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The Formation and Development of the Socialist Town in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia,  
1945-1965

Oblikovanje in razvoj socialističnega mesta v Jugoslaviji in na Češkoslovaškem, 1945-1965



Mentor  
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This work is dedicated to the memory of my mother.



## INTRODUCTION

Many people, circumstances, ideas, and coincidences have influenced and shaped this project. I would probably never have written it, had I come from a different background with different experiences.

### **Personal Experience and Memories of the Late Socialism in Slovenia**

I grew up in Velenje<sup>1</sup>, a mining town, built in the late 1950s in North-Eastern Slovenia. My parents moved to the town in the mid-1970s, because they obtained employment there, not in a coal mining company, though. As a child I never identified the town as a mining one, to me it was just a 'normal' town with wide streets, open spaces, parks and a big playground. I never had the notion that we lived in a 'special' or, even worse, 'dirty mining town' as I heard it called by non-Velenjeans. It was rather the narrow, winding streets of medieval towns that I found inconvenient, if not unattractive.

Not just the social but also the national identity of Velenje from the 1970s onwards was a subject of mockery, with the town being called 'little Yugoslavia'.<sup>2</sup> Most of my classmates came from various Yugoslavian republics. My generation remembers the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Communist system through national and also social conflicts in the classrooms. Slovenian society in the 1980s was already so stratified that to us, as schoolchildren, it was clear who came from a poorer and who from a richer

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<sup>1</sup> During my childhood, the town was called *Titovo Velenje* (Tito's Velenje) (1981-1990). In 1977, a six-meter monument of the Yugoslavian marshal was placed in central Tito Square and stands there to this day.

<sup>2</sup> Since the late 1960s, there was a strong emigration flux of workers from other Yugoslavian republics to Velenje.



family. The latter, for example, more frequently traveled to shopping centers in Austria (mainly to Lavamünd or Graz), where they could purchase goods that were not available at home. Having the biggest box of "Jolly" pencil crayons or Barbie doll designer clothes (instead of home-made ones) meant a huge difference to a 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade child. When Communism ended in the country, came the very upsetting recognition that we were the first generation who were not going to be accepted among the Juniors (*mladinci*), and would forever remain the Pioneers (*pionirji*).<sup>3</sup>

### **Transformation Period: between the “Balkan Babel”, (re)Discovery of Central Europe and Yugoslavian Exceptionalism**

I studied History at the University of Ljubljana in the late 1990s and early 21st century. Our four-year program emphasized Slovenian, South-Eastern European and Global History from medieval to modern times. There had been a strong attempt to reform the curricula, allowing more options for individual choices and subjects.<sup>4</sup> After the collapse of Yugoslavia, the beginning of the Yugoslavian wars<sup>5</sup> and the Slovenian proclamation of independence, boundaries were set up to separate the Slovenian nation in an attempt to reject association with the Balkans. Being part of Central Europe meant being associated with the South, the ‘uncivilized Balkans’.

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<sup>3</sup> The Pioneer Organization (*pionirska organizacija*) was a Communist-led organization, which children joined when entering primary school. In their seventh year at school, the Pioneers were accepted among the Juniors in the Junior Organization (*mladinska organizacija*).

<sup>4</sup> In 1991, the curriculum of the Department of History at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana was again renewed (again after 1985/86) and lasted until the beginning of the Bologna system in 2009. Janez Mlinar: *Zgodovina oddelka*. <http://www.zgodovina-ff-uni-lj.net/>

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the History Department at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, there was a great loss of contact with History departments in ex-Yugoslavian states.

After the post-war Cold War division there were two different backgrounds to the revival of the concept of Central Europe. In the 1960s, the three neighboring countries – Yugoslavia (Slovenia and Croatia), Austria and Italy—established cultural and economic relations in the region, irrespective of the political order.<sup>6</sup> For the ‘Central Europeans’ from former Yugoslavia, Central Europe represented a distinction from the ‘oriental’, Southern Yugoslavia, while ‘Eastern Europe’ was part of the ‘totalitarian’ Eastern Bloc, from which Yugoslavia, after 1948, had escaped. On the other hand, since the mid-1970s, dissidents in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, transformed the concept of Central Europe from a geostrategic, historical or geographic area into an ideological concept and a constituent part of their movement.<sup>7</sup> For them ‘Eastern Europe’, being historically part of Central Europe, meant sharing a common Western cultural background of democratic civilization, in contrast to ‘oriental totalitarianism’, namely the Soviet Union.<sup>8</sup>

One of my first trips to ‘the East’ was to Slovakia which, in my imagination, represented a poor, underdeveloped part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and later Czechoslovakia. However, in contrast to my expectations, I was overwhelmed by the historical town center of Bratislava. At the same time, I was astonished to see Petržalka, an enormous settlement of prefabricated apartment buildings, the ‘panelaks’ of the 1970s

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Vodopivec: Srednja Evropa je, Srednje Evrope ni. In: Peter Vodopivec (ed.): Srednja Evropa, Mladinska knjiga, Ljubljana, 1991, 7. In this respect, in 1982 a television program was shown: *Alpe-Donava-Jadran, Podobe iz Srednje Evrope* (Alps-Danube-Adria, Images from Central Europe) on TV channels in Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and later in Italy, Switzerland, Bavaria and Hungary.

<sup>7</sup> Timothy Garton Ash: *The Uses of Adversity. Essays on the Fate of Central Europe*, Granta Books, Cambridge, Second edition 1991, Timothy Garton Ash, *Does Central Europe Exist?*, The New York Review of Books, October 9, 1986 and Maria Todorova: *Imagining the Balkans*. Oxford University Press, 2009, 140-160.

<sup>8</sup> Oto Luthar and Breda Luthar: *Marking the Difference or Looking for Common Ground? Southeast Central Europe*. In: Nancy Meriwether Wingfield (ed.): *Creating the Other: Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, Austrian Studies, Volume 5, Berghahn books, 2005, 231-241.



and 1980s, finding it very hard to compare it with similar settlements I was familiar with in Slovenia (for example Štepanjsko naselje in Ljubljana or Kardeljev trg in Velenje). The aforementioned attempts to change the curricula at the Department of History were not immune to the question of the inclusion of the History of Central Europe in it. From the mid-1990s onwards, it was possible for History students at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana to choose the Czech, Polish or Slovak language and History courses. I chose the Slovak language and History classes and studied and resided in Bratislava many times between 1999 and 2004 .

### **The Rise of Historiography of New Socialist Towns**

I soon started to practice ‘new socialist town tourism’, during which I visited many new socialist towns: Dimitrovgrad, Dunajváros, Eisenhüttenstadt, Halle-Neustadt, Havířov, Horní Slavkov, Most, Nová Dubnica, Nova Gorica, Novi Beograd, Nowa Huta, Poruba, and Považská Bystrica. At first, new socialist towns, conventionally seen as failures of the Communist system, became an object of interest especially for architects and art historians.<sup>9</sup> Since my knowledge of the architectural history was very poor, in 2004/2005 I studied at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana with Prof. Aleš Vodopivec. In 2005 the Krakow Town Museum opened a new branch in Nowa Huta, dedicated to the cultural

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<sup>9</sup> Matús Dulla, Henrieta Moravčíková: *Architektúra v 20. storocí*. Vydavateľstvo Slovart, 2002. Maciej Miezan; *Kraków's Nowa Huta, Socialist in Form, Fascinating in Content*. Wydawnictwo Bezdroża, 2005; *Nowa Huta, przeszłość i wizja, studium muzeum rozproszonego*. Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Krakowa, Kraków 2005; Elisabeth Knauer-Romani: *Eisenhüttenstadt und die Idealstadt des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Weimar 2000; Thomas Topfstedt: *Eisenhüttenstadt: Die Magistrale zum Kombinat*. Deutscher Städtebau in der Nachkriegszeit. München, 1992; Michaela Marek: *Die Idealstadt im Realsozialismus. Versuch zu den Traditionen ihrer Notwendigkeit*. In: Christiane Brenner, Peter Heumos (Eds.): *Sozialgeschichtliche Kommunismusforschung 2005*, 425-480; Sedláková, Radomíra. *Sorela: česká architektura padesátých let*. Prague: Národní galerie, 1994; Urban Novak (ed.): *Arhitekturna delavnica Velenje 2000*, MO Velenje, 2000. Slovenian architects, Nande Korpnik and Edo Vučina, published numerous articles in *Naš čas*, a Velenje local newspaper in the first half of the 1990s. They emphasized the unique architectural and urban structure of Velenje and criticized town authorities for neglecting the town's architectural heritage.

heritage of the town. One of the first exhibitions with an accompanying catalogue was on Architecture.<sup>10</sup>

Many municipalities usually publish pictorial publications for town anniversaries or for diplomatic and tourist purposes. For their 40<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries in the 1990s and 2000s, many municipalities of new socialist towns supported the organization of conferences, publication of more comprehensive volumes,<sup>11</sup> films,<sup>12</sup> exhibitions,<sup>13</sup> or even unveiled new statues in the town centers.<sup>14</sup>

New socialist towns soon became the object of interest, not only for architects but also for historians, especially those working on Social, Cultural or Comparative History.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nowa Huta – architektura i twórcy miasta idealnego. Niezrealizowane projekty. Catalogue of the exhibition 1<sup>st</sup> February–5<sup>th</sup> May 2006. [http://www.mhk.pl/oddzialy/dzieje\\_nowej\\_huty](http://www.mhk.pl/oddzialy/dzieje_nowej_huty)

<sup>11</sup> Jiří Kroha a jeho výjimečný koncept ideálního mesta. SAS 2006; Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice, Mestna občina Velenje, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> David Vigner: Mesto zelene. Film o tom, jak na zelene louce vyrostlo mesto. Davi Studio Film, 2006. Anja Medved, Nadja Veluscek: Mesto na travniku, esej o Novi Gorici. Kinoatelj, Mestna občina Nova Gorica. David Vigner: Mesto zelene. Film o tom, jak na zelene louce vyrostlo mesto. Davi Studio Film, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Thematic exhibitions at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Velenje in 2009: Tito in Velenje (in the House of Culture Velenje, 4.7.2009 - 13.9.2009 and Town in a park, exhibition of the postcards from Velenje, 1955-1965 Museum Velenje 26.3.2009 - 3.12.2009; the museum has a permanent exhibition: *When Velenje was becoming a town*, covering the period from 1945 to 1960. In 2006, a year after 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Havířov, the local newspaper Havířovský deník published a series of articles written by Josef Pintér, comparing photos taken in the past and nowadays.

<sup>14</sup> In September 2009, at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Velenje's town center, a monument in the memory of Nestl Žgank, the director of the Coal Mine Velenje (1950-1965) and town's mayor (1969-1978) was placed.

<sup>15</sup> On **Nowa Huta**: Katherine A. Lebow: Revising the Politicized Landscape Nowa Huta, 1949-1957. City & Society, Volume 11, Issue 1-2, 1999, Public Works, Private Lives: Youth Brigades in Nowa Huta in the 1950s," Contemporary European History 10: 2, 2001, Socialist Leisure in Time and Space: Hooliganism and Bikiniarstwo in Nowa Huta, 1949-1956. In: Christiane Brenner and Peter Heumos (eds.): Sozialgeschichtliche Kommunismusforschung. Vergleichende Beiträge zur sozialen Entwicklung in der Tschechoslowakei, DDR, Polen und Ungarn 1948-1960. Band Wiesseer Tagungen des Collegium Carolinum 29, 2005 and Barbara Klich-Kluczevska: Nowa Huta. Skąd przychodzimy (Nowa Huta. The roots of newcomers). In: Sybilla L. (ed.): Moja Nowa Huta, Krakow 2009. **Ostrava region**: Jana Jílková: Každodenní život obyvatel města Havířova od jeho počátků do poloviny šedesátých let 20. století. Ostrava University 2007;; Kimberly Elna Zarecor: Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: The Architecture of Industrialized Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-56. Pittsburgh University Press 2011; **Northwestern**



Already in 1993, the Museum of the History and Culture of Everyday Life in East Germany (*Museum für die Alltagsgeschichte und Alltagskultur in Osten Deutschlands*) had been established in Eisenhüttenstadt and renamed in 1999 as *Dokumentationszentrum Alltagskultur der DDR*.<sup>16</sup> Despite being a historian of the Soviet Union, the work by Stephen Kotkin on the first Soviet new socialist town of Magnitogorsk<sup>17</sup> was influential for the next generation of scholars. In his work, he pursued the study of power at the micro-level, asking how socialism was lived and organized during Stalinism.

