

SOME EXAMPLES OF SLOVENE-GERMAN CONFLICT IN AUSTRIA BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS

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According to the prevailing principle of integral nationalism in the interwar period, every person needs a nationality and every ethnic group its own nation state. The rationale behind a nation state is ethnic purity and homogeneity, therefore national minorities are regarded as potentially dangerous “alien bodies” in the “national organism.” To ethnically cleanse its territory the nation state uses various methods from political and economic pressure to violence and expulsion. Such a political attitude was also valid in Southern Carinthia in the first half of the twentieth century.¹ In this article I wish to illustrate the consequences of the realization of the principle of integral nationalism for the everyday life of the people in this ethnically mixed area. I will not discuss the well-known characteristics of the general development and the history of interwar Carinthia,² but rather point out some examples of national conflicts on the local level and between national protagonists in various fields of life.³

Organizations and societies played a major role in the process of national differentiation and mobilization of the population. The activities of Slovene political, economic, and cultural organizations were viewed as potentially irredentist, looked upon with suspicion, kept

¹ Cf. Andreas Moritsch, “Formen „ethnischer Säuberung“ in Kärnten,” ed. Andreas Moritsch, *Austria Slovenica. Die Kärntner Slovenen und die Nation Österreich. Koroški Slovenci in avstrijska nacija*. Series Unbegrenzte Geschichte/Zgodovina brez meja 3 (Klagenfurt/Celovec-Ljubljana-Wien 1996) 28–44.

² For the historical development in Carinthia, see: Andreas Moritsch, “German Nationalism and the Slovenes in Austria between the two world wars,” *Slovene Studies* 8.1 (1996): 15–20; Thomas M. Barker, *The Slovene Minority of Carinthia*, East European Monographs 169 (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1984).

³ Sources for this paper were found in various archives in Klagenfurt, Ljubljana, and Vienna as well as in interwar newspapers from Slovenia and Carinthia.

under surveillance, or even attacked, as can be illustrated by examples originating from Carinthian Slovene women associations. Carinthian Slovene cultural associations were in principle organized by age and gender. Within the parent organization of the associations, Slovenska krščanska socialna zveza (Slovene Christian Social Union), existed the Krščanska ženska zveza (Christian Women's Union) and the Dekliška zveza (Girls' Union). According to the conservative role models of the Carinthian Slovene political élite, which was almost exclusively male, women had to look after household and family.⁴ Therefore the women's associations mainly organized cooking and housekeeping courses that were meant to teach economic but also national skills: "The girls learn to read and write Slovene, they learn declamations and good expression in written Slovene, from their ranks come our best actresses on the rural stages and, most of all, our [nationally] conscious housewives."⁵

The German side accused the organizers of the Slovene cooking courses of trying to win the participants for a "national Slav conviction"⁶ and of aiming at "political instigation."⁷ Participants in such courses were even insulted as "a gang of Tschuschen."⁸ According to the Federal Police Commissioner's Office in Klagenfurt, Milka Hartman, who played a central role in organizing courses, was, together with parents and siblings, known as "a fanatical adherent of southern Slavia." She was said to hold cooking courses in various regions of Carinthia, "preferably in places where the population is Yugoslav-minded or, at least, Slovene." The participants were not

⁴ The question of gender relations among the Carinthian Slovene minority has hardly been researched. The newspaper *Koroški Slovenec*, which was published by the central Carinthian Slovenes' political organization, the *Politično in gospodarsko društvo za Slovence na Koroškem* (Political and Economic Society for Slovenes in Carinthia), propagated very traditional views. For illustration, just one quotation: "Creation is reserved for the man. In economy and in culture, in religion and in all social life the man commands and leads. And the woman, the girl? She should be an assistant to the man not only in the family, but also in the wider, national life." *Koroški Slovenec* 11 March 1936: 3.

⁵ Seja S.K.S.Z. za Koroško 3. novembra 1932, Arhiv Inštituta za narodnostna vprašanja [henceforth = AINV], 18, Manjšinski institut, fasc. 146 Slovenska Koroška.

⁶ *Koroška Domovina* 27 February 1931: 4.

⁷ *Koroška Domovina* 13 February 1931: 3.

