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THE RED AND THE BLACK

Abstract: The red or black colours used to differ between individual days in many calendars are an important aid to organising life in a particular society. The typographical devices used to distinguish days of special importance are instrumental in turning historical events and persons into the images of the nation, which its members can admire, from which they can learn, and—not least—for which they can also fight. The prevailing ideology has a decisive role in the choice of colour for particular days. By defining which days should be marked as particularly important, those in power not only define which days are suitable for work and which for rest. They also appropriate the past, and canonise knowledge and meaning of the past. Radical changes in political systems as a rule bring about changes in the symbolic system of a certain society. Old symbols are withdrawing in order to make way the new ones which represent the new ideology and the new political leadership. In my treatise, I will analyse interventions in the symbolic world on the examples of two holidays, introduced in the Republic of Slovenia in 1992, namely Reformation Day and Day of Remembrance of the Dead. If the first holiday, which has its roots in the Protestant religious tradition, represents a novelty in the Slovenian calendar, has the second – rooted in the Catholic tradition – longer and harder roots. In the analysis of the narrative image of the past, I draw on the model proposed by Marea Teski and Jacob Climo (*The Labyrinth of Memory. Ethnographic Journeys*, 1995) for constructing and reconstructing the past through the memory repertoire, and applied by Cheryl Natzmer (2002: 164) to her analysis of creative expressions and reconciliation in post-Pinochet Chile.

Key words: Reformation Day, Day of Remembrance of the Dead, Collective memory, struggle for interpretation.

Red or black colours of individual days in the calendar are an important aid to organising life in a particular society. Red-letter days help people build their relationship with the past and give them a sense of history. They are instrumental in turning historical events and persons into the images of the nation, which its members can admire, from which they can learn, and – not least – for which they can also fight. The prevailing ideology has a decisive role in the choice of the right colour for particular days. However, by defining which days should be coloured red, those in power not only define

which days are suitable for work and which for rest, but also appropriate the past, and canonise knowledge and meaning.

Several groups compete for social predominance in any society, which is why all societies contain several collective memories of historical persons and events. These competing recollections are not something static, but rather a constantly ongoing process leading to important changes to 'reasonable' and 'unreasonable' materials. Diverse social groups and individuals, in fact, view the past in their own way and, in reconstructing the story, they include those 'facts' that confirm their expectations and viewpoints. Preserving the narrative images of persons and events from the past is, hence, a process of continually determining the significance of individual historical figures and events, while ideological, political, ethical and other perceptions radiate outwards from within the stories themselves, in the light of which one interprets and evaluates whatever is still of current concern and what already belongs to the past, what is and what is no longer important (see Jezernik 1979: 239). Consequently, memories, linked to highly observed subjects, are being constantly reshaped, changed and giving rise to doubt.

Radical changes in the political system generally bring changes in the symbolical system of the state. Old symbols are removed and new ones are introduced, representing the new ideology and the new political group that has taken over. New political elites, however, usually claim some continuity with what they regard as good, just and progressive elements of the nation's past and refer to them in the construction of the new symbolic structure of the state. Thus, certain old symbols are revived in the new contexts and meanings (Mach 1993: 106).

In analysing the struggle over how the story of the past is being told in Slovenia, I draw on the model proposed by Teski and Climo (1995) for constructing and reconstructing the past through the memory repertoire, and applied by Cheryl Natzmer to her analysis of creative expressions and reconciliation in post-Pinochet Chile. According to this model, memory is not a matter of simply recalling past experiences; rather, it is a complex and continuing process of selection, negotiation and struggle over what will be remembered and what forgotten. The process involves remembering and forgetting, changing and reconstructing one's perception of the past, so that it both supports the needs of the present and projects a logical future. The past is constructed, reconstructed and continuously reinterpreted in the light of present events and a vision of the future. According to the model, the past is almost as unknown to us as the future (Natzmer 2002: 164).

Reformation Day

The dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991 brought about a new list of red-letter days in all succeeding new states that emerged on the territory of former Yugoslavia. Some of them were new and associated with the historical events that led to the establishment of the Republic of Slovenia as an independent state (Independence Day, Statehood Day), while others obtained a new name (Remembrance Day). At the end of 1991, the Slovene parliament added 31 October, as Reformation Day, to other state and religious holidays or work free days. Together with renaming what was officially known as the Day of the Dead after 1945, as the Day of Remembrance of the Dead, citizens of Slovenia thus celebrate two successive days at the end of October and beginning of November, with assumed religious content, the first a Protestant and the second a Catholic holiday.¹

The new nation-state, established in 1991, needed its own story of continuity on which it could build its legitimacy as a nation-state. It is not surprising that the then governing elite turned back to the period of the Reformation, which brought the Slovenes their first book and a literary language and, at the same time, also the first important mention of the concept 'Slovene'. However, it was soon clear that there was a great deal more to this choice than appeared at first sight.

