

# Slovenian Communist Legacy: After 25 Years of Independence of Slovenian Nation

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## Abstract

It has been 25 years since Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia, but nevertheless it seems that Slovenia can not break its ties with the communist tradition, which for decades dictated and limited the life of Slovenians and hindered Slovenia's development in general. Even transition (on economic and political filed) has failed, although in its beginnings it seemed that Slovenia would be a story of success. The paper deals with the rise of the Communist Party and the Communist regime and its impact on Slovenian developments till nowadays.

**Key Words:** Slovenia, Communism, Transition, Gradualism, Independence.

## INTRODUCTION

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 Slovenia celebrated its *Statehood Day*, which represents 25 years of independence of Slovenian nation from Yugoslavia. On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1990, Slovenian nation decided with a referendum it was time for a free, sovereign and independent country of Slovenian people. "*Tonight, dreams are allowed. Tomorrow is a new day*"<sup>2</sup> were the words with which the former President Milan Kučan ended his solemn speech on Trg republike in Ljubljana on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1991. This was the moment when Slovenes began to believe in a new dream, when finally got their own country after more than 70 years. The struggles for independence were difficult, as Slovenes were faced with opposition and oppression of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> (SFRY), dictated by Belgrade (Serbia). But in spite of Yugoslav Army's invasion, pressures and refusing to discuss Slovenia's decision to withdraw from SFRY, Slovenian nation strongly united as never before in faith of national interest for an independent and sovereign country.

After the recognition of independence, Slovenia started the process of transition within which previous communist system changed into a democratic political system, while economic transition comprised the change of centrally planned economy into market economy. Slovenia started its transition in good

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<sup>2</sup> "*Nocoj so dovoljene sanje. Jutri je nov dan*"

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conditions compared to other SFRY countries and also other transition countries. It seemed that Slovenia had excellent prerequisites to become a country, which many considered a "story of success" since all indicators pointed towards this way, particularly between 2004 and 2008, when it reached and even surpassed the average of Eastern European countries. But, the global economic crisis slowed down and inhibited Slovenian economic growth and progress and stopped the cycle of prosperity, which was a major step backwards in development, compared to other transition countries.

After 2008/2009 negative aspects of transition started to emerge, as changes were carried out on the basis of the so-called gradualist model wherein interruption with communistic tradition was progressive and slow. A number of scandals and negative aspects of badly "performed" processes of economic transition (e.g. privatization, restructuring and macroeconomic stabilization) and political transition (e.g. unsuccessful termination communist traditions and patterns) emerged. The latter was reflected in sharp rejection of all elements characteristic for developed Western society (e.g. democracy, private property, innovation, foreign investment, etc.), which appeared in political and economic establishment, while also among citizens. Based on such attitudes, it seems that Slovenes forgot the reasons for secession from Yugoslavia and once again prefer the left political option, which evokes communist tradition and rejects vital elements of western societies.

The key focus of the present paper will be the rise and performance of Slovenian Communist Party<sup>4</sup> (SCP), established already in 1918, but gaining strength and impact just before and especially after the II. World War. Understanding the functioning of SCP is crucial for further understanding of Slovenian socio-political and economic structure and all events, which evolved after 2008/2009. The latter is also the key argument on which we form our research thesis, where we argue that *nostalgia for the previous communist regime strongly affects the situation after the global economic crisis, which has severely affected Slovenian economic and political sphere*. The latter inhibits development and progress of Slovenian society, since it prevents to break the link with communist (socialist) tradition, which in its logic and structure rejects the key elements of democracy and market economy.

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<sup>4</sup> Komunistična partija Slovenije

## 1 DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS: COMMUNISM, SOCIALISM, TRANSITION

Communist (and all other authoritarian) regimes and political orders are rather homogeneous and disciplined societies, which is contrary to concepts of freedom and democracy. When analysing Slovenian communist legacy it is imperative to highlight crucial differences between *socialism* and *communism*, as it is still quite unclear whether we are talking about a socialist or a communist order and therefore legacy. In addition, understanding and defining these concepts are rather blurred, not only among the general population, but also among scientists and experts, who are engaged in analysing socialistic and communistic societies. The term "*communism*" is used primarily by authors of the western world to designate the entire area of Eastern and Central Europe, while authors from eastern parts of Europe distinguish these two concepts (i.e. socialism and communism).

One of the crucial features of communist regime is a clear and strong opposition to any capitalist elements (e.g. private property, competition, entrepreneurship, etc.). Communist ideology opposes capitalists, landowners and imperialists, as owners (or managers) of enterprises, land, means of production, money, etc. and support the idea of social (state) property. Singer (2000) argues that communism represents an upgrade of orthodox socialist policies and the final state to which individuals aspire. Heywood (2007) defines communism as a principle of a common property, which is generally used for label regimes, which are based on Marxist idea and principles. On the other hand, socialism<sup>5</sup> was designed with the aim of creating a people-friendly alternative (Heywood, *ibid.*). In defining socialism, Huerta de Soto (2010) stems from entrepreneurial principle, wherein his definitions are based on the essence of human nature, i.e. the right of individuals to act freely and creatively. And because socialism, within the context of entrepreneurship, negates this right (for being a highly authoritarian regime), Huerta de Soto defines it as a system of institutional aggression and coercion on free exercise of human action or entrepreneurship, which is justified by individuals, politicians and scientists as the only regime that can improve society and enable the achievement of

<sup>5</sup> Modern socialism emerged in Europe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and is associated with rapid economic and social changes affecting urbanization and industrialization. These processes had a decisive impact on and in society, as they undermine rural economy and lead to a breakdown of norms and values, and support the authoritative order. Socialists have emphasized community participation, cohesion and cooperation identified massive inequality as a key problem (Newman, 2005). Therefore, socialism is formed as an ideology opposed to capitalism, where enterprises should ensure equality of social stability and cohesion, which promotes freedom in terms of satisfying material needs and the foundation for personal development.

objectives. Moreover, Huerta de Soto (ibid.) sees socialism as a system that challenges and contests key ideas of Western society i.e. stratification, social differentiation, meritocracy, etc.

