

THE POST-WAR RETRIBUTION IN SLOVENIA: ITS DEATH TOLL

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The politics of retribution in Slovenia embraces practically the same forms known in other Central and Eastern European countries. Nonetheless, I am going to point out only the most radical of the measures introduced—executions and capital punishments—and leave out punishments such as the loss of national honor, civil and other rights, forced labor, and fines, in spite of the fact that they played an important role in providing the economic foundation and the political power of the new Communist regime.

The events that took place in Slovenia immediately after World War II were closely connected to certain processes within that area (at least) during the war itself. These events followed the four-year (6 April 1941–15 May 1945) occupation of Slovenia by neighbouring (Axis) powers that had partitioned the territory and introduced a variety of aggressive governances, including Germanization and Hungarization. Nonetheless, the most favourable factors for organized resistance were in the Province of Ljubljana, where the Italian authorities allowed some modes of expressing Slovene national identity. The Communist Party gradually took the leading role in the fledgling resistance. By the end of the war, this (partisan) movement became the most influential political force. Pre-war political elites, who formed their own underground organization and maintained contacts with the government in exile, opposed partisan resistance techniques. The two sides were unwilling to cooperate and their differences only deepened amidst ideological propaganda. The antagonists were engaged in a civil war by the middle of 1942, by which time the occupiers' terror had become more brutal and the partisans had started to use terror in parts of the Ljubljana Province that they occupied. Fear of a revolutionary seizure of power contributed to pre-war political elites' decision to collaborate (tactically) with the Italian occupation. By a summer 1942 agreement, the Italian authorities used the *Milizia volontaria anticomunista* (or so-called Village Guards) in the zone they occupied. German authorities later used "Domobranci"

(Home Guards) in much the same fashion, mostly as auxiliary police units.¹

Developments such as the occupation and the dismemberment of the country by the Axis powers, armed resistance, revolution and revolutionary terror, (tactical) collaboration, and a form of civil war claimed a very high percentage of victims. By the end of the war more than 80,000 people had lost their lives, or 5.4% of the population. Most of them died due to the occupiers' repressions. However, the "inter-Slovene" civil conflict (among other factors) decisively influenced the post-war retribution. Approximately 2,700 partisans died in armed conflicts with Slovene anti-partisan units (most of all with Domobranci) or were killed by these same units after their capture, and, in addition to soldiers, around 1,500 civilians perished. The anti-partisan units lost more than 3,100 troops in the same way, while around 4,500 civilians became victims of partisan units.²

Figure 1. The number of victims in WW II and of post-war violence from April 1941 to February 1946

War status	Number	% of all victims
Partisan Units	28,507	29.6
Civilians	38,581	40
Yugoslav Royal Army (April 1941)	298	0.3
Village Guard (Milizia volontaria anticomunista)	834	0.9
Slovenian Chetniks	489	0.5
Domobranci (Home Guards)	14,737	15.3
Persons, mobilized into foreign armies (German, Hungarian, Italian)	12,118	12.6
Others	587	0.6
Total	96,151	99.8

¹ Tone Ferenc, *Okupacijski sistemi na Slovenskem 1941 – 1945, Zgodovinski viri* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 1997); Boris Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo 1941 – 1943* (Ljubljana: Slovenska matica, 2003) 11–35.

² *Seznam žrtev druge svetovne vojne in zaradi nje v Sloveniji, Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, Ljubljana; stanje z dne 16.9.2005.* (The register of the victims of World War II and its aftermath 1941–February 1946, the data on 16 September 2005) (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2005). See figure 1.