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**Bohemia:** Lubomír Zeman: Architektura socialistického realismu v severozápadních Čechách. Národní památkový ústav, územní odborné pracoviště v Ostravě, 2008; on **Halle-Neustadt:** Albrecht Wiesener: Als die Zukunft noch nicht vergangen war – der Aufbau der Chemiarbeiterstadt Halle-Neustadt 1958-1980. In: Werner Freitag/Katrin Minner/Andreas Ranft (Hrsg.): Geschichte der Stadt Halle, 2 Bände, Band 2: Halle im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Halle 2006; on **Eisenhüttenstadt:** Andreas Ludwig: Eisenhüttenstadt. Wandel einer industriellen Gründungsstadt. Potsdam: Brandenburgische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Brandenburgische Historische Hefte 14, 2000; **Dimitrovgrad:** Ulf Brunnbauer: Die Stadt der Jugend: Dimitrovgrad. In: Die sozialistische Lebensweise. Ideologie, Gesellschaft, Familie und Politik in Bulgarien (1944-1989). Zur Kunde Südosteuropas, Band II/35, Böhlau 2007; Bilyana Raeva: Migration processes – Dimitrovgrad (1947 – 1989). Ethnographic Institute and Museum, Sofia 2011, **Žďár nad Sázavou:** Petr Lozovík: Das alte und das neue in einer sozialistischen „Musterstadt“: die Bezirk Stadt Žďár nad Sázavou. In: Christiane Brenner and Peter Heumos (eds.): Sozialgeschichtliche Kommunismusforschung. Vergleichende Beiträge zur sozialen Entwicklung in der Tschechoslowakei, DDR, Polen und Ungarn 1948-1960. Band Wiesseer Tagungen des Collegium Carolinum 29, 2005; **Hungary/Dunaujváros:** Pál Germuska: Between Theory and Practice: Planning Socialist Cities in Hungary. In: Urban Machinery. Inside Modern European Cities. Ur. Mikael HARD and Thomas J. MISA. The MIT Press 2008; Sándor Horváth: Continuities and Discontinuities in Kádár's Hungary: Everyday Life in a Socialist Town. In: Kádár's Hungary – Kekkonen's Finland, Hungarologische Beiträge 14, 2002. Sándor Horváth: Alltag in Stálinváros. Die „Zivilisierten“ und die „Wilden“ in der ersten sozialistischen Stadt Ungarn. In: Christiane Brenner and Peter Heumos (eds.): Sozialgeschichtliche Kommunismusforschung. Vergleichende Beiträge zur sozialen Entwicklung in der Tschechoslowakei, DDR, Polen und Ungarn 1948-1960. Band Wiesseer Tagungen des Collegium Carolinum 29, 2005. **Comparison:** Dagmara Jajeśniak-Quast: "Die sozialistische Planstadt Eisenhüttenstadt im Vergleich mit Nowa Huta und Ostrava Kunčice, in: Bohn, Thomas (Hg.): Von der "europäischen Stadt" zur "sozialistischen Stadt" und zurück? Urbane Transformationen im östlichen Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts, München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2009, S. 99-113 and Jajeśniak-Quast: In the Shadow of the Factory: Steel Towns in Postwar Eastern Europe, in: Hård, Mikael / Misa, Thomas J. (Ed.): Urban Machinery: Inside Modern European Cities. Ur. Mikael Hard and Thomas J. Misa. The MIT Press 2008; Arkadiusz Markowski: Polska i Czechosłowacja w okowach ideologii komunistycznej w latach 1945-1955. Havirov, Ziar nad Hronom i Tychy – pierwsze lata budowy trzech miast socjalistycznych, Rozprawa doktorska Uniwersytet Ostrawski w Ostrawie, Wydział filozoficzny, Katedra historii, Ostrava 2010.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.alltagskultur-ddr.de/pages/home.html>

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Kotkin: Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization. University of California Press, 1995.

In recent years, scholars working on the planning and experience of new socialist towns, shape an enviable community of different disciplines: historians, sociologists, anthropologists, architects, art historians, all comparing urban development in different countries, as well as making it thematic and transnational.<sup>18</sup>

### **Yugoslavian (Slovenian) Communism as Totalitarianism: Revisionists and the Politics of History in the Mid-2000s in Comparison with the Czech Republic**

In addition, the political situation in Slovenia in the mid-2000s influenced my intention to prepare a dissertation project on the topic of a new socialist town, with a comparative approach.

Besides the aforementioned nationalistic perception, contempt for the Balkans and prioritization of Central Europe, there was also a perception of Yugoslavian (Slovenian) exceptionalism during the Communist period towards the former Soviet Bloc countries. This view was soon challenged by the revisionists' totalitarian view, which echoed similar politics of history in the former Eastern Bloc countries. The totalitarian approach to Communism, i.e. the Communist Party and its leadership enjoying a total monopoly of power and imposing its ideology on a largely passive population, started at the beginning of the Cold War in the USA and soon began to be criticized.

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<sup>18</sup> Last conventions of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) and the European Association for Urban History (EAUH), devoted many panels to, everyday life in socialist towns and comparing them with those in the West and Third World countries. New (socialist) towns have also become the subject of a project sponsored by the EU government, in which common problems among new towns built in the East, or in the East and West, have been discussed. See: <http://www.pilotcities.eu/> or <http://www.dk-ostrov.cz/sorela/>

Pascaline Gaborit: New Towns: image, identities, future perspectives. Peter Lang, 2010.



In the 1970s, studies on the Soviet Union under Stalin moved from the 'center' of social and intellectual systems to the 'periphery' by researching everyday life, and were criticized for discussing History with the State 'left out', as well as omitting the importance of terror, coercion, and propaganda, the central point of totalitarian theory. When Western historiography, if not discarding it, at least had been discussing and looking for an alternative approach, the totalitarian one found its revival in Eastern European historiography after 1989.<sup>19</sup>

From the late 1990s and especially in the mid-2000s, there were strong attempts in Slovenia to declare the period of Communism in Slovenia (Yugoslavia) as an era of totalitarianism. I will present the situation in comparison with the Czech Republic. There are two crucial periods in the Yugoslavian (Slovenian) Communist era which were the most politicized. One is the period dealing with the Second World War, which is a crucial time for understanding the legitimating processes of the 1945-1990 phase. The second crucial period is the Yugoslav split with the Soviet Union in 1948, which gave legitimization to Titoism and made Yugoslavia exceptional when compared to other East European countries. Bojan Godeša argues how the ideological changes of the second half of the 1980s affected Slovenian historiography and enabled the opening up of topics that were previously considered as taboo or only partially researched.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Abbot Gleason: *Totalitarianism. The inner history of the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, 1995, 140-142.

<sup>20</sup> Bojan Godeša: *Revision and Prospects of New Vistas: An Opportunity for a 'Different' kind of History?* *Historical Review*, 63, 3-4, Ljubljana 2009, 440-457. Božo Repe: *Jugoslovanska historiografija po drugi svetovni vojni*. *Currents of History, Journal of the Institute for recent history of Serbia*, 1-4/1999, 312-325.



On the other hand, in the Czech Republic the changes in historiography began only after 1989, when studies followed more or less the totalitarianism-inspired approach, initiated by democratic politicians and intellectuals who had escaped to the West, strictly dividing 'Party' and 'Society'.<sup>21</sup> The far less radical politics in the Slovenian history of the 1990s prevented the totalitarian paradigm to become the central one.

Nevertheless, after Slovenia became independent, two patterns of interpretation emerged in its historiography. The rightist one claims that during the Second World War a Communist revolution threw the country into civil war. Anti-communists fought back, even though with the help of the occupiers. The leftist pattern claims that identifying the struggle for national freedom with a Communist revolution, as well as rehabilitating Slovenian collaborators is not acceptable.<sup>22</sup>

One of the first widely discussed and publicly introduced notions of the totalitarian nature of the Slovenian communist period was the exhibition held in the Ljubljana Museum of Recent History (December 1998 to January 1999) and in the accompanying catalogue, 'The Dark Side of the Moon. A short history of totalitarianism in Slovenia 1945-1990'.<sup>23</sup> Both the exhibition and catalogue were edited by Slovenian writer, publicist and former dissident, Drago Jančar. In the years that followed, there was extreme polarization between Slovenian historians and society about the totalitarian nature of the Slovenian

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<sup>21</sup> Pavel Kolář, Michal Kopeček: A difficult quest for new paradigms: Czech historiography after 1989. In: Sorin Antohi, Balázs Trencsényi and Péter Apor (eds.): *Narratives unbound. Historical studies in post-communist Eastern Europe*. CEU 2008, 176-218.

<sup>22</sup> Janez Cvirn, Jure Gašparič: Unbearable burden of history. Clash between historians in Slovenia. In: *HOP Historie-Otázky-Problémy*. 2/2010, 135-143.

<sup>23</sup> Drago Jančar (ed.): *'The Dark Side of the Moon. A short history of totalitarianism in Slovenia 1945-1990'*, Museum of Resent history, Ljubljana 1998.

socialist period, mostly not discussed in professional publications, but in daily/weekly journals.<sup>24</sup> Historians, trying to present post-war History within a totalitarian framework, received institutional recognition in 2008, at the end of the mandate of the Conservative government of Janez Janša (2004-2008), when the Research Center for National Reconciliation (*Študijski center za narodno spravo*) was established under the protection of the Ministry of Justice, which enabled the new Institute to impose its projects on other institutes through the Ministry.

According to Czech historian, Michal Kopeček, there were two periods in the Czech 'politics of history' after 1989.<sup>25</sup> The most urgent issue of the first period was the quest for legitimacy of the new order, with the new political elite being concerned about remedying past injustices, such as the rehabilitation of former political prisoners, property restitution and economic transformation. The most controversial issue at the time was the use of 'lustration': the screening of public officials with regard to their past political activities in the Communist regime and possible collaboration with the security services.<sup>26</sup> The issue of lustration was also debated in the Slovenian Parliament, but never approved.

The politics of history activists in the Czech Republic went even further and in 1993 achieved the success of the Czech Parliament declaring the former regime between

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<sup>24</sup> Discussions about totalitarian elements in Slovenia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were published already in the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in a framework of discussions on National reconciliation published in specialized, professional journals. e.g. Jože Dežman (ed.): *Totalitarizmi in sodobnost 1945-1995*. Borec, revija za zgodovino, literature in antropologijo, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Michal Kopeček: *The Czech Republic: From Democracy Legitimization to the Politics of Memory*. In: *Journal of Modern European History*, Vol. 8/2010/2, 145.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

February 1948 and November 1989 as illegitimate and totalitarian, and in 2004 allowing free access to the majority of archival documents from the Communist era. This ensured that the Czech archival policy was one of the most, if not the most, liberal in the entire post-Communist world.<sup>27</sup> The establishment by a special law in 2007 and the work of the Czech Institute for the Documentation of Totalitarian Regimes (*Ústav pro Studium totalitních režimů*) are highly controversial. This Institute, just as in the Slovenian case, is not defined under the Academy of Sciences or the University, but under Parliament. The co-founders of the Institute were relatively young individuals who were “interpreting the documents of the repressive apparatus of Communism with an almost total absence of methodological reflection on the single source”.<sup>28</sup> Both Institutes, together with other similar ones in East Central Europe actively organize conferences on Communist totalitarianism in Europe and produce research, mostly on repression and resistance under Communism.<sup>29</sup>

As presented in the Czech historiography after 1989, the most common term used to identify the 1948 to 1989 period is the ‘totalitarian regime’ (*totalitní režim*) and only gradually have new concepts been introduced. On the other hand, in the Slovenian historiography, the notion of the socialist period as a totalitarian one was only more widely discussed at the beginning of the new millennium. Most commonly Slovenian

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 147.

<sup>28</sup> Muriel Blaive: La question épineuse de la collaboration dans l’appréciation du passé communiste tchèque: quelques réflexions. In : Georges Mink, Pascal Bonnard (eds.) : Le Passé au présent. Gisements mémoriels et actions historisantes en Europe centrale et orientale. Michel Houdiard (Éd.), 2010, 226, 227.

<sup>29</sup> See for example: Totalitarizmi – vprašanja in izzivi. Ob dvajsetletnici padca železne zavese v Evropi. Zbornik prispevkov z mednarodnega znanstvenega posveta 9. novembra 2009 v Ljubljani. Študijski center za narodno spravo, Ljubljana 2009.



historians identify the period between 1945 and 1990 as the ‘time during socialism’ (*v socializmu, v čase socializma*).

Also other former European socialist countries have expressed similar interpretations of the Czech historiography. The most complex discussion on conceptualizing the nature of the socialist system has taken place in German historiography. For example, historians of the GDR are trying to define whether it was a ‘modern dictatorship’ (Jürgen Kocka), a ‘welfare dictatorship’ (Konrad Jarausch), a ‘participatory dictatorship’ (Mary Fulbrook), or a ‘consensus dictatorship’ (Martin Sabrow). Here, the definition of ‘dictatorship’ unlike ‘totalitarianism’ does not suggest dichotomy between the ‘rulers’ and the ones who were ‘ruled’, but allows an active role and reaction from a broad social strata (to a certain extent).<sup>30</sup>

A comparison or the application of different characteristics of socialism from different historiographies can be difficult and confusing to understand the interpretation behind it. For example, while in the Czech historiography, the concept of ‘socialist/communist dictatorship’ represents a more open and flexible understanding of the period, this concept in Slovenian historiography has a flair for totalitarian characteristics.

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas Lindenberger: Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung. In: Thomas Lindenberger: Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur: Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR. Köln am Rhein 1999. Also: Mary Fulbrook: Approaches to German Contemporary History since 1945. Politics and Paradigms. *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 1 (2004), 1, 31-50. Corey Ross: The East German Dictatorship. Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR. London 2002.

When I was given the possibility of applying for a scholarship within a project called ‘Socialist Dictatorship as a World of Meaning’ (*Sozialistische Diktatur als Sinnwelt*),<sup>31</sup> I was very skeptical about working within a group that had the term, ‘socialist dictatorship’ in its title. The mysterious word, ‘*Sinnwelt*’, prompted me to submit my application.