Based on these definitions, communism can be understood and treated as a repressive form of socialist socio-political system and a regime where government represses democratic principles and human rights and through political levers develops the entire social, political, economic and cultural context. As a valid argument to this thesis, we can mention developments in communist societies of Eastern Europe where social and political arena were closely linked and where political system led other social subsystems. Indeed, owning administrative sources was an alternative to economic and productive ones<sup>6</sup> (Wittfogell in Bottomore 1994). In addition, Debeljak (1968) claims that communism in all countries proved its inability to solve crucial social issues and even hindered progress and development.

A country's historical basis have a significant impact on further social, political and economic development and define its baseline development potentials. In this respect, the legacy of former communist (socialist) countries is particularly important, as it has a strong impact on success of transition. Indeed, if structural and cultural components are still under traditional influence of repressive communist regime the latter affects society's fundamental adjustments to institutional, legal and behavioural standards characteristic for developed Western societies. This structural component depends on socio-economic resources, human capital and other skills or competences held by "designers of developmental strategies" for structural reforms. These resources vary within countries, therefore countries and societies have different levels of development and performance (Zver et al., 2005).

Despite the fact that leading fractions seek to propagate communist (socialist) regime as "*Heaven on Earth*" the latter experienced a general crisis, which began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. The resulting (empty) space, denoted as "institutional vacuum" (according to Lijphart and Waisman, 1996) or "creative chaos" (according to Ágh, 1994), enabled the socio-political actors, who were eager for changes and establishment of new institutional arrangements, to express their "creativity" in the social field. Therefore, 1989 was a turning point for many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which for decades operated under the repressive communist regime. Nevertheless, with the fall of the Berlin Wall these countries were given the opportunity for a new beginning, which time is denoted as *transition*. Transition represents a synonym for "modernization" of Central and Eastern Europe as it implies changes of collectivist society

<sup>6</sup> This represented political power, which replaced private ownership of means of production, as officials of the ruling party, and the state itself, had the control over economy, which is called "*oriental despotism*".

into a individualistic one, which is based on freedom of choice, as the main characteristic of western societies (Pezdir, 2008). Moreover, transition represents changes of political regime (from communism into democracy) and economic systems (from a centrally planned regime into market economy).

Dimensions and effects of modernization (transition) were different in the West and the East, which is consequently reflected in social organization of Central and Eastern countries and Western Europe. Due to the socio-political legacy of eastern countries, Western ones are more developed and therefore in advantage, being mainly the result of the scale and scope of reforms (for a more detailed description of the latter see Rončević, 2005). In the context of modernization, transition represents a shift of traditional society and implies changes and restructuring of society, politics and economics. Contemporary developed society is based on an open stratification system, functional differentiation, social mobility, non-personal forms of government, political pluralism, economic development and prosperity, with established collective meaning and identity of all members of society (Greenfeld, 1992). Countries, which started the process of transition (in 1989/1990) strive for such an arrangement of society. But, success of modernization of eastern European countries, which should take place with transition, varies among countries, as the latter had different predispositions for success of reforms on one hand, while reforms have been differently implemented and carried out on the other.

Regardless the structure and dimension of reforms, the aim of transition was unique in all (former) communist societies, i.e. transformation of socialist structures in a Western type of society, wherein amendments covered all social subsystems (Offe, 1993). Thus, post-communist societies had to adapt to basic institutional and legal standards characteristic for developed Western societies, achieving different degrees of success, due to different socio-economic resources and developmental potentials (see Zver et al., 2005; Rončević 2002; 2005). Transition in central and Eastern Europe was strongly influenced by policies of the communist regime, therefore we talk about the *post-socialist modernization*, which was characterized by a rigid regime. Such a modernization has proved as deformed, which cannot "compete" with developed Western societies (Adam et al., 2001).

On this basis, authors developed different concepts to denote modernization in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, defining it as "*deformed modernization*"<sup>7</sup> (after Adam 1989, p. 23), "*cultural lag*"<sup>8</sup> (after Ogburn in Adam 1989), "*socialist*

<sup>7</sup> Adam used this concept for labeling modernization in post and real-socialist systems, where functional differentiation was not developed, not only as the result of "politically-ideologically induced neotraditionalism" since it can also be explained by specific culture (cultural codes, values, habits, norms and traditions) of these systems.

<sup>8</sup> Due to unsynchronized development of subsystems in society.

*modernization*”<sup>9</sup> (after Tomšič, 2002), ”*non-organic modernization dictated from above*” (after Bozoki 1994, p. 68) or ”*alternative modernization*” (after Arnason in Adam et al. 2001). All these conceptions have in common a total lack of freedom and failure of achieving western societies’ level of development. The reason may lie in still present pre-modern cultural trends, which act as a negation of modernistic or post-modernistic culture<sup>10</sup> (Zver et al., 2005).

Transition can be carried out on the basis of different models. Gomulka (2000) for example, speaks of three models: 1) shock therapy, typical for the former East Germany, 2) gradualist model, typical for countries of the former Soviet Union, and 3) model of rapid adaptation, characteristic for all Eastern European economies. Nevertheless, Mencinger (2000) finds these three models inappropriate, while also criticizes Gomulka’s claims that model of rapid alterations is caused by relative success in transition countries of Eastern Europe, and claims that gradualism was unsuccessful in countries of the former Soviet Union. Therefore, in general we distinguish two models of transition: 1) gradualist and 2) shock therapy (Offe, 1993).

The latter represent two opposite ways of transition from traditional (communist/socialist) society into a modern democratic one. The gradualist approach implies slow changes in social, political and economic field. Moreover, it strives for an active participation of public (citizens) and long-term preservation of government in socio-economic processes. As a result, all transition elements, i.e. stabilization, liberalization and restructuring are implemented gradually and not simultaneously. On the other hand, shock therapy implies rapid changes in social, political and economic system, and strives for fast division of politics and economy and abolition of state institutions’ impact in society. The aim of shock therapy is a quick break with old political regime and economic system, therefore macroeconomic stabilization, liberalization and institutional restructuring are rapidly implemented. While in the political arena, the key objective of shock therapy comprises the introduction of free government structures, political pluralism, effective and independent institutions, etc. (See Hall and Elliott, 1999).

