

## SLOVENE INTELLECTUALS AND THE COMMUNIST REGIME

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At the beginning of the 1950s, the Yugoslav authorities made great efforts to demonstrate to the West that the country had become more democratic. These efforts included campaigns in which they presented progress reports on human rights issues to the international public. For this reason, Yugoslavia was keen to contribute a number of case studies of rulings made by Slovene courts in 1950, demonstrating their respect for fundamental human rights, and to publish them in the 1951 United Nations Report on Human Rights. The Secretary General of the Slovene Government, Boris Kocijančič, addressed a letter to the Slovene Minister of Justice, Heli Modic, requesting that his department ascertain which court rulings in Slovenia in 1950 “were representative of case studies of the acknowledgement, adherence to, and development of human rights in our judicial system,” for use in such a report. The reply to this request, however, came as somewhat of a “cold shower” to many leading politicians. It brought home the realization that Slovenia would not be able to participate in the project, since Modic had promptly reported on July 10, 1951, that

... according to our findings and the information obtained from the Supreme Court of the People's Republic of Slovenia, there were no court rulings made by our judiciary in 1950 such as might serve as case studies of the acknowledgement, adherence to and development of human rights in our society.<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, does not mean that the entire judicial system operated in a way not in keeping with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It merely proves that the judicial system, as well as the state on the whole, had set their sights on other goals, and in their efforts to achieve them, they had simply not given much thought to human rights. This could have been taken into account only if they had not been

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<sup>1</sup> Arhiv Republike Slovenije (ARS), Predsedstvo Vlade Ljudske republike Slovenije, box, 26, Pov. 25–52.

diametrically opposed to the primary goals of the state—namely, the defence of the existing system and regime.

Culture has had special significance for Slovenes, because language was the common point that united Slovenes as a nation during times of national conflict. Yet, since the Slovene bourgeoisie was both economically and politically weak and played nowhere near the role that this stratum of society did in many other countries from the nineteenth century, the intellectuals in Slovene society functioned as more than artists and scholars. From the start of the Slovene national movement in the second half of the nineteenth century, most of the Slovene intelligentsia also ranked among the nation's national and political leadership. The specific status of Slovenia's cultural and intellectual spheres was preserved also after the separate nations had united in Yugoslavia in 1918. Despite significant gains in the area of Slovenization and the development of Slovene cultural institutions between the two world wars, the pressure from Belgrade, which was the state capital at the time, was still great.

Even after 1945, culture played a significant role, despite the widespread conviction among the Communist leadership that the federalization of Yugoslavia had also solved the national issue once and for all. The Slovene Ministry of Culture and Education was one of the most independent of Slovene ministries, since the Yugoslav government did not have a ministry for this area. The state authorities also recognized Slovene as an independent language and withdrew support for Serbian in more important communications, thus returning to the state of affairs that existed before the war. The regime in Yugoslavia differed from all other Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in that, after the break with the Cominform in 1948, it showed a far greater degree of political tolerance towards dissenting citizens. The partial liberalization of the media at the beginning of the 1950s allowed the Slovenes to hear or read opinions regarding certain topics other than the "sanctified" opinions of the ruling communists.

The liberalization of the media over the next few decades did not progress linearly. This was a period in which times of greater or lesser tolerance on the part of the authorities followed each other successively. Periods of more relaxed polemicizing alternated with periods of stricter censorship and political trials against artists and experts in the fields of the social sciences and humanities.

Although the intellectuals enjoyed the privilege of speaking more freely in public than the average person on certain issues, not all members of the intelligentsia were on an equal footing. While the vigilant communist authorities kept a close eye on some, others were considered far less dangerous. Initially, those kept under closest scrutiny by the government's national security offices were the older intellectuals with Catholic and liberal viewpoints. These individuals had earned their academic reputations before World War II. The authorities also kept under surveillance communist intellectuals who had held leading positions in the party before Josip Broz. (Tito had assumed leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party in 1937.) The communist leadership availed themselves of two basic methods in getting rid of these intellectuals. The milder form, "silencing" prominent and influential persons considered potential political competition, consisted of offering these persons, who were highly acclaimed experts in their fields, employment at prestigious cultural institutions, such as the University of Ljubljana and various institutes of the Slovene Academy of Science and Art. Due to these intellectuals' abilities and knowledge, such appointments were completely justifiable, yet underlying the appointments was the communists' reasoning that the once politically active intellectuals would become politically inactive under the weight of sufficient professional demands and given the solid social status of their positions. This method was useful mainly in getting rid of older, more prominent intellectuals whose view of the world had been molded during the time between the two wars, a time when the social and political situations were quite different.