The first epilogue to these war processes after the liberation took the form of mass killings of repatriated anti-Tito refugees—i.e., those who surrendered themselves to British troops in Austrian Carinthia on 13 May 1945. The subsequent fate of Slovene, Croatian, Serbian, and Montenegrin anti-Tito refugees was in many ways decided by the complex military and political situation in that area. The aspirations of the Yugoslav or Slovene partisan leadership to occupy the entire area of Carinthia were not consistent with the decisions of the Western Allies at the Moscow Conference in October 1943—namely, to restore Austria's borders within the confines before the Anschluss. Local British military authorities handed over the refugees to Tito, due in part to the strained military situation at that time and as a part of the agreement with the Yugoslav units to withdraw to pre-war frontier. This was mainly in contradiction with the directives of the British and the U.S. governments, which were to disarm the refugees and settle them in refugee camps. Before the British handed over roughly about 11,700 Slovenes, they returned around 13,000 Croats (about 4,000 of them were civilians), around 4,000 Serbs, a few “Nedičevci” and Montenegrin Chetniks (after 18 May). Most of them were later killed on Slovene territory, while others, together with captured German troops, were forced to “march” across Yugoslavia. 80–90% of the captured did not survive this march. The return of a few thousand civilian refugees from Austrian Carinthia to Yugoslav authorities was stopped on 4 June. We will never be able to ascertain the exact number, as all the documentation regarding this episode was (most probably) destroyed. Besides, all final decisions from the selected Party and military leadership regarding the destiny of the returned anti-Tito refugees were most likely adopted only verbally, most probably at the end of May 1945, during Tito's visit to Ljubljana and Zagreb. The heads of republican secret police offices (OZNA)—in Slovenia Ivan Maček—then conveyed these decisions.³

The handover of the Slovene anti-Tito refugees began on 27 May. They were accepted by Slovene military and police agencies of the new regime and directed to collection camps or prisons in Kranj, Škofja Loka and Šentvid nad Ljubljano, Teharje, and in many other places.

³ Boris Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 473–92, 507, 512, 519, 523–25; Jera Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti 1944 – 1946* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1992) 224–25, 231, 242–48.

After short interrogations or investigations in their hometowns, they were divided into three groups. So far, the results of the research show that at least 553 Domobranci were killed on their way to these camps or they were separated in the camps from other prisoners and shot on the camps' premises or in the immediate vicinity. Some of them died due to the conditions in the camps, which witnesses put on a par with conditions in the concentration camps during World War II.

Any under-aged refugees were supposed to be released. This plan was not carried out in full, as the new regime segregated some of them at least on two separate occasions, even after the amnesty, which was declared on 3 August 1945. Around 495 minors were killed. Among them were twenty-five civilians; others were the Domobranci or Slovene Chetniks. Fifty-six released minors never reached home—they fell victims to unknown “avengers.” The second group consisted of those who joined the Domobranci after 1 January 1945 and whose fate was not yet finally decided. In the last and most numerous group were those who were assigned to die. Mass transportations to killing grounds started at the beginning of June and continued until the end of the month. The majority of the Slovene captives were killed during this period at or around the vicinity of Teharje and at Kočevski Rog. The Slovene governmental commission investigating the so-called “camouflaged mass graves” established that Slovenes were buried in approximately 139 such burial grounds (in sixty-nine of them lie civilians), but it has to be noted that some of these graves originate from the wartime period.⁴

A few members of the anti-partisan units “disappeared” later, after they had reported to local military authorities in compliance with an order which applied to all members of uniformed organizations during the war as well as to all men between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five years. Others were arrested at home or captured as they tried to go underground.⁵

⁴ Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 516–20; Vodušek Starič 242–44; *Seznam žrtev* 16.9.2005; Mitja Ferenc, “Evidentiranje grobišč,” ed. Janvit Golob, *Zbornik: žrtve vojne in revolucije* (Ljubljana: Državni svet Republike Slovenije, 2005) 115–23; Mitja Ferenc, *Prikrito in očem zakrito, Prikrita grobišča 60 let po koncu 2. svetovne vojne* (Celje: Muzej novejše zgodovine, 2005) 113.

⁵ Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 520–21.

As the present results of our research show, altogether 12,731 Domobranci and 161 Slovenian Chetniks (including minors) were executed without trial at that time. Since no one knows what happened with the majority of them after their “disappearance,” we cannot establish exactly how, when, or where they were killed.⁶

The majority of Domobranci units, which had around 17,000 troops at the end of the war, and Slovenian Chetnik units, now only numbering a few hundred, were therefore killed. In addition to soldiers, at least 458 civilians (mostly women) and 289 men (for whom we still cannot establish whether they were members of one of the military formations or not) were killed in June 1945. Another 581 civilians and 221 men, about whom we also do not know whether they were members of one of the military formations during the war, died or were executed by February 1946—most of them in prisons or camps.⁷

Some of the captives were court-martialled, but courts martial worked fast and were under immense pressure by the OZNA. Judicial experts point out that the key problem of the first penal law was that it allowed abuses of penal repression for political ends. At the same time they tried to discredit the former social system, its political elites, and the Roman Catholic Church (since the latter was feared as one of the most powerful opponents). It was evident at the trials that the new regime desired not only punishment for specific acts but also political power and retribution against the so-called “class enemies” (rich farmers, merchants, and industrialists). Therefore, they tried political defendants together with war criminals and collaborators. Judges often rendered decisions based on political and not legal bases.⁸