Slovenian transition was carried out on the basis of gradualist model, which has proved unsuccessful after more than two decades as a definitive restructuring and reforms of social, political, cultural and economic spheres have failed. Negative consequences of gradualism and unfinished transition of all internal processes (restructuring, macroeconomic stabilization, privatization, transformation of political regime, change of cultural values, etc.) are visible in all areas where it

<sup>9</sup> Which tended to promote egalitarianism, it prevented functional differentiation of society and ideological pluralism.

<sup>10</sup> Which is reflected in the level of rejection of democracy, acceptance of autocratism, expertocracy, system of privileges, state control, fraud, corruption etc.

is still possible to detect the presence of the communist legacy. For this purpose, we analyse the key features of the communist regime in Slovenia since the II. World War, when the Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS) has gained its political influence and power. The latter has strongly influenced Slovenian society and its further development, whilst its magnitude is detectable even after 25 years of Slovenia's independence, which should be a democratic country with a well-functioning market economy.

## 2 THE RISE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SLOVENIA (CPS)

*Communist Party of Slovenia*<sup>11</sup> (CPS) did not have enough strength for major impacts on socio-political developments in the beginning of its formation (in 1918), but ever since its formation it advocated for key reforms or changes in the social order. At the unifying Congress of the Social Democratic Party<sup>12</sup> (1919) Slovenian communists adopted the view that the removal of the capitalist social order represents the only condition for a complete success of socialism. The latter represented the cornerstone of Party's performance, which in subsequent years tried to reach the Soviet structure of society by worsening the social situation, calls for revolts, etc. In its sustainable urban practical work program and other program documents CPS advocated for political rights and freedom of the proletariat, it demanded the freedom of the press and assembly, political and legal equality and the overall active and passive right of citizens for free elections, protection of national minorities, etc. Nevertheless, at the same time it rejected any cooperation with bourgeois parties and promoted the introduction of a higher tax burden for wealthy individuals, it strived for nationalization of major (private) economic companies, for a limited agrarian reform, for limiting the influence of the church and for withdrawal of its public functions, etc. (Deželak Barič, 2007).

Its operations from the background and indirect impacts begun to actively manifest with introducing royal dictatorship (1929), which caused the resistance of the CPY, whereupon revolts stated, which turned into an armed uprising and the announcement of the Civil War of workers, farmers and citizens of other nations, who were a part of the Great Serbian Hegemony, which led to radicalization of political orientations of Yugoslav communists (Zgodovina Zveze komunistov Jugoslavije, 1986).

After the death of King Alexander I Karađorđević (in 1934) the situation

<sup>11</sup> It was formed a year after the Yugoslav Communist Party at the unifying Congress between 20 and 23 April 1919 as an integral part of the centralist Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistična partija Jugoslavije*). The ideological leader of the CPS were Edvard Kardelj and Boris Kidrič.

<sup>12</sup> Socialdemokratske stranke

was further aggravated. At the beginning of 1935, the government dissolved the National Assembly and called for elections in spring, which were won by the government list, which did not contribute to stabilization of the situation, on the contrary, it was additionally exacerbated. To this end, Prince Paul Karadorđević allowed to Serbian radical Finance Minister Milan Stojadinović<sup>13</sup> to form the government, who also formed a new government party called *Jugoslovanska radikalna zajednica* (JRZ) as an opposition party to the incumbent government led by the Yugoslav National Party<sup>14</sup> (YNP), which after the confirmation of Stojadinović's government moved from the "supra-party" organization to the opposition. Also the Slovenian People's Party<sup>15</sup> (SPP) was included in the JRZ and gained nearly an absolute power in Slovenia until the beginning of II. World War (Štih et al., 2009). In 1937, Josip Broz Tito took over the leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, next to whom there were also representatives of Slovenian nation, i.e. Edvard Kardelj, Franc Leskošek and Miha Marinko. However, until 1941 the operation of Slovenian communists was illegal, therefore secret (Repe, 2006).

The rise and power of the Communist Party began only or during the II. World War, which was fought by men with higher education and younger intellectuals, who remained the main initiators for integration of Communists after the break-up of Yugoslavia, when Liberation or Anti-imperialist front<sup>16</sup> was founded. Nevertheless, the rise of Communists was facilitated by the uncertain situation of Slovenian nation, as the latter find itself unprepared for the war and without instructions or understanding, how to deal with the occupation (Štih et al., 2009).

In March 1941, the government in Belgrade joined the *Tripartite Pact*<sup>17</sup> (due <sup>13</sup> Stojadinović, who led the government until 1939, was especially successful on the economic field, as economic situation has improved, but his domestic and foreign policies has become less popular among the masses as it has been ineffective in solving major political problems at home (eg. *the Croatian question*). In 1938 Stojadinović called the elections in which government candidates did not perform well, for which Stojadinović blamed the Interior Minister Korošec, who was forced to resign in December 1938. Due to the superiority of the opposition, conflicts between Stojadinović and Prince Paul exacerbated, consequently in February 1939 the second Stojadinović's government fall. At the same time, the government in Belgrade introduced restrictions and limited trading of food due to the forthcoming II. World War. At the same time the Slovenian People's Party (Slovenska ljudska stranka) discussed the events while being in dilemma of preserving Yugoslavia or for its dissolution.

<sup>14</sup> *Jugoslovanska nacionalna stranka*.

<sup>15</sup> Slovenska ljudska stranka

<sup>16</sup> Osvobodilna or Protiimperialistična fronta

<sup>17</sup> Signed on 27 September 1940 in Berlin (by Hitler, Ciano and Kurus) as a political agreement and commitment to mutual assistance in establishing a "new order" and defence in the event of an attack on any of the countries, which have signed this agreement (the Third Reich, the Kingdom of Italy and the Japanese Empire, but later on other countries acceded to the agreement). The signing of the agreement has resulted as creation of axis forces and as a defense against allied forces.

to German pressures), which was supported by leading Slovenian Catholic politicians in the faith that with such a gesture Yugoslavia could avoid the war. But the next day mass demonstrations occurred in Belgrade, which surprised Slovenian leaders and public. Nevertheless, the Slovenian People's Party tried to respond positively and agile, and in the last days before the German attack tried to establish contacts with German and Slovakian embassies in Belgrade. They wanted to regulate the situation with Croatian HSS and present the idea of a joint Croatian-Slovenian country in the event of a dissolution of Yugoslavia. Croatia did not respond positively, while discussions and collusions among Slovenian politicians of how to act in the case of occupation, was overtaken by the II. World War (see Petrovich, 1941).

