

THE BOLSHEVIZATION OF SLOVENIA

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No consistent designation exists for political systems in countries that lay east of the Iron Curtain after 1945. In the literature we find references to communist rule in those countries; some historians speak of the so-called peoples' democracies; the term "Stalinism" is used for the time of the most severe terror. Each term is to some extent appropriate and on the other hand partly inappropriate, which might also be said to hold for the term "bolshevism." By analogy to "fascism" and "nazism," which name political systems after the ruling totalitarian parties, bolshevism is a term proper to the Soviet Union, where the Bolsheviks took control after the revolution. For the Eastern European states in which communist parties ruled after WW II, the designation communism seems better to correspond. Therefore, the notion bolshevization as it is used in this article refers only to the copying or transferring of experiences from the Soviet political system to Yugoslav and Slovene reality. Some might prefer the designation "sovietization" for this process.

When the three-member vice-regency of King Peter II Karadorđević on 7 March 1945 entrusted the mandate for the composition of a new government to the leader of the Yugoslav resistance movement and communist leader Josip Broz Tito, many older Yugoslav and Western politicians as well still hoped Yugoslavia would not take the path of bolshevization. Tito was given the mandate based on the agreement between him as president of the government of the liberation movement, the National Committee for Liberation of Yugoslavia (Nacionalni komitet oslobodenja Jugoslavije, NKOJ), and the president of the king's government Ivan Šubašić. The agreement deemed that a collective government should be composed, which lead the state to adopt a new constitution that was approved by a freely elected constituent assembly. Representatives of the liberation movement as well as of the king's government in emigration were appointed to the new Yugoslav government. Tito became president, and Šubašić secretary of state. The new government was therefore to have its foundations in democratic principles of political pluralism and federative regulation, and the

constituent assembly was to decide the dilemma whether Yugoslavia would be a kingdom or a republic.¹

The initial step in establishing tighter external political bonds between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union was taken during President of the unified Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito's visit to Moscow on 11 April 1945, where he signed an agreement of friendship, mutual assistance, and post-war cooperation between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. That was the first external political agreement by the new Yugoslav authority. Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs Viacheslav Molotov signed for the stronger side, but his Yugoslav counterpart, Secretary of State Ivan Šubašić, could not sign for the Yugoslav side, since he was not able to journey abroad. Further, due to his "soft" political stance, Šubašić was under increasing pressure from politicians of parties legal before the war. By signing the agreement the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia obligated themselves to mutual military cooperation in ending the war against Hitler's Germany or any other state that would imperil either of the signatories. They pledged not to cooperate in any coalition whatsoever directed against the other signatory. Apart from political and military ties, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia agreed to develop and strengthen economic and cultural bonds.²

Although only Hitler's Germany was mentioned as an enemy in the agreement, it was clear the agreement was not necessary on these grounds because Germany was virtually defeated. Tito indirectly confirmed this when he proposed the treaty for ratification after the end of the war. He mentioned the joy of the Yugoslav nations at victory was spoiled because "already in the first days of the collective magnificent victory, we did not meet with understanding from our great allies for the rights we won not only by bloodshed, they are historically grounded as well."³ He had in mind the determined demands of the Western powers, according to which the Yugoslav army was to retreat from the territories in Italy and Austria that it had occupied at the end of the war and which Yugoslavia demanded at the peace conference. Unlike those disagreements, cooperation with the Soviet Union indicated beneficent relations,

¹ Jera Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti 1944-1946* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1992) 52–53, 61–63, 130–46; Bojan Godeša, *Osvobodilno gibanje v sklepnem obdobju vojne*, ed. Jasna Fischer et al., *Slovenska novejša zgodovina: Od programa Zedinjena Slovenija do mednarodnega priznanja Republike Slovenije 1848-1992* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2005) 750–55.

observed Tito, and added that the treaty was created during the war against Germany but “not only because of the impending victory over the common enemy, but also as an instrument of protection before similar attacks on our country.”⁴ The Yugoslav leader thus clearly indicated the position of Yugoslavia in a possible straining of relations in Europe or in the world.