By the end of June, these courts tried those who were accused of collaborating with the occupiers. There was a trial against a group of

⁶ *Seznam žrtev, 16.9.2005.*

⁷ Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 395, 487; Boris Mlakar, *Domobranstvo na Primorskem* (Ljubljana: Borec, 1982) 99; Monika Kokalj Kočevar, *Gorenjski domobranec, Gorenjski kraji in ljudje XVIII* (Kranj: Gorenjski muzej Kranj, 2000) 34–36; *Seznam žrtev, 16.9.2005.*

⁸ Vodušek-Starič 266–73; Lovro Šturm, “Pravo in nepravo po letu 1941,” *Žrtve vojne in revolucije* (Ljubljana: Državni svet Republike Slovenije, 2005) 100–11; Lovro Šturm, *O kratenju človekovih pravic in temeljnih svoboščin v Sloveniji v obdobju 1945 – 1990, Temna stran meseca*, ed. Drago Jančar (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 1998) 65–101.

economists from Prekmurje for economic collaboration with the Hungarian occupation. Two of the defendants, the industrialist Jože Benko and the director of the Prekmurje Bank Jože Lipič, were executed. (A lower court had sentenced them to prison but the higher court martial demanded capital punishment.) On 23 June a larger trial took place in Ljubljana against eleven defendants: among them one was tried for "White Guard" ideology, two were Dombranci lieutenants, two were local Heimatbund heads, and two were pro-Nazi Germans. Lack of documentation does not permit us to establish how many similar trials took place during the first two months after the war. According to the information we have, at least nine other civilians were sentenced to death and executed by February 1946.

After an amnesty was declared on 3 August the 1945 sentencing became less severe. This act provided for the possibility of a reprieve and it also allowed for numerous extenuating circumstances for prisoners, so that most of those sentenced would have been released. But for many it came too late. The majority of the Domobranci members who had been sentenced to prison were released at that time. As the results of our research show, the amnesty had an ambiguous impact on those who were still imprisoned. Some of them were still being put to death; some of them were put on trial. Trials against the Domobranci continued up until the early 1950s.⁹ There were 320 between 1948 and 1951.

In December of 1945, the so-called "Christmas" trial took place in Ljubljana, where thirty-four people were tried for their active participation in the anti-partisan units. Several Domobranci officers were found guilty, and five of them were condemned to death and executed. The following year, another infamous trial, the so-called "Rupnik Trial" took place, where General Leon Rupnik, the head of the provincial administration of Ljubljana during the German occupation, and a senior SS officer and head of the police Erwin Rösener, were condemned to death and executed in September 1946. A member of the Domobranci staff, Milko Vizjak, who had voluntarily returned to Slovenia in the

⁹ Vodušek Starič 266–73; Mlakar, Slovensko domobranstvo 258, 470, 518, 522–23; Božo Repe, "Povojni sodni procesi," *Povojna zgodovina na Slovenskem* (Slovenj Gradec: Koroški pokrajinski muzej Slovenj Gradec, 1992) 54–63; Lovro Šturm, "Pravo in nepravo po letu 1941"; *Seznam žrtev*, 16.9.2005; Lovro Šturm, "O kratenju človekovih pravic in temeljnih svoboščin v Sloveniji v obdobju 1945 – 1990," *Temna stran meseca* 65–101.

spring of 1946, was sentenced to twenty years in prison at the same trial. In April 1948 Colonel Mirko Bitenc was sentenced to death and executed. He was captured in Ljubljana after the war while gathering intelligence. Also worth noting is the case of Domobranci captain Maks Kunstelj, who escaped from a prisoner convoy but was later captured and tried. As a former Domobranci battalion commander, Kunstelj was sentenced to one year of prison due to extenuating circumstances and then released. Both trials were part of a broader network of trials carried out at the same time in Yugoslavia; against General Draža Mihailović in Belgrade and against Dr. Alojzije Stepinac in Zagreb. The new regime's interest in retribution against the pre-war political elite and high-ranking Catholic clergy was demonstrated at the Rupnik trial in August 1946, where Dr. Miha Krek, member of the Slovene government in exile, and Bishop of Ljubljana Gregorij Rožman were condemned for political and military collaboration.¹⁰