⁸ *Koroški Slovenec* 21 October 1936: 2 f.

allowed “to speak a single word in German” nor to use the local Slovene dialect of the Rosental/Rož. The “Serbophile clergy” and other Slovene leaders were invited to the festive meals concluding the courses. The Federal Police Commissioner’s office in Villach requested special attention be directed at “the activities of this dangerous female agitator.” However, this was already the case, as the District Commissioner’s Office at Völkermarkt was surveilling Milka Hartman.⁹ Hartman and ten other members of the managing board of the Slovenska prosvetna zveza (Slovene Cultural Union) were also said to be “promoting the Yugoslav-irredentist endeavours.” As the Federal Police Commissioner’s Office in Klagenfurt stated in 1937, there was no doubt about their “attitude, which was friendly towards Yugoslavia and hostile towards Austria.”¹⁰ By contrast, a Slovene report described Milka Hartman as “an ideal Slovene girl” and “an ideal Yugoslav apostle in Carinthia.”¹¹ We can say that as a *female* representative of the Carinthian Slovene élite Milka Hartman was an exception. However, the Carinthian establishment’s incriminations and actions against her were typical of the fate of the Slovene intelligentsia active in the national field.

The Slovene cooking courses and their promoters were not only faced with state surveillance and rival German courses but also with physical antagonism. In 1930 the police station at Ruden/Ruda reported the following incident: Pupils of the Slovene housekeeping course were busy all night preparing meals for the final exhibition of cooking products and decorating the facilities. In the middle of the night unknown perpetrators “out of spite” switched off the electric light and blocked both entrance doors with wooden bars. They also tore down four pine trunks in front of the house and the triumph-arch garland above the entrance door. Finally they threw a piece of mortar, as big as a fist, through a window. The window glass was shattered, but no one suffered physical danger because the room was almost empty and the window

⁹ Bundespolizeikommissariat Villach an Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung, 14.7.1932, streng vertraulich; Antwortentwurf, 26.11.1932, both Kärntner Landesarchiv [henceforth = KLA], Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1932.

¹⁰ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik, Neues Politisches Archiv, Liasse Österreich 2/22, K. 248, Fol. 511-512.

¹¹ Koroška (April 1935), AINV, 18, Manjšinski institut, fasc. 146 Slovenska Koroška. On Milka Hartman’s life and work, see Milka Hartman and Feliks J. Bister, *Milka Hartman* (Celovec-Dunaj: Družba sv. Mohorja, 1982).

was from behind covered by a stage. The search for the perpetrators, "who had probably acted out of party hatred," had so far not been successful.¹²

Slovene national consciousness and activities could result in grave economic disadvantages, such as problems when seeking a job or applying for subventions.¹³ The destiny of various Slovene teachers, clerics, and other members of the Slovene intelligentsia who lost their posts after the plebiscite of 1920, is well known.¹⁴ There is the example¹⁵ of the Slovene Miha K., who came from a "nationally very conscious"¹⁶ family and worked for several years at the cooperative society

¹² Gendarmeriepostenkommando Ruden an Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt, 3.2.1930, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1932. On the other hand, attacks on German courses were reported by *Koroška Domovina*. In 1934 a "follower of the Slovene party" had agitated against a German cooking course by rioting in front of the course leader's window while making "loud nonsense remarks and insults." *Koroška Domovina* 23 January 1934: 2.

¹³ For the various forms of economic pressure, see: Hanns Haas and Karl Stuhlpfarrer, *Österreich und seine Slowenen* (Wien: Löcker & Wögenstein, 1977) 39–43; Karl Stuhlpfarrer, "Deutsche Volkstums-politik in Kärnten nach der Volksabstimmung," ed. Helmut Rumpler, *Kärntens Volksabstimmung 1920. Wissenschaftliche Kontroversen und historisch-politische Diskussionen anlässlich des internationalen Symposions Klagenfurt 1980* (Klagenfurt: Kärntner Druck und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981) 326–35.

¹⁴ Cf. Arnold Suppan, *Die österreichischen Volksgruppen. Tendenzen ihrer gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik Wien, 1983) 147–49; Avguštin Malle, "O dolžnosti vernikov in narodni disciplini. Zapleteni odnosi med krškim ordinariatom in koroškimi Slovenci v prvem desetletju po zlomu monarhije odnosno po plebiscitu," ed. Andreas Moritsch. *Problemfelder der Geschichte und Geschichtsschreibung der Kärntner Slovenen. Problemska polja zgodovine in zgodovinopisja koroških Slovencev* Series Unbegrenzte Geschichte/Zgodovina brez meja 1 (Klagenfurt/Celovec-Ljubljana/Laibach-Wien/Dunaj, 1995) 33–71, esp. 51–53.