The deepening cooperation between the two states and increasing attachment of Yugoslavia to the Soviet Union soon presented tangible results. The Soviet Union helped with the development of the Yugoslav army and started sending arms. Soviet military advisors were visiting Yugoslavia, and military and police cadres from Yugoslavia were trained in the Soviet Union. All this was to strengthen Yugoslavia’s post-war position as one of the so-called peoples’ democracies in the anticipated straining of relations with the West. However, the Soviet side did not second all Yugoslav demands for correcting its borders with neighboring states; it directed Yugoslav attention towards its western neighbors and at the same time warned Yugoslav politicians it was pointless to ignite conflicts with those neighbors who were potential allies of the Soviet Union.⁵

The increasing Soviet influence on decisions of the Yugoslav leadership was evident not only from political reliance on Stalin’s Soviet Union in external relations but also in the ever-increasing copying of the Soviet social system. On the internal political scene, the copying of the Soviet model led to monopolization of authority in the hands of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and to elimination of political opposition; in the economy to nationalization of means of production, destruction of enterprises, and state control over production and services;

² *Dokumenti o spolnoj politici Socijalističke federativne republike Jugoslavije 1945* (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1984) 26–28.

³ Josip Broz Tito, *Graditev nove Jugoslavije: prva knjiga* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1948) 41.

⁴ Josip Broz Tito 42.

⁵ For more on this problem, see Leonid I. Gibianskii, “Sovjetska zveza in Jugoslavija leta 1945,” ed. Aleš Gabrič, *Slovenija v letu 1945: zbornik referatov* (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 1996) 53–70. About Soviet-Yugoslav cooperation in the early post-war period see Leonid I. Gibianskii, *Sovetskii Soiuz i novaja Jugoslaviia: 1941-1947* (Moskva: Nauka, 1987).

and in culture to ideologization, censorship, and hindrance of opposition media.

The leading Yugoslav communist politicians consulted in advance on important political decisions their Soviet colleagues; the Soviet ambassador to Yugoslavia, Ivan Sadchikov, was one of the best-informed persons in Belgrade. The Yugoslav leaders reported to him regularly on current affairs. The most significant Slovene politician in the Yugoslav political leadership, Edvard Kardelj, visited him several times.⁶ The president of the Slovene government, appointed on 5 May 1945, was Boris Kidrič. In the Yugoslav as well as in the Slovene governments there were besides communists, representatives of other parties or groups in the Peoples' Front, who did not influence important decisions, which were—copying the non-democratic Soviet system—frequently taken elsewhere and not by the ostensibly responsible government agencies. For example, the national government of Slovenia assembled three times in the first month after its formation in May 1945, but only four times between then and 2 March 1946, when it resigned after the adoption of the Yugoslav constitution. Leading communist politicians discussed important issues at places where the (unwanted) public could not peek in—particularly at sessions of the chief Communist party agencies or at informal meetings of a few of the leading politicians—not at government sessions. The Central Committee of the CPY, the highest body of the party, did not meet at all in the post-war years; the Politburo took over its role, and thus some ten people were deciding the destiny of the state. The CPY and its politburo were operating half legally and without publicity. Decisions of leading politicians became public in resolutions of mass organizations behind which the communists were concealed, while resolutions of leading party organs did not receive attention in public media.⁷

Upon assuming authority, the national government of Slovenia used regulations previously tested out when establishing authority on liberated territories of Yugoslavia. The most significant was the decree of the AVNOJ presidency of 3 February 1945, which annulled all legal

⁶ *Vostochnaia Evropa v dokumentah rossijskikh arhivov 1944-1953 gg. 1: 1944-1948 gg.* (Moskva-Novosibirsk: Sibirskii khronograf, 1997) 314–16, 325–30, 334.

⁷ Vodušek Starič 209–15; Aleš Gabrič, "Osvoboditev in vzpostavitev nove oblasti," *Slovenska novejša zgodovina* 831–36.

regulations of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and of the occupiers, and allowed for those older regulations that were not contrary to the new political principles. As it was not precisely outlined what was legal and what was not, optional interpretations of legal regulations came into practice. In its decisions, the new authority paid much more attention to political circumstances than to legal regulations, which lead to arbitrariness. A considerable deviation from the principles of parliamentary democracy was the enforcing of the principle of unity of authority. All three branches of authority—the legislative, executive, and judicial—were joined in the hands of the new political elite. The principle of the separate branches' independence was, in the opinion of the leading communists, an obsolete principle of bourgeois society on the basis of which the people would be deprived of the rights gained in the liberation struggle.