The relationship between the Communist authorities and the intellectuals changed completely in the 1950s, when the younger, post-war generation of artists and scientists asserted itself. Most of them were in their thirties and—unlike their older colleagues—they did not look back with nostalgia on past times. The threat of Nazi Germany was not something this generation had experienced directly, and consequently they were neither backward-looking nor centered on and blinded by anti-Nazi and anti-fascist efforts, as was the case with the communist intellectuals preceding them. Their primary concern lay with the real-life problems of the people in the socialist society in which they had grown up, a society they lauded as the best possible, at least officially. The focus of activity for these younger intellectuals were magazines, most of which eventually suffered the same fate: after only a few years, they were

abolished one after another by the communist authorities. As this generation of intellectuals grew in renown, they were subjected to increased surveillance by the department of internal affairs. During the first post-war decade, this government body had focused on the older, pre-war generation of prominent figures in the field of culture, but by the mid-fifties, the political police were concentrating most of their attention on people who, until then, had not been black-listed in their files.

The intelligentsia in Slovenia and Yugoslavia, who were able to voice a more critical view of the communist reality than their colleagues in other Eastern European communist states, were often labelled "the opposition" by those in power. However, this "opposition" cannot be equated with the political opposition in multi-party systems. Under the communist regime, the opposition in Slovenia did not unite into a political or any other formal group. Although consisting of a heterogeneous mix representing various ideas and world-views, its members had one thing in common: public criticism of problems with the socialist order. The label of "opposition" was given to them by the ruling communist echelon out of fear of losing power, and was not what they called themselves. Yet even the government saw a positive side to what they termed the "cultural opposition": the political pragmatists at the head of the League of Communists of Slovenia (LCS) had to acknowledge that the opposition's creativity and its ability to shape fresh, new ideas contributed to the nation's social development. The LCS plagiarized much of the opposition's criticism and initiatives and incorporated them into its political program. This "solution" was also instrumental in the Yugoslav regime's more tolerant attitude towards the cultural "opposition" as compared to that in other communist countries in Eastern Europe.

The escalation of the conflict between the authorities and the cultural "opposition" took place in phases. The LCS felt that the first major conflict with the younger generation of intellectuals in 1957 was not a prelude to greater political conflicts, even though Slovenia's leading cultural ideologist at the time, Boris Zihelr, pointed out that the intellectuals were already touching upon a number of the system's founding principles. He stated: "Not just in Slovenia, but elsewhere, cultural workers are voicing the opinion that the postulate of the leading role of the working class in the construction of socialism and the development of contemporary society needs to be revised, as recent

developments have shown that the intelligentsia, and in particular writers, are in effect the leading factor.”<sup>2</sup>

Intellectuals soon began adopting more radical positions and extended their criticism to encompass not only ideological issues, but also a broader pallet of economic, political, and cultural issues. This triggered increasingly harsh responses by the leading Slovene communists. By the time the magazine *Perspektive (Perspectives)* was closed in 1964 (the third young intellectual journal to be closed down in seven years), the communist regime had already altered its viewpoint. At a meeting of the Slovene Communist leadership at which the decision was taken to close down the magazine, Vida Tomšič voiced this assessment of the magazine’s influence:

With this approach, they have crossed the line between publication and direct action. The platform of their actions is this: the growing material base provides a means for the bureaucracy in Slovenia to oppress the intelligentsia... It is evident, that they view culture and the intelligentsia as having a specific part to play—in which the latter is rapidly changing into an opposition party, as the only policy it is developing is that of criticizing the policies implemented by the government.<sup>3</sup>

To this, Stane Kavčič added that “...the fundamental ideology of the core persons running the magazine, ... is to gain power.”<sup>4</sup>

Yet, the question is to what extent were the criticism and demands of the “opposition” political? It is clear that in numerous cases the opposition campaigned for many things they found society lacked. This included a number of human rights issues, which the communist politicians had consistently made into minor issues or unwittingly neglected, even though the resolution of a number of these items of dispute would in no way have threatened their positions of power. This criticism on the part of the Slovene intellectuals was not voiced outright, nor was it put forward as a public demand for changes in the political system. Such action would have been entirely fruitless and tantamount to

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<sup>2</sup> ARS, AS 1589, box 7, Zapisnik seje izvršnega komiteja CK ZKS, 14.5.1957.