## **Methodologies**

In September 2007, I joined the project “*Socialist Dictatorship as a World of Meaning. Representations of Social Order and Transformation of Authority in East Central Europe after 1945*”, referred to as *Sinnwelt*. It was a combined undertaking of the Institute of Contemporary History, Prague, and the Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam. The project sought to “analyze the mechanisms of establishing, perpetuation and erosion of the Communist dictatorships using the methods of social and cultural history”.<sup>32</sup>

## *Comparison*

Together with researchers working on different former European socialist countries, the *Sinnwelt* project was an attempt to better understand the different experiences of various countries in the region during the second half of the 20th century, about which Mark Pittaway stated in the 2004 edition of his book, “Eastern Europe 1939-2000”, that it was still “grasped relatively poorly.”<sup>33</sup> However, in the last decade, a comparative approach, in the form of articles’ collections and international projects covering the experiences of

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<sup>31</sup> Sozialistische Diktatur als Sinnwelt. Repräsentationen gesellschaftlicher Ordnung und Herrschaftswandel in Ostmitteleuropa in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.sinnwelt.usd.cas.cz/>

<sup>33</sup> Mark Pittaway: Eastern Europe 1939-2000. Hodder Arnold 2004, x.

life under socialism has been extensively expanded. This mostly covers separate case studies on individual countries, accompanied by an editor's introduction.

In order to answer and better understand the aforementioned questions, i.e. the uniqueness (or not) of the Yugoslavian way, interpretations of the socialist period as a totalitarian one, and experiences of living in new socialist towns, I decided to undertake an equal comparison of two case study towns: Velenje in the former Yugoslavia (now in Slovenia) and Havířov in the former Czechoslovakia (now in the Czech Republic). While it is obvious why I chose Velenje, I decided on Havířov because it is a similar type of town to Velenje—a mining town, built in the 1950s<sup>34</sup>—as well as for practical reasons, since I was residing in the Czech Republic during my involvement in the *Sinnwelt* project.

### **History of Everyday Life / *Eigen-Sinn***

Political differences and consequently also differences in the economic, social and cultural sphere between Yugoslavia and other European communist countries have already been researched to some extent. The differences mainly derive from the autonomous partisan resistance during the Second World War, fragmented by the *Informbiro* in 1948 which led to the decentralization and opening of the country, Tito's cult, the introduction of Self-Management in internal policy and the Non-Alignment Movement in foreign policy.

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<sup>34</sup> Beside, among all the towns I visited during my 'new socialist town tourism' I found architecture in Havířov very vibrant and colorful, which was different from what I have seen in other towns.



However, despite the differences, one key issue remained the same in all the Communist countries: the monopoly of the power of one, Communist, party. My aim was to investigate how Yugoslavian withdrawals were demonstrated in the case of Velenje, by comparing it with a similar case study from another Eastern Bloc country, Czechoslovakia.

To research and compare ideological interventions, the reaction and adoption of the population in their micro habitus, I needed a special methodological model. The methodology of the History of Everyday Life (*Alltagsgeschichte*) under Communism proved to be suitable.<sup>35</sup> Although this methodology has been criticized as a social history with the politics left out, it represents “a particular form of the ‘bottom-up’ approach, which starts from the bottom-down, from the realities of everyday life and then moves up to find the interaction between people’s daily activities and their forms of adjustment or defense and the practices undertaken by the authorities”.<sup>36</sup> This methodology enables the identification of ‘the limits of dictatorship’ and “detects the motivations of social agents through the analysis of their own process of making sense or construction of autonomous meaning, coined by the word, *Eigen-Sinn*.”<sup>37</sup>

## Sources

As required for the methodology of the History of Everyday Life, this study is based on the uses of official sources like letters, petitions, requests, complaints, denouncements,

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<sup>35</sup> Already during the 1980s, and then extensively in the 1990s, the *Alltagsgeschichte* was developed in German historiography with Alf Lüdtke as the main theoretician of the school. Alf Lüdtke (ed.): The history of everyday life: reconstructing historical experiences and ways of life, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1995.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Corner: Introduction. In: Paul Corner (ed.): Popular opinion in totalitarian regimes: fascism, nazism, communism. Oxford University Press, 2009, 5.

<sup>37</sup> Péter Apor: The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships. East Central Europe/ECE, vols. 34-35, 2007-2008, part 1-2, 185-218.

photos and films, in order to examine contemporary experiences and reconstruct the way of thinking involved in an authentic manner.

### **Time Frame**

The time frame of the study is between 1945 and 1965. The lower delineation is marked by the end of the Second World War, an event which was important for both Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The upper delineation is not marked by a single event important to both countries. My decision on the year 1965 was adapted regarding three circumstances which took place or were in progress around that time.

Firstly, there was an event in the first half of the 1960s in both towns which represented a shift from the earlier optimistic, hopeful belief in progress and Party to a more severe and discouraging one. In the Czechoslovakian case, it is represented by the year 1961, when a devastating tragedy took place in the pits where most of the miners from Havířov were working. For Yugoslavian Velenje, the year 1964 represents the ultimate peak in the series of its rapid development. Specifically, it was the year that the project for the Velenje electro-chemical combine, one of the biggest investments in Slovenia after the end of the Second World War, was approved. However, just a few months later, the Central Slovenian Bank refused to credit it. In addition, many experts warned of a failed investment until finally the project was completely canceled.

Secondly, the years for the official opening of both towns were 1955 (Havířov) and 1959 (Velenje). The decision to prolong the research for a few more years after the official

opening of both towns enables us to observe the advantages and disadvantages of life in a new town, the experiences, challenges, and adaptations by the new town residents and new local authorities.

Thirdly, the mid-1960s, not just for both mining towns, but also in the global perspective, represent a shift in people's perceptions towards the authorities and the way of living, where old, traditional modes and habits began to be reproduced or supplanted by new, modern ones.

### **Structure and Chapter Summary**

The text is divided into five chapters, each containing an introduction and two episodes from both case study towns, Velenje and Havířov. It is traced throughout the dissertation how socialism attempted to establish new norms, values and patterns of behavior, but was also capable of reproducing pre-socialist cultural traditions and patterns by adjusting to the local context.

The first part of Chapter 1 is an introduction to the political and social conditions in both town communities during the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Interwar period and the Second World War. The second half of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 examine the asynchronous method of building and the consolidation of socialism in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, both shifting from its repressive character to an accommodation of the domestic political circumstances, which strengthened and, to a great extent, legitimized the system. Chapter 3 concentrates on the conditions, experiences, perceptions and



evaluation of work, whether concerning the introduction of new methods, attitudes towards gender, or intervention in economic planning. This chapter shows how, after a few enthusiastic years, the first great disappointments of the system occurred, as well the responsibility on state and local levels. Chapter 4 examines the realities of the public sphere. On the one hand, it investigates how local and national identities of both towns were intertwined with the socialist identity and, on the other hand, it shows what image and reputation the towns had in the eyes of their residents and visitors. Chapter 5 examines the transformation of the private sphere. Together with Chapter 2, it assesses the conception of modernity regarding housing and household policies.



Fig. 0.1. Map of Austria–Hungary:

Empire of Austria (Cisleithania): 1. Bohemia, 2. Bukovina, 3. Carinthia, 4. Carniola, 5. Dalmatia, 6. Galicia, 7. Küstenland, 8. Lower Austria, 9. Moravia, 10. Salzburg, 11. Silesia, 12. Styria, 13. Tyrol, 14. Upper Austria, 15. Vorarlberg;  
 Kingdom of Hungary (Transleithania): 16. Hungary proper 17. Croatia-Slavonia;  
 Austrian-Hungarian Condominium: 18. Bosnia and Herzegovina





Fig. 0.2., 0.3. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia during the Interwar period



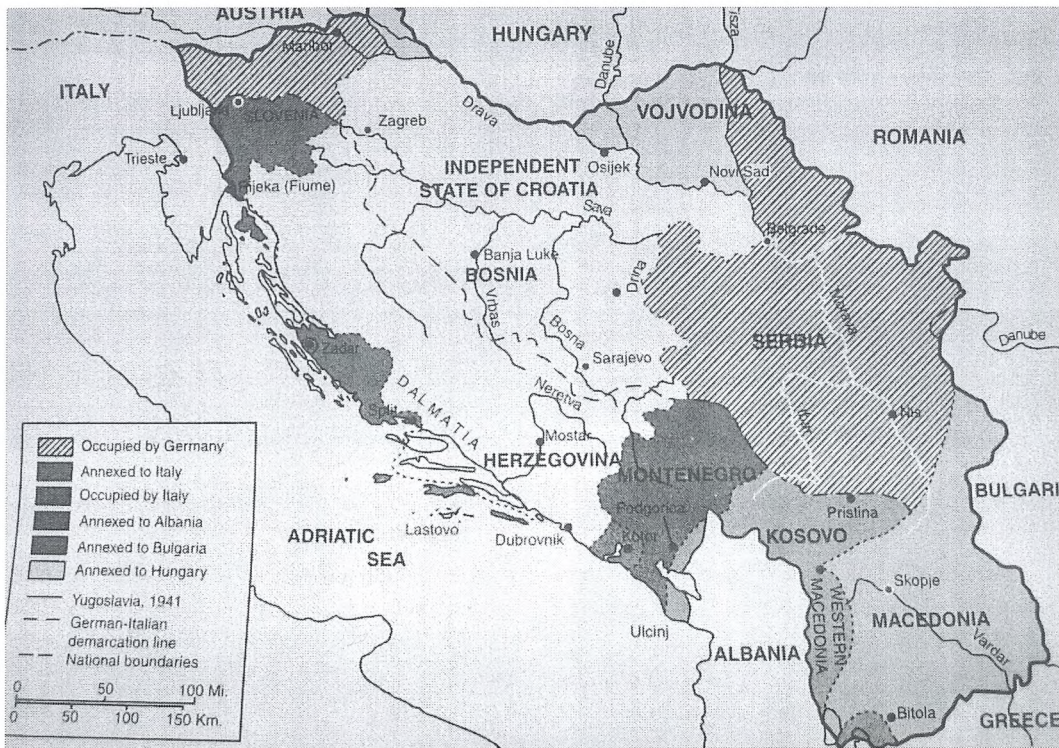


Fig. 0.4., 0.5. The partition and occupation of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia at the beginning of the Second World War



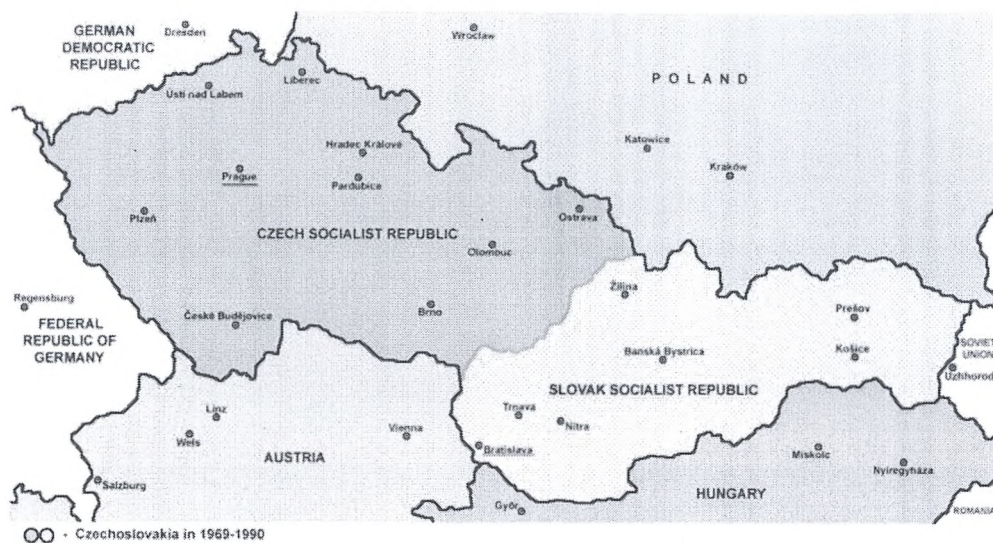


Fig. 06., 0.7. Republican administrative division of Czechoslovakia (Czech and Slovak Socialist Republics since 1969) and in Yugoslavia (for example People's (Socialist) Republic of Slovenia since 1945)



## 1. BUILDING A NEW COMMUNITY

Building socialism in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia and legitimizing the power in the hands of the Communist Party in both countries was a process which comprised internal and external circumstances and methods, some of them common to and some different in both countries and their individual regions. Firstly, this chapter portrays a short history and the identities of two sites in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first is East Silesia, or Tešínsko, one of the most industrialized areas of the dissolved Monarchy and the first Czechoslovak Republic, with its own tendencies towards autonomy, a strong workers' identity, and Czech-Polish disputes, which, in particular immediately after the First and Second World Wars, escalated into violence. The other site is the Šaleška Valley in Lower Styria, which, as part of the Empire or the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia), was predominantly agrarian and Catholic. During the Second World War, both parts were introduced to violent Nazi policies. In Tešínsko, since their resistance was the strongest, the Poles hoped that the area would become a part of Poland after the war. Instead, with the aid of the Soviet Union, whose Red Army liberated the area, it remained within Czechoslovakia. People in the Šaleška Valley, however, had never had any direct experience with the Red Army since the territory was liberated by the local resistance movement. By the end of the war, the Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS) represented the only organized political group. However, it was only in the last year and a half before the end of the war that the resistance and the Communist movement had strengthened in the valley. As admissions to the Party during the war took place on a broader basis, the peasants became the dominant social group in the Party. In

Tešíňsko, most of the Communists in the area were Poles who welcomed the victory of the Communists in Czechoslovakia in February 1948. The Czechoslovakian Communist Party (KSČ) was the only political party that was not hostile to the Polish minority in the radical atmosphere towards national minorities in the Czechoslovakian postwar years. Therefore, when during the purges of the early 1950s, the former tolerant policy of the KSČ towards the Polish minority in Tešíňsko changed and began to be more repressive, the labels and accusations of the Communist authorities corresponded to the already known forms. Deficient and inadequate training of the Communists in the Šaleška Valley was obvious in the first postwar years, as well as after the break with the Cominform in 1948. The CPS invested much effort in strengthening its position in the Šaleška Valley and to legitimate its new Yugoslav position. However, as this chapter shows, terror and fear were not central when imposing a new social order. Instead, the authorities were faced with the people's resistance and the need for negotiation. On the other hand, without using overt repression, the authorities made use of what Slovene philosopher Renata Salecl defines as *mechanisms of identification*, where people start to obey the authorities, without even knowing it, and see it as their own free choice.<sup>38</sup> This chapter focuses on the issues that were the subject of the negotiations, as well as on the *phantasms* (Salecl 1993) through which people identified with the postwar policies in Tešíňsko and the Šaleška Valley.