Even before the CPY began implementing the stipulations of the Tito-Šubašić agreement, it wanted to reinforce its political bloc. That was easiest in Slovenia, for the Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS) dominated the Liberation Front as early as during the war. The CPY was yet to establish such political primacy on the national level. They achieved it at the founding congress of the People's Front of Yugoslavia on 7 and 8 August 1945 in Belgrade; the Liberation Front of Slovenia became its Slovene part. At the congress, the parties included in the front agreed to present a unified list of candidates at the elections. By hiding behind the wide but unified front organization, the CPY succeeded in concealing its goals and at the same time weaken the opposition, because the majority of the registered parties were included in the People's Front. Those parties therefore renounced independent participation in the elections, while other opposition parties failed to create a stronger opposition bloc during the summer months. All the formally registered parties had their headquarters in Belgrade; the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, which was formally only a part of the People's Front, was not among them.⁸

⁸ Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški, *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam: društveni pokreti i politički sistem u Jugoslaviji 1944-1949* (Beograd: Centar za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 1983); Zdenko Radelić, *Hrvatska seljačka stranka 1941-1950* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 1996); Momčilo Pavlović, "Politički programi Demokratske narodne radikalne, Jugoslovenske republikanske, Demokratske, Socijalističke i Socijal-demokratske

However, the party's move was deceptive. The CPY was not prepared to respect the agreements Tito signed as leader of the liberation movement. The communists were controlled the organs of repression and the media, and the secret political police, the Organization for the Protection of the People (in Serbian, Organizacija za zaštitu naroda, OZNA), was neutralizing the opposition by suppressing printing of their party papers and by disturbing their very few public assemblies. Echoes of the opposition's political activities in Belgrade barely reached Slovenia. The leadership of the Slovenska ljudska stranka (Slovene people's party)—the most important Slovene pre-war party—was abroad and politicians in Slovenia were either passive or already included in the Liberation Front.

Accordingly, when on 10 August 1945, the Provsional People's Parliament (Začasna ljudska skupščina) assembled for the first time, to adopt legislation for elections to the constituent assembly, the communists already had all levers of authority either in their hands or under strict control. CPY consent to holding at least formally free elections thus in no way whatsoever jeopardized the communists' intention of ensuring themselves complete authority. The People's Front could count on the wide support of those who sympathized with the liberation movement. To its credit Yugoslavia was in the camp of victorious forces after the war; it won over the most numerous part of the population, the peasants, by expeditious adoption of agrarian reform; women were given the right to vote, and the era of gender equality started. On the other hand, the secret police were intimidating opponents of the regime by arresting them and arranging court trials. The voice of the opposition reached the masses, which had little experience with democracy, only with difficulty.

The opponents of the new regime actually did not have a proper chance to redirect the course of events. The Yugoslav protector, the Soviet Union, successfully blocked Great Britain's attempt to place on the Potsdam conference agenda the Yugoslav opposition's political difficulties and Tito's abrogation of political agreements. The Soviet Union was aware of the unequal status of the two political factors, CPY and opposition, in Yugoslavia, and consequently advocated the

stranke Jugoslavije iz 1945. godine," *Istorija 20. veka III* (1985) 1, 119–55; Aleš Gabrič, "Opozicija v Sloveniji po letu 1945," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 45 (2005): 2, 97–120.

standpoint that only the unity government formed in March 1945 and based on the agreement confirmed by the three great powers was entitled to make decisions on Yugoslav difficulties.⁹

However, even if the CPY would have agreed de facto to fair and free elections, it is difficult to understand how the opposition would have been able to prepare for them and what success they could have anticipated. Already in the middle of 1945 there were reports from the American embassy in Yugoslavia that the country was under the total control of the Soviet Union, that there were no democratic freedoms in the state, and that there was no sign of a strong opposition to the new regime.¹⁰

The Western powers also realized there could be no doubt about the results of the elections. For the leading communists, the elections to the constituent assembly on 11 November 1945 were actually just the last step required to seal recognition by the Western powers. With numerous irregularities in carrying out the elections, the People's Front of Yugoslavia as the sole candidate received over 90% of the votes; the most votes against it were registered in Slovenia, particularly in two districts in the northeast of the republic, where the two Liberation front candidates received less than half the votes. After the elections, the British and American governments settled with the new political situation in Yugoslavia and recognized Tito's regime. With this, the last barrier fell to the communists carrying out long planned revolutionary changes to the entire state and social regulation on the Soviet model.