<sup>3</sup> Božo Repe, *Obračun s Perspektivami* (Ljubljana: Znanstveno i publicistično središče, 1990) 62.

<sup>4</sup> Repe 62.

political suicide or (“voluntary”) retirement from the political arena and public life. Still, certain ideas were voiced which touched upon the issue of human rights or the role of the individual in society. They gave a clear enough indication of the viewpoints and wishes of individual intellectuals or larger groups of intellectuals that usually came together for the publication of various magazines.

In taking a closer look at some of the more politically active and prominent intellectuals, their demands for the democratization of society, and greater respect for human rights and individual freedom, we gain insight into the wishes of those people who thought differently from the ruling elite; and in tracing their subsequent life histories, we are given a direct view of the realities that they were faced within the struggle to achieve their goals.

During the first few years after the war, one of the most prominent supporters of the Liberation Movement among the non-communists was the Christian Socialist Edvard Kocbek. A poet and writer by profession, his ideas were inspired by the French personalist movement. It was upon this philosophy also that his criticism of his political colleagues was based. In contrast to the collectivist world-outlook, he gave priority to personal liberty and rights of the individual and as a Christian Socialist he called for religious freedom. During the first few post-war years, Kocbek characteristically only recorded his observations in his own personal diary, or voiced them at closed-door meetings to which the public and/or press had no access. This also applies to his most specific and detailed criticism, delivered to leading communists during an October 1946 meeting called at the request of Kocbek himself. At this meeting, he enumerated the mistakes inherent in the communists’ monopolistic position within the political system. In doing so, he neither flinched from referring directly to the acts of terror carried out by the secret police nor to the censorship and curtailment of dissidents’ rights. He argued that humans should be respected as unique and conscious beings. In voicing his personal understanding of freedom, Kocbek also defined the predicament of the citizens of Yugoslavia: “Freedom does not exist in the ability to provide for the material conditions of life alone, but also in the awareness of self-sufficiency, independence, personal worth, and inviolability. The state has a tendency to claim possession of the individual and his innermost self. We have already begun to tread such a path of the curtailment of the freedom of the individual to the extent that one can no longer freely express one’s

inner truth or world-outlook—neither in public nor in print nor within the domain of culture.”<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of the 1950s, when Yugoslavia experienced partial democratization, some of Kocbek’s critical remarks were disseminated by the media. Kocbek’s sharp criticism of the strong tendency to copy the Soviet system, the curtailment of the freedom of the mass media and of cultural expression, and the disregard for fundamental human rights by the ruling elite caused the leading communist politicians to resolve to “corner Kocbek and force him to capitulate.”<sup>6</sup>

They proceeded to carry out this resolve in a carefully planned political action at the beginning of 1952. This was, in effect, only a part of a far broader planned settling of accounts with the Catholic intellectuals following the severe deterioration of diplomatic relations between Yugoslavia and the Vatican. As an excuse for their attack, the communist ideologists focussed on Kocbek’s book in an attempt to disguise the political and ideological attack under a veil of literary and aesthetic differences of opinion. The one advantage Kocbek had when political punishment was dealt him, though, was that he had been a member of the Liberation Front leadership during the war. In other cases, however, the authorities showed far less consideration, particularly towards intellectuals who had no history of service in the Partisan Army. Yet even in Kocbek’s case, although he stepped down from all political offices and went into forced retirement in the spring of 1952, the authorities nonetheless forbade him from publishing any writings whatsoever. It was only little under a decade later, at the beginning of the 1960s, that he was granted permission to publish again. Even then permission was limited strictly to literary works. The injunction against political polemics or articles containing alternative ideas remained unaltered.