¹⁵ For some other examples, see: *Koroški Slovenec* 6 April 1921, 4; *Slovenski narod* 16 July 1931: 2; *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 20 February 1933: 3; Rado Wutej, Cenjeni gospodje!, 25.7.1931, Arhiv Republike Slovenije [henceforth = ARS], Klub koroških Slovencev, š. 3.

¹⁶ A Carinthian Slovene subscriber to the Slovene newspaper *Jutro* wrote this to the newspaper, when asking for help in finding a job for Miha. *Jutro* forwarded the letter to Klub koroških Slovencev. Ivan K. upravništvu Jutra, 1931, ARS, Klub koroških Slovencev, š. 3.

Rosenbach/Področca. In 1931 he accompanied—as a spectator—a tour of Slovene amateur actors from St. Jakob i. R./Št. Jakob v. R. through Slovenia, while two of his sisters worked as actresses.¹⁷ After the tour the weekly newspaper of the Carinthian Slovenes, *Koroški Slovenec*, reported that the retired Gilbert G. had attacked Miha at the railway station during the arrival of the tour participants with abusive insults such as “rogue, swindler, traitor of the land, Tschusch.”¹⁸ The newspaper *Koroška Domovina*, published by the anti-Slovene organization Kärntner Heimatbund, accused the tour of having an irredentist touch¹⁹ and verbally attacked also the employee of the cooperative society (that is Miha, not referred to by his name):

This one lives well and has an income from the workers wages, but for appreciation he wanders through Yugoslavia shouting “Živio!!” [cheers]. We would like to ask the members of the cooperative society, if they will accept such mistakes in their ranks for long? We think not.²⁰

As a matter of fact Miha was dismissed without explanation—and *Koroški Slovenec* blamed the agitation on the pensioner Gilbert G. G. also agitated against Miha’s father, a baker, and tried to convince the people not to buy bread at his shop. The whole incident ended at court, when Miha sued Gilbert G. for insult to his honor. The accused denied having used the aforementioned expressions, but he aimed to prove his case for the expression “traitor of the land.” Not having succeeded, he accepted the proposed settlement, revoked his accusations, expressed regret for the incident, and bore all expenses of the proceedings. *Koroški Slovenec* asked whether the Heimatbund would help him pay the expenses, as the Heimatbund itself was “not completely innocent” in the whole matter. And the director of the cooperative society, who had declared that Miha was fired for economic reasons and not because of his nationality, had to admit during the court proceedings that Miha was actually fired because of pressure from clients.²¹ Miha’s example shows not only the consequences of national consciousness that could

¹⁷ Ivan K. upravništvu Jutra, 1931, ARS, Klub koroških Slovencev, š. 3; *Slovenski narod* 16 July 1931: 2.

¹⁸ *Koroški Slovenec* 14 October 1931: 2 f.

¹⁹ *Koroška Domovina* 29 May 1931: 1.

²⁰ *Koroška Domovina* 29 May 1931: 2.

²¹ *Koroški Slovenec* 14 October 1931: 2 f.

threaten one's economic existence, but underlines the dominance and interdependence of national conflict in all fields of life: reaching into the cultural and judicial sphere, involving the press and nationalist organizations as well as the minority's "motherland."

National conflict manifested itself also on the symbolic level of "national colors," as the use of the "Yugoslav" color combination blue, white, and red was apparently forbidden by the authorities and repeatedly entailed difficulties. In 1926 the authorities proceeded against the tamburizza club Gorotan from St. Michael ob Bleiburg/Šmihel pri Pliberku for "reasons of public order." During a New Year festivity of the Slovene fire brigades St. Stefan/Št. Štefan and Globasnitz/Globasnica the club "played Slavic-national melodies and the club's players had cords on the tamburizzas in the Slavic colors." Two German firemen had brought the case forward by denouncing it to the police. They declared that already in summer 1926, during a visit of the musicians, they had noticed the Slavic-colored cords and had already reported it at that time. Since, however, the police officer on that occasion had not taken action against the players, they now demanded "a thorough examination of these fellows." A complaint was filled against the tamburizza club "because of Yugoslav machinations," and against the various players "because of unauthorized wearing of Yugoslav colors." The police officer removed the cords and tassels in the "Slavic tricolor" from the instruments "for reasons of public order." The accused tamburizza players stated they had been wearing the cords "publicly already for a long time" without ever having received objections. The band leader confirmed that the members of his group had had the cords on their instruments "already a hundred times" and that the police had never objected. He thought this to be a "harassment."²²