The first step was adoption of the new constitution by the constituent assembly, which was composed of only representatives of the Peoples' Front of Yugoslavia. The initial proposal of the constitution was mainly just a translation of the Soviet one and did not take into account Yugoslav particularities. Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia Ivan Sadchikov was being promptly informed of all changes and variants of separate suggestions. He reported to the Soviet minister of foreign affairs that critical remarks were coming from "the left" and from "the right" over the constitution project. Bourgeois politicians stated they wrote the draft of the constitution at the Soviet embassy in Belgrade and that

⁹ Gibianskii, "Sovjetska zveza in Jugoslavija" 60–62.

¹⁰ Loraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: the United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 1997) 5–6.

adoption of such a constitution “will change Yugoslavia into an ordinary vassal of the USSR like the Mongolian Republic is.”¹¹ Critics on the left were of opinion that the draft, with its at least formal acknowledgment of democratic rights, did not differ from “bourgeois constitutions,” which could jeopardize the development of socialism in Yugoslavia. Sadchikov added in the end that the proposed constitution was supported by representatives of all parties in the Peoples’ Front,¹² and that therefore there should not be any trouble confirming this constitution, modelled on the Soviet Union’s.

The Constitution of the Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (FPRY), adopted on 31 January 1946, adjusted the constitutional regulation of Yugoslavia to the Soviet model. Thus, it gave among other the decrees of the government of the FPRY legislative power, and by doing so, legislative and executive authorities were united in the hands of a narrow group of people. Judicial authority was formally separated from the legislative and executive authority, but on the Soviet model, public prosecutors, which was under control of the secret political police, had extraordinary power. The constitutional court, a special organ for the protection of legitimacy, was at that time not yet introduced either in the Soviet Union or by the first post-war Yugoslav constitution.¹³

In Slovenia as well, the communist authority began to make more daring moves in the bolshevization of society after the elections that sealed Yugoslavia’s post-war political orientation. The KPJ and CPS leaderships discussed political difficulties in Slovenia on 4 December 1945. They saw the causes of the “poor” election results in Slovenia in their own mistakes, in the drowning of the Communist Party in the Liberation Front, in slow implementation of agrarian reform, in strong church propaganda, and similar factors. Besides criticism, directives for future work were also given. Kardelj, for example, mentioned that the CPS cooperates insufficiently with the OZNA and that courts were not administering justice as they were expected to. Thus, he added, “Courts must judge the way the party wants. The OZNA must be at court.”¹⁴

¹¹ *Vostochnaia Evropa I*, doc. 120, 329.

¹² *Vostochnaia Evropa I*, doc. 120, 325–30.

¹³ *Uradni list SFRJ* II, 10, 2 February 1946.

¹⁴ *Zapisnici sa sednica centralnog komiteta CPY (11. jun 1945 – 7. jul 1948)* (Beograd: Arhiv Jugoslavije, Službeni list SRJ, 1995) 103.

The time of the political trials began. In the first post-war months, several people were tried for collaboration with the occupation authorities during the war. According to the new guidelines, all potential opponents of the new regime also became suspects. Political activity was moving more and more from parliamentary struggles and political rallies to the courts, and sharp political accusations of dissidents were repeatedly being heard in public prosecutors' speeches. In order to conceal politically motivated trials against some political and prominent persons, war criminals and political opponents were brought before the court together and were accused of "treason" or "collaboration" during the war. The first judicial reprisal against political opponents in Slovenia, mentioned as significant in political police reports, was the so-called Christmas trial on Christmas of 1945. The OZNA wrote that at the trial they squared accounts with "members of former bourgeois parties, which were during the occupation opponents of the liberation movement and organizers of cooperation with the occupier."¹⁵ The accusations were rather far-fetched since the so-called Rupnik trial in September 1946 was directed more against actual collaborators. At the so-called Nagode trial in August 1947, politicians who were during the war collaborators or followers of the Liberation front but opposed to a communist political monopoly in the post-war society were sentenced.¹⁶