“*The beginning of the end*”<sup>18</sup> of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was its capitulation in 17<sup>th</sup> April 1941 due to the weakened army and the escape of the King. After its capitulation, Yugoslav territory was distributed to almost all neighbour countries<sup>19</sup> with which Germans invaded Yugoslavia. Such events encouraged the *Anti-imperialist front* (led by Boris Kidrič), which aim was an uprising on the basis of ideology that Slovenian nation has to fight and free itself with its own strengths. Nevertheless, Kidrič was of the opinion that it is in Slovenian and Yugoslavian best interest to join the Soviet Union, while also considered that it is preferable for Slovenes not to associate with any side in the “imperialist” war between the axis powers and Western democracy (Štih et al., 2009). But the objectives of the Anti-Imperialist Front (which was later on renamed as *Liberation Front*) were differently understood and interpreted, since nationalists understood it in a bourgeois-nationalistic sense, while formers of the front understood it as a “bait” for the masses to support the revolution, which was in the interest of leaders (Debeljak, 1968).

The result of Slovenian and Yugoslavian Communist Party's alliance with Comintern in Moscow, was the Communist revolution in Slovenia, which started in spring 1942. The position of Slovenian nation was delicate and critical, since in addition to the revolution, Slovenes were still faced with the triple occupation<sup>20</sup> of the Nazis, Fascists and Hungarians (Debeljak, 1968). Beginners of the resistance

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<sup>18</sup> The collapse of the first Kingdom of Yugoslavia began on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1941, when Germany, Italy and their allies carried out a bombing attack on Belgrade without a declaration of war. The attack on Yugoslavia was carried out with its surrounding from Italy, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Hungary by German troops and their allies.

<sup>19</sup> The Germans occupied the northern part of Slovenia, Hungary has taken Prekmurje, Italians occupied the southern part of Slovenia and founded the Ljubljana region and declared it as a part of Italy.

<sup>20</sup> But Slovenes did not gave up, as they founded an underground military organization called *Slovenian legion (Slovenska legija)* already 1941, as a rebellious force in the event of emergency or war for the freedom of Slovenian nation and as help for Western allies.

were members of the pre-war Catholic Academic Club called *Straža*, who accused communists since the beginning of anti-occupier resistance of taking advantage of the latter for their own interests that is to achieve revolutionary aims. Eventually, the so-called *vaške straže* (village guards) were formed, which have undertaken the task of defending people against Slovenian partisans (communists) (Štih et al., 2009). After the recognition of Serbian royalist chetniks and Tito's partisans at the Tehran Conference in 1943, and after the second session of *Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia*<sup>21</sup> (ACNLY), a fight for a takeover started between communists. In June 1944 Josip Broz Tito and Ivan Šubašić signed the so-called *Vis' agreement*<sup>22</sup> (on Croatian island Vis) under which they founded a short lasting country *Democratic Federative Yugoslavia*<sup>23</sup> (DFY), led by Josip Broz Tito. The country existed until the end of the war (until 1945), in which Tito became a national hero, therefore the strength of the communists, has risen even more (Ridley, 1994).

After military pressures were calmed by Germans and Italians, and after Red Army's victory at Stalingrad, communist leaders focused on consolidating the communist order in the resistance movement. At the same time they encountered opponents, represented by Catholic allies, with strong political power, which escalated conflicts between the Communists. In February 1943, Communist leaders proposed to Catholic and Liberal fractions of the Liberation Front to sign a statement in which they "recognize the leading role in resistance movement and the right to their own political parties, while also renouncing their political organizations and even its activists" (Štih et al., 2009, p. 409-410). In the beginning some leading catholic and liberal groups opposed to the latter, but eventually had to accept the pact, when faced with Communists' threats with isolation and liquidation (Štih et al., Ibid).

### 3 SOCIO-POLITICAL SITUATION AFTER THE II. WORLD WAR

After the end of the II. World War and the Civil War on Slovenian territory (in Yugoslavia), the Communist Party took the authority, which blocked the development of democracy for decades. A new order called *socialism* was established, which was later renamed as *Self-management socialism*<sup>24</sup>, basing on Marxist ideology. In principle, this was a one-party system that negated and denied democratic rights of citizens and conducted cruel removes (e.g. murders, prisons, labour camps, exile, etc.) of system's opponents. The main conceptual

<sup>21</sup> Antifašistični svet narodne osvoboditve Jugoslavije (AVNOJ)

<sup>22</sup> Viški sporazum

<sup>23</sup> *Demokratska Federativna Jugoslavija* (DFJ)

<sup>24</sup> Samoupravni socializem

designer and leader of socialism was Edvard Kardelj, who otherwise advocated for democratic discourses in Yugoslavia, which do not have anything in common with modern parliamentary democracy (Brezovšek et al., 2008).

Despite the country's renaming (from Democratic Federative Yugoslavia) in *Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia*<sup>25</sup> (FPRY) in 1946, the socio-political structure has not changed. FPRY was a federal state and the union of equitable nations living in the federation, with the possibility and the right of secession. It consisted of six people's republics: *Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro* and *Macedonia* (Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, 1996). FPRY was also dominated by the communist culture of which royalists resigned, while the power of Yugoslav Communists turned into absolutism and kept on growing (Ridley, 1994). The Federal Constitution (influenced by the Soviet Constitution from 1936), which was based on the Soviet model, introduced the agrarian reform and classified property as state-owned, cooperative or private, did not take into account the rights of all Republics to its own defence forces, the right to the forging of direct diplomatic contacts, etc., which generated an extremely centralist management and operation of the state (Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, 1996). All reforms, which included the newly formed institutions, altering of property rights (nationalisation of enterprises), transformation of the legal system, different interpretation and implementation of constitutional articles, etc. transformed the political and economic arena. New rules entered into force, particularly regarding investments, which changed into a bureaucratic system. Financial markets and institutions have become micro-executors of state's budget, while development of the corporate sector has become dependent on preferences of responsible for economic policy (Pezdir, 2008).