The second half of the 1950s saw the emergence of a younger generation, who gathered around several newly founded magazines. The magazine *Revija 57* (published in 1957–58), for example, contained the strongly critical contributions of Jože Pučnik and some almost equally critical writings by a number of other authors as well. However, where

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<sup>5</sup> Edvard Kocbek, *Osvobodilni spisi II*, ed. Peter Kovačič-Peršin (Ljubljana: Društvo 2000, 1993) 326.

<sup>6</sup> Darinka Drnovšek, comp., *Zapisniki politbiroja CK KPS/ZKS 1945-1954*, ed. France M. Dolinar, trans. Barbara Simoniti, Series Viri/Arhivsko društvo Slovenije 15 (Ljubljana: Arhivsko društvo Slovenije, 2000) 67.

Pučnik voiced his opinions in a direct and clearly unequivocal way, the authors of the other articles often minced their words, making it necessary in many cases to read between the lines. In his article “Moralne korenine kulta osebnosti” (“The Moral Roots of the Cult of Personality”), published in 1957, Pučnik analysed this phenomenon as it occurred in the Soviet Union and clearly stated, among other things: “The problem of the cult of personality is a general social problem ensuing from the socialist construct itself, and its occurrence is not limited to Stalin and the East bloc alone.”<sup>7</sup> In his article “Družba in država” (“Society and the State”), published in the same year, Pučnik touched upon the attitude of the individual to society at large and advocated the rights of the individual, saying: “... the liberation of man means setting him free from all that is above and outside of him—be this God, monarch, or the state.”<sup>8</sup> The state—that is, society—should be built according to the measure of people, and not vice versa. Pučnik also advocated the concrete rights of the individual before the state in some of his subsequent articles. In his study of the phenomenon of the cult of personality, Pučnik did not mention Tito, and in emphasizing the rights of the individual before the rights of the state he did not point out explicitly that the opposite principle was the rule in Yugoslavia. Yet it was clear to the reader that Pučnik was not merely discussing general issues but was referring to the difficulties those who lived in Yugoslavia encountered in everyday life.

His articles reveal at a glance a person whose social outlook differed considerably from that of the authorities and who was also unafraid to defend his viewpoint in public. Pučnik’s articles were published at a time when a new escalation of political conflict began to develop in Slovenia. They were the result of a number of synchronous factors which I do not intend to analyze in detail at this point. Suffice it to say that magazine articles undesirable from the authorities’ point of view were by far not the only, let alone the main reason for the subsequent persecutions of young intellectuals. Jože Pučnik became the main victim of this concentrated effort on the part of the authorities. He stood trial in March 1959 and was sentenced to nine years of strict imprisonment. The weightiest charge brought against him was an

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<sup>7</sup> Jože Pučnik, *Članki in spomini 1957-1985*, Series Znamenja 87 (Maribor: Obzorja, 1986) 9.

<sup>8</sup> Pučnik 21.



accusation concocted by the police, who maintained that Pučnik was the founder of a group of conspirators that intended to carry out subversive and unconstitutional actions against the existing political regime. Of his articles only his most recent one, “Naša družbena stvarnost in naše iluzije” (“Our Social Reality and Our Illusions”), was mentioned. It had been confiscated as soon as it came off the press—together with the last issue of *Revija 57*—thus preventing its public distribution.<sup>9</sup> In this article, Pučnik analyzed the discrepancies between the ideological precepts of the ruling elite and reality, as well as between the thinking and working of the members of the underground communist movement twenty years prior and the post-war ruling communists. Upon its rise to power, stated Pučnik, the Communist Party found itself in a crisis. Although it had intended to be merely the ideological leader of society, it had in reality merged totally with authority. Those in power justified their authority as “the rule of the people”, but the rift between the ideology they professed to follow and their actual attitude towards the people was deepening, wrote Pučnik, and he proceeded to ask the following question:

A large amount of the blame for such a social atmosphere can without doubt be ascribed in our country to the forums of the party and those in power and their antagonistic understanding of society. Their mistrust and inflated, opinionated attitude, their constant fear of a threat to the “rule of the people” and the constant suspicions they harbour of the presence of “enemies of our socialist system” have already reached chronic proportions. These days, one is forced repeatedly to ask oneself: do these people still have the feeling at all that they are living amongst their own people and within a national community in which they as the people are vested with authority?<sup>10</sup>

Such words were the product of the deliberation of a broad group of members of the younger generation, who shared their writings and thoroughly discussed them. That there were, however, also inconsistencies within this group can be seen by the facts that Pučnik himself, almost at the same time that he wrote his critique of the League of Communists, became a member of this organization; and that, prior to

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<sup>9</sup> Janko Lorenci, *Jože Pučnik*, Series Portreti Emonice (Ljubljana: Emonica 1990) 68–74.