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<sup>38</sup> Renata Salecl: Zakaj ubogamo oblast? Nadzorovanje, ideologija in ideološke fantazme. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1993, 9.

## **1.1 THE STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF ŚLŮNSK / TĚŠÍNSKO / ZAOLZIE**

Rich in natural resources, Silesia was of strategic importance and under the control of different rulers and states: Greater Moravia, Bohemia, the early Polish state, the Crown of Bohemia. In 1526, it was passed on to the Habsburg Monarchy. From 1740 to 1742, Frederick the Great seized seven-eighths of Silesia from the Habsburgs, leaving Empress Maria Theresa with the southernmost fragment of Upper Silesia. This Austrian Silesia, bordering on Prussian Silesia, Galicia (Little Poland), Moravia and Slovakia, and the neighboring Archdiocese of Breslau (Wrocław) and Olmütz (Olomouc), was reconstituted by Vienna as a separate Crown land. It consisted of two territories separated by the Moravian wedge, becoming known as West and East Silesia. The Crown land's capital of Troppau (Opava) was located in West Silesia, while Teschen (Cieszyn, Těšín) served as the main administrative center of East Silesia. After the First World War, Lower Silesia remained in Germany, while Upper Silesia was divided among Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Throughout this dissertation, East (Těšín) Silesia will be the main focus of interest.

### **East Silesian Identities (1900 - 1938)**

Religious, linguistic, political and socio-economic borders played a role in the formation of ethnic identity in Austrian Silesia. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the inhabitants of East Silesia were of German, Polish and Czech nationality, Jews and emigrants from Austrian



Galicia who had a very poor or even no national awareness.<sup>39</sup> Two major conflicts shaped the definition of ethnicity in interwar East Silesia. Firstly, there was the conflict between those espousing a strictly regional identity and those who claimed a broader ethnic and national identity. The second conflict was the Czech-Polish one, which concerned nationalist ideology as much as the possession and control of the land, rail lines and industries.<sup>40</sup> Austrian Silesia was the most industrialized Crown land of Austro-Hungary and later of Czechoslovakia. Rapid industrialization attracted many workers to the Ostrau-Karwin (Ostrava-Karviná) industrial basin, organizing workers' movements, developing their self-confidence and the workers' identity.

#### *East Silesian Quest for Autonomy*

The ideologies of German, Czech and Polish nationalism did not develop on Silesian soil, but were imported there. The process of ennationalization into Germandom in Lower Silesia was largely swift and painless, as the populace was overwhelmingly Protestant and German-speaking. The situation differed in Upper Silesia, where its Catholic and Slavic-speaking character was too different to be easily incorporated into *Kleindeutsch* Germandom, which was threatening the traditional way of life.

According to Tomasz Kamusella, Berlin's ennationalizing efforts caused most of Upper Silesia's Slavic-speaking Catholics to develop their specific *Slonzokians* ethnic identity,

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<sup>39</sup> Józef Szymeczek and Krzysztof Nowak: Poláci v Těšínském Slezku do roku 1918. (Poles in Těšín Silesia until 1918) In: Roman Kaszper and Bohdan Malysz (eds.): Poláci na Těšínsku. Studijní materiál. Český Těšín 2000, 14.

<sup>40</sup> Kevin Hannan: Ethnic Identities in Austrian and Czech Silesia before the Second World War. In: Kai Struve and Philipp Ther (eds.): Die Grenzen der Nationen. Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit. Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung, vol 15, Marburg: Herder-Institut 2002.

while a similar though less intensive process, coupled with the infiltration of Polish and Czech nationalisms, brought about the emergence of the *Slunzakian* ethnic group in the East and the *Morawec* ethnic group in West Austrian Silesia.<sup>41</sup> Kevin Hannan, on the other hand, points out the importance of religious borders for the development of ethnic identities: *Ślonzok* was encountered throughout the territory of the Wrocław diocese in Austrian and Prussian Silesia. Corresponding Czech forms were literary *Slezan* and colloquial *Slezák*, while literary Polish was *Ślązak*. *Ślonzak* is the Czech spelling of the ethnonym commonly encountered in East (Těšín) Silesia.<sup>42</sup>

As early as 1848, the supporters of Silesian independence were organized into a political party, the Union of Austrian Silesians. In 1911 there were local elections in Austria where the Silesian People's Party (*Slezská lidova strana*, *Ślůnsko Partyjo Ludowo*, *Schlesische Volkspartei*, 1908-1938) was elected to head 36 out of 213 communities, including Šumbark, one of the villages to be incorporated into the new town of Havířov in the mid-1950s. Local politicians had hoped to maintain the unity of the Austrian Silesia Crown land or to transform East Austrian Silesia into a Silesian nation state.<sup>43</sup>

The prominent leader of the Silesian movement was a teacher, Josef Každoh (1873-1949). He was Head of the Silesian People's Party and was elected to the Silesian

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<sup>41</sup> Tomasz Kamusella: *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Hannan, 234-237.

I will use English term *Silesian* (Czech *Slezan* or *Ślonzak*) when speaking about regional identity and national movement in East Silesia.

<sup>43</sup> In the interwar period, the left-orientated poet, Óndra Lysohorskya represented the common movement with a goal for the integrity of all the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, regardless of nationality. Lysohorskya had, since the 1930s, written in his self-invented '*Lašský*' language. He introduced his own theory of the '*Lašský*' nation, to which 1.5 million inhabitants of Upper Silesia belonged. According to Lysohorsky, the '*Lašský*' nation had the right to independence and he supposed that after the victory of Socialism, that would be achieved. Marie Gawrecká: *Slezsko po roce 1918*. In: Radim Jež, David Pindur (eds.): *Těšínsko v proměnách staletí. Sborník přednášek z let 2008-2009 k dějinám Těšínského Slezska*. Muzeum Těšínska: Matice slezská, Český Těšín 2010.

Assembly during the final years of Austrian rule. Before 1920, he advocated political autonomy for East Silesia. Following the breakup of Austro-Hungary, Prague took control of West Austrian Silesia<sup>44</sup>, while Poland and Czechoslovakia contested the eastern part until 1920, when the Allies split it between both states. Between 1923 and 1938, Každoň was elected Mayor of Český Těšín (*Czeski Cieszyn*, *Tschechisch-Teschen*), a town built on the west bank of the Olza River, after the division of the region and allocation of the historical center of Cieszyn to the Polish side. Každoň was motivated by anti-Polish sentiments and viewed the Czechs and their culture as closer to Germans than to Poles.<sup>45</sup>

The ethnic composition of Czechoslovakia presented enormous challenges for the new state. The government faced the task of making Czechoslovaks of Slavs, who had no Czech or Czechoslovakian political or cultural consciousness. In preparing for the first official census in 1921, the Czechoslovak government initially planned to recognize the category of *Silesian* (*Šlonzak*) as an official ethnicity.<sup>46</sup> Czech officials became concerned that the population would choose the designation of Silesian over Czech, therefore the Silesian category was subsequently modified into three subcategories: Šlonzak-Czechoslovak, Šlonzak-Pole and Šlonzak-German. By choosing one of these categories, a person was actually identifying himself not as a Silesian, but as a Czechoslovak, Pole or

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<sup>44</sup> A larger part of the Upper Silesian territory, which became known as the *Hultschiner Ländchen* (*Hlučinsko*) inhabited by the Morawecs, was transferred to Czechoslovakia in 1920. The Czechs considered the Morawecs as 'antiquated Czechs' who had to be modernized and integrated into the fold of the Czech nation. This sudden imposition of the Czech national identity on the Morawecs squelched the Morawec national movement and brought about an equally rapid reaction to Czechization. Gradually, the Morawecs started to identify themselves as Germans. Tomasz Kamusella: *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia* (Central European Studies). Purdue University Press 2006, 232.

<sup>45</sup> Hannan, 234

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.



German. In this manner, the Czechoslovak government was able to force many Silesians, who otherwise would not have claimed Czech identity, to identify themselves with the Czechoslovakian state. Out of a total population of 177,176 in Těšinsko in 1921, 68,034 identified themselves as Poles, 88,556 as Czechs, and 18,260 as Germans.<sup>47</sup> For that population, which had previously lacked a clearly defined ethnic consciousness, ethnicity came to be defined by state citizenship.



Fig. 1.1. Český Těšín, the Town Hall with Renaissance decoration (2011)

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<sup>47</sup> Tadeusz Siwek: *Česko-polská etnická hranice*. Scripta Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Ostraviensis. Ostrava 1996, 32.

Since the 1880s, Czech nationalists had been active in East Silesia. In 1901, Ferdinand Pela (1876-1932), a leading activist of the Silesian Organization for Popular Education (*Slezská matice osvěty lidové*), stated that the "*Polish danger was equal to the German one.*"<sup>48</sup> His opinion found support in the emotive poetry of Petr Bezruč from Austrian Silesia (born Vladimír Vašek, 1867-1958), who in one of his poems commented that "*one hundred thousand of us* (that is, Czech-speakers of Austrian Silesia) *were Germanized, and one hundred thousand Polonized.*"<sup>49</sup> The labels 'Pole' or 'Galician' were considered as offensive, due to the clearly lower standard of living and education of the Polish-speakers in Galicia, associated with the proverbial *bieda Galicyjska* (Galician poverty) or *Polnische Wirtschaft*. 76% of all the Poles in Czechoslovakia lived in East Silesia, according to the 1930 census. They had developed a good system of schooling and publishing.<sup>50</sup> While the Poles in Poland were traditionally Catholic, in East Silesia besides two-thirds being Catholic, one-third was Protestant.<sup>51</sup>

After the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Poland and Czechoslovakia came into conflict over Austrian Silesia. Czech claims to this territory were initially based on Silesia's historical ties to the Czech Crown, beside Czechs asserted that Czechoslovakia's economic survival depended upon the acquisition of the coal mines and industry in the

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<sup>48</sup> Kamusella, 222.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. This line of reasoning was derived from Ignác Hořica's 1895 thesis that East Silesian's Polish-speakers were Polonized Moravians who should be regained for Czechdom.

<sup>50</sup> Tadeusz Siwek, Stanisław Zahradnik, Józef Szymeczek: *Polská národní menšina v Československu 1945-1954*. ÚSD AV ČR 2001, 20.

<sup>51</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 13.

Těšín region (Těšínsko). What was more, Czech propaganda pointed out the superiority of Czech civilization.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, Polish claims were ethnolinguistic.<sup>53</sup> A considerable number of Silesians and Germans were in favor of East Silesia or Těšínsko being part of Czechoslovakia.<sup>54</sup>

In January 1919, the Czechoslovak army started to occupy those areas of Silesia which were under administration of the Polish *Rada Narodowa*. The tensions and violence between the Czechs and Poles became more brutal and dangerous, vandalism, terrorist actions and bombing became commonplace. Just a month before the final division of the border, a secret Polish belligerent organization coordinated the largest terrorist action in Šumbark, a village which was to be incorporated in the new town of Havířov in the mid-1950s.<sup>55</sup>

In July 1920, at the Peace Conference in Paris, the victorious atmosphere was on the Czech side. The new State of Czechoslovakia did not receive all the land of the Czech Crown, but the main goal had been achieved: to acquire the entire Karviná coal basin, Třinecké ironworks and the transportation hub through which the only railroad connections ran, linking Bohemia, Slovakia and Ruthenia. This solution was by no means optimal and, as we shall see, it contributed to deciding Poland on the action it took against Czechoslovakia in 1938.

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<sup>52</sup> Grzegorz Gąsior: Rozdělení Těšínského Slezka v letech 1918-1920. In: Roman Kaszper, Bohdan Małysz (eds.): *Poláci na Těšísku*. Studijní materiál, Český Těšín 2009, 29.

<sup>53</sup> Hannan, 235.

<sup>54</sup> Gawrecká, 140.

<sup>55</sup> Gąsior, 28, 29.



Between 1927 and 1928, Czechoslovak Silesia was arranged as the administrative district and was connected with Moravia as the *Country of Moravia and Silesia* (*Zemí moravskoslezská*).<sup>56</sup> After East Silesia had been divided between Czechoslovakia and Poland, the eastern part, which was incorporated into Czechoslovakia, became known to Poles as *Zaolzie* (*Zaolší, Olsa-Gebiet*), meaning 'lands beyond the Olza River', as seen from the Polish side. *Zaolzie* became a symbol connected with Poles and their cultural identity in Czechoslovakia.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Gawrecká, 140.

<sup>57</sup> Kaszper and Malysz, 7. Later a theory had been spread around about two homelands of Těšínsko: Czechoslovakia – material (materiální), Poland – spiritual (duchovní).