The Communist Party headed by Tito experienced a big boost in 1948 in the period of *Informbureau* when Yugoslavia reinforced its dominance and introduced control over citizens, which was akin to the Soviet KGB system<sup>26</sup>. The purpose of introducing this technique was the retention of Yugoslav Communists on power, as an independent party, which can implement various measures<sup>27</sup> against those who oppose the communist regime (Bell, 2001). Also in the economic field, the Communist Party fully led all developments. And despite the fact that, in 50s' centrally planned economy was introduced together with measures, which established the self-governing economy (Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja,

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<sup>25</sup> Federativna Ljudska Republika Jugoslavija (FLRJ)

<sup>26</sup> A large number of believers, mainly Rimo-catholic and Orthodox, diminished under pressures of Party from 99% (in 1948) to less than 70% (in 1964), since the affiliation to any religion represented serious threats for both national unity and country's structure according to post-war communists.

<sup>27</sup> For example *Goli Otok* and to Soviet's *Gulag* similar approaches, which were maintained even after the stabilization of situation in 1955.

1996), while also attempts of liberalization of the social, economic and political regime, the situation of Slovenians did not improve (Osolnik, 1998). Economic market has been subjected to political ideas of Party's leadership style and centralization of the economy, while at the same promoting of monopolies, which have institutionalized policies for management and employment also began. This process of transformation of economic and political sphere comprised all socialist/communist countries, which increasingly monopolized their economy and distortion of market principles. Five-year plans, designed on the Soviet's basis did not generate desired objectives, therefore, the first following action comprised liberalization of Yugoslav, and thus also Slovenian economy (Pezdir, 2008). But reforms and restructuring were carried out according to the logic and interests of the communist regime, which have retained communist values and logic until nowadays dominating system.

The Assembly of the FPRY and People's Assembly LRS adopted a new constitution<sup>28</sup> in April 1963, while also renamed the country into the *Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*<sup>29</sup> (SFRY). Slovenian constitution, constitution of other republics of the former FLRY, the Federal Constitution itself and thus SFRY were based on the principle of self-managed. And despite tendencies for decentralization, the new state remained fundamentally centralist, for which the role of republics has been neglected (Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, 1996). The VIII. Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia between 7 and 13 November 1964, was the first occasion when criticism towards interethnic relations in Yugoslavia were publicly highlighted, and at the same time the idea of economic reforms was accepted. The starting point of the latter was the economic sovereignty of all republics in Yugoslavia and their mutual connections on the basis of common economic interests. Additional meeting of Central Communist Party of Yugoslavia was held in the middle of November 1965, and pointed out that Yugoslavia is characterised by three conflicting fundamental orientations, wherein each part of Yugoslavia advocates their interests (hereinafter Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, 1996: 291):

1. The first orientations were advocated by representatives of underdeveloped parts of Yugoslavia (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia), who supported centralism, especially in the economic field, as they expected greater assistance from federation.
2. The second orientations were advocated by Slovenia and Croatia, which wanted to emancipate itself from the federation.
3. The third orientations (the so-called hegemonistic policies) were advocated

<sup>28</sup> The new Constitution has soon proved as an incomplete document, therefore during 1967 and 1971 several amendments were adopted.

<sup>29</sup> Socialistična Federativna Republika Jugoslavija (SFRJ)

by the Serbs. The hegemonic concept of orientations had the best chance to be achieved, due to the centralist structure of Yugoslav power.

Despite the fact that Yugoslavia was a "socialist republic", the ruling party behaved in a communist way, while especially at the beginning CPY's political organization defended the Soviet developmental logic of the economy. Thus, the whole economic system based primarily on a centralist and planned economy, and on the basis of a continuous strengthening of material base, of which an important part of the industry was socially owned. Communist Party exploited the latter for political propaganda and self-promotion and justify it as national economic success<sup>30</sup>. CPY also saw self-governing social development as a way to reach independence of socialist economy and distancing the latter from imperialistic economies. At the same time Yugoslav Communists began to advocate for equal economic development of all parts of the country, which in practice meant inhibition of more developed parts for a faster development of less developed countries, which led to stagnation in development of advanced republics (e.g. Slovenia and Croatia) and therefore lack of competitiveness, disagreements, frictions and tensions between Yugoslavian nations (Prinčič, 1997).

Kardelj proposed that Republics should become States, while Federation should serve only as a basis to coordinate their policies. Kardelj also submitted additional explanations of economic reform, while also proposing a new Yugoslav economic system, which should take into account market characteristics, but at the same time basing on social ownership. Josip Broz Tito, at that time the president of Yugoslavia and the highest authority, who brought together state, military and party's function, supported Kardelj and his ideas. But already in 1967 negative effects of this reform began to appear reflected in economy's saturation, capital outflow into neighbour banks, etc., which in a few years almost nullified reform's aims. The latter resulted in slowing down a relatively high growth of Slovenian economy (economic stagnation lasting more years), which was most reflected in industrial production. Such events hindered Slovenian development, as it lost its advantages over other parts of Yugoslavia (Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, 1966).

Between 1960 and 1970, the Yugoslav leadership introduced economic reforms similar from those in other socialist countries in that period, which led to anarchy and fragmentation, instead of progress due to a lack of appropriate institutional infrastructure (Grancelli, 1995). Thus, societies were faced with uneven

<sup>30</sup> The Communist Party of Yugoslavia and its leaders operated under the ideology that rapid strengthening of material base and industrialization were the key to unlimited power of socialism and its economic system.

distribution of goods and resources, both in economy and in general (Schierup in Grancelli, 1995), consequently Slovenes lived on the edge of developed Western countries at the beginning 70s'. The emergence of progressive and liberal flows of ideas promised reforms, which would improve disastrous economic situation in the already mal-functioning Yugoslavia. But these attempts have resulted only in changes of local constitutions, which hindered Slovenian development for another decade (Osolnik, 1998).