If certain ideas and histories are to be durable, the ideals of the official memory must generally be supported through ceremonies and commemorations (Shackle 2002: 660). The first celebration of Reformation Day took place in 1992, in the Evangelical church in Puconce, which is the centre of the largest Evangelical parish in Slovenia. The speakers stressed one after another that the Reformation also deserves such a holiday. The senior minister of the Evangelical church, Ludvik Novak, recalled Martin Luther and his theses, which he pinned to the door of the Wittenberg church, and the further development of the Reformation and Protestantism, which brought faith closer to simple men and, at the same time, nurtured the emergence of literary languages and the creation of national cultures. The Slovene linguist, France Zadavec, dealt in more detail with Prekmurian Protestant writers, of whom he said that »their writing helped generations after them to preserve a sense of nation and awakened literary activity even among Prekmurian Catholics«. He therefore expressed his disagreement with the views of some

¹ According to data from the Statistical Office RS, in the census of 2002, 0.8 percent of the population declared themselves to be Evangelical, and 0.1 percent of the population to be members of other Protestant denominations. The vast majority live in the extreme northeast of the country and are organised in thirteen parishes. In the same census, the majority of the population, i.e., 57.8%, declared themselves to be Catholic.

contemporary writers about the importance of Protestant religious literature for Slovene cultural development and national existence. He stressed:

If a writer in 1991 says to us in a novel that he is hurt after Trubar's time a considerable number of people of firm character were driven from Slovenia and, in the same breath, haughtily talks as if the Protestant aspect was not in itself worth very much, then this means that, even today, some people cannot be reconciled with the reality that they can write novels also because Slovene Protestant writers put a pen in their hands.

The then President of the Republic of Slovenia, Milan Kučan, also described Protestantism as one of the constitutive elements of the Slovene nation and language and stressed the principle of equality and brotherhood, which this faith still now strengthens (Jože Pobič and correspondents 1992: 2).

Before 1992, Slovene Evangelicals celebrated other days. On 21 October 1981, for instance, in the Evangelical church in Murska Sobota, there was a service of celebration of the 200th anniversary of the patent of tolerance that the Austrian Emperor Joseph II issued on 13 October 1781. In it, this monarch guaranteed Evangelicals freedom of religious, cultural and national development and the performance of religious activities. During the religious service (in 1981), Evangelicals gave thanks to God for the path achieved »from tolerance to complete equality with other beliefs in our self-management socialist social arrangement« (Anon. 1981a: 3).²

The first mention of celebrating Reformation Day dates to 1989 in *Evangeličanski list*. An anonymous writer then wrote that the celebration took place »quietly and unnoticeably« - on 1 November. It had explicitly religious but also political meaning, since Evangelical parishes obtained a regular Slovene minister, which happened »for the first time since the Reformation (and Counter-Reformation) or after »the second suppression of organised evangelicalism after 1945« (Anon. 1989: 2).

Since 1992, the central celebrations of Reformation Day have taken place in Ljubljana and no longer in the east of the country, where members of the Slovene Evangelical community live. In terms of content, they have held to a similar model: a short cultural program and a speech from one of the leading political figures. The stress of the national celebrations has been generally on the cultural and national importance of the Reformation for the

² The anonymous writer concluded his report for the Catholic broadsheet *Družina* with the finding: »Our Evangelicals only achieved real freedom in the new socialist social arrangement, which, through constitutional principles and laws, guaranteed them (as well as other faiths in Slovenia) freedom, equality and unhindered activity and profession of religion« (Anon. 1981b: 3).

Slovene nation. Even Protestant writers explicitly stress the national importance of the holiday, on the grounds that:

We do not celebrate this holiday because of the handful of Evangelicals in Slovenia, we celebrate it because of our language, culture, our nationality (Škalič 2000: 1).

Stressing the cultural role of the holiday, which is connected with the development of the Slovene language, supports the national role of the holiday and thus completely blurs its religious meaning. The contributions of Protestant authors also testify to this, in which it is often mentioned that all Slovenes can identify with the holiday, not only Evangelicals. These even treat the importance of Martin Luther in terms of his cultural and spiritual achievements, without mentioning his religious importance (see e.g., Škalič 2002: 1; 2004: 1). Such a stress of Reformation Day gave rise after 1993 to a negative reaction by writers in the Catholic weekly *Družina*. The professor of theology, Drago Ocvirk, even claimed in that year that, with the introduction of this holiday, politicians intended to »set people against each other« on the grounds that the media exploited this celebration »for libelling and mocking Catholicism«. In the absence of a religious stress of the state celebration of Reformation Day, Ocvirk saw atheism, and in atheism the negative »Communist« heritage, since:

Everything comes back to the yearning desire: how fine it would be for us if there weren't any Catholics. Precisely because of this, Catholics decisively reject such a content of Reformation Day as the media offered us this year (Ocvirk 1993: 3).

Because the Reformation and Counter-Reformation have been at the centre of ideological disputes in Slovenia since the 300th anniversary of the birth of Primož Trubar in 1886 (Jezernik 2010), differences in views of the past deriving from the celebration of Reformation Day were soon made the scene of conflicts over the proper interpretation of history. Slightly later, Reformation Day was even presented in *Družina* as a »a holiday of the revolt against the Catholic Church« and the Catholic theologian, Juhant, in 1999 questioned the veracity of historical facts not only in relation to the Reformation but also to the post-war massacre of domestic opponents of the Yugoslav National Liberation guerrilla movement:

Historical truths obtain a clear image with difficulty, even among the profession, and even more so among the public ... This does not just apply to the post-war massacres but also ... to the meaning of the Reformation and the Catholic Restoration in Slovenia (Juhant 1999: 3).