The Yugoslav (and with it the Slovene as well) authority thus managed within a few years to introduce into the internal political sphere numerous totalitarian principles, which originated in the first socialist country, the Soviet Union. I should also mention here retributions against the opposition the communists did not defeat in fair, democratic elections but mostly with the help of the secret political police and political trials. The parliament was without a proper role; it only subsequently confirmed government and assembly presidium decrees. Parliamentary sessions were short and non-dynamic. Even on the most important issues no animated debate would develop. The judicature and the media were under total control of the Communist Party. After the agrarian reform, it began preparing the way for nationalization of all economic potentials on the Soviet model. However, they did not want to carry out nationalization too fast in order to avoid new conflicts with the

¹⁵ Jožc Pučnik, ed., *Iz arhivov slovenske politične policije* (Ljubljana: Veda, 1996) 95.

¹⁶ *Iz arhivov slovenske politične policije* 179–80.

West before the outlines of the peace treaty and the new Yugoslav and Slovene western border were known. The law on nationalization of private economic enterprises, adopted on 5 December 1946, thus merely concluded the more than yearlong discrete nationalization. The economic takeover was so well prepared that the law was adopted in a single day in a rapid procedure, and the takeover of factories and appointment of new state directors completed in a few days.¹⁷ When it had in its hands more than nine-tenths of all economic potentials in the country, the state authority was easily able to adopt on 28 April 1947—the first among Eastern European states after the Soviet Union to do so—a five-year plan of economic development for Yugoslavia, or the first five-year plan. Instead of Stalin's five-year plan, they called it, as befitted Yugoslav conditions, Tito's five-year plan. The state controlled almost all production and distribution of products; exceptions were small trade workshops, shops, drugstores, and agricultural products for domestic use.

People were progressively more dissatisfied with the party's total monopoly in all fields of society, malcontents were filling the prisons of the political police, and criticism could not be published in the media. Criticism could only be voiced among narrow groups of people, and even then the danger existed that the authorities, who did not hesitate to use brutal suppression against dissidents, would react.

In Slovenia, the most famous critique of totalitarian authority was by the Christian democrat Edvard Kocbek, who at a 4 October 1946 closed session with the leading Slovenian communists took the stand of an advocate for those who thought differently.¹⁸

Perhaps more interesting for the theme of bolshevization was the critique of the communist regime by an old communist, consistent Marxist-Leninist, and advocate of even more perfect copying of the Soviet Union, Dragotin Gustinčič. In the extensive letters he sent to leading Slovene communists he proved himself a genuine Bolshevik for he built his criticism of post-war Slovene development on frequent references to Lenin and Stalin. He criticized what he thought was inappropriate policy in the cooperative system because the leading

¹⁷ More on the issue see: Jože Prinčič, *Nacionalizacija na ozemlju LR Slovenije 1945-1963* (Novo mesto: Dolenjska založba, 1994) 21–57.

¹⁸ See Kocbek's speech in *Edvard Kocbek, Osvobodilni spisi II*, ed. Peter Kovačič-Peršin (Ljubljana: Društvo 2000, 1993) 319–45.

Slovenian communists agreed to different forms of cooperatives and trade, which in rural areas best suited the “kulaks.” In Gustinčič’s opinion, consistent state centralization of cooperatives should be carried out and the remaining small private shops closed. In industrial policy, he considered factory employment of a semi-proletariat that had in addition some land or a croft to be wrong because the proletariat would thus lose its revolutionary consciousness. Large working-class districts should be built in the center and not on the outskirts of towns; thus, they would enable the proletariat to assume a leading role in towns. He considered wrong the cadre policy by which the leading positions were occupied by partisan cadres and not by workers—proletarians. In this way, the “bourgeois” cadres would occupy the ruling positions in the economy and administration, which would be a considerable barrier to successful realization of the five-year plan. According to Gustinčič, at that time dean of the Faculty of Economics of University in Ljubljana, nationalization was realized without a proper proletarian party. The Communist Party was at that time presumably a party of the political elite, careerists, and double-dealers, and with no evident working-class core.¹⁹