In 1974, a new Constitution was adopted, which began to introduce decentralization<sup>31</sup> and a new and complex system of political organization and representation, which removed the last remains of traditional parliamentary system, replacing it by a system of delegations. Autonomy of autonomous regions increased, while division of Serbia into three parts was further deepened. Also on the economic field experiments of economic laws continued, one of which was the creation of the *Law on Associated Labour*<sup>32</sup> (from 1976), by which economic, political and cultural organizations were reduced to the smallest possible components, with the aim of mass politicization of the population and speeding up of cooperation in "self-management decision-making process". The system proved as inefficient, due to complexity and ambiguity of political language, which was incomprehensible to general population<sup>33</sup> (Vodopivec s.a.).

The crisis was manifested and reflected in all areas, but the most noticeable one could be spotted in economy, where ever more frequent discrepancies of balances were found, beside to an escalating inflation, introduction of shock therapy, etc., consequently the economy was increasingly apathetic. The increased lavishing of Yugoslav public finances at the end of 70s' and at the beginning of 80s', led the country into a crisis, due to the increase of loans' requests abroad, meanwhile the Federation accepted the warranty, without a prior check of consumption. The federal government shared non-existent funds to guarantee loans, which resulted in a huge debt and inability to pay-off all debts. Such a situation led to inflation accompanied also by high costs for armament of the Yugoslav Army. Conflicts, contradictions and difficulties in balancing interests between the Yugoslav republics and autonomous provinces rapidly escalated. More and more frequent disputes and misunderstandings have led to increasingly stringent nationalist conflicts (Osolnik, 1998).

After Titoto's death introduction of political and economic measures were necessary, as society rushed into ruin. *International Monetary Fund* (IMF)

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<sup>31</sup> Being at the highest level than ever before

<sup>32</sup> *Zakon o združenem delu*

<sup>33</sup> In 1974 Faculties in Ljubljana (eg. Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism) removed four professors, who advocated a liberal and bourgeois point of view, while in 1978 a professor from Faculty of Law for similar reasons (Vodopivec S.A.).

requested to stabilize Yugoslav finances or the reimbursement of 7.4 billion \$ of external debt. In exchange for a stable and non-socialistic economy, the Americans offered a rescheduling of debts, since they were sure of a Yugoslav disintegration in other case (which de facto occurred 8 years later). Milka Planinc, who led the government between 1982 and 1986 refused the offer and embarked in solving the bankrupted country under her own logic by introducing "shock therapy" and "stabilization measures", which were introduced by force with the support of the former CPY with devastating consequences for the economy<sup>34</sup>. Measures and reforms taken on the initiative of various consultants caused chaos in economy and society in general<sup>35</sup>, which generated gray economy, smuggling, collective breaking of the law, issuing of uncovered bills, etc. The consequence of Planinc's policy was a chaotic economy, which has grown in borrowing of the country and moved from hyperinflation to stagflation and led into a complete financial collapse and disintegration of Yugoslavia (M. Planinc Gurala, 2010).

The political climate in the 80' has become increasingly tense and frictions started in all areas, which "forced" the Yugoslav leadership to seek a quick solution, as the debt already exceeded 40% of foreign exchange inflow. For this purpose, *Kraigher Commission*<sup>36</sup> was established, which mission was to find a way out from the crisis, while members of the commission insisted on principles of the economic system, which operated on the basis of the 70'. The Yugoslav government tried to overcome the crisis by borrowing, which resulted as inefficient and a failure since the latter exceeded 20 billion \$ in all, followed by a socialization of debts (Repe, 2001). Yugoslavia introduced strengthening mechanisms for redistribution and socialization of debts, at the same time also Slovenia sought proper "market" solutions and all weaknesses that have been identified, were assessed as internal ones, inherent for the previous socio-economic system (Borak et al., 1997).

Due to the structure and functioning of the Yugoslav economy where economic issues were closely connected with national or political arena (Borak, 2002), Slovenians wanted to liberate from Yugoslav economic regulations. Economic decisions in SFRY, which operated on the principle of self-management,

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<sup>34</sup> Some of the most important shocks for the economy taken in time of real socialism in Yugoslavia comprised: baning the import of consumer goods, limitation of oil imports, introduction of vouchers for fuel, limited traveling by car, restricted traveling abroad (especially to the west), reduction of power, balancing imports of all goods without currency's resources, etc. Which proved to be a failed experiment resulting in depleted stocks of goods in shops, illegal entries of commodities (eg. coffee, jeans) from neighboring countries. In less than 4 years inflation developed into hyperinflation, which in the last days of Yugoslavia's existence, could compare with the highest rate of inflation since 1929.

<sup>35</sup> For example increased employment at time of economic stagnation.

<sup>36</sup> Kraigherjeva komisija

were introduced and accepted by the party nomenclature. But nevertheless, Slovenia had, in comparison with other socialist countries, a greater autonomy what considers enterprises' decision-making process (Tomšič, 2002). Such developments in economy, politics and society in general raised desires for autonomy and independence among Slovenes.

#### **4 BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL AWAKENING AND INDEPENDENCE OF SLOVENIAN NATION**

The crisis, which marked Yugoslavia in the 80s' and sealed its fate, i.e. collapse, raised desires for changes, social stabilization and functioning of the state in general among Slovenes. Massive engagements and functioning of new social movements in Slovenia (then still part of Yugoslavia) started, which have brought into light essential topics, which are according to Inglehart, the key to postmodern values, e.g. quality of life, individualism, environment, spirituality, tolerance, etc. (Inglehart in Hafner-Fink, 2000: 808). New social movements advocated for modernization of Slovenian society in order to enable political pluralism. At the same time Slovenian identity was formed, which can be understood as a response to "incomplete and delayed" modernization of socialist society. Slovenes see Western Europe as a "model of modern society", which is characterized by market economy, parliamentary democracy, the rule of law, etc. (Hafner-Fink, 2000).