Reformation Day as a new red-letter day thus appeared as a sign of great ideological confrontation, the main message of which is that the positions of the opposing sides are mutually exclusive and that neither side is prepared to compromise. In discovering, correcting, elaborating, inventing and celebrating their histories, suggested David Lowenthal, competing groups

within a certain society struggle to validate their present goals (Lowenthal 1996: 302). Catholic authors also tried to throw the shadow of doubt over the timing of the holiday, positioned in the calendar the day before 1 November (All Saint's Day). So, for the moral theologian, Ivan Štuhec, for example, 31 October as the date for the holiday is "unfortunate timing", since people are for the most part focused on visiting graves. According to Štuhec, there is a characteristic lack of religious significance for this holiday, and he sees its political colouring especially in that it is possible to see at commemorative ceremonies numerous »faces of politicians who otherwise grudgingly move around religious matters«. (Štuhec 1997a: 27).

The stories of a past

Natzmer argued that telling the story of a nation's past is a highly political act involving struggles over whose stories will be remembered and preserved and whose memories will be repressed or forgotten. According to her, the struggle over memory is especially intense in societies in which the past is highly contested:

The ownership of memory is a question of power. Individuals and groups struggle over who has the right to represent the past and whose memories will become institutionalized. Creative expression is an arena where that struggle takes place and where it can be observed. Through the stories that people tell, the images they create, the social dramas they enact, and the institutions they embrace and resist, the events of the past are interpreted and transformed into social realities. Memories are given physical substance and become history (Natzmer 2002: 171).

Authors in *Družina* in connection with Reformation Day, above all express disapproval of versions of history that have been selectively chosen by left leaning politicians and in which the place of the Catholic religion and Church cannot be seen. These versions of history ascribe cultural and national importance to the reformists and the movement itself, with Primož Trubar the icon at their head. After 1992, the weekly *Družina* carried a fair number of articles in which Catholic writers attempt to present the other side of the coin and stress the role of the Catholic church in the preservation and development of the Slovene language, culture and nation in general. As Drago Ocvirk wrote, the Slovene reformists were »taught literacy, educated and trained by the Roman Church«, and the work that they started was »continued by Catholics, not only in language but in all fields of life« (Ocvirk 1993: 3). According to him, the Catholic Church still today has great national importance, an importance which is otherwise ascribed to Primož Trubar and the Reformation in general, since it is

[t]oday closely fused with the nation as supporter, initiator and protector of its interests and aspirations ... It also played such a role in the independence and national affirmation of Slovenia (Ocvirk 1993: 3).

The profound difference in the perception of the historical role of the Reformation and its leading representative, Pastor Primož Trubar, on the one hand, and the Counter-Reformation and its leading representative, Bishop Thomas Chrön, on the other, was most fully expressed at the celebration in 2007, during the period of the centre-right government. The then authorities gave primacy at the main state celebration to the »Counter-reformist Tomaž Hren«, while there was no room for mention of Primož Trubar or Jurij Dalmatin, the author of the first translation into Slovene of the Bible, or Adam Bohorič, the author of the first grammar of the Slovene language (Vogel 2007: 5).³

That Bishop Hren would appear in the celebration of Reformation Day in 2007 was confirmed even before the celebration by the then president of the coordination committee for the state celebration, Aleksander Zorn. It can be inferred from his explanation that it was a considered decision. In his book from 1999, namely, Zorn had written:

Changing society, the state and politics is changing the past. A reasonable social, state and political present thus explains the past in line with its own most genuine conviction. Such conviction is the actual peak of history. The Communist Party thus did this when it came to power and subordinated the entire historical past to its ideological convictions. So the new authority today must look at history anew, in order to correct it in line with its democratic convictions about its many layers, and rewrite the blank spots on its map that were silenced or falsified. Between the communist and today's civil correction of history, of course, there is no kind of moral equation, since the radical corruption of history is an invention of Communism (Zorn 1999: 289-90).

The central celebration of Reformation Day in 2007, then, was an explicit polemic against the liberal perception from the turning point of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which saw Pastor Trubar as a free thinker

³ A writer of a report on the celebration for the main Slovene daily paper, Delo, asked about this: »Is this the 'but' spoken aloud, which was often read within idle talk about Trubar's importance for Slovenes, who became with him ... a nation, and at the main celebration did not even deserve this recognition? Is it really necessary to deny or at least silence the opposition in order to validate your own point of view? Is it really culpable that in 1596 Trubar's books were placed on the Vatican index of books forbidden to Catholics, who were so eager for destruction that his books Chatechismus, Abecedarium and Cerkovna ordnunga have only been preserved in single copies. And none in Slovenia?« (Vogel 2007: 5).

and national hero (see Jezernik 2010). Or, as Zorn said in answer to a journalist's question:

Bishop Hren also appears. Bishop Hren has a dual role. It is known from school curricula that he burnt books but, at the same time, he took very great advantage of what the Protestants had done. He used their language and their translations. He has a dual role, that's how it is. It would be very difficult to produce any kind of cultural struggle from these two directions of Christianity: Evangelism and Catholicism. Primož Trubar did not write a single hymn. He was not a rebel against the Church as such but against certain forms of the Church. To make from this any kind of story of combat and hang contemporary ideology on it is senseless and far-fetched (Koren 2007: 3).