A similar dispute about Yugoslav colors arose after the consecration of a fire-station in Zell/Sele in 1930. Among decoration flags in various color combinations appeared one in blue, white, and red, for which the captain of the fire brigade was sentenced to a fine of twenty schillings or forty-eight hours in prison. He asked the provincial

²² Landesgendarmierkommando für Kärnten, Posten zu Globasnitz, an Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt, 1.1. and 2.1.1927, Abschriften, both KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-3/6367/1926.

inspector of fire-brigades to intervene. In the following official inquiries the main question was whether the incriminating flag was put up in the middle of the front of the fire-station “on purpose or merely by chance” “in a conspicuous way.” Finally the criminal procedure was suspended because the authorities concluded that the flag had not been used “with a specific purpose.” The captain of the fire brigade was “invited” to follow the ban issued by the provincial government and “pay attention that in the future decorations in the Yugoslav colors blue, white, and red no longer be used.”²³

And yet another example taken from the women’s associations: At the final exhibition of cooking products of a Slovene cooking and housekeeping course at Globasnitz/Globasnica in March 1931 the sweet dishes were offered “in blue, white, and red paper wrapping, that is the colors of the Yugoslav tricolor forbidden in Carinthia.” The local police station reported this incident to have incited “public offence” within a part of the population.²⁴ One may ask if the display of national colors was a constructive step towards the preservation of Slovene national culture or rather a provocation. Nonetheless, the use of the “Yugoslav” national colors can be seen as a rightful means of expressing a Slovene national affiliation—but that was exactly the reason why it was persecuted by the authorities.

Almost innumerable are conflicts relating to the school system, since the school system serves the nation state as one of the most important instruments to nationally homogenize its population. The Slovene press attacked the Carinthian utraquist elementary school (which existed since the Imperial Primary School Law of 1869 until the National Socialist rise to power) as an “Slovene-eating Germanization institution,”²⁵ a “heartless, mean, criminal institution,”²⁶ and an institution “for the upbringing of national deserters, renegades!”²⁷ The

²³ Bezirkshauptmannschaft Klagenfurt an Amt der Kärntner Landesregierung, 28.11.1930; Feuerwehrhauptmann Ferdinand P. an Landesfeuerwehrinspektor Kohla, 26.10.1930; Bezirkshauptmannschaft Klagenfurt an Feuerwehrhauptmann Ferdinand P., 15.12.1930, Abschrift; all KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1930.

²⁴ Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt an Präs. der Kärntner Landesregierung, 8.4.1931, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1932.

²⁵ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 7 January 1936: 4.

²⁶ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 11 January 1937: 4.

²⁷ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 15 July 1935: 4.

utraquist school was said to be the “death enemy”²⁸ and the “executioner and gravedigger”²⁹ of the Carinthian Slovenes, “really a mousetrap, a lethal poison,”³⁰ “a rapacious wolf, that massacres tens of thousands of Slovene children”³¹ and a “real dragon eating up the Slovenes in Carinthia.”³²

A key point of this criticism was the insufficiency of the Slovene lessons. Children were meant to learn both the province’s languages at school. But in fact the system only encouraged the process of Germanization, for the Slovene dialect was merely used as a means to change over to German as the language of instruction as quickly as possible. Standard Slovene was never taught. Only religious instruction was given in Slovene in the ethnically mixed area. Furthermore, the Slovenes criticized the attitude of the teachers, who were mainly German nationalists, and in the thirties increasingly National Socialists.³³ The teachers were labeled as “by majority grim German chauvinists”³⁴ and “pioneer[s] of Germanhood”³⁵ and accused of forbidding schoolchildren using the Slovene language or even Slovene greetings.³⁶

Slovene children are beaten if they speak Slovene during school break. They are punished if they greet in Slovene! They are mocked at for singing Slovene! It is demanded that they speak German already in the second school year. They are slapped if they don’t obey.³⁷

²⁸ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 11 January 1937: 4.