There was a cognitive shift in the cultural and symbolic sphere (Adam, 1989) and desires for independence, which could have been the consequence of Slovenian geographical position as a Central European country that could be compared with developed countries of Western Europe<sup>37</sup>. Although Slovenian political system was more similar to Eastern ones (Kundera, 1984), its cultural framework based on West – Christian foundations (Tomšič, 2008). Desires for independence of Slovenian nation were made public in *Nova Revija*'s no. 57, afterwards the informal political coalition presented a clear formulation of national interests on people's assembly in May 1989, known as *Majniška deklaracija*, highlighting three crucial points (hereinafter *Majniška deklaracija v Prunk*, 2002: 555):

1. Slovenians want to live in a sovereign country of Slovenian nation.
2. As a sovereign country, it will be able to decide on connection with Yugoslavia and other nations in the context of renewed Europe.
3. On the basis of all historical efforts of Slovenian nation for political independence, Slovenian state can only based on "respect for human rights

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<sup>37</sup> The same could be claimed for the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland.

and freedoms and on social organization that provides spiritual and material well-being in accordance with natural conditions and in accordance with human capabilities of Slovenian citizens”.

*Majniška deklaracija* demanded a social organization, which will provide spiritual and material welfare of Slovenian citizens and thus became the conceptual basis of democratic coalition *Demos* founded in December 1989. In the same year, *Demos* (consisting of the majority of opposition parties<sup>38</sup>), published its political program, which was well funded from humanistic and democratic perspective and which promised to stop the persecution of democracy and political opponents<sup>39</sup>. At the presentation of key requirements of *Majniška deklaracija*, Serbian nationalists tried to perform the so-called "miting resnice"<sup>40</sup> (in December 1989), which was banned by Slovenian authorities. Afterwards, Serbia put the economic blockade on Slovenia hoping for a crisis, but proposals of confederal regulation of SFRY were unsuccessful, consequently Slovenian communists left the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia on January 1990. The latter caused the final and official break-up of the communist federation, which initiated the process of Slovenia's independence (Prunk, 2002), which did not take place without pressures from Belgrade and the violence of the Yugoslav Army.

Parties of *Demos* competed on elections in spring of 1990, while they concretised and spread its program to all areas, while remained loyal to their initial views throughout its existence and functioning. In March 1990 Slovenia declared its economic independence, which was a new step towards the collapse of Yugoslavia (Prunk, 2002). First serious attempts of developing a free market started, and the Prime Minister Marković tried to introduce it on the Yugoslav market, but his attempts of preserving Yugoslavia and introduction of a free market with a solid and convertible local currency failed to maintain the political order in Yugoslavia. Marković did not show enthusiasm for deeper changes in economic policies and simply ignored these needs and negated the urge of political pluralisation. Before the end of 1990 such a situation led to the splitting of interests of all Yugoslavian nations and to the national political fanaticism, local opponents of the communist party (for example, Milošević) and ended with the Balkan war, which lasted up to half of the 90'.

<sup>38</sup> Slovenska demokratična zveza, Socialdemokratska stranka Slovenije, Krščanski Demokrati, Zeleni, Slovenska kmečka zveza.

<sup>39</sup> Due to its own moral principles in its program *Demos* committed to a peaceful transition from authoritarian regime into a democratic society, while on declarative level its policies and functioning did not base on anti-party revenge. In addition, *Demos* strived for finding the truth about the past and to "repair" injustices for denationalization, ideologisation of school textbooks, for national reconciliation, etc.

<sup>40</sup> A kind of truth meeting

## 5 COMMUNIST REGIME'S COLLAPSE AND TRANSITION IN SLOVENIA

In July 1990, the Slovenian Assembly, whose president was the opposition leader France Bučar, while the Prime Minister was Lojze Peterle (both members of Demos) already advocated for independence legislation, therefore in 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1990 a plebiscite on Slovenian independence was launched. Total participation amounted of 93.2%, out of which 95% of Slovenians voted "FOR INDEPENDENCE". Plebiscite's results were officially announced on 26<sup>th</sup> December, with which desires for an independent state became a formal requirement of Slovenian nation. The latter was perceived as a threat and betray in former republics and especially in Serbia. Consequently, the Yugoslav Army adopted the constitutional law and attacked Slovenia, which resulted in *Slovenian War of Independence* (also known as the *Ten-day War*), which took place between 27<sup>th</sup> June and 7<sup>th</sup> July 1991. The war ended with the Brioni Declaration signed on Brioni on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1991.

The secession of Slovenia from Yugoslavia coincided with the beginning of transition in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and for Slovenia a period of development and growth started, both in symbolic and socio-economic and political terms. Due to Slovenian excellent starting position, compared to other Yugoslav republics and other countries in transition, such as Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, etc. (for a more detailed description see Prijon, 2012a), it has been described many times as a "success story". Transition was a symbolic and a definitive path to democracy and market economy (see Prijon, 2012b) and it seemed that it was ready to break the ties with socialist/communist tradition. Decisions for changing its political and economic order and organisation based on gradualist model of transition which implied a slow withdrawal of politics from economic system, introduced a gradual process of privatization and allocation of resources through political market, etc. Due to such transition and despite a significantly better starting position in comparison with other transition countries, Slovenia began to lose its economic advantages<sup>41</sup>, which is reflected in reduction of differences between many macro-economic indicators (see Prijon, 2012a), as well as in the limited foreign competition, stagnation of the private sector, economic stagnation in general, etc. Moreover, the economic arena comprises incomplete and incorrect privatization, a strong influence of interest groups in the political sphere, monopolization of markets, ineffective rule of law, high level of tax burden on the economy, protectionist economic policies, etc. (Pezdir, 2008).

<sup>41</sup> Which could be explained by a weak Slovenian civilization competency, which implies country's long lasting adaptation on innovations, poor utilization of resources, poor social capital, etc. (Adam et al. 2001).