The Evangelical pastor Gez Erniš expressed reservations about such a cast in a celebration devoted to Reformation Day. In his opinion, the inclusion of Bishop Hren was not »the most felicitous« because he played an important role in the Counter-Reformation and burning of Slovene books. Pastor Erniš also expressed the opinion that state celebrations were not meant to cause divisions among Slovenes (Blažič 2007: 46; Koren 2007: 3). Some other representatives of the Evangelical community asked after the celebration,

whether it was a celebration of the Reformation or the Counter-Reformation, some even characterised the celebration as the rehabilitation of Bishop Hren. Reformation Day, by which we mark 31 October 1517, when Martin Luther hung 95 theses concerning renovation of the Church on the door of the church in Wittenberg, and thus drew attention to its crisis, namely, was personified in Slovenia by Primož Trubar, who in 1550 wrote the first book in the Slovene language, *Katekizem*, and later *Abecednik*. The Bishop of Ljubljana, Tomaž Hren, in accordance with the then church and state policy of the Counter-Reformation burned Slovene books en masse and ensured the suppression of Protestantism. He saved only Dalmatin's Bible from the flames, since he had obtained permission for its use from the Pope (Koren 2007: 3).

One of the then leading opposition politicians of liberal provenance, Pavle Gantar, was considerably more critical of the content of the event. In his blog of 4 November 2007, he wrote that the state celebration such as had been put on that year deserved a different name; Counter-Reformation Day (Gantar 2007).

Adherents of the conservative option saw the event completely differently. The theologian Metod Benedik, for example, stressed in the Catholic weekly, *Družina*, that Reformation Day is not just a religious holiday for Protestants, or there would not be a state celebration. »All actors who helped create the image of the nation« must have their place in such a celebration. In his opinion, the event, set in the wider context of those inclined

to Protestantism and those opposed to it, clearly presented »the influence and power of the cultural and spiritual activity of Protestants«. On the other hand, it also showed Bishop Hren in the right light, for whom printing and disseminating Protestant literature »in any language« was activity against the state, and the burning of such books the implementation of the re-catholicising of politics. More than the image of Pastor Trubar, he was worried about the public image of Bishop Hren, which is supposed to have been greatly distorted:

Is Bishop Hren really that which some journalists said about him after the celebration? What kind of image of him, for example, did the journalist for Pop TV, Movrin create, who took as introductory words about him, as real facts, the hard imputations of his opponents that he »had incestuous relations with his sister«? The primary intention is more than clearly disqualification, which is further confirmed by the general »finding« that he was the burner of Slovene books. And such an image of Hren can no longer be changed by any fact. Is this the real image of Tomaž Hren? (Benedik 2007: 3).

To the writer of an article for the conservative weekly *Demokracija*, Gregor Blažič, »according to his understanding, the inclusion of Bishop Hren in the state celebration on Reformation Day was fairly disturbing for the representatives of the Evangelical Church in Slovenia« since he was »at the head of the Counter-Reformation commission, which with military assistance destroyed almost everything that the reformists had created, and expelled them and their adherents or brought them back violently into the Catholic Church«. However, according to Blažič, Bishop Hren did not have a leading role at all in dealing with the Reformation, but the »main initiator of the Counter-Reformation in Slovenia was Archduke Ferdinand, while Hren was his authorised agent on a lower level«. Although great wagonloads of books were burnt on Hren's bonfires, Blažič notes that, prior to the burning, the bishop protected the first translation of the Bible into Slovene, the work of the Protestant Jurij Dalmatin. He then presents his view of history with a leap to the second half of the twentieth century:

The debate about how many books Bishop Hren destroyed also touches on the question of how much literature the Communist authorities destroyed between 1945 and 1990 (for example, the freshly printed poetry collection of Balentič, which they carted off to Vevče paper mill) but this is almost never mentioned. In connection with the celebration, it is worth considering to whom Reformation Day is devoted – whether it is a celebration in honour of the beginning of Slovene literature or the religious community that came out of the movement that gave the Slovenes the first book in Slovene. Since all those defenders of state secularity, who are disturbed by the

presence of the Catholic Church in public have so far not uttered a sound on Reformation Day (Blažič 2007: 48).

After 2008, power in the state was taken over by a left of centre government. The main speakers at the main celebration, the president of the state, Danilo Türk, in 2008 and president of the parliament, Pavle Gantar, in 2009, stressed the positive achievements of the Slovene Reformation in the cultural field. President Türk presented the period of the European Reformation and especially the role of Slovene Protestants in the sixteenth century as »an important source of inspiration for us«. He stressed that the publication of the first Slovene books and the translation of the entire Bible placed »the Slovene nation irrevocably on the map of European nations« and explained that the powerful personality of Primož Trubar was at the centre of this important activity. Pavle Gantar stressed in his speech that the Reformation, and with it the Protestant movement in Slovenia, had left an indelible seal, since the foundations were laid for the cultural development and progress of the Slovene people. In Gantar's opinion, we could wish that Protestantism had touched us even more, including in economic and cultural and rational foundations. He quoted the idea of the connection between the development of modern rational capitalism and the Protestant ethic.

The reaction of *Družina* was predictable. In 2009, the Argentine Slovene, Andrej Fink, in familiar style expressed his amazement at the »strange religious fervour«:

This holiday is intended to raise a revolt against the Roman Church and the Pope, although the name is different: a holiday of the Slovene language or the first Slovene books. But it stands out that some of the government people are so inflamed with it. It was even claimed that the Reformation in Slovenia is not yet finished. How is it that, with the jealously guarded separation of Church from State, the government is now striving for reformation? ... So many words about Trubar's merits and the first Slovene books, and not a euro of support from the government side for his recently published translated *Katekizem*. Strange religious zeal! Only one reformation in Slovenia is not yet finished: ideological and political! (Fink 2009: 9).