Let us now look at the issue of post-war retribution against the Catholic Church. The foundations for the retribution were rooted in World War II, due to the involvement of the church in the civil conflict in the Province of Ljubljana. Certain priests and monks who actively collaborated with Domobranci as curates, medical attendants, and soldiers shared the same fate as the rest of the Domobranci after the war. By February 1946, fifty-seven of them were killed without trial. In addition, thirteen priests or monks who did not wear the Domobranci uniform were killed at the same time, and forty-seven theologians. By 1962, 429 priests were tried, seven were sentenced to death, and four of them executed, another twenty priests or monks died during their imprisonment or met violent deaths under unexplained circumstances. Most of these trials were staged and were not intended to punish only those priests who were accused of collaboration with the occupiers, since most of these priests emigrated abroad.¹¹

¹⁰ Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 470, 522–23; Vodušek Starič 266–67; Repe 54–63; Seznam žrtev, 16.9.2005.

¹¹ Tamara Griesser Pečar, "Procesi proti duhovnikom in redovništvu po maju 1945," *Temna stran meseca* 113–25; Tamara Griesser Pečar, *Cerkev na zatožni klopi* (Ljubljana: Družina, 2004); France Martin Dolinar, "Katoliška cerkev v Sloveniji 1918 – 1945," ed. France Martin Dolinar and Luigi Tavano, *Cerkev in družba na Goriškem ter njih odnos do vojne in osvobodilnih gibanj* (Gorica: Istituto di storia sociale e religiosa, Istituto per gli incontri culturali mitteleuropei, 1997) 54–62; *Palme mučeništva. Ubiti in pomorjeni*

On 1 May 1945, with the establishment of a forty-day double occupation in the Littoral (Julijska krajina), the Yugoslav military authorities were instructed to “clean the area” of those who had collaborated with the fascists. Once again OZNA played the main role. Most of the executions were carried out between 2 and 15 May 1945. More than half of those executed were Italians, especially those who had been settled in the area between the wars by the Italian government in order to Italianize it. They were for the most part civil servants and members of the fascist militia.¹² Most of the Slovenes killed were from Domobranci units. The Yugoslav military authorities deported many prisoners to Yugoslavia. Some died on the way or later, in camps and prisons. An estimated 1,600 persons of different nationalities were victims of those processes.

It is more difficult to establish the number of German nationals killed in Slovenia after the war. 25,000–28,000 people of German origin were living in Slovenia between the wars. The majority associated themselves with the Nazis before WW II. The Third Reich’s genocidal politics and the roles of local Germans and pro-German Slovenes during the war were factors in retributions against these people after the war. They were punished under the principle of collective guilt, in accordance with the spirit of that time in other Eastern and Southeastern European countries, as well as the Potsdam agreements. It is estimated that the majority of Germans fled together with the German army before the end of the war, while 9,474 of them were deported in organized transports to Austria, Germany, and Hungary between the autumn of 1945 and February 1946. Some of them died in collection camps or during the transportation process, some of them were sentenced to death or killed without trial. So far, we have managed to identify 541 German victims of those actions. Other research shows that 1,350 Germans died in Maribor

slovenski duhovniki, redovniki in bogoslovci in nekateri verni laiki (Celje: Mohorjeva družba, 1995); France Martin Dolinar, “Duhovniki v primeču revolucije,” *Žrtve vojne in revolucije* 61–69; Repc, “Povojni sodni procesi” 54–63.

¹² Nevenka Troha, *Komu Trst* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 1999) 9–10, 43–60, 67–71; *Seznam žrtev, 16.9.2005*; Milica Kacin-Wohinz and Jože Pirjevec, *Zgodovina Slovencev v Italiji* (Ljubljana: Nova revija, 2000) 121; Milica Kacin-Wohinz and Nevenka Troha, eds., *Slovensko – italijanski odnosi 1880 – 1956: Poročilo slovensko – italijanske komisije* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2001) 63.

and its environs during or after the war; 213 of them died in post-war camps or were executed. An estimate of 2,000 German deaths after the war is credible.¹³

All these war and post-war events caused a great demographic loss in Slovenia of no less than around 150,000 people.¹⁴ The 14,447 victims of post-war violence on the territory of present-day Slovenia represents 15% of all wartime and post-war deaths (96,151 in the same area) together, or 1% of the population. All wartime and post-war victims on the anti-partisan side, about 22,100, is almost 23% of all killed in wartime and after the war.¹⁵ The proportion of anti-partisan deaths is comparable to that in other parts of Yugoslavia—23% in Serbia, 22% in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 20% in Croatia.¹⁶