²⁹ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 9 July 1934: 3.

³⁰ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 7 January 1936: 4.

³¹ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 11 January 1937: 4.

³² *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 7 January 1936: 4.

³³ Cf. Ulfried Burz, “Der Wille der Lehrerschaft ist der Wille des Volkes. Bildungspolitische Zielsetzungen und Aktivitäten der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung in Kärnten,” ed. Elmar Lechner, Helmut Rumpler, Herbert Zdarzil, *Zur Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens*, Series Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 587 (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien 1992) 491–514.

³⁴ *Slovenec* 12 October 1930: 8.

³⁵ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 2 August 1937: 4.

³⁶ *Koroški Slovenec* 27 July 1932: 1.

³⁷ *Slovenec* 26 November 1937: 3.

A teacher was said to have promised a schilling to a pupil for not uttering a single Slovene word at school during a month, another teacher to have torn apart a Slovene book.³⁸ Teachers would scoff Slovene children because of their Slovene origins.³⁹ In Suetschach/Sveče the teacher mocked a Slovene girl, that he would not because of her introduce in class “Serb propaganda and Cyrillic writing.” The teachers would depict the Yugoslav state in “the most disgusting colors,” its people as “a nation of barbarians and swineherdsmen.”⁴⁰ A teacher in Jauntal/Podjuna was said to have scoffed Slovene mothers in front of Slovene children with the following “mean common rhyme” originating from the time of the plebiscite: “Red-white-blue is the windisch sow.”⁴¹ From Gurnitz/Podkrnos *Koroški Slovenec* reported:

“We will not breed any Tschuschen!” Our senior teacher said this about a girl who attended the Slovene language lessons in Radiše [...]. He directly assaulted the girl at school. He shouted at her, why she went to Radiše. The girl shivered and was unable to answer. He threatened her and yelled: “We don’t need any Tschuschen” and similar things.⁴²

It has to be pointed out that the teachers were also criticized because of their agitation for the “German cause” outside school:

The teachers did not Germanize only at school, but exerted harsh pressure on overall public life in their local communities.

1. the teacher-Germanizer was the community secretary, as the District Commissioner’s Office would not confirm anyone else.
2. the teacher was the leader of the German choral society.
3. the teacher was the leader of the “Südmark” branch.

³⁸ *Koroški Slovenec* 12 February 1936: 1.

³⁹ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 19 June 1933: 4.

⁴⁰ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 5 March 1934: 4.

⁴¹ *Ponedeljski Slovenec* 4 January 1932: 3.

⁴² *Koroški Slovenec* 13 June 1935: 3. On private Slovene language courses and hostility towards them, see: Tina Bahovec, “Die Kärntner Slovenen 1930–1941. Politische, wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung,” diss., Klagenfurt, 1999, 325–33.

4. the teacher was the leader of the Heimatbund branch the so-called Heimatkreis.

5. the teacher led the German Südmark library.

6. the teacher led the group of German folk dance in the community.

7. the teacher led the German theater group.

[...] The teacher registered Slovenes as Germans at the census. The teacher was correspondent for German newspapers that propagated national intolerance in Slovene Carinthia.⁴³

The fight for the hearts and souls of the children was pursued also during holidays. The Kärntner Heimatbund sent children from the bilingual area on trips to the Baltic Sea to stay there for several weeks. "In special cases" they also wanted to include children "of national Slovenes." Although Slovene children "were eagerly awaiting this trip to Germany, national Slovene parents did not allow their participation. For their compensation and in order to hamper our action, children of national Slovenes were instead sent to the Slovene Adriatic Sea, and this free of charge."⁴⁴

As a matter of fact various Slovene national defense organizations, such as Klub koroških Slovencev (Club of the Carinthian Slovenes) and Družba sv. Cirila in Metoda (Society of SS. Cyril and Method), organized holidays for Carinthian Slovene children at the Adriatic sea or in the Slovene mountains in cooperation with the Manjšinski institut (Minority Institute) in Ljubljana and the Carinthian Slovenes (Klub slovenskih koroških akademikov na Dunaju (Club of the Slovene Carinthian Academics in Vienna), Koroška slovenska stranka (Carinthian Slovene Party), Kmečka zveza (Peasant Union). The Klub koroških Slovencev described the importance of this action as follows:

This action is necessary from a national point of view, as the Carinthian Germans try to build up relations and gain influence on Slovene families [...] by organizing holidays for Slovene children at the North Sea and for German children at the Carinthian lakes [...] To impede the action

⁴³ Vplivi izvenšolskih faktorjev na učni jezik v šoli [written after March 1946], AINV, Severni oddelek, Koroška – nova ureditev, š. 7.