Negative effects of such a transition were further reinforced in 2008 and 2009 with the global economic crisis, which most strongly affected construction companies and subcontractors as well as other industries and banks. The latter resulted in a crisis of the economic sector, which was further accelerated by trade unions' requirements for improving workers' conditions, which indebted companies were not able to afford. All this awakened the mentality and culture of solving business, which was typical for times of socialism, in practice artificially maintained failing factories or companies, and assistance of underperforming state monopolies. At the same time various political scandals, tycoon affairs, crash of the stock market of major companies and banks, bankruptcies of construction companies, etc. emerged. Other consequences of an unstable economy comprised insecure jobs and difficult working conditions, which generated insecurity and distrust among people in the ability of state and government to solve the crisis. Slovenian government has embarked on resolving the crisis with the sale of Slovenian companies, despite the fact that all years from independence on, insisted on national interest, therefore, on the idea of protecting and preserving Slovenian companies in the hands of domestic owners. But in recent years, we witnessed a massive sell of major and successful Slovenian companies to foreigners (e.g. Mercator, Lek, Letrika, Sava, etc.), which were sold below the price by Slovenian Government, due a critical situation after 2008/2009.

In subsequent years following the economic crisis also macroeconomic indicators began to undermine (e.g. drop of GDP, fall of foreign investments, rise of unemployment, increased debt, etc.), which inhibited the economic growth and development, which was above the European average between 2004 and 2008. At the same time also banking system crisis started, due to a poor liquidity of Slovenian banks and the credit crunch, which enabled enterprises to enter and successfully operate in foreign emerging markets (K. Š., 2012). Slovenian banks have become heavily dependent on liquidity provided by the European Central Bank and yields of long-term government bonds. Moreover, Slovenian banking system was faced with high poor-performing loans, which caused general insecurity and fear among foreign creditors. The already critical economic situation was further deteriorated by financial assistance to *Nova Ljubljanska banka* (NLB) in the amount of 380 million € (1% of GDP), allocated by the government for resolving the critical situation of NLB, which is state-owned and of strategic importance for foreign investments (The Economist, 2012). The latter is the result of unsuccessful management, and in particular the fact that Slovenian state-owned banks (unlike other countries where banks are privately owned). The Governor of Slovenian banks is replaced with each political mandate and acts in accordance with the interests of the ruling political option. And due to

strong tendencies for continuing of such management of banks it is not possible to expect significant and radical changes that could resolve the situation.

It seems that Slovenian leaders and experts (both on political and economic arena) do not have a clear strategy on how to solve the critical economic situation, which requires radical changes, to which obviously political leadership is not in favour. Indeed, the Communist heritage has created an environment that is not stimulative for a free market economy typical for western countries and which has been implemented in other transition countries (e.g. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia). Despite the fact that economic growth of these countries progresses slowly, it is constant. However, in Slovenia it seems that the majority of nation grows great resistance to development of entrepreneurship, negative attitude towards private property, free market, innovation, foreign capital, etc. And despite the fact that it constantly expresses dissatisfaction with the government and politicians and requires new personalities in politics, in the end it always votes for left or centre-left parties and is critical to the right or centre-right ones.

In addition, it also seems that Slovenian public is oblivious to the bloodthirsty socialist (communist) events and legacy as a public discourses do not issue and condemn the war and post-war's events (exile, murders, etc.) of the Communist Party. On the contrary, new parties or party lists emerge, which evoke and defend the socialist logic (e.g. *Združena levica*<sup>42</sup>). In economic field, there are no suggestions and debates on how to improve the situation and which measures to introduce, which started with reducing of public deficit and reduction of external debt, increase of real GDP, etc. But such measures would imply a decrease of salaries of civil servants and freeze of promotion, which was clearly not in the best interests of designers and decision makers of public policies. The latter is also one of the crucial elements of communist legacy that advocates for workers' rights regardless of the price that other individuals in public and economy will pay. It appears that many Slovenes still require what was taken for granted in time of socialism, e.g. fixed and sure salaries, relatively high-wage equality (egalitarianism), social transfers, etc., which has been long out-dated or even unknown in economic systems of developed Western countries. Moreover, it seems that even in other former communist countries forgotten and reconciled with the fact that "sacrifice" of communist elements is a price worth paying for a better tomorrow in the spirit of democracy and a market economy, which allow individuals freedom, self-actualization and self-realization.

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<sup>42</sup> United Left

## CONCLUSION

Based on highlighted facts, a question rises spontaneous, *did Slovenia truly broke free from the Communist (socialist) heritage, which dictated the life of Slovenians for decades until the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as communist influence is still present today*. Political and economic approaches, while also measures of Slovenian governments, do not show that Slovenia is ready for permanently break up with items of communist legacy. Similarly, it could be said about the values of Slovenian "electoral base", which keeps electing a more left-wing parties. Even the media is still strongly marked by pro-communist (socialist) sentiment, which is evident from their reports (where they prefer left-wing politicians and their politics and policy) and the fact that they are much more critical of the right (Makarovič et al., 2008). The right is more often under the microscope of critical discourse, as more negative facts are exposed than positive ones.

Perhaps the latter could be explained based on transition logic, which was carried out basing on gradualism unlike, for example in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, etc. where transition occurred based on the model of shock therapy. These countries are rapidly developing, and differences between Slovenia are shrinking (despite the great advantages that Slovenia had at the beginning of transition). These countries immediately interrupted with communist regime and socialist society and immediately introduced the necessary changes for democratization of society and market economy. Explanation for such events and developments can be found in the fact that hard and repressive Communism was forced in other transition countries (like Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic), while Slovenia performed in a socialist environment and therefore it built identity and values of the Slovenian nation on the communist regime, which is now impossible to eradicate. Perhaps communist and socialist values are so deeply implemented in a national awareness of Slovenes that they can not imagine life without slogans such as: "*All the same, all equal*"<sup>43</sup>, etc.

And if we highlight again those important and frequently quoted words uttered by Milan Kučan after he finished a solemn speech on achieving independence of Slovenia: "*Tonight, dreams are allowed. Tomorrow is a new day*"<sup>44</sup>, which radiated strength and hope for Slovenian nation, who long fought for independence, we can only ask, *what went wrong that Slovenia has not been able to break with the communist tradition and insists on reviving communist symbols and slogans in the spirit of Yugo-nostalgia and Tito-nostalgia? How many years and battles will still be needed for Slovenians to forget about the communist past and realize*

<sup>43</sup> *Vsi enaki, vsi enakopravni*

<sup>44</sup> "*Nocoj so dovoljene sanje. Jutri je nov dan*"

that progress is possible only if communist thinking and values, which has for decades put a brake on social and economic development of Slovenian state, are extinguished.

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