Slovene post-war retributions may be compared with those in other European countries occupied by Germany, including (northern) Italy and France, despite certain differences (figure 2). In these countries mass killings were carried out publicly and under circumstances when new (democratic) power had not been consolidated. In Italy, about 10,000 actual or imagined collaborators with the fascist Salo or German occupational authorities were killed without trial by members of the resistance movement between 1945 and 1946. In France, with a population of forty-two million, the majority of 10,000 actual or suspected collaborators were killed in final military operations, while 2,250 were killed immediately after the war. In general, in Western and

¹³ Dušan Biber, *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji 1933 – 1941* (Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1966); Mitja Ferenc and Božo Repe, "Nemška manjšina v Sloveniji med obema vojnama," ed. Dušan Nečak et al., *Slovensko - avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju*, Historia 8 (Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2004) 147–60; Tone Ferenc and Bojan Godeša, "Slovenci pod nacističnim gospostvom 1941 – 1945," *Slovensko - avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju* 177–218; Dušan Nečak, "Nemci v Sloveniji 1938 – 1948," *Slovensko - avstrijski odnosi v 20. stoletju* 349–72; *Seznam žrtev*, 16.9.2005.

¹⁴ Peter Vodopivec, "Populacijske posledice druge svetovne vojne in povojnega nasilja na Slovenskem," *Žrtve vojne in revolucije* 95–99.

¹⁵ *Seznam žrtev*, 16.9.2005.

¹⁶ Vladimir Žerjavić, *Gubici stanovništva v drugom svjetskom ratu* (Zagreb: Globus, 1989).

Northern European countries retribution was less radical and its aim was political normalization and economic and social reconstruction.¹⁷

Figure 2. Number of victims in WW II and its aftermath¹⁸

Country	Population	War victims	Victims of post-war violence and executions	Victims as % of population
Norway	3,300,000	4,000	25	0.14
Denmark	3,850,000	4,000	46	0.11
Netherlands	9,000,000	248,000	53	2.8
Belgium	8,000,000	111,000	277	1.4
France	42,000,000	358,000	3,041	0.85
Greece	6,000,000	420,000	5,000	7.1
Hungary	14,500,000	900,000	7,000	6.2
Poland	35,000,000	6,000,000	3,000	17.0
Slovenia	1,492,000	96,151 ¹⁹	14,447	6.4

By comparison, an estimated 10,000,000 people were victims of the former Soviet government between 1941 and 1945, or 1.21% of the population annually, while between 1946 and 1954 approximately 12,488,000 were killed, or .88% of the population annually.²⁰

¹⁷ Boris Mlakar, "Epuracija in povojne Źrtve v Zahodni Evropi," *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 36 (1996): 201–16; Božo Repe, "Francija med drugo svetovno vojno: vprašanje kolaboracije, odpora in epuracije ter možne primerjave s Slovenijo," *Borec* 561–63 (1998): 5–73; Romano Canosa, *Storia dell' epurazione in Italia, Le sanzioni contro il fascismo 1943 – 1948* (Milan: Baldinini and Castoldi, 1999) 181, 386; R.J. Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004) 83; István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt, eds. *The Politics of Retribution in Europe, World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000).

¹⁸ Boris Mlakar, "Epuracija in povojne Źrtve v Zahodni Evropi" 201–16; Božo Repe, "Francija med drugo svetovno vojno" 5–73; Vodopivec, "Populacijske posledice" 95–99; István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and Tony Judt, eds., *The Politics of Retribution in Europe, World War II and Its Aftermath*.

¹⁹ *Seznam Źrttev*, 16.9.2005.

²⁰ Rummel 83.