The ruling communists would presumably not have been dealing with Gustinčič’s criticisms as much as they had if they would not have read similar reviews a year later in the criticisms from Moscow found in the letters of the central committee of the VKP(b), which were an introduction into the Cominform conflict between the Soviet Union (and its satellites) and Yugoslavia. In a letter of 27 March 1948, the Bolshevik party leadership warned the Yugoslav party leaders “the CPY is still not completely legalized and is still in a semi-legal state”; in addition, it had no program of its own.²⁰ In a letter dated 4 May 1948, the central committee of the VKP(b) indicated more concretely the mistakes of the Yugoslav leadership in internal policy. Those were an “incorrect” attitude to the class question—namely, in Yugoslavia they were too tolerant of exploitative capitalist elements, particularly of “kulaks” in rural areas; they repeated the criticism that Yugoslav leaders did not “consider as the fundamental leading force the Kompartija (Communist

¹⁹ Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Republiški sekretariat za notranje zadeve Socialistične republike Slovenije (AS 1931), Dosje Gustinčič, letter from D. Gustinčič to E. Kardelj, B. Kidrič and CPS secretary, 1 January 1946; letter from D. Gustinčič to E. Kardelj, 31 May 1947.

²⁰ *Pisma CK KPJ in CK VKP(b)* (Ljubljana: Ljudska pravica, 1948) 37–38.

party) but the Peoples' Front"; and formal problems sprang from the illegal fraction of the party, since it was not clear who the leading CPY people were, how the CPY operated, and how it admitted new members.²¹

The CPY leadership at first intended to convince the Soviet colleagues they were wrong or improperly informed. Tito and Kardelj were assuring Stalin and Molotov that they were accurately following the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and experiences of the Soviet Union.²² When their letters in the spring and summer of 1948 did not bring reassurances, the ruling Yugoslav politicians decided to substantiate their words with deeds and thus prove loyalty to the Bolshevik tradition. They "borrowed" reproofs written in the letters of the Soviet party leadership and the Cominform to use as a short-term political program that was to prove the orthodoxy of the Yugoslav party leadership. Their aim was to demonstrate they were more Stalinist than Stalin was, more papal than the Pope, and more Bolshevik than the Bolsheviks.

At its fifth congress, in July 1948 in Belgrade, the CPY rebutted the criticisms in the Cominform resolution but at the same time began to make corrections. That they were taken seriously is seen from the fact that this was the first party congress after twenty years and the first legal one since taking over authority. At the congress the CPY formally "left the underground" and presented itself to the public. By adopting the program and by publicly presenting the lists of members of the central committee and the politburo, only the "mistakes" mentioned in the letters of the Soviet leadership were omitted. The political switch—formal takeover of authority by the CPY and formal subjection of the Peoples' Front to the CPY—was accomplished the next year when at the congress the Peoples' Front adopted the CPY program as its own. In internal politics, the CPY, following the "advice" of the Soviet side, thus shed the pretence of a mass front organization and presented itself as a genuine bolshevik party in power.

The treatment of citizens who did not agree with the state leadership's policies was bolshevik. And so were party members who thought that after the letters the CPY should openly confess it was mistaken. They were considered Cominformists and the majority were

²¹ *Pisma CK KPJ in CK VKP(b)* 46–53.

²² *Pisma CK KPJ in CK VKP(b)* 17–27.

from the traditionally Russophile Orthodox parts of Yugoslavia—that is, Serbia and Montenegro—while in Slovenia there were few. The internal affairs administration and secret police were empowered to sentence people without involvement of the judiciary to up to two years of forced labor. This is, of course, a distinctive indicator of a totalitarian regime, which gives the executive and the police almost unimaginable possibilities for arbitrary (mis)treatment of prisoners. Along with existing prisons and camps, new ones were being established for the so-called Cominformists. Camps on two northern Adriatic islands, Goli otok and Grgur, were of all the camps organized most precisely according to the model of the Soviet gulags. An analysis of the number of arrested and sentenced Cominformists makes it evident that the climax of the terror followed a year after the Cominform conflict, when the number of political prisoners in Yugoslavia increased considerably in comparison to previous years.²³