East Silesia was topographically divided between a lowland agricultural area and highlands. Many of the highlanders were descended from the Valach shepherds, who had migrated westwards from other parts of the Carpathians to settle in the East Silesian highlands in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ethnic origins of the East Silesian Valachs were mixed, representing Polish, Slovak, East Slavic and Romanian elements. In East Silesia, a highlander was identified as a *Valach* or *gorol*.<sup>58</sup>

Besides agriculture and highlands, Austrian Silesia was a highly industrialized land, the most industrialized among the Austro-Hungarian crown lands. It was responsible for 46.2% of the Monarchy's total coal output and 97% of its coke production. In 1910, 39.4% of the Austrian Silesian workforce was employed in industry. In the second most industrialized Crown land, Bohemia, this number was lower, 36.6%.<sup>59</sup> In the Ostrava-Karviná coal basin, mining began in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>60</sup> The rise of deep mining in the 1830s created a distinction between the western (Ostrava) part of the coalfield and the eastern (Karviná) part.<sup>61</sup> Probably the most important stimulus for deep mining in Karviná was the completion of the Košice-Bohumín railway line in 1872.

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<sup>58</sup> Hannan, 233.

<sup>59</sup> Kamusella, 223.

<sup>60</sup> Miloš Matěj, Jaroslav Klát, Irena Korbelařová: Cultural Monuments of the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield. National Heritage Institute, Ostrava branch, 2008, 17.

<sup>61</sup> Matěj, Klát, Korbelařová, 19 and Dějiny OKR do znárodnění. (The history of the Ostrava-Karviná coalfield up to nationalization.) Reserach report. In Szlesky sborník, 1974, no. 4, 246-249.

The last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought about a second wave of deep mine opening throughout the Ostrava-Karviná coalfields, accompanied by a series of large investments in the reconstruction and modernization of existing collieries. Several mining companies previously belonging to individuals were floated on the stock market or were merged into large-scale mining groups.<sup>62</sup> The colliery situated near the village of Dolní Suchá (today on the outskirts of the new town of Havířov), was established in 1907 by the Orlová-Lazy Coal Mining Corporation and was named in honor of Emperor Franz Josef. Rapid industrial development in Austrian Silesia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century complicated the ethnic composition of the Crown land. German and Czech professionals and technicians arrived, as well as far greater numbers of miners and workers, mainly ethnic Poles from Galicia.<sup>63</sup> In 1930, more than 72% of the Poles in East Silesia were workers.<sup>64</sup>

The miners' strikes of 1894, 1896 and 1900 in the Ostrava-Karviná industrial basin<sup>65</sup> were an indication that the Social Democratic movement was temporarily stronger than the national one. The cooperation of Social Democratic activists of Czechs, Germans and Poles ceased after the successful 1907 Reichsrat election when they seized four of Austrian Silesia's seven mandates. However, the Social Democratic organizations split along ethnic lines and fully espoused the nationalist ideology after 1910.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Matěj, Klát, Korbelařová, 24.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 87. Also: Kříbský, K.: Pamětní publikace dolu Dukla. Havířov 1987. Jaroslav Čihař, Dominik Káňa: 100 let dolu Dukla. Ostrava 2005.

<sup>64</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 12.

<sup>65</sup> Miners' strikes continued in the interwar period. In 1928, a public meeting of the International Union of Coalminers was held in Horní Suchá to protest against the increasing poverty of miners. In addition, there was a strike and the shooting of miners in Horní Suchá in 1932. Borák, Janák, 143.

<sup>66</sup> Kamusella: Silesia and Central European nationalisms, 228.



In 1921, the Marxist Left from Ostrava founded the first town's organization of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa*, KSČ) and during the following months, the Polish, German and Jewish sections of the KSČ followed.<sup>67</sup> Communist newspapers for Slovakia were published in Moravian Ostrava, where, between 1924 and 1926, Klement Gottwald (1896-1953) worked in the redaction and, after the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Comintern in 1924, helped to cleanse the KSČ in Ostrava of reformists and opportunists,<sup>68</sup> before becoming Secretary-General of the KSČ in 1927.

From 1924, according to Borák and Janák, public speeches and meetings of the KSČ increased in Ostrava. In the villages of Horní Suchá, Prostřední Suchá, German (Dolní) Lutyni, Dolní Datyně, which were to form the new town of Havířov from the mid-1950s, many public meetings of the Communists were held. The town committee of the KSČ in German (Dolní) Lutyni, for example, criticized the district conservative leadership of the Party and positioned itself to the left with Gottwald.<sup>69</sup> The decision was made to reconstruct the Party from town organizations to those of companies (*zavodní*).

In November 1925, the first parliamentary elections in which the KSČ took part were held. The Party received 13.2% of the vote, becoming the second strongest party in Czechoslovakia. In the Ostrava region, the KSČ received 12% of the vote, but in industrial parts of the region, received more than 30% of the vote.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Mečislav Borák, Dušan Janák: *Přehled dějin KSČ v Severnomoravském kraji v letech 1848-1981. Profil Ostrava* 1983, 98.

<sup>68</sup> Borák, Janák, 113.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

One of the most prominent political leaders in Těšinsko was the Pole, Karol Śliwka (1894-1943), since 1921 Executive Committee member of the KSČ and between 1925 and 1938 a Member of the Czechoslovakian Parliament where he fought for the rights of the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia.<sup>71</sup> He was an advocate of unity between Polish, Czech and German Communists and, besides social questions, encouraged discussions on national policies in schools and on the violent Czechization in Těšinsko/Zaolzie.<sup>72</sup>

## **From the Munich Agreement to the End of the Second World War**

### *Polish Occupation*

After 1926, with the introduction of authoritarian politics in Poland, led by Józef Piłsudsky, foreign policy toward Czechoslovakia became more aggressive. On the 15th anniversary of the occupation of Těšinsko by the Czechoslovak army, anti-Czechoslovak demonstrations were organized on the initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. In many villages local Poles, having the approval of local Polish diplomatic representatives, destroyed Czech schools. Only the Communist Parties of both countries continued to advocate inter-ethnic cooperation.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> After the cession of Zaolzie to Poland in 1938, Śliwka, as well as other parliamentarians representing national minorities, lost his parliamentary seat. Śliwka was jailed in Warsaw and then released after he signed a testimony stating that he was splitting from the Communists. As a result, he was expelled from the KSČ. In 1942, he was sentenced again and eventually transferred to the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp, where he died in 1943. After World War II he was dishonored in Czechoslovakia for the alleged betrayal of Communist ideals in 1938. He was exonerated in 1969. *Elektroniczny Słownik Biograficzny Śląska Cieszyńskiego – Karol Śliwka*.

<sup>72</sup> Borák, Janák, 134. KSČ meeting in Horni Sucha in 1928.

<sup>73</sup> Kamusella and Kacir, 121, 123.



In the 1935 parliamentary elections in Czechoslovakia, the Polish minority won two representative seats: Communist Karol Śliwka and Leon Wolf, who was a candidate on the list of Hlika's Slovak People's Party. After the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the Polish parties united into a common organization called the *Polish Union in Czechoslovakia* (*Svaz Poláků v Československu*), led by Leon Wolf. In the new organization, radical Polish nationalism driven by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was triumphant. Polish Socialists and Communists remained outside the Union. Both Polish and German national minorities demanded autonomy.

After the Munich Agreement, the Sudetenland province was established and West (Opava) Silesia was assigned to this province, while the Hlučín area was incorporated into Germany itself (known as the *Altreich*). The Czechoslovakian government could not afford further conflict with Poland, at the time still an ally of Germany, and, in October 1938, Těšínsko was occupied by the Polish army.

The boomerang returned with double force: by 1930 Těšínsko was inhabited by 120,000 Czechs, 76,000 Poles and 17,000 Germans and many Czechs coming to Těšínsko after 1918 to 1920 were now expelled. Czech associations and organizations were dissolved, property confiscated, Czech schools closed, Polish language became the only official language, many Czech workers lost their jobs, etc.<sup>74</sup> After the Munich Agreement, KSČ became illegal and most members of the Central Committee, together with Secretary-General Klement Gottwald, went to Moscow. The resistance against the so-called Beck's Occupiers, named after Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck, was led by the Czech illegal

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<sup>74</sup> Ivo Baran: *Polská menšina v Československé republice*. In: Kaszper and Małysz, 40.

organization, *Slezsky odboj* (Silesian Resistance), which did not have wider support.

Conspiratorial action groups of three people were formed, orientated mainly on acts of sabotage.<sup>75</sup>

### *Nazi Occupation*

The Polish occupation of Těšínsko lasted 11 months: from October 1938 until September 1939, when the German military occupied and annexed the area directly to the Reich's territory. The territory became part of the German province of Upper Silesia, and was known as the *Olsagebiet*. The Nazi occupation policies, persecution, as well as the resistance in Těšínsko were in many ways different from those in the Protectorate, Sudetenland or in the General Government.<sup>76</sup> Unlike in the Protectorate, the Nazis had occupied Těšínsko by a violent martial act, and violence and terror ruled immediately. Public use of the Polish or Czech languages was prohibited, as well as divine services in both Slavic languages. The first inhabitants were already shot in September 1939.<sup>77</sup> Public executions in Těšínsko took place during the whole period of the occupation. The largest execution took place in March 1942, in what is today the Polish part of Těšín, when 24 people were hanged in the presence of 10,000 inhabitants, gathered by force to watch. However, the largest mass execution in Těšínsko was held in August 1944 in Životice, a village that in the late 1950s was to become part of the new town of Havířov,

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<sup>75</sup> Borák, Janák, 243.

<sup>76</sup> Mečislav Borák: Nemecka okupace Těšínského Slezka. In: Kaszper and Malysz, 42.

<sup>77</sup> 12 victims of the mass execution of Polish inhabitants in Karviná, which took place as an example on September 18, 1939. At the end of September 1939, the first mass execution was held in Těšínsko. In the woods near Karvina, 12 miners of Polish nationality were shot, among them also some from Prostřední and Horní Suchá. In April 1941, 11 people were taken to a concentration camp. Borák, Janák, 261, 267.

when the occupiers murdered 36 local citizens. This event, described in more detail in the following section, was immediately regarded as a tragedy and had long-term consequences.

Silesia, with its industrial potential, was of significant importance to the Third Reich. Most of the Těšínsko inhabitants were qualified industrial workers, therefore the goal of the occupation policy was not mass displacement or liquidation, but a quick Aryanization of the populace. Ethnic and national identity in the whole of Upper Silesia played an important role during the entire period of Nazi occupation. In December 1939, the Nazis conducted a survey to determine the ethnic composition of Silesia, the so-called *Fingerabdruck*, with the following figures: 44% Silesians, 23% Poles, 16% Czechs, 14% Germans, 0.7% Jews.<sup>78</sup> In 1940 the Nazis introduced the *Volksliste* by which individuals were forced to identify themselves according to one of four categories: the first two designated Germans, the third Silesians and the fourth ethnic Slavs.<sup>79</sup> The advantage of Silesian identity was taken with the assumption that the regional origin of consciousness prevailed over the consciousness of nationhood. Those groups which did not correspond with the Nazi conditions, or openly resisted Germanization, were to be destroyed or displaced to the General Government and replaced by German colonists.<sup>80</sup> Nazi policy on Silesian identity shifted in 1941. Whereas previously they had emphasized Silesian identity in order to accentuate the differences of Slav Silesians from other Slavs, it was subsequently declared that Silesians were of the same ethnic stock as Germans.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Hannan, 242 and Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 14.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 242

<sup>80</sup> Gawrecká, 143

<sup>81</sup> Hannan, 242



The different national policy of the Nazis aimed to cause dispute between the oppressed nations, and hide the real perpetrator of their oppression.

The situation of the Poles was the most difficult. As a nation they were, according to Fascist ideology, doomed to destruction, although their disposal was not as vast and rapid as that of the Jews and Roma.<sup>82</sup> The *Volksliste* determined the level of rights and obligations in the Reich. The lowest ranking were those who were not classified on the *Volksliste*, and were therefore destined to heavy manual labor and gradually exterminated. The atmosphere of uncertainty, fear, and pressure played a significant role in determining the filing of the application. Only a minority of applicants for the *Volksliste* complied with this to the full satisfaction as an adequate expression of their ethnic or national identity. Consent to Germanization by signing the *Volksliste* was often just a pretense. Later, those who had signed and had to serve in the German armed forces, escaped across the Front to the Allies. *Volksliste* participants joined the resistance *en masse* and represented one-quarter of the prisoners in the Český Těšín prison, arrested for their resistance activities. The prison served as a jail for the Gestapo.<sup>83</sup>

### *Resistance and the Životice Tragedy*

After the occupation of Těšínsko, the resistance movements which were being formed, were strictly divided according to the nationality of the resistance fighters. The Czech and Polish national resistance movement was based on the domestic one, planned by their

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<sup>82</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 24.

<sup>83</sup> Gawrecká, 144, 145.

governments in exile that had fundamentally different views on the nationality of Těšínsko. The common factor of both resistance movements was their Communist resistance with its international character. Polish Communists represented the majority among the Communists in Těšínsko, but, despite their internationalism and rejection of the program of the Polish government in exile, they expected Těšínsko/Zaolzie to remain in Poland. In Těšínsko, illegal activities and resistance primarily had a Polish character. It arose from the local context, but had access to the main resistance organization in Central Poland, including the strongest Home Army (*Armia Krajowa*), which was controlled by the Polish government in exile in London.

Military losses among the Poles in Těšínsko, regardless of their political orientation, were high (3,000 to 4,000 people).<sup>84</sup> As mentioned earlier, in August 1944 the largest mass execution in Těšínsko took place in Životice, a village which in the late 1950s was to become part of the new town of Havířov.