⁴⁴ Kärntner Heimatbund an Landesregierung für Kärnten, 30.7.1931, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1931.

“holidays at the North Sea” among the Carinthian Slovenes, the only means against this action is sending our children to our sea, while at the same time these Slovene children from Carinthia would be at least taught reading and singing in the Slovene language.⁴⁵

Such opportunity to spend some time in an all-Slovene social surrounding and thereby strengthen national consciousness was nationalistic propaganda in the eyes of the District Police Command at Völkermarkt:

The purpose of this stay is not so much recreation as it is the education of the children in a Yugoslav sense, imposing the Yugoslav state idea on the children, the learning of the new-Slovene standard language, the establishment and strengthening of ties between the Carinthian Slovenes and the Yugoslav Slovene children across the border. [...] The children, all of them of school age, return from Yugoslavia completely Yugoslav-oriented and succumbing to one-sided incitement.⁴⁶

Slovene critics of German teachers may be compared with German critics of Slovene priests. Due to the process of national differentiation in Carinthia the “German” teacher and the “Slovene” priest had become the main exponents of the national conflict. They embodied the ideological-political opposition between the supposedly “clerical and conservative” Slovene camp and the “liberal and progressive” German camp:⁴⁷

In Carinthia a grotesque situation had arisen, where teachers and clergy saw both their main objective in converting people to a nation. The German liberal teachers were trained already at college to make Germans

⁴⁵ Klub koroških Slovencev Mestnemu magistratu v Ljubljani, ARS, Klub koroških Slovencev, š. 2.

⁴⁶ Bezirksgendarmeriekommando Völkermarkt an Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt, 7.9.1932, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/19261932.

⁴⁷ Cf. Andreas Moritsch, “Einleitung und Problemstellung,” ed. Andreas Moritsch, *Vom Ethnos zur Nationalität* (Wien-München: Wiener Beiträge zur Geschichte der Neuzeit, 1991) 9–43, esp. 24 f.; Andreas Moritsch, Gerhard Baumgartner, Vergleichende Zusammenfassung der Ergebnisse. Ibid. 156–62, esp. 158–61.

out of their pupils. By contrast, the clergy pursued partly the opposite mission, when, for example, in the secular classes children were influenced to declare themselves as Germans, whereas in religious education, which was held in Slovene, the opposite should be attained. The discrepancy between teacher and priest developed into a national contrast.⁴⁸

The activities of the Slovene clergy—after the plebiscite virtually the Slovene élite—in the religious, political, economic and cultural life of the minority gave rise to numerous tensions entailing even violent assaults.⁴⁹ As in public life in general the question of language use was an ever contentious issue; this applied also to the religious domain. In 1923 and 1924 the provincial authorities instructed the priests and parochial offices under threat of punishment that all records in the official registers (referring to death, birth, marriage) and administration in general were to be entirely in German.⁵⁰ With regard to written communications about any matter pertaining to the registry the District Commissioner's Office at Völkermarkt forbade the priests the following:

- 1) to use any other than the German official language;
- 2) to use forms other than printed entirely in German (unilingual German);
- 3) to keep official seals except in German;
- 4) to use other than German envelopes, paper seals and rubber stamps;
- 5) to fix other than German unilingual inscriptions and official name plates in or on the recording offices of the parishes.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Karl Newole, "Die Kärntner Slowenen," *Neue Zeit* 9 December 1945: 1f.

⁴⁹ Valentin Limpel was severely wounded in a shooting attack 1921, Janez Starc and Vinko Poljanec, who were especially exposed because of their political activities, were several times victims of insults and attacks. See, for example, Ivan Starc, *Erinnerungen*, AINV, Oddelek za mejna vprašanja, š. 24; *Teroristični napadi Nemcev na Slovence v dobi po januarju 1923 dalje*, AINV, Severni oddelek, Koroška – nova ureditev, š. 7.

⁵⁰ Bezirkshauptmannschaft Klagenfurt, Matrikenämter: Amts- und Matrikenführung, 12.2.1924, Abschrift, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-3/6367/1926.