Day of the Dead

The new Holidays and Days off in the Republic of Slovenia Act of 1991 renamed the holiday that follows Reformation Day in the calendar, the former Day of the Dead, as the Day of Memory of the Dead. Although the great majority of Slovenes do not celebrate Reformation Day, 1 November is an important holiday that people observe in their masses. On this day, people visit the graves of their relatives in crowds, bringing flowers and lighting candles. On the first of November, Slovenia is full of burning candles, flowers

and memories of the deceased (Anon. 1912: 3). The custom is a clear expression of Catholic tradition (Kuret 1970: III, 112). The whole of pagan Europe celebrated its festivals of the dead, and the old pagan belief in the return of the spirits of the deceased later obtained Christian concept and entered pure popular belief. They still say in many places in Slovenia today that, the souls of the dead sit on the graves on All Saints Day and watch who visits them (Kuhar 1990: 12).

Facing death is always completely individual, so death is the great divider. It incites in people horror and fear because of the feeling of helplessness, since death cannot be resisted by any human means. High culture and profound wisdom are equally powerless before it. All good works and all bad works, all love and all perfidy are impotent before it.

Death! You squeeze in your bony fingers all culture and wisdom, all diligence and all wickedness, all love and all perfidy – and nothing remains from all this human lumber but a pile of putrid bones and dust...

There is something immense in the cult of death, and divine is the thought that both king and beggar have the same last sigh. And equally great is the idea that, so to speak, brings us closer to death, which on the Feast of All Saints allows us to communicate with the dead, of which the rites and ceremonies create some link between us, on whom god's tears shine and those who sleep the eternal sleep below, without tears and dreams... And the thought is also educational that this holiday is an invaluable teacher. This cannot be denied. Death does not know us as politician, as mighty dignitary and hungry proletarian, as a member of this or that nationality and faith – death is the same for all. And anyone who thinks intelligently and with honest heart on death, will never abandon this for their soul to float from poison hatred. Death divides us but most unites us... (Anon. 1914: 2-3).

On the other hand, death is perhaps the strongest linking factor of human societies, which unites the powerless individual into a powerful community:

The Feast of All Saints is thus personal and intimate, so that in places they even call it little Christmas; the families of the deceased find each other by the graves, squeeze their hands, chat a little, perhaps as they haven't for a long time. »This is the day of the great meeting« Deacon Benedetič from Solkan called the holiday (jz. 1980: 1).

In the 1870s, in accordance with the spirit of nascent individualism, in Slovene towns, too, the custom developed of visiting the cemetery on the first of November and decorating the graves. People pilgrimed en masse to the graves of their families, with artificial or live flowers and candles, to the last resting place of their near and dear (Original letter 1877a: 2; Anon. 1878: 3; 1893: 1; Cvetinimirski 1911: 174). Because of the powerful feelings that the

idea of death triggers, the new custom in the process of democratisation of political life quickly became an important tool in the struggle for hearts and minds. The graves of »great men« and famous patriots (Orig. let. 1877b: 3; Anon. 1878: 3) became an important gathering point of those who though politically the same. In the 1870s, Slovene academics in Vienna honoured the memory of Jernej Kopitar on the first of November (Orig. let. 1877b: 3).⁴ How important was the role of such men, who enjoyed grateful memory among people in the time of the awakening of nations, can be inferred from the note of an anonymous reporter from Bovec, who wrote:

Our nation regrets the unfortunate muteness in our graves, no monument, no talk displays the gentle men who deserve the limit of people's gratitude in regard to the nation. Should we then be so surprised that we have remained so far behind? There are, though, special relations in Bovec; anyone who knows them and knows how to appreciate saying without reflection: Anyone who wants to do something for the nation in Bovec must awaken the dead (Orig. let. 1878: 3).

The Austrian government was also aware of how dangerous such gathering points could become during the years of the First World War, which, by ministerial decree in 1916, banned the lighting of graves before the Feast of All Saints and All Souls Day »in view of the need for saving« (Anon. 1916: 123).

With the end of the First World War, graveyards had grown considerably in Slovenian towns and villages. Visits to the graves of the victims of war gained strong emotional associations and new interpretations, which again strengthened the feeling of solidarity. From this feeling developed the custom of collecting "contributions for the poorest" or so-called countable coin. Visitors to cemeteries were appealed to on behalf of the Red Cross or Catholic charitable societies to repay the memory of their dear departed by doing their utmost to alleviate poverty (c. 1931a: 2; 1932: 2; 1933: 2; 1937: 4; 1939: 2; Anon. 1931: 8; 1936: 3). After the First World

⁴ The reporter of this event presented the court librarian Kopitar as follows: »What Kopitar is to us, not only to Slovenes but to all Slavs, will certainly be known to any educated person. It is thanks to him that our language is on the present level of culture, without him there would not be such perfect language and without language our spiritual heroes, Prešeren, Jenko, Stritar and Levstik and others would not have matured, who have ploughed the fallow of our literature. It is thanks to him that knowledge of the famous Miklošič was generated; and what would Slavic philology be without Kopitar and Miklošič? We owe more to Kopitar; that we have chairs of Slavic philology in Vienna, in Graz, in Prague and other universities, that Slovene language studies are taught in Paris, Berlin and Liepzig and other German universities. So not just the Slavic world honours the man, students of all nations honour him« (Orig. let. 1877b: 3).

