on a large scale);
- resettlement of border line population;
- arrests of children, removal from families and their re-education in institutions;
- dissolution of societies, political parties, newspapers;
- persecution and prosecution of clergy, catholic and other religious organizations and societies;
- abolition of freedoms: the right to assemble, to stand for election, to publish, to hold a passport and to travel freely;
- censorship;
- overall and especially border control by the secret police (Udba) and border killings;
- control over economy, nationalization, confiscation, state ownership and planning;
- compulsory membership in state cooperatives, control of machinery and other agricultural means, persecution of wealthy peasants and prosecution of ‘saboteurs’;
- denial of social security for farmers, priests, former convicts, etc.;
- shock working for ration cards; other forms of economic pressure.

For all those crimes and violations no perpetrator has been liable for. On the contrary: many of those violators of human rights still have the same privileges as in the former political system.

The Catholic Church in Slovenia represented the biggest “thorn in the flesh” for the Communist regime, because it was the only one which stayed organized outside the Party and had widespread support from the rather religious population. Therefore, on the one hand the Communists wanted to slander the Church in public, and on the other hand, destroy its economic basis. Only in Slovenia priests needed authority consents if during war they were not in their posts. Even those, who were deported or sent to concentration camps by the occupiers. Some 630 priests, monks, nuns and seminarists were imprisoned or in concentration camps. Many fake trials were held against Church representatives. Up to 1961, 429 trials took place (of about 1,000 priests); 329 were sentenced to imprisonment and nine to death – four death penalties were executed. The most important trial against the Church in Slovenia took place in 1946, before a military court in Ljubljana against the Bishop of Ljubljana, Gregorij Rožman (1883-1959), who in 1945 escaped to Austria. He was sentenced together with a very heterogeneous group who had nothing in common. Among them was SS General Erwin Rösener.

In Slovenia, the parties that developed out of the political corpus of the second Yugoslavia used nationalism as a trump card to remain in power even after 1990, or to put it simply: the communists used nationalism in the Second World War as well as in the Slovenian independence project and in the June war in 1991. If the one-party model could sustain the abuse of party nationalism for 45 years, the question is how long it can be sustained in parliamentary democracy.

The leading Bolsheviks and their heirs have two essential goals: the communist criminals must not be found guilty in the court of law for crimes that do not fall under the statute of limitations; and that the party’s ascent to power during the Second World War is seen as a “national liberation movement”. Even though the police and the prosecution are diligently gathering proof, especially about mass murders of people after the Second World War, they still

have not managed to arrange a trial for anyone. However, so many historical facts have been accumulated, that the myth of the “national liberation movement” is being judged in the court of history. The relatives of disregarded victims are erecting monuments for their deceased, and the state commissions and civil society are discovering new and new concealed burial sites of victims of communist terror.

But the Slovenian parliament has not been able to adopt the condemnation of communism, which was adopted by the Council of Europe.