When we try to establish the causes for radical retribution in Slovenia, including (especially) mass killings, we have to consider the fact that in parts of Slovenia the war was accompanied by civil war. Nevertheless, these killings could not have taken place only out of revenge or due to the danger of an armed conflict with the Western Allies, since the latter danger had already vanished in the second half of May 1945. Executions took place regardless of the Trieste Crisis and also after it. Such acts were probably only possible in an emotionally tense period permeated with ideological and class hatred. Mass killings were also part of the revolutionary process in which the Communist Party was simultaneously taking over and consolidating its power, carrying out its own retribution against so-called class enemies and the potential opposition. Not only that, the Yugoslav Party leadership did not consult with its coalition partners in the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia government on the fate of these people; they concealed everything from the public both at home and abroad. One of the key characteristics of this retribution was the fact that the personal guilt of the majority of the prisoners was not established through legal proceedings. This also indicates that the most expedient way of dealing with the perceived problem of collaboration was chosen. Doubtless due to such draconian retributions and instigations of revenge in the media an atmosphere of fear developed; however, this also helped to consolidate the Communist Party's power. Thus, the key figures in the partisan movement during the war became the new elite.²¹

At that point also the story began of the concealed victims and their hidden graves which troubles social relations in Slovenia even today.

Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino

POVZETEK

POVOJNI OBRAČUN V SLOVENIJI: ŠTEVILO SMRTNIH ŽRTEV

V prispevku o povojnem obračunu s kolaboracijo in drugimi dejanskimi in domnevnimi nasprotniki v Sloveniji, ki so ga izvedle nove komunistične

²¹ Mlakar, *Slovensko domobranstvo* 525; Repe, "Poboji" 11–30; Vodušek Starič, *Prevzem oblasti* 238. Šturm, "Pravo in nepravo po letu 1941" 100–111; Vodopivec, "Populacijske posledice" 95–99.

oblasti, se osredotočam zgolj na najhujše oblike obračuna in njegove posledice, kot so množični povojni poboji vrnjenih in zajetih domobrancev, slovenskih četnikov in civilistov, smrtne obsodbe pred hitrimi in vojaškimi sodišči, obračun s pripadniki nemške in italjske narodnosti, sojenja vojnim zločincem itd.

Te procese sem predstavila kot epilog medvojnim dogodkom, saj so sledili štiriletnemu obdobju (6.april – 15.maj 1945) okupacije s strani držav, članic Osi, ki so si razdelile in razkosale slovensko ozemlje ter uvedle različno nasilne okupacijske sisteme. Razvil se je oborožen odpor pod vodstvom komunistov, revolucija, ki jo je spremljalo nasilje, razvila se je protirevolucija, kolaboracija in nato oblike državljanske vojne, ki je potekla v vojnih razmerah.

Ker se naslanjam na raziskavo o številu smrtnih žrtev v času druge svetovne vojne in povojnega nasilja, ki poteka na Inštitutu za novejšo zgodovino v Ljubljani, kjer sestavljamo poimenski seznam vseh smrtnih žrtev, sem prikazala tudi obseg vojnega in povojnega nasilja. Osredotočam se predvsem na obračun z domobranci, saj je bil ta najradikalnejši. Kot kaže trenutno naša raziskava, je vojna zahtevala od Slovenije več kot 80.000 žrtev, medtem ko je bilo v prvem povojnem obdobju brez uvedbe sodnega postopka pobitih 12.731 domobrancev in 161 slovenskih četnikov (vključno z mladoletnimi) in najmanj 939 civilistov. Glede na to, do so štele domobranske enote med vojno okoli 17.500 mož, četniki pa nekaj sto, so izkaže, da jih je bila v prvih mesecih po vojni večina pobita. Ko iščemo vzroke za to, jih ne moremo videti zgolj kot posledico težnje po maščevanju nad premaganci. Prav tako ne nevarnosti spopada z zahodnimi zavezniki, ki je na severni meji minila že v drugi polovici maja, poboji pa so potekali tudi ne glede na tržaško krizo in potem, ko je bila ta že mimo. Verjetno se je to lahko dogodilo le v tako čustveno napetem obdobju, ki je bilo polno ideološkega in razrednega sovraštva. Poleg tega je bilo vpeto tudi proces, ko je koministična partija ob prevzemanju in utrjevanju oblasti obračunavala tudi s t.i. razrednimi sovražniki oziroma s potencialno opozicijo. Kajti ne samo, da se jugoslovanski partijski vrh o usodi the ljudi ni posvetoval s koalicijskimi partnerji v vladi DFJ, vse skupaj je celo skrival pred domačo in mednarodno javnostjo. Ni mogoče zanikati, da se je pod vplivom radikalno izvedenega obračuna, pa tudi medijskega razpihovanja maščevalnosti, razvilo ozračje strahu, ki je pripomoglo k utrditvi partijske oblasti.