War, the custom was also introduced of choirs performing at cemeteries and singing funeral songs. In the mid 1920s, Celje singers came to the understanding that »power is in style and salvation in uniqueness«. They agreed on a joint appearance at cemeteries for All Saints Day, on the grounds that »politics cannot be found in singing«. They also invited members of the choir of the Socialist Party to a joint performance but its leaders made it known to the other singers that members of their choir were »class conscious« and could not sing with »bourgeois parties«. A reporter in *Nova Doba* was angry about such a decision, since a great many »fine proud overcoats with ragged collars and many calloused hands« could be seen at the cemeteries among the »bourgeoisie«. Indignant at such a policy, he compared the event to the story of an Indian chief and the Jesuits:

When the Spanish came to America, they began – what is true is true – to treat the Indians unconscionably. The Redskins of course felt violent hatred towards the Spanish. And so something unusual happened: the Jesuits, who were propagating Christianity there, converted the Indians so that it would at least be better in the next world. A fervent missionary had already almost completely obtained a prominent Indian chief and it had finally got so far that he wanted to be christened on his deathbed. When the priest told him, that he must also forgive the Spaniards everything, even though his race had suffered so much misfortune, the Indian chief hesitated and considered. With glazed eyes he stared at the bourgeois person in the flowing robes and asked him: »Do any Spanish get to heaven, too? Eh?« »Of course, those who live honestly and worshipfully.« »Mmm, I don't want to be with them.« The story says that on this the Red Indian's spirit gave out, he turned to the wall and died unbaptised. However, he quickly began to grow pale and lose his red skin and after death became as yellowish as the damned Spanish. So at least after death we are all the same, bourgeois and proletarian (ca. 1925: 2).

Preserving the Past for the Future

Although the newly created national state of Yugoslavia was multi-confessional, in 1931 the Catholic Feast of All Saints was declared a national holiday, when all shops and barber's shops had to remain closed (ca. 1931b: 2; 1931c: 2-3). In the twentieth century, All Saints Day was already firmly rooted in tradition (Koštomaj 1923: 1; Gaberc 1925: 1; Kuret 1970: III, 112-13), so that the new state authority, despite being based on a radical break with the past, did not annul it. Although other religious festivals in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, including Easter and Christmas, were removed from the calendar of national holidays, 1 November remained coloured red. Instead of annulling the holiday, it wanted to give it a new, secular content, on

the model of the Church, which gave a Christian content to pagan celebrations. It symbolised the change with a new name: Day of the Dead. The holiday was also marked in a new way. Numerous commemorative ceremonies took place throughout Slovenia on 1 November, designed to play a role in the shaping of social memory (see Connerton 1989: 48). They took place at carefully selected locations, generally beside memorials and the graves of members of the National Liberation Army, hostages and other victims of the Nazis and Fascists. The selected locations and commemorative ceremonies suggested that thousands of people »in the years of the most difficult experience, gave their lives for freedom and peace« (Čurin 1986: 13). The commemorative ceremonies were normally also attended by school children, and members of the Alliance of Combatants took these opportunities to »explain the meaning of the memorial celebrations« (Kos 1981: 11). In memory of the dead »even 'ciciban' (pre-school children) paid reverence« (Gojanović 1986: 7). Only rarely did delegations of pupils carry wreaths or flowers to the memorial plaques or graves of important Slovene men of letters (Črnič 1978: 18).

Such commemorative ceremonies served as a means by which people were supposed to think about historical events, especially about the years of the national liberation struggle and socialist revolution. The past, especially »the brightest period of our past«, as this period was called, was placed in the service of a »bright future«. Although the ruling elite were well aware of the power of memory, they also recognised the superior force of forgetting. 'He who controls the past controls the future; he who controls the present controls the past,' wrote George Orwell (1984: 34). Day of the Dead had an important role as a basis for social remembering, and for forgetting. The regime truly attempted to make a complete break with the (Christian) past and to secularise the present in entirety; as is well-known, the Yugoslav Communists »were at cross purposes with God« (Jezernik 1994: 33). However, secularisation of the Christian past did not obliterate its framework. History was still interpreted as a narrative, a conflict between good and evil (Plumb 1969: 98). At the commemorations, they remembered the fallen heroes of the national liberation struggle and the socialist revolution, in which one could often hear the statement »They will live with us«.

We often, in fact, hear the strange words: »They died so that they will live with us«. If we consider the horror of these words, which some express only for emotional charge, without basis in reason, we must look around us and ask: where are they?

There are not just around two million Slovenes but millions and millions; with us live the peasant rebels and Primož Trubar, Sebastijan Krelj and Jurij Dalmatin, Anton Tomaž Linhart and Valentin Vodnik, France Prešeren, Fran Levstik and Simon Jenko, Josip Stritar and Josip Jurčič, Ivan Cankar and Oton Župančič, Ivan

Grohar and Marij Kogoj, Boris Kidrič and Edvard Kardelj... to mention only a few chosen names of these thousands and thousands of people of our past, who accompany us each day because they are part of our Slovene consciousness.

All these people gave us their lives but they did not give us their deaths.

Thousands and thousands of young men and women, husbands and wives fell in the national liberation struggle from 1941 to 1945, the enemies of the Slovenes killed thousands of them in jails and concentration camps. When people died during those times they declared in their final moments of life that they were dying for freedom and for a better life in the future. Their death was the price of our better life...