<sup>10</sup> Lorenci 69.

its publication, he had discussed the very same article that was later brought as evidence against him at his trial with his mentor at the university, the Slovene Party's leading cultural ideologist Boris Zihlerl. Yet, the persecution of the co-workers of the *Revija 57* (in addition to Pučnik, a number of other members of the magazine's staff were also interrogated, some of whom lost their posts at the University of Ljubljana) brought about a clarification of the situation in the long run. Those who had been caught in the inexorable, grinding wheels of the police state became, in later years, even more unbending critics of the mistakes in the system. Pučnik evolved from a man who had entered the League of Communists with the conviction that it could be reformed from within into one of Slovenia's most famous political dissidents.

Although *Revija 57* was closed during these proceedings, this did not prevent a large circle of like-minded people from gathering around new magazines—even though these too, had to endure the political pressures that arose repeatedly with every incidence of increased internal political friction. The most renowned of these publications in the first half of the 1960s was *Perspektive* (*Perspectives*), which extended its criticism to the new area of human rights. Here we must mention the polemical writings from 1963, which for the first time in Yugoslavia voiced a clear and unequivocal demand for the abolition of the death penalty. This occurred as a result the prosecution of Ram Dizdarević, a seasonal worker from Bosnia convicted of the murder of a Slovene colonel. At a time when the press was blaming mild penal laws for the rising crime rate, it was no surprise that Dizdarević was convicted and sentenced to death. The authors of three articles published in *Perspektive* (T.Š.—Tomaž Šalamun, Marjan Rožanc and D.S.—Dominik Smole) pointed out the sentence's blatant lack of logic. They also raised the questions of why, from among the numerous murder trials held at the same time (in which one Slovene was usually accused of killing another, in one instance his own mother) did only the seasonal worker from Bosnia receive the gravest penalty? The authors condemned the polemics in the papers as calls for a lynching and as Slovene chauvinist attacks on “second-class” citizens, adding that throughout no thought had been paid to the social background of seasonal workers in Slovenia, whose living conditions were comparable to those of the poorly paid black working force in the West.<sup>11</sup> Šalamun wrote in a very direct manner:

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<sup>11</sup> *Perspektive* 33–34 (1964): 480–89.

If there were a possibility of preventing rape and murder and of ensuring safety for man by an act of law (say, for example, the death penalty) and were it true that in sentencing one person to death, one could save several human lives, I would not venture to state that the death penalty is not necessary. Yet in this case, sentencing this man to death in no way ensures that we save one single life, let alone more. (...) The death penalty, which obviously has no power to change the future, can only be an act of repression. It is not just punishment, but an act of revenge. It differs only from the killing of a man in a fit of rage or in a state of drunkenness in that it is an organised act, carried out with the full consciousness of those participating. In other words, it is an act of *organized killing* [emphasis in the original].<sup>12</sup>

Only one year later, in 1964, *Perspektive* suffered the same fate as its precursors. It was closed. The affair, as usual, was the result of various factors and not one single incident or even several incidents involving the opposition against the authorities. Similar experiences showed that clear and unambiguous thoughts were sentenced to live a secret life, to be voiced only behind closed doors, or in the form of notes and private talks shared amongst like-minded people. This particularly applied to more comprehensive political programs like, for example, that conceived of in the 1970s by a group of former Christian Socialists. To the group's dismay, these notes ended up in the hands of the police. The political program was written in the diary entries of Judge Franc Miklavčič from Ljubljana, who had jotted down in his private records the viewpoints expressed at a meeting. The notes then found their way into the wrong hands. This program for the reform of the political system envisioned a state tailored more according to the measure and wishes of its citizens. In addition to necessary and thorough changes (the establishment of an independent Slovene state, national reconciliation, the liberalization of the economy, etc.), the group also advocated the right to public gatherings and freedom of the expression of thoughts and opinions. Under the heading of "A democratic political system," Miklavčič had also jotted down "the reinstatement of the former constitutional liberties, these being the so-called four essential liberties: freedom of belief,