⁵¹ Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt an Propst und Dechant Mathias Randl in Eberndorf, 30.7.1923, Abschrift, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-

The District Commissioner's Office at Villach underlined that all place names as well as Slavic Christian names were to be spelled in German (e.g., Dragoschitschach for Dragožičah, Eduard, Emerich, and Johann, for Slavoljub, Mirko, and Ivan).⁵² According to the District Commissioner's Office at Völkermarkt the "traditional Carinthian spelling" was to be kept for surnames and "arbitrary changes of their spelling (Slovenization of endings, etc.)" were not permitted.⁵³

In the local parishes conflicts emerged repeatedly regarding the use of language in liturgy, in church singing, in church inscriptions, and at funerals, as was the case at a funeral in the parish of St. Nikolai/Šmiklavž in 1931. According to *Koroška Domovina*, the attendants at the funeral

were exclusively Germans and thus a relative naturally prayed in German at the funeral. At the cemetery [...] the priest stressed the fact, that this was Slovene territory and therefore also the prayers had to be in Slovene! As none of those attending the funeral could either recite or repeat the Lord's Prayer in Slovene, they were forced to abandon praying.⁵⁴

According to *Koroška Domovina* the parish of St. Nikolai was bilingual; thus the priest could be expected at least once a month to read the Sunday gospel and words of encouragement in German for those parishioners who had no grasp of Slovene. "Wrong! The national hatred of the Slovene priest does not permit this and while the parishioners are allowed to support the parish with contributions, they are forbidden to pray to God in their mother tongue."⁵⁵

A report under the title "Yugoslav irredenta" by the police station St. Michael ob Bleiburg/Šmihel pri Pliberku, dated April 1934,⁵⁶ vividly illustrates the fields of conflict with regard to priests. The police

3/6367/1926. For the question of language in registers cf. Malle 55; Kirchliches Verordnungsblatt 1924, n. 1.

⁵² Bezirkshauptmannschaft Villach an Pfarrämter Maria Elend, St. Jakob i. R. und Augsdorf, 1.2.1924, Abschrift, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-3/6367/1926.

⁵³ Bezirkshauptmannschaft Völkermarkt an Pfarramt in Ruden, 9.2.1924, Abschrift, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-3/6367/1926.

⁵⁴ *Koroška Domovina* 17 April 1931: 3.

⁵⁵ *Koroška Domovina* 17 April 1931: 3.

⁵⁶ Gendarmeriepostenkommando St. Michael ob Bleiburg an Landesgendarmeriekommando für Kärnten, 19.4.1934, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1934.

officer reported that St. Michael “seems to be the heart of the Yugoslav irredenta in lower Carinthia and the local priest Josef Vintar the backbone of the irredenta.” Vintar would often travel to Yugoslavia and for him as a priest it would be “easy to work for the Yugoslav irredenta.” The report mentioned a symptomatic example of controversy about the spelling of family names. A certain person called Schneider, who was by the Yugoslavs given the name “Znidar” “during the occupation,” demanded a “correction” of his name by the authorities. As proof he had to bring excerpts from the parish registers with regard to his father and grandfather. The priest handed over to the police officer excerpts containing the name Znidar, since the names Schneider allegedly did not appear in the register. When the police officer demanded personally to inspect the registers, he deduced from the priest’s hesitation that the priest had clearly seen the name Schneider in the register, “but, as it [the name] was German, had concealed it on purpose.” The name Schneider was finally discovered in the register, but Vintar still claimed this not to be the respective Schneider in question. After having been convinced of the applicant’s identity he was said to have declared, “that the applicant was feeling well with his Slovene name till now but now all at once wanted to become racially pure.” Because of his persistence the police officer “fell into disgrace” with the priest Vintar and the Slovene municipal councilors. Vintar also made inquiries about the police officer (for example he asked at the local restaurant if the police officer had outstanding debts) and an anonymous letter about the police officer was written to his superior authorities.