So the words that we hear so often on the Day of the Dead are not meaningless: »They died so that they would live with us!« They live with us and they demand of us that they fulfil everything for which they fought with their lives and with their deaths (Javoršek 1986: 1).

It is understandable that under conditions of the »dictatorship of the proletariat« strong voices of opposition were not heard. The Catholic newspaper *Družina* stood against the interpretation of the first of November as a secular holiday. It began to strengthen its opposition to the change in the celebration of first of November in the 1980s; at first it appeared mainly in the constant repetition of the Catholic weekly *Družina* that November 1 is All Saints Day, that we remember all the deceased only a day later (jz. 1980: 1; j. 1981: 1; Anon. 1982: 3; M. B. 1982: 154). However, these appeals did not have a great deal of success, since on the same page could also be found that the name Day of the Dead »had also become customary among Christians« (Anon. 1982: 3). The later president of the first democratically elected government, Lojze Peterle, then even asked:

November first, this essentially joyful (!) Christian Feast of All saints is becoming increasingly the bare day of the dead. We drive death from life and consciousness and lead the corpses to the commune. In the consciousness of the believer, death should mean above all a herald of new life. Do we live and believe thus? Are we not increasingly gnawed by the doubt that death is the end of all? (Peterle 1983: 144).

After the independence of Slovenia, the name of the November 1 holiday was again officially changed; from 1991, the main commemorative ceremony was devoted to those who had fallen in the ten-day war of June 1991. Now, each year, the highest representatives, in the presence of a guard of honour of the Slovene Army, lay a wreath in the main Ljubljana cemetery, Žale, to the memory of the war for Slovenia in 1991, and then set off for the

monument to combatants of the national liberation struggle and the Lime* of Reconciliation (see e.g., C. R., D. G. 2007: 1; dr. 2007: 2).

Although reconciliation between former members of the national liberation movement and their domestic opponents has a very pronounced place in the political rhetoric of democratic Slovenia, it is a golden rule by which political elites strive to shape the social memory of citizens that, more than seeking compromise, they seek those points on which consensus is impossible. It was first presented in the Slovene emigrant press. It was written in *Svet in dom*, the literary supplement of *Zedinjene Slovenije*, that »our writers must become the memorial to all our dead, they must enlighten our struggle and our suffering« [3] (Švent 1992: 47). *Svobodna Slovenija* (Eslovenia libre/Free Slovenia), the journal of Slovenes in South America, which was published in Buenos Aires from 1947 onwards, regularly raised the demand on the first of November that the authorities must stop publicly smearing the good name of opponents of the revolution with the reproach of collaboration and treason, publicly recognise the right of victims of the Communist revolution to be fighters for the national ideal, for which they gave their lives, and enable free access to the places of torture and massacre and thus give back to the victims their human dignity – including with memorial features (Švent 1992: 104). The journal of the associations of Slovene anti-communists *Tabor* defined the political importance of such a monument in more detail:

»For decades, already, they have taken the good name of our victims, but we know that the time of satisfaction will come, since it is not just the new authorities that write history. Our dead have the right to their honour, and the nation to true freedom, in which it will be able to find the right relation to its own past. It will then become clear to all that, over the decades, the Communist Party has been the great traitor and destroyer of the Slovene nation!« (cit. Švent 1992: 112).

This kind of thinking regularly appeared in the Slovene emigrant press at the time of the first of November holiday. Despite mentioning »God's forgiveness« the dark »shadow of hatred« tended to fall on this thinking. So, for example, the newspaper *Družabna pravda* (Justicia social/Social Justice) wrote that »there is no cooperation between us and the murderers, but only death« [23] (Švent 1992: 114).

In Slovenia, the so-called pos-war massacres were a taboo subject, about which people only spoke in fear and with limitations (»Nothing in public!«). However, even before the republican elections, members of the newly founded Slovene Democratic Alliance began to talk about it being worth, on the Feast of All Saints, lighting candles on the graves of the victims of partisan cleansings (Anon. 1990: 16).

* The Lime is the national tree of Slovenia.

After 1992, the post-war massacres became an important theme of the Slovene media. *Družina*, in particular, devoted a considerable number of short contributions to commemorations of the victims of post-war massacres throughout Slovenia. There were also frequently contributions in this weekly about the erection of parish memorial plaques for those killed during and after the war throughout Slovenia, whereby a »Christian duty« was fulfilled (Žajdela 2007: 18). During the time of the centre-right government 2004-2008, individual ministers laid wreathes on the first of November on monuments to victims of the post-war massacres or at memorial features (see e.g., dr. 2007: 2).

At first the media remembered the victims of the post-war massacres in terms of considering the tragedy of human existence.

In memory of the dead, in memory of the victims of the last war, all the dead, all of our dear own, good old acquaintances, friends. We have laid wreathes, lit candles – and prayed. In churches, at these sacred marks of faith, and by crosses and monuments in Kočevski Rog, in Prečna, by the Lime of Reconciliation in Ljubljana Žale, in Dobrava, in Krimška jama, symbols of death and salvation. »We are here, you will be here!« Thanks be to God for the eternal gift that we can believe in the great transformation of mankind and the world, that we can honour the Sacred and hope for eternal salvation. We are all pilgrims into this eternity (Zadravec 1992: 1).