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<sup>12</sup> *Perspektive* 33–34 (1964): 480–81.

thought, association and the press.”<sup>13</sup> Following the discovery of these notes, Miklavčič was put on trial in October 1976, accused of disseminating hostile propaganda. He was sentenced to several years imprisonment on grounds of his political activities. However, he served only nineteen months in jail, as a result of intervention by Amnesty International.

More clearly delineated political programs could only be published at this time by political emigrants abroad. Yet owing to the restrictions on the import and distribution of foreign literature, readers in Yugoslavia could not be informed to any great extent of these proposals. The most frequent connections between Slovene intellectuals at home and abroad took place along the lines of Ljubljana-Trieste. In this Italian harbour town with a large Slovene ethnic minority, works were published by both former supporters of the Liberation Movement born in the Trieste region (for example, the writer Boris Pahor), as well as by people who, feeling that their freedom was curtailed in their homeland, had emigrated abroad after the war (e.g., Franc Jeza). The latter published five moderate-sized anthologies, mainly containing works that envisioned an independent and democratic Slovenia. The titles of these anthologies already clearly indicated their purpose and political goals: *Alternativa* (*Alternatives* 1978), *Iniciativa* (*Initiatives* 1979), *Demokracija* (*Democracy* 1980), *Akcija* (*Action* 1981), *Neodvisna Slovenija* (*Independent Slovenia* 1983).<sup>14</sup> Yet, these works, like all similar ones published abroad, could not be freely disseminated and sold in Slovenia. Although there were few official prohibitions, there were many informal obstacles in the path of importing the works of “black-listed” authors.

The prohibitions, prison sentences, censorship, and other political measures implemented by the communists, however, failed to smother new ideas, which re-emerged in an even more sharply critical form during the crisis at the beginning of the 1980s. Only a short while earlier, in January 1979, a year before Tito’s death, the LCS leadership of Slovenia had assessed the national security situation in the republic as favorable and stable, concluding that

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<sup>13</sup> Franc Miklavčič, “Politični kriminal iz svinčenih let- 4. del,” *Delo* 23 December 1993: 11.

<sup>14</sup> Besides the anthologies, also see Marko Tavčar, ed., *Zbornik simpozija o Francu Jezi, 22. aprila 1994* (Gorica: Goriška Mohorjeva, 1995).

the presence of these forces, which are not formed as an opposition with a unified program, at this moment and given the current social, economic, and international situation, does not pose a threat to the stability of the socialist development of our republic along the lines of self-management.<sup>15</sup>

State and party leaders opted for several methods, including repression, in the fight against the intellectuals' criticism. The simplest of these was legal prosecution on the grounds of alleged anti-state propaganda and the publication of false statements with the intent of causing "civil dissent and unrest." Shrouded in obfuscating legalese that could be interpreted in any number of ways, giving the state authorities considerable scope for intervention, was the legal concept of "verbal delict". This made it possible for people to be prosecuted merely on the grounds that they had uttered or written thoughts considered a threat to its rule by the communist oligarchy in power. The special prohibition on imports of foreign literature and books also made it necessary for importers to obtain government permits for all shipments of books and literature from abroad. The state apparatus was particularly meticulous in demanding (or refusing) the appropriate permits for Slovene literature published abroad by post-war political émigrés.

Through such legislation, the authorities attempted to prevent the spread of reports on unflattering incidents, and to stifle all mention of the privileges of the leading communist elite and revelations on a number of crimes committed by the communist leadership in its struggle for power, such as the extrajudicial mass killings of quislings and civilians in 1945 and the staged show trials conducted in Stalinist fashion during the subsequent years, the purpose of which was to eliminate all political opposition. At the same time as introducing taboos, the political authorities took pains to prevent the disclosure of their well kept secrets.