A postwar chronicle of the village gives an insight into life in the village during the interwar and war periods.<sup>85</sup> The first postwar chronicler, Ferdinand Baginsky, a Pole, a teacher and a pre- and postwar Communist, wrote the chronicle until 1949, when he became a teacher in another town. His writing concentrated mainly on the national relationships and events during the interwar and war years: "*New times came after the*

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<sup>84</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 24.

<sup>85</sup> Chronicles were usually written by local teachers or retired officers. The main idea was to introduce the most important events that had happened in the community during the past year. It was up to the chronicler to decide what to include, that is why the chronicles differ greatly in form and content. The Chronicle of Životice was written until 1958. Later it was incorporated into the Chronicle of Havířov as part of the new town.

*Liberation and the foundation of the Social-Democratic Czechoslovakia with its first President, Professor T.G. Masaryk – "Daddy Masaryk" (tatiček Masaryk) as people called him. Two parties had been formed in the village: one consisted of the Czech, i.e. the Silesian nation and the other of the Polish nation. In the first half of 1930, new Polish and Czech schools were opened. In front of the Czech school a monument had been placed in a memory of the liberator Masaryk and his successor, the second President of the Republic, Dr. Edvard Beneš. Between 1935 and 1936, Polish Fascists destroyed the windows of the Czech school and the new Polish Consul in Ostrava formed Fascist guilds called 'Ozony'. This organization was established and led by a Polish teacher in the village. During this time the Czech school became a Polish school. In September 1939, Těšínsko, which was under Polish administration, was annexed to the Reich. Only German was taught in the school and the inhabitants were forced to accept German nationality, the so-called Volkslist, otherwise they would be deported to concentration camps. From the village of Životice, 23 people were taken to concentration camps and only 6 returned."*<sup>86</sup>

Baginsky also gives us a detailed description of a 1944 tragedy: "On August 4, a meeting was held in the inn of Mayor Mokroš, attended by the Amtskommissar and his wife from the village of Dolní Bludovice, four members of the Gestapo from Těšín and one member of the Army of the Protectorate. Around midnight they left the inn in an exhilarated mood and went to the inn of the Mayor's relative. There they continued to drink. After 1 a.m., partisans surrounded the inn and when the owner opened the door they started to shoot. One partisan and two Gestapo members were killed; two more Gestapo members and the

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<sup>86</sup> Státní okresní archiv Karviná (SOKA Karviná), Kronika obce Životice, 23-29.



*Amtkomissar's wife were wounded. Early in the morning, the Supreme Commander of the Gestapo came from Těšín to investigate the case. He asked the Mayor who he thought was responsible. The Mayor replied that it was an act of unreasonable young people from the village. The Commander ordered the office in Dolní Bludovice to make a list of 40 people from Životice who were to be shot. On Sunday, August 6, 1944 at 4 a.m., the villages of Životice, Dolní Bludovice, Prostřední, Dolní and Horní Suchá were full of German soldiers and members of the Gestapo. They went from house to house, checked the people according to the list, and carried certain persons a few steps out of their homes, pointed a gun to their backs and shot them. In such a brutal way, 24 people were killed. The bodies were taken to the Jewish Cemetery and buried in a common grave."<sup>87</sup>*

The Nazis were expelled from Těšínsko at the beginning of May 1945 by the Soviet Army, who had been "immediately informed of what had happened in Životice."<sup>88</sup>

### **Quest for a National and Communist State**

According to the Constitution, interwar Czechoslovakia was a national state, recognizing one Czechoslovakian nation. Other nationalities were recognized as national minorities. During the interwar period, national minorities in Czechoslovakia never achieved political-administrative autonomy, however, they had a relatively high level of autonomy regarding their language, education and culture. Already shortly before the Munich Agreement, the first plans were made for the transfer of about a million Germans, the ethnic minority that, according to President Beneš, "broke the Republic". During the war,

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 33-36.

<sup>88</sup> SOKA Karviná, Kronika obce Životice, 41.

the plans became gradually radicalized and, after the war, during what was known as the Democratic Third Republic (1945-48), the discourse on 'cleansing' the border lands became completely legitimized.<sup>89</sup>

The program of the postwar Košice government declared Czechoslovakia as a national state of Czechs and Slovaks and a preconditioned People's Democratic establishment. According to historian, Bradley Abrams, the KSČ refrained from discussing its vision of Socialism during the first year after Liberation. The silence allowed time for Communists to develop a reinvention of the nation and for their own reinvention as Czech patriots to gain plausibility.<sup>90</sup>

After their victory at the 1946 elections, they started to play on the perception that Czech Communists were not like other Communists by formulating their aims as a 'specific Czechoslovak road to Socialism'.<sup>91</sup> This theory, however, was a Czechoslovak adaptation of the theory of the 'national path to Socialism' formulated by Stalin and was also used as a reference in the rest of the world Communist movement.<sup>92</sup> The KSČ fashioned a program that stressed the already existing elements of which the public overwhelmingly approved: the People's Democracy, the National Front government, and the Two-Year

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<sup>89</sup> Matěj Spurný: *Nejsou jako my. Česká společnost a menšiny v pohraničí (1945-1960)*. Antikomplex, Praha 2011, 91-100.

<sup>90</sup> Bradley F. Abrams: *Czech: The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation. Czech Culture and the Rise of Communism*. The Harvard Cold War studies book series. Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2004, 178.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> Muriel Blaive: *Internationalism, Patriotism, Dictatorship and Democracy: The Czechoslovak Communist Party and the Exercise of Power, 1945-1968*. *Journal of European Integration Studies*, 13, (2), 2007, 66.

Plan for the economy. All of these reassured the public that the Party did not intend a radical shift towards a Soviet regime.<sup>93</sup>

In Těšínsko both the liberation and the restoration of Czechoslovakian administration were achieved with the substantial aid of the Soviet Union, who used a nationally vulnerable area of Těšínsko for negotiation in the process of establishing a Communist system in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The process of rehabilitation, addressing the issue of former participants in the *Volksliste* and the so-called Beck's Occupiers, fueled national feelings, especially since the nationwide policies did not correspond to local circumstances. While the postwar Czech anti-German nationalism was to a large extent propagated by the KSČ, which helped it to its election victory in 1946, until February 1948, the KSČ proved to be the only political party in Těšínsko to tolerate the Poles. However, the policy of the KSČ gradually changed towards national minorities after the Party seized power in February 1948. The radical national ideology of the first postwar years moved to identifying class enemies, saboteurs, and in the early 1950s, during the Stalinist purges, 'bourgeois nationalists'.

#### *The Soviet Union and the Division of Těšínsko*

In January 1944, the Soviet diplomat wrote a letter to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, V.M. Molotov, claiming that Těšínsko "should be returned to Czechoslovakia" and continued that "in contrast to Poland, it is beneficial for the USSR to aim at the creation

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<sup>93</sup> Abrams, 179.



of a strong Czechoslovakia."<sup>94</sup> After the Liberation, old disagreements and hatred between the Czechs and Poles were brought up and the Soviet Union acted as a kind of mediator, with both sides counting on its help.

In the conflict over Těšínsko, according to Volotkina, the Soviet Union proved to have a skilled and flexible diplomacy. The Soviet leaders generally favored the Czechoslovak position, but they also wanted to take advantage of the dispute in order to strengthen the pro-Soviet regime in Poland.<sup>95</sup> The Red Army that liberated Těšínsko, handed over power to the Czechoslovak administration, indicating how the border question was seen from Moscow. Poland did not give up and continued to legitimize its claim to the territory with its ethnically Polish character

(between 1919 and 1920). The situation in the first months after the war worsened and Czechoslovakia and Poland again threatened armed conflict. In 1945 and 1946, the plan to regulate the problem of Těšínsko failed to lead to a result. The Czechs 'threatened' not to recognize the provisional Polish government and began openly to delay the signing of a bilateral agreement of friendship and co-operation with Poland, in which the Soviet Union had an intense interest. Moscow aimed to keep the issue localized by not allowing the Czechoslovak-Polish conflict to become an international one. The Soviet and Czechoslovak governments both understood that the Polish government, lacking the support of the majority of Poles, was in a difficult position.

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<sup>94</sup> T.V. Volotkina: The Polish-Czechoslovak Conflict over Teschen: the Problem of Resettling Poles and the Position of the USSR. In: Alfred J. Rieber (ed.): Forced migration in Central and eastern Europe, 1939-1950. Frank Cass Publishers. London 2000, 46.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 48.

The situation essentially changed in January 1947, when in the elections for the *Sejm*, a Communist-dominated democratic bloc gained the victory. In February 1947, Stalin and Molotov addressed the Czechoslovakian Communist leader, Klement Gottwald to "*overcome the opposition of nationalistic elements in Czechoslovakia and take a step closer to democratic Poland.*"<sup>96</sup> In March 1947, the Polish-Czechoslovak Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance was signed in Warsaw, according to which territorial disputes would be resolved in two years and national minorities would be given the same rights and advantages on the basis of reciprocity. The territorial question was definitively regulated in 1958, when the pre-Munich borders were confirmed.<sup>97</sup>

#### *Postwar Rehabilitations*

The restored Czech Administration in Těšínsko had to deal with the regulations for traitors, collaborators, the *Volksliste* participants, etc. Expulsion of Germans from Těšínsko was performed in several stages and, by the end of September 1946, a total of 4,346 Germans had been expelled.<sup>98</sup> The Poles in Těšínsko primarily decided among three possibilities: the most national conscious to leave for Poland; those materialistically and emotionally tied to Těšínsko, to stay; or to accept Czech nationality.<sup>99</sup> The vast majority of Czechs considered the attitude of the Poles as treason against the Republic, welcoming the fall of the Polish Army of 1938. The Poles then perceived their position as an historical expiation of 1920. At the same time as acknowledging that their attitude was

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 58, 59.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>98</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 32.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 16.

not loyal towards the moribund Republic, Poles believed that their greater involvement in an anti-Hitler resistance and their relatively high loss of life had been redeemed. Poles were often considered by the State as unreliable people and the general dislike of them by Czechs was only slightly less than that of the Germans. They were condemned especially for their general adoption of the *Volksliste* and the presence of the so-called Beck's Occupiers.

The Polish or Beck's Occupiers were mainly those inhabitants of Těšínsko, who in 1920 had left Czechoslovakia and who had returned to their original homes in 1938. After the Second World War, even the KSČ in Ostrava, which was relatively conciliatory towards the Poles, spoke along with other State bodies and political parties for the expulsion of Beck's Occupiers from Těšínsko to Poland.<sup>100</sup> In particular, during the first year after the war, tensions between Poles and Czechs became violent. In Životice, for example, anti-Polish propaganda affected those who had desecrated the monument honoring the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Czechoslovakia during the Polish occupation of Těšínsko. In October 1945, a Polish member of the Town's National Committee (*Městský národní výbor*, MNV), Josef Rozbroj, was even suspended from his function for this reason.<sup>101</sup>

One of the most threatening examples of postwar Czech-Polish hostility was the closure of the Polish school in Horní Lutyně, advocated by the Ministry for Education led by the National Socialist, Jaroslav Stranský. Czech citizens accused the Poles, among others, for their collaboration with the Germans during the war and in their protests manifested

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<sup>100</sup> President Edvard Beneš signaled to the Town's National Committee (MNV) in Třinec, that Czechoslovak authorities would gladly assist those Poles in Těšínsko who wanted to emigrate to Poland. Siwek, Zahradník, Szymeczek, 29.

<sup>101</sup> SOKA Karviná, Kronika obce Životice, 45.



statements such as: "*Rather make Lidice from Horní Lutyně, than open the doors of the Polish school*".<sup>102</sup> Even the Communists, as the only Polish supporters in the dispute about the school, were not excluded from the allegations, since the Czech population publically threatened to make "*a concentration camp for the Communists and Poles out of Horní Lutyně*".<sup>103</sup>

When, in May 1946, the aforementioned Josef Rozbroj and some other Polish citizens came to the MNV with a request to open a Polish school in Životice, the delegation was received as 'Polish instigators' (*štvači*) who should go beyond the Olza River.<sup>104</sup> The President of the MNV at that time, Czech Jan Pastucha, and Rozbroj were or had been Party comrades, since we know that they had both attended meetings of the KSČ a year earlier, where Rozbroj had even been elected as Party Secretary.<sup>105</sup>

Those Czech parties who viewed the *Volksliste* from the perspective of the Protectorate, where people who adopted the *Volksliste* were either Germans or traitors, were foremost in their uncompromising attitude towards those who had adopted the *Volksliste*. Those politicians did not realize that Těšínsko was not part of the Protectorate, but a direct part of the Reich, where persecution of the non-German population was much stronger. The regional KSČ in Ostrava understood in a relatively conciliatory manner the specific issue of adopting German citizenship in Těšínsko during the war, acknowledging that it was a 'devilish plan of the Nazis' whereby those who had adopted it, had been forced to. The decision was made that those classified in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> categories of the *Volksliste*

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<sup>102</sup> Quotation taken from: Spurný, 125.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> SOkA Karviná, Kronika obce Životice, 42.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

should be expelled, while those rated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> categories, into which most of the local Poles and Czechs fell, should be rehabilitated.

There were more Poles classified on the *Volksliste*, since the territories, annexed in 1938 to Poland and in 1939 to Germany, had resulted in the departure of many Czechs. In addition, the Polish population of Silesia was under much greater pressure of the occupation administration. After the war, people from the *Volksliste* were a factor for growing ethnic problems. Many of the Poles who clung to the stigma of the *Volksliste*, tried to 'purify' themselves by adopting Czech nationality. This resulted in the largest decrease of Polish nationality: at the time of the rehabilitation process of former German citizenship holders, almost 30,000 people adopted Czech nationality. They were expeditiously rehabilitated, even though among them often real collaborators were hiding.