In order to invalidate the criticisms in the correspondence with the Soviet leadership on underestimating the class issue and exaggerated tolerance of the exploitative class, the CPY decide in haste to conclude nationalization of the economy. The assembly speedily adopted a supplement to the law on nationalization in April 1948, immediately after the exchange of the first letters between the leaderships of the Soviet and Yugoslav parties. With the so-called second nationalization, the “capitalist remnants” in the state were dispossessed of their property. After that, the government nationalized small shops, small industrial plants, warehouses, cellars, health and tourist institutions etc.²⁴ After this supplementary nationalization, no economically significant private enterprise existed in the country; only some small trade workshops were left.

The people understood the second nationalization as a matter of course. “Implementing” the other reproach by their Soviet comrades, on indulging the exploiters (i.e., strengthening the “kulaks” in the countryside), was a greater challenge to the authorities. In January 1949 the

²³ For more on this, see Aleš Gabrič, “Informbirojevstvo na Slovenskem,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 33.1–2 (1993): 163–75; Božidar Jezernik, “Non cogito ergo sum: arheologija neke šale,” *Borec* 46 (Ljubljana: Društvo za preučevanje zgodovine, literature in antropologije, 1994): 533–34

²⁴ Jože Prinčič, *Povojne nacionalizacije v Sloveniji: 1945-1963* (Novo mesto: Dolenjska založba, 1994) 78–93.

Yugoslav party leadership adopted a resolution on consistent copying of Soviet organization of agriculture. A decisive step towards collectivization of agriculture was to have been establishing peasant working cooperatives, a Yugoslav variety of the Soviet kolkhoz. Enrollment was formally voluntary, but since the larger farmers did not want to join cooperatives, various forms of coercion, including violence, threats of prosecution, and imprisonment, were employed.²⁵

The nationalization of the majority of industrial plants, shops, warehouses, collectivization in agriculture, and similar measures by the authorities worsened the standard of living and led people to complain, criticize, and resist, which filled the prisons. Already in its annual report for 1949 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Slovenia reported that most resistance to measures was in agriculture and in distribution of goods; thus, purchase of agricultural produce could be carried out only with the assistance of police, and even so they were essentially behind the planned quantity.²⁶ As in the Soviet Union after agricultural reform, in Yugoslavia as well famine threatened; rapid improvement of relations with the West and the help of Western powers saved Yugoslavia.

Political-economic measures gave the authorities a good deal of work prosecuting "criminals." Besides the so-called kulak trials, at which large farmers and opponents of collectivization were tried, the most politically volatile were the so-called Dachau trials, against wartime prisoners from the concentration camp, in 1948 and 1949. These political trials most resembled the Soviet Stalinist trials in the 1930s. At those trials, wartime political opponents were no longer being judged but their own people—communists. In addition, it was not any more in the authorities' interests for the prosecutor to prove the guilt to the accused. More important was—as at the Stalinist trials ten years earlier—that the accused publicly confess guilt, repent, and agree that the infallible Party was always right. As such confessions can only be achieved by torture, blackmail, and other morally intolerable actions, at the Dachau trials

²⁵ Zdenko Čepič, "Kolektivizacija kmetijstva," *Slovenska novejša zgodovina* 937–39, 964–65.

²⁶ AS 1931, A-13-O, Letno poročilo Ministrstva za notranje zadeve L.R. Slovenije, 4–6.

many of the accused died during interrogations. The court levied drastic, terrible punishments and ordered several executions.²⁷

The difference between the terror stimulated by the Cominform events and that immediately after the war, which demanded a much larger blood-tax, is that in the terror of 1945 and in the following few years, we find a mixture of causes. Besides settling accounts with those who thought differently, the authorities prosecuted those who collaborated with the occupier, or worked for foreign intelligence services. In effecting retributions, which was accelerated by the Cominform events, the new regime simply made up such accusations, which it soon confessed in secret documents.²⁸