The wishes expressed by the intellectuals and the realities of the socialist system were thus separated by a sometimes wider and sometimes narrower gulf. Under such political circumstances, the intellectual "opposition" could not express the demand for changes in the system and

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<sup>15</sup> ARS, Fond Edvard Kardelj, box, 126, doc. 6599, Informacija s 14. seje predsedstva CK ZKS o varnostnih razmerah in delovanju opozicijskih sil v SR Sloveniji.

greater respect of human rights in direct terms. Such criticism was often delivered in a more indirect manner, "between the lines." The fact is, though, that up until the 1980s, demands for greater respect of human rights were voiced or recorded in individual instances only and failed to elicit a broader response from the general public. In this situation, the authorities were betting on the reasoning that a state of social stability, a well-developed education and health-care system, social security, and national retirement schemes would act as dampers against criticism. True to their expectations, the social critics could not count on a greater response to the opinions they voiced as long as the system was functioning. It was only when socialism experienced a serious crisis due to economic collapse and staggering foreign debts that people began reaching in greater numbers for literature that contained criticism of the existing social and political system. As a result, critical writing aimed at Yugoslav politics gained new impetus in the 1980s and began taking on a more comprehensive and complete form. The debate about acts of terror perpetuated by the communist regime when it had come to power (i.e., the post-war killings, political trials and concentration camps like the one on the infamous island of Goli otok), hidden censorship, persecution of dissidents, and the need to develop a Slovene national program became more and more lively until it was a part of everyday life in Slovenia.

The political climate in the republic changed noticeably. In contrast to Serbia, where the other strong wave of criticism within Yugoslavia in the 1980s had originated, the authorities in Slovenia no longer assumed a strong stance against the intellectuals for publishing their thoughts, even though these were still fundamentally in opposition to the political system. At this time, one of the major differences between Slovenia and the other East European countries was also the fact that in the 1980s the Slovene courts no longer pronounced sentences against people for committing so-called verbal offences against the state. Although Slovenia was still a part of Yugoslavia and the communist world, it chose its own specific path to democracy.

Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino

**POVZETEK****SLOVENSKI INTELEKTUALCI IN KOMUNISTIČNI REŽIM**

Od ostalih komunističnih režimov vzhodne Evrope se je jugoslovanski razlikoval po tem, da je bil po informbirojevskem sporu s Sovjetsko zvezo politično tolerantnejši do drugače mislečih državljanov. Ob delni liberalizaciji medijskega prostora od začetkov petdesetih let je bilo možno slišati ali prebrati tudi več kot zgolj edino zveličavno stališče o določenem problemu, ki so ga zagovarjali komunistični oblastniki. Če si ogleđamo nekatere med politično bolj dejavnimi in vidnejšimi intelektualci (Edvard Kocbek, Jože Pučnik, Franc Miklavčič, Franc Jeza), njihove zahteve za demokratizacijo družbe in večje spoštovanje človekovih pravic in svoboščin, lahko spoznamo želje ljudi, ki so razmišljali drugače kot oblastniki, ob njihovi nadaljnji življenjski usodi pa se soočamo z realnostjo, s katero so se srečevali v boju za svoje cilje. Ideje intelektualcev so bile omejene na posamezna politična vprašanja, širša razmišljanja o spreminjanju državnega ustroja pa so bila do političnih sprememb ob koncu osemdesetih let 20. stoletja bolj redka.

Usode omenjenih intelektualcev (prisiljenost v upokojitev, obsojanje na zaporne kazni, življenje v emigraciji in prepoved tiskanja del v domovini) so dokazovale, da je iskanje radikalno drugačnih političnih usmeritev od obstoječe vladajoči režim z vsemi sredstvi onemogočal. Želje dela intelektualcev in realnost socialističnega sistema je torej razdvajal enkrat bolj in drugič manj širok prepad. V takšnih političnih razmerah intelektualna "opozicija" ni mogla izražati neposrednih zahtev po spremembah državnega sistema in večjem spoštovanju človekovih pravic, zato so bile kritike pogosto zapisane v bolj posredni obliki, med vrsticami. Dejstvo pa je, da so bile zahteve po večjem spoštovanju človekovih pravic do osemdesetih let izrečene ali zapisane posamično in da med ljudmi niso naletele na širši odmev.