For the Poles who retained their nationality, the rehabilitation process was much longer and more difficult. In Životice, the *Volksliste* affected the restored KSČ at its first elections of candidates to the Town Committee. At first, the Committee did not elect candidates for the MNV, since some were on the *Volksliste*. The elections were postponed for a week and only then the candidates who were not classified on the *Volksliste* were elected to be representatives of the KSČ in the MNV.<sup>106</sup>

During the first postwar years, Těšínsko was more often than usual visited by chief State and Party officials, including Social Democrat Prime Minister, Zdeněk Fierlinger and

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<sup>106</sup> SOkA Karviná, Kronika obce Životice, 42.

Communist Deputy Prime Minister, Klement Gottwald, to reinforce State consciousness among the population in Těšínsko and to enhance the position of the individual political parties. The first postwar years in Czechoslovakia were marked by a sharp political struggle, which deepened national problems in Těšínsko. All four political parties of the Czech Lands, united in the National Front, were active in Těšínsko. For example, in May 1945, 15 workers and citizens held a meeting in Životice to reestablish the KSČ in the village. Later, in July 1945, the Social Democratic Party held a meeting to elect a new Committee in the presence of 80 citizens.<sup>107</sup>

Although the position of the Social Democrats in Životice was stronger than that of the KSČ, the KSČ had the strongest position in the region. In May 1946, in the first postwar elections for the National Assembly and in the elections of representatives for district and local national committees, the KSČ received 42.9% in the district of Frystát and 33.8% in the district of Český Těšín. After the elections, the Communist party considerably strengthened its position in the ONVs and MNVs. The policy of the Communist party in Těšínsko was generally based on nationwide principles, but in practice, they were adapted to the local conditions, as State methods for solving national questions in Těšínsko had not always applied to local circumstances. A crucial percentage of Poles voted for the Communists to the Regional National Committee (*Krajský národní výbor*, KNV) of the KSČ in Ostrava. The post-election reorganization of national committees allowed the return of a large number of Poles to the Czechoslovak State and local governments. For example, after the elections, the MNV in the District of Český Těšín

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<sup>107</sup> Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party in a very short time received 92 members of Czech and Polish nationality. SOKA Karviná, Kronika obce Životice, 44.



had, out of 771 representatives, 212 of Polish nationality (27.5%). Despite the relative electoral success of the Poles in Těšínsko, they only rarely became Chairmen of the MNV, and if so, then only a contender from the KSČ.<sup>108</sup>

After the 1946 elections, there was also a change in the local administration in Životice. The first postwar President of the MNV, Czech Jan Pastucha, a candidate of the previous Communist Party, was listed as a candidate of the National Socialist Party.<sup>109</sup> On the KSČ list of candidates the aforementioned Pole, Josef Rozbroj, appeared. In June 1946, at the first meeting of the newly elected MNV Životice, the KSČ received six votes, the Czechoslovak Social Democrats five, the Czechoslovak National Socialists three and the People's Party one vote. Polish Communist, Rozbroj, received the majority of the votes and began his new function as President.<sup>110</sup> The new MNV, with a large majority of Communists, Social Democrats and Poles began to work. In the fall of 1946 they organized a ceremonial gathering to celebrate the National Day and to commemorate the October Revolution in the Soviet Union.

The MNV asked President Beneš and Prime Minister Gottwald if they would honor them by receiving the honorary citizenship of Životice. Both Presidents accepted.<sup>111</sup> One of the main acts of President Rozbroj was to erect the memorial to the 1944 tragedy in Životice. After the war, the bodies were exhumed and placed in a communal tomb in Životice. In

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<sup>108</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 28, 33.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 39. Ex-Mayor Mokroš was taken into provisional detention, from where he was released before Christmas 1946, without being judged. The inhabitants complained and Mokroš was taken to Court again and jailed for 10 years.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 47. Josef Rozbroj was born in 1882 in the district Karviná and worked as a miner in the mine František in Horní Suchá.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 49.

September 1947, the work of designing a memorial was given to the local academic painter and sculptor, František Šwider from Karviná.<sup>112</sup> He created a very poetic, two-meter high sculpture of a mother with a child in her arms, bending down to a male victim. In September 1949, in the presence of about 10,000 people and guests from the KNV, ONV and other delegations, the memorial was unveiled to honor the fallen heroes of August 6, 1944, as well as those who had been tortured in the concentration camps.<sup>113</sup>

Placing the memorial honoring the victims in a village with a strong Polish minority was an act of reassurance to the village, a deterrent to accusations, especially regarding the *Volksliste* and Beck's Occupiers, and to represent the collective commemoration and identity of the community.<sup>114</sup> The chosen sculptor and style indicate that the memorial was primarily a local matter and not a State one.<sup>115</sup> It was also not intended to please the Soviet liberators by being forced to set up a memorial created in the Soviet realist image.<sup>116</sup> This was almost the final act of President Rozbroj before the end of his presidency in November 1949. He later started to write the local chronicle, where he

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>114</sup> South Carinthia is a similar example to Těšínsko: in 1920 there was a plebiscite and the area inhabited by the Slovene- and German-speaking population officially became part of Austria. During the war, Slovenes mostly joined the Anti-Fascist movement and, in 1947, the first partisan monument was erected near *Velikovec/ Völkermarkt*. Since the postwar de-Nazification in Carinthia was done slowly and gradually, the monument was blown up in 1953.

<sup>115</sup> Životice represented a place for local commemoration, but never crossed the local threshold as was the case of *Lidice*, a village lying 20 km North of Prague, destroyed by the Nazis in 1942. During the Communist period, the newly-built village became a place of commemoration, visited by numerous excursions from all over Czechoslovakia.

<sup>116</sup> Martin Strakoš: *Nová Ostrava a její satelity. Kapitoly dějin architektury 30.-50. Let 20. Století. Národní památkový ústav, územní odborné pracoviště v Ostravě*, 2010.

The *Monument of Victory*, placed in Murska Sobota, capital of the Prekmurje region, a Hungarian part of the Dual Monarchy until 1918 and later incorporated into the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. This area was the only territory in Slovenia liberated by the Red Army. The monument, planned and sponsored by the Soviets, was erected in August 1945 in the Socialist-Realist style, one of the few monuments or buildings constructed in this style in Slovenia.



described that during his presidency "the village had calmed down."<sup>117</sup> However, it is not exactly clear why President Rozbroj, after less than three and a half years, ended his presidential mandate. According to Spurný, it was approximately from mid-1949 that the policies towards national minorities in Czechoslovakia slowly began to change. Chaos and spontaneous, ad hoc decision-making on lower administrative levels started to become more subordinate to the newly created concept of national policy. From the early 1950s, minorities had only minimal opportunities to develop their own collective identities, other than language, or often even only aesthetics and folklore.<sup>118</sup>



Fig. 1.3. Memorial to the tragedy in Životice (1963).

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 64.

<sup>118</sup> Spurný, 136-144.





Fig. 1.4. Memorial to the tragedy in Životice (2012)

#### *Towards Material and Spiritual Homelands*

After February 1948, the basis of national policy status enshrined in the new Constitution was similar to the previous one: "Czechoslovakia is a unitary state of two equal Slavic nations, Czechs and Slovaks." A large majority of Poles in Czechoslovakia welcomed the victory of the Communists because this was the party which had often defended them against the attacks of Czech nationalists. By supporting the Communists, the Poles hoped that at least some of their national requests would be fulfilled. For Poles, February 1948 in some cases meant immediate benefits. For example, they won a greater representation

on the National Committees. Further progress was seen in October 1948, when it was confirmed that Polish schools would be opened wherever there were suitable conditions, Radio Ostrava would broadcast in the Polish language once a week, and administrative offices were to accept and deal in the Polish language.<sup>119</sup>

The most important attempt to influence the solution of the Polish national question in Těšínsko was known as the *Ciešlar Platform*. Paweł Ciešlar (1902-1983),<sup>120</sup> between 1949-1952 the President of the OV KSČ and Vice-President of the ONV in Český Těšín, disagreed with automatic and inadequate solutions to national problems. In June 1950, he appeared at the North Moravian Regional Committee (KV KSČ) in Ostrava with his national program. The KSČ authorities for some time had tolerated Ciešlar's opposition, but in late 1950 Ciešlar was asked to submit his opinion on the national policy in writing. He sent an article entitled *The Bolshevik National Policy in Těšínsko*, later labeled as the *Platform of Paweł Ciešlar*, to the Committee.

Ciešlar's national politics were based on a theory of the so-called 'autochthonous'. The program did not respect Těšínsko as an ethnically diverse region, but insisted on its original Polish character. Ciešlar hoped that the rapidly changing national character of

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<sup>119</sup> In October 1950, the Polish national school in Životice was renamed as *Poručník Šverma* and the Czech national school as *Kapetan Jaroš*. SOkA Karviná, Kronika Životice, 71.

<sup>120</sup> Paweł Ciešlar was born into a working-class family and employed as a worker in the local ironworks. He graduated from the Party School in Moscow and, between 1926 and 1931, was one of the founding members of the KSČ in Těšínsko. In 1940 he was sent into forced labor. After the Liberation, he was actively involved in Party work: from 1945 to 1949 he served as the President of the Company Board of the Třinecké Ironworks; between 1949 and 1951 he was President and Vice-President of the OV ONV in Český Těšín. He was also elected as Congress candidate of the UV KSČ. In 1951, he was deprived of all the functions connected to his platform and the following year expelled from the Party for spreading bourgeois-nationalist views and hostility towards the working class. Between 1952 and 1958, he was employed as a worker in the Třinecké Ironworks before leaving on premature retirement. His request for rehabilitation in 1968 was rejected.



Těšínsko, from Polish to Czech, would halt and that the Polish character of Těšínsko, as it had been in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, would be restored.<sup>121</sup> In April 1951, the national question in Těšínsko was discussed at two special conferences in Český Těšín. At the first one, held on April 13, 1951 and organized by the presidency of the KSČ Regional Committee (KV KSČ), the representative of the Central Committee KSČ (Ústřední výbor (ÚV) KSČ), Gustav Bareš,<sup>122</sup> illuminated his and the views of the Central Committee on the national problems in Těšínsko. He found that the Polish minority had access to all cultural activities. Bareš then accused Ciešlar of 'Gomulkavism',<sup>123</sup> after Władysław Gomułka, former Polish Communist leader, who was expelled between 1951 and 1954 from the Polish United Workers' Part, imprisoned and denounced as 'Titoist', right-wing, and reactionary. In the name of the ÚV KSČ, Bareš suggested a rejection of the platform: *"It's not that the condemnation of the platform of Comrade Ciešlar means any rejection of the Poles. But rather Polish comrades themselves must reveal him as a bourgeois nationalist, similar to Slovak nationalists, who collaborate with Polish wealthy men."*<sup>124</sup>

The following day, after the conference of the KV KSČ, the KSČ County Committee (OV KSČ) held a meeting. Bareš again rejected the Ciešlar program as 'reactionary' and labeled the author as a 'bourgeois nationalist'. However, this time Bareš used a different explanation of Ciešlar's ideological ground. Instead of 'Gomulkavism', he claimed that the base for the platform derived from *"Hitler and Rosenberg, therefore the racist theory*

<sup>121</sup> Siwek, Zahradník, Szymeczek, 61.

<sup>122</sup> Gustav Bareš, (born Gustav Breitenfeld, 1910-1979) was a Czechoslovakian journalist, Communist Party politician, Member of the National Assembly of Czechoslovakia and party ideologue. After 1952, he was removed from the Party.

<sup>123</sup> Jiří Knapík: Kdo spoutal naši kulturu. Portrét stalinisty Gustava Bereše. Nakladatelství Šárka, Přerov 2007, 133,

<sup>124</sup> ZA Opava, f. KV KSČ, sign. P – 252. From Knapík, 134.



of *Blut and Boden*".<sup>125</sup> According to historian, Jiří Knapík, Bereš acted in this ethnically mixed environment with caution and intentionally escalated criticism by comparing 'Poland' to 'Germany'. It is also possible that comparison with Gomułka would not have had such a political effect as would that of Hitler.<sup>126</sup>

Both conferences required that Ciešlar surrender his misconceptions, which he did initially, under the influence of momentary depression. But he soon rallied and began with an uncompromising, although vain, defense of his views. In February 1952, KV KSC excluded Ciešlar from public and political life.<sup>127</sup>

The literature known to me does not provide any examples of resentment of the Party's decision or support for Ciešlar, whether coming from local Party functionaries or the people. Kevin McDermott's investigation into popular opinion during the Slánský process shows the limitations of postwar 'Stalinization'. McDermott shows that the purges were not merely initiated and coordinated in Moscow, but were often "adapted for domestic purposes".<sup>128</sup> Additionally he offers a conclusion that "at no time was the 'Party' a singular entity. ... The purges and show trials were in important ways counterproductive for the leadership"<sup>129</sup> "Neither the mass arrests not the elite purges

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<sup>125</sup> Referat of Gustav Bareš at the VII. KSC County conference in Český Těšíně. Ostrava 1951, 13. From Knapík, 134.

<sup>126</sup> Knapík, 135.