The Yugoslav regime thus took the ultimate step towards complete bolshevization of Yugoslavia in the years after the beginning of the Cominform conflict, when it tried to prove the orthodoxy of its Marxist-Leninist ideas to the Soviet leadership. Even after Tito's break with the USSR, the Yugoslav communists were still glorifying the Soviet Union, Lenin, and Stalin at every opportunity. To prove it was a misunderstanding, they did what the criticisms of their big brother required: only then did they "become legal" and publicly present themselves as the actual master of their house; only then did they conclude the second nationalization by nationalizing practically the entire Yugoslav economy; set more seriously about collectivization and begin cruelly to pursue the "kulaks"; and produce trials that approximated the Stalinist ones. The Soviet leadership would probably have been—had it wanted reconciliation with the Yugoslav leadership—most dissatisfied with the pursuit of loyal communists—that is, the Cominformists. However, the Yugoslav party dealt with them, too, in a manner consistent with bolshevization. By the end of the 1940s,

²⁷ Martin Ivanič, ed., *Dachauski procesi: (raziskovalno poročilo z dokumenti)* (Ljubljana: Komunist, 1990).

²⁸ About the trials see Roman Ferjančič and Lovro Šturm, *Brezpravje: slovensko pravosodje po letu 1945* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1998); Božo Repe, "Povojni sodni procesi v Sloveniji," *Zgodovina v šoli* 1.3 (1992): 9–16; Aleš Gabrič, "Politični sodni procesi," *Slovenska novejša zgodovina* 861–63; Tamara Griesser-Pečar, *Cerkev na zatožni klopi: sodni procesi, administrativne kazni, posegi "ljudske oblasti" v Sloveniji od 1943 do 1960* (Ljubljana: Družina, 2005); Milko Mikola, *Sodni procesi na Celjskem: 1944-1951* (Celje: Zgodovinski arhiv, 1995).

bolshevization of Yugoslavia reached its zenith. Other Eastern European states were at that time distant from that goal.

Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino

POVZETEK

BOLJŠEVIZACIJA SLOVENIJE

Komunisti, ki so leta 1945 zavladali v Jugoslaviji, so se v političnih načrtih zgledovali po Sovjetski zvezi. Sporazum o prijateljstvu, medsebojni pomoči in povojnem sodelovanju med Jugoslavijo in Sovjetsko zvezo, podpisan 11.aprila 1945 ob obisku Josipa Broza Tita v Moskvi, je bila prva zunanjepolitična pogodba nove jugoslovanske oblasti. S pospešeno boljševizacijo je Titov režim začel po zmagi na volitvah v Ustavodajno skupščino 11.novembra 1945. Sledil je obračun z opozicijo, ki je niso premagali na poštenih demokratičnih volitvah, pač pa predvsem s pomočjo tajne politične policije in političnimi sodnimi procesi. Sodstvo in medij so prišli pod popoln nadzor Koministične partije. Že leta 1945 so sprejeli zakon o agrarni reformi, decembra 1946 pa je sledil še sprejem zakona o nacionalizaciji zasebnih gospodarskih podjetij, ki je le dokončal že več kot leto dni izvajajočo prikrito nacionalizacijo. Ko je imela v rokah več kot devet desetih vseh gospodarskih potencialov države, je oblast aprila 1947 sprejela petletni načrt gospodarskega razvoja Jugoslavije oziroma prvo petletko. Namesto Stalinove petletke so jo jugoslovanskim razmeram označevali kot Titovo petletko.

Po izbruhu infornbirojevskega spora med Jugoslavijo in Sovjetsko zvezo pomladi 1948 se jugoslovanska oblast sprva ni odločila za demokratiziranje družbe, temveč je skušala sovjetskim voditeljem dokazati, da so zvesti boljševiski ideji. V notranji politiki se je Komunistična partija prenehala skrivati za množično frontno organizacijo in se predstavila kot prava boljševiska stranka na oblasti. Na hitro so sprejeli dopolnitev zakona o nacionalizaciji in odvzeli lastnino še zadnjim »kapitalističnim ostankom« v državi. Januarja 1949 so sprejeli sklep o kolektivizaciji kmetijstva ter začeli ustanavljati kmečke delovne zadruge, jugoslovanske različice sovjetskih kolhozov. Ob koncu štiridesetih let je boljševizacija Jugoslavije dosegla svojo najvišjo raven. Druge vzhodnoevropske države so bile tedaj še precej oddaljene od tega cilja.