Questions about *unburied* or *unrecognised* victims of the Second World War in parts of the media over the years at first gained an increasingly clear image of the blindness and, above all, the irresponsibility of the current political authorities that they did not strive hard enough for the settlement of the matter in accordance with civilised standards, thus an inexhaustible source of accusations in terms of:

Families are still fighting in some places for recognition of their violent death and, in some places, even monuments to the massacred do not have peace. The most recent discoveries testify to a cruel truth, that Slovenia with communism... is also a land of graves... (Juhant 1999: 3).

After 1999, in articles devoted to the post-war massacres, there is already a more clearly present tendency to revise history. The tendentiousness of some authors carried them beyond all the boundaries of understanding. So, for example, a speech by Boštjan Turk at the memorial celebration by the Lime of Reconciliation in Žale cemetery on the first of November, said among other things:

The dead are a million times more alive than us ... The dead are even today turning a new page of history, giving healing to misfortune. The Slovene holocaust is built into the foundations of Slovene statehood. It is finally a stronger bond than some of the resolutions of AVNOJ, which were adopted by a handful of communist turncoats, not knowing what history is at all (Turk 2000: 21).

In 2003, the Catholic *Ognjišču* published an interview with Jože Možina, after a showing of his documentary film on the post-war massacres in Slovenska Bistrica. Možina explained in it how the families of the victims »even today« fight in vain to have their near and dear publicly recognised as victims. »Unfortunately, brutal trampling by the occupier and revolutionary violence has been the norm among us...« or even more explicitly:

The Communist authorities are here comparable with the Nazis, in that after the war they continued the division into us and them, whether this concerned the living or the dead, who could not even have a grave (Turk 2003: 58-9).

After 1991, in both Catholic newspapers, in addition to contributions that dealt with the victims of the post-war massacres, there also appeared those that focused on priests and the Catholic religion as victims of persecution on the part of the former political authorities. In 1993, for example, an article appeared in *Ognjišče* entitled *Priests, Victims of the Swastika and the Red Star*. In the reporting on these themes, of particular interest was the appearance of contributions relating to the Ljubljana Archbishop, Gregor Rožman, and his role during and after the Second World War. Catholic authors presented Bishop Rožman as the ultimate victim of the former regime, who even today is the recipient of criticism, insult and disapproval. In an article of 1997, the author writes that... *The Feast of All Saints lived with the smell of gunpowder, when it exploded at monuments to victims of the Communist revolution... There was something comforting this week, though... For the first time the entire Slovene people had the opportunity to hear and to see who Bishop Rožman was...* (Štuhec 1997b: 19). In addition, the conviction of Rožman was declared to be illegal, and a condemnation of the entire Catholic Church. In these and similar contributions it is criticised as »The time of erroneous faiths«, about which the author explained:

Two (faiths) struck at us. One came from the north... The other faith came from the east... It took firm hold among the Slovenes. It proclaimed freedom and equality, but introduced servitude and inequality. This faith was so dangerous because it triggered civil war among the Slovenes (Stanovnik 1994: 7).

An Emotional Choice

Herbert Muller explained that every age has to rewrite its history, recreate the past, since 'in every age a different Christ dies on the Cross, and is resurrected to a different end' (Muller 1952: 33). As we have seen, Christ dies and is resurrected because political parties are constantly giving his death their own interpretation in order to capitalise on it. As we have already seen, it is not important for these interpretations on what day Christ died and on

which he rose again, and similarly it is not important what these days are called.

A review of the celebrations of Reformation Day and The Day of Remembrance of the Dead shows that Protestant and Catholic holidays, which the State Holidays and Days off in the Republic of Slovenia Act linked together after the creation of an independent Slovene state, do not in reality reflect tolerance of multi-confessionality and awareness of the importance of both confessions of faith for the cultural development of the Slovenes. According to an analysis of newspaper articles carried out by Eva Batista, celebrations of Reformation Day and the Day of Remembrance of the Dead have a feature in common: the selective shaping of memory of the post-war massacres, victims and graves and about former and present political authorities. This has been above all noticeable since 1991, when a religious content to the two holiday can no longer be perceived, but their messages have become explicitly political and, in the case of Reformation Day, also cultural. Commemoration of the past with both holidays is focused on presenting the victims of historical events as martyrs of the »real thing«, thus as morally elevated persons, who even risked their own lives in the struggle against evil. Such a celebration of the past selectively exploits stories of victims from the past in order to show the adherents of the opposing political party as the Other, and raises those who fight against evil onto a pedestal of high morality. Adapting history and the selective use of the collective memory deprives both holidays of space for religious contemplation. So such commemoration of the two holidays gives rise to the thought that both have lost religious significance on the public level but, on the other hand, have helped pull bones from the cupboard, which not only agitate spirits but strongly polarise them.

Because of such behaviour, the past as a problem in Slovenia of the last twenty years, as Peter Kolšek says, has become »generally the most current article, without it we are nothing, whether it concerns the Second World War or independence« (Kolšek 2009: 1). Even the president of the country, Danilo Türk, spoke out against such use of the past, on the grounds that this is »bad practice in Slovenia, melancholy, tragic events from the past are used for daily politics« (Türk 2009: 7). However, the forces of remembering and forgetting will continue to battle in Slovenia. In order to legitimise their present needs, politicians, intellectuals and the media are constantly remaking social memory and making people accept their inventions as the authentic memory of the society. As a result, the past is as unclear as the future. It will remain so as long as the past is seen as an emotional choice between an apple and an orange.

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