<sup>127</sup> Siwek, Zahradnik, Szymeczek, 59

<sup>128</sup> Kevin McDermott: A "Polyphony of Voices"? Czech Popular Opinion and the Slánský Affair. *Slavic Review* 67, no. 4 (Winter 2008), 846.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 864.

were able to completely annul independent thought and intimidate the population into submission."<sup>130</sup>

The Party's solutions of the national question in Těšínsko, however, started to spread a theory among the Polish minority about two homelands for Těšínsko: Czechoslovakia as material (*materialní*) and Poland as spiritual (*duchovní*).<sup>131</sup> The KSČ had to recognize that the national situation had not been solved. It was only in 1959 when it became more concentrated on the national question again. However, as the following chapters will show, during the 1950s on the local level, official, semi- and non-official solutions and understanding of the national question, resulted in an image of the new town of Havířov.

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Jirí Friedl: *Polská menšina v letech 1945-1956*. In: Kaszper, 60-66.

## 1.2 WÖLLAN – VELENJE / БЕЛЕЊЕ – VÖLLAN – VELENJE

### Šaleška Valley, 1900 - 1941

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the eastern part of the small Šaleška Valley (*Šaleška dolina*) in *Lower Styria* (*Spodnja Štajerska, Untersteiermark*) was inhabited by approximately 12,000 people. Along an 8-km line, three main settlements were situated, surrounded by villages and mountain farms.

Coming from Carinthia (*Koroška, Kärnten*) in the north, through the Huda luknja gorge, where the railway line to Celje (*Cilli*) on the Monarchy's Southern Railway line (Vienna – Trieste) had been routed since 1899, we first find the market of Velenje (*Wöllan*). The market was situated beneath mighty Velenje Castle facing the ruins of Šalek Castle on the opposite hill, from which the valley got its name. Fields, farms and churches were scattered on both sides of the road, with the Paka River giving it the hint of a fairy tale. The picture changes as we move along the railway line: first we pass the coalmining area and workers' settlement of Pesje (*Hundsdorf*), before reaching the historical town of Šoštanj (*Schönstein*), the capital of the valley.

Examples of all three main settlements in the Šaleška Valley serve to present the national, social and political situation in the Valley from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the Second World War, especially the national struggles and industrial



development which played an important role at the end of the War and the imposition of Communist rule in Slovenia (Yugoslavia).

### **Schönstein or Šoštanj: German-Slovenian Struggles**

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, national movements and the rise of industrialization influenced the national struggles, in the case of the Šaleška Valley, German-Slovene struggles.

The Vošnjak/Woschnagg family of Šoštanj is used as an example. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the family had already started its leather business, but it was not until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the company started to be developed and modernized by two of the four brothers who took over the business. When we look at the genealogy of the family, it is in this generational branch, born between 1830 and 1840, when the earlier very irregular inscription of the family name became strictly divided between the Slovenian version, Vošnjak, and the German, Woschnagg.<sup>132</sup> According to one brother, Dr. Josip Vošnjak, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German language dominated, whereas Slovenian was mainly the language of farmers and poorer people. Until 1848, nationality was bypassed and language was only a means of communication.<sup>133</sup> Until the end of the 1880s, all four brothers decided as to which nationality they belonged: the engineer and

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<sup>132</sup> Miran Aplinc: Vošnjaki: industrialci iz Šoštanja. Lapis bellum, Zavod za kulturo Šoštanja 2005, Genealogy of family Vošnjak.

<sup>133</sup> Josip Vošnjak: Spomini. Slovenska matica, Ljubljana 1982, 16.

the doctor<sup>134</sup> decided on Slovenian nationality, while the other two, who stayed in Šoštanj and managed the leather business, decided on German nationality.

In 1880 in Šoštanj, 16% of the inhabitants had decided on the German colloquial language (*Umgangssprache*), but in 1910, after the Woschnaggs, as the town's main employers, decided on German, almost 70% followed suit.<sup>135</sup> People with German *Umgangssprache* were not German by origin, but politically identified themselves as German, as it was the most convenient for them. Germans held key positions in the economy and administration and were not fond of the foundation of the new State of South Slavs.

Therefore it comes as no surprise that in May 1917, the May Declaration demanded by Slovene, Croat, and Serb representatives in the Vienna Parliament, which supported the idea of an independent Yugoslavian State within Austro-Hungary, was supported in all the municipalities in the Šaleška Valley, except for the town of Šoštanj.<sup>136</sup> On October 29, 1918 the new State of the former Austro-Hungarian South Slavs, the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs (SHS) was established and, two days later, the National government of the SHS was instated in Ljubljana. The State did not obtain international diplomatic recognition and had problems with the West Italian and North Austrian borders. The Šaleška Valley was not directly confronted by border problems with Austria as had been the nearby town of Maribor or the Carinthia region, where the borders had

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<sup>134</sup> Mihael Vošnjak was one of the founders of the liberal-progressive peasant cooperatives in Lower Styria, while his brother Dr. Josip Vošnjak, the leader of the Slovene National Movement in Styria, was one of the most prominent representatives of the national liberal Young Slovene movement.

<sup>135</sup> Aplinc, 90.

<sup>136</sup> Milan Ževart: *Narodnoosvobodilni boj v Šaleški dolini*. Knjižica OF 5, Ljubljana 1977.

only been settled in 1920, after long negotiations and military intervention. On December 1, 1918, the National government joined the State of the Kingdom of Serbia to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes with its capital in Belgrade. In the new Kingdom all German signs would be removed and replaced with those in the Slovene or Serbo-Croatian language. Šoštanj's main square was renamed as King Peter Square.<sup>137</sup>

Already by November 1918, the new State government had accomplished the partial nationalization and control of foreign companies and properties. Woschnagg's Leather Company became one of the biggest companies in the Kingdom of SHS. The Woschnaggs accepted Yugoslavian citizenship and the family leaned towards Slovenian, namely the Yugoslavian side.<sup>138</sup> After the First World War, the German organizations of the *Schulverein* and *Südmark* were dissolved, but in the 1930s the Swabian-German Cultural Association (*Kulturbund, Schwäbisch-deutscher Kulturbund*)<sup>139</sup> appeared in Šoštanj.

In 1931, 57 people, less than 1%, with German as a mother tongue, lived in the Šaleška Valley, 50 of those in Šoštanj. After Hitler came to power, pro-German orientation in Šoštanj increased and the town started to be represented as the most German ('nemškutarsko'<sup>140</sup>) town, 'German nest' (*nemškutarsko gnezdo*) in the Valley, with 18%

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<sup>137</sup> Aplinc, 110.

<sup>138</sup> Aplinc, 121.

<sup>139</sup> The Swabian-German Cultural Association was an organization dedicated to the preservation of German culture in the Kingdom of SHS.

<sup>140</sup> Nemškutar, *Deutschtümler*. Pro-German propaganda spread mostly among those who were not satisfied with the economic and political circumstances in Yugoslavia and started to declare themselves as Germans; those people were recognized as "namčurji".



of the people declaring themselves as German in 1937.<sup>141</sup> In 1939, the Woschnaggs became members of the *Kulturbund* and the company became the center of this Association in the town. The increasing number of self-declared Germans in Šoštanj was noticed by the Ministry of Interior, which issued the following report: "*A very interesting matter took place in the small town of Šoštanj in Slovenia. In a company owned by Germans, 400 workers, who until just recently had declared themselves as Slavs, are now declaring themselves to be of German origin.*"<sup>142</sup>

#### Velenje/Велење: Farms, Churches and the Electricity Plant



Fig. 1.5. Velenje Power Plant, 1934. Sign Elektrarna (in Slovenian) / электрарна (in Serbian and Cyrillic)

<sup>141</sup> Aplinc, 164.

<sup>142</sup> Dušan Biber: *Nacizem in Nemci v Jugoslaviji: 1933-1941*. Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1966, 315.

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Velenje, with fewer than 600 inhabitants, was a provincial market in rural surroundings. In 1931, the agrarian population in the Šaleška Valley was 60% and agriculture, as in the rest of Yugoslavia, was the most important economic sector. Farmers in Velenje owned about 5 hectares (0.05 km<sup>2</sup>) of land.<sup>143</sup> Mayor M. Lempl was a member of the Slovene People's Party (*Slovenska ljudska stranka*), which joined with the JRZ, Yugoslavian National Party (*Jugoslovanska nacionalna stranka*) and came into power. The SLS/JRZ party was very popular in Velenje and received the majority of votes at the local elections in 1935. It expanded its influence through many associations and organizations, as well in connection with the Church. Many Church organizations and fraternities operated in the town, with numerous Slovenian associations, such as Ciril-Method's Association, trying to spread and consolidate national awareness.<sup>144</sup>

### **Pesje: Image of Communists**

Beside Vošnjak's Leather Company, the biggest employer in the Valley after the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the Velenje Coal Mine Company. Despite the Company having its seat in Velenje, the image of the town was not affected by it, since the main shaft and the power plant building were situated to the west, towards Pesje and Šoštanj. Coal was discovered in the Valley in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the first century of its existence, the coal mine owners lacked the funds for further development. In the mid-

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<sup>143</sup> Jože Hudales: Šaleška dolina v 18. in 19. stoletju. In: Velenje. Razprave k zgodovini mesta in okolice, Velenje 1999, 260-286.

<sup>144</sup> Milan Ževart: Velenje in okolica od začetka prve do konca druge svetovne vojne v Evropi. In: Velenje. Razprave k zgodovini mesta in okolice, Velenje 1999, 313-325.



19<sup>th</sup> century, the mine in Pesje, managed by the Zagorje ob Savi Mining Company, employed only two workers. In 1885, the Company was sold to Daniel Lapp from German Ixheim, a businessman and constructor, especially interested in building railways. His major success, which had brought him economic prosperity as well elevation into the hereditary nobility by the Habsburg Emperor Franz Joseph, had been to successfully complete the 10-km long tunnel on the important Arlberg Railway.

Lapp started work on the modernization of the coal mine in the Šaleška Valley.<sup>145</sup> In 1892, a year after the railroad connected the valley with Celje, the mine started to operate on a full scale. The main shaft was named after Franz Joseph and had an average production of coal of approximately 100,000 tons per year. During the Lapp period, the Company had between 110 and 400 employees. Mainly poor farmers (*bajtarji*) worked in the mine, while the professional miners rather went to Germany, where salaries were much higher. For those workers who were not coming to work from the rural surroundings, Lapp financed the building of four apartment houses in Pesje, together with 57 workers' one-roomed apartments and some workers' houses near the mine.

Lapp died in 1910 and his heirs sold the Company to the State Treasury of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the end of the First World War, the Company was nationalized and owned by the State Treasury of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.<sup>146</sup> It was only in 1928 when technical conditions in the Velenje Coalmine started to improve. In that year, a new thermal power plant was built, which enabled the electrification of the mine and the

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<sup>145</sup> Peter Ficko: Rudarsko Velenje do ustanovitve stare Jugoslavije. Kronika: časopis za slovensko krajevno zgodovino. Leto 19, zv. 3, 1971, 163-166.

<sup>146</sup> Ficko, 166.



replacement of manual excavation with mechanical excavation. Despite the new mechanization, production did not increase. The causes could be found in the economic crisis which affected mostly those mines with a low calorific value of the coal, such as the Velenje Coal Mine. The number of workers were conditioned by fluctuations in the production, but, in general, 500 workers were employed in the mine. However, the number of houses in Pesje almost doubled and the Coal Mine Company installed water and electricity in the houses.<sup>147</sup>

During the time of the world economic crisis, between 1928 and 1938, workers in the coal mine sometimes worked only two or three days a week. The salaries were so poor that they were not sufficient to cover basic expenses. They had to cultivate the land and do extra work as craftsmen or farmers or emigrate abroad. Pesje also became known as the 'Red Nest' of the Šaleška Valley, as it was the center of the workers' movement in the Valley. The Social Democrats as well the Communists organized strikes in the coal mine or in the Vošnjak Company, with the major strikes being in 1920 and 1934. In 1924, *Svoboda* (Freedom), a working-educational association, was established with its seat in Pesje. The Association had a choir, a theater, a gymnastic club and a library. Because of its Communist orientation, it was banned and the most active members were arrested.

In 1919, the Socialist Working Party of Yugoslavia (Communists) was established in Belgrade. In Vukovar in June 1920, the party was renamed as the *Communist Party of Yugoslavia* (CPY) and Slovenian Communists were incorporated as regional organization in the centralized CPY. During the short time when the Party was legal, it had fairly

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<sup>147</sup> Damijan Kljajič: Pesje skozi čas. Šoštanj 1999.

broad social support. In the 1920 elections, the CPY came third and fourth in Slovenia. At the end of that year, the government issued the *Obznana* (Announcement) Decree, which prohibited all Communist activities and forced the CPY to be transformed into an illegal operation.

While in 1920 the CPY in Slovenia had more than 12,000 members, the number decreased to 196 in 1928.<sup>148</sup> After the introduction of the King's dictatorship in January 1929, many members of the CPY were arrested and the leadership moved abroad. Young Communists, such as Josip Broz and Edvard Kardelj, stayed in Yugoslavia and accused the CPY leadership of the Comintern and Stalin of inability and the responsibility for disunity. In 1938 Stalin named Josip Broz as General Secretary of the CPY, to organize a new Central Committee of the CPY with Edvard Kardelj, Milovan Đilas, Aleksandar Ranković, Rade Končar and Franc Leskovšek. During this time, the CPY had about 6,500 members and was among the smallest political parties in the country.

In the 1920s, Slovenian Communists within the CPY discussed the meaning of the national question, rejecting the theory of a common Yugoslavian nation. In April 1937 near Trbovlje, a traditional industrial town, Slovenian Communists established the Communist Party of Slovenia (CPS) as part of a centrally organized CPY and declared themselves a national party. Boris Kidrič and Edvard