Furthermore, the police report reveals that Vintar had agitated for the Slovenes before the census of 1934,⁵⁷ trying to explain to his parishioners the “correct” answers:

Regarding the question of language affiliation [the census did not ask for the language of everyday use, but for the cultural environment to which one felt that one’s language belonged] the priest said, that people may not state a language that they have learned later. They would have to declare that language, in which a person as a small child asked his/her mother for bread for the first time. No one

⁵⁷ For census information in general and the census of 1934, see: Emil Brix, “Die Kärntner Volksabstimmung von 1920 im Kontext der österreichischen Nationalitätenstatistik 1880–1934,” ed. Helmut Rumpler, *Kärntens Volksabstimmung 1920. Wissenschaftliche Kontroversen und historisch-politische Diskussionen anlässlich des internationalen Symposions Klagenfurt 1980* (Klagenfurt: Kärntner Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981) 232–53.

was allowed to name Italian as his language, if he had only later learned Italian. Those who did so would be punished. —The interpretations of priest Vintar are so obvious, that Vintar by Italian could only have meant the German language [when referring to Italian]. The success of his words was that at the census out of the 1,901 inhabitants of the community Feistritz bei Bleiburg 1,384 confessed to the Slovene language and 517 to the German language. It is easy to explain how these results can be used for propaganda on this and on the other side of the border.⁵⁸

The priest was also regarded as the main culprit for various Slovene inscriptions:

At the cemetery in St. Michael the gravestones bear almost without exception Slovene inscriptions. If someone asks why he will be told that it requires always a tough fight with the priest Vintar if the relatives of the deceased want a German grave inscription. Only rarely the relatives succeed in having their wish fulfilled.

The elementary school building in St. Michael displays above its main entrance in big, visible letters the inscription "Ljudska Sola." Above is a small wooden plate with the inscription "Volksschule." This is understandable if someone knows that Vintar was for many years the chairman of the local school council.

Above the door of the house in which the community office is located the inscription reads: "Obcinski Urad." A German inscription is missing.

The predominantly Slovene inscriptions undoubtedly give a wrong impression. St. Michael is popularly nicknamed "Little Belgrade."⁵⁹

The report from St. Michael illustrates the efforts of Vintar—according to a Slovene report one of the "most expressive representatives of Yugoslav orientation" among the Slovene priests in Carinthia⁶⁰—to

⁵⁸ Gendarmeriepostenkommando St. Michael ob Bleiburg an Landesgendarmeriekommando, 19.4.1934, KLA, Präs., K. 555, 2-4/24/1926/1934.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Kratek pregled današnjega stanja Slovencev v Avstriji (December 1933), AINV, 18, Manjšinski institut, fasc. 146 Slovenska Koroška. — For activities

keep the national rights and preserve the national identity of "his people," while during this struggle also fighting the establishment.

In sum, we can see that the main cause for the conflicts described was the expression of Slovene consciousness through cultural activities, through Yugoslav color combinations, and, above all, through the use of Slovene language in writing and speaking. The latter fact is understandable when we bear in mind that language represented for the ideologists of nationalism the "soul of a nation" and was considered one of the key national criteria.⁶¹ Of course, there are many examples, but those selected clearly illustrate the impact of integral nationalism on everyday life in Carinthia between the two World Wars, when existence outside the national collective was perceived as impossible and political, social, economic, cultural, and religious life was in many ways subordinated to the national principle.

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POVZETEK

NEKAJ PRIMEROV SLOVENSKO-NEMŠKIH KONFLIKTOV V AVSTRIJI V OBDOBJU MED PRVO IN DRUGO SVETOVNO VOJNO

Prispevek prikazuje posledice uresničevanja ideologije integralnega nacionalizma, ki zahteva etnično homogeno nacionalno državo, za slovensko prebivalstvo južne Koroške med obema vojnama. Primat nacionalnega je posegal v vsa življenjska področja. Uporaba slovenskega jezika v govoru in pisavi in izkazovanje slovenske narodne zavednosti (na primer uporaba „nacionalne“ barvne kombinacije modra-bela-rdeča) so bili vzrok za številne slovensko-nemške spore glede delovanja društev, na področju gospodarstva, šolstva in verskega življenja. Glavna eksponenta nacionalnih nasprotij na lokalni ravni sta bila „slovenski“ duhovnik in „nemški“ učitelj. Razprava opisuje in analizira različne primere nacionalnih konfliktov in temelji na arhivskem gradivu in časopisju iz Avstrije in Slovenije.

of Vintar see also *Koroška Domovina* 17 April 1931: 3; *Koroški Slovenec* 22 April 1931: 3.

⁶¹ Cf. Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) esp. 51–63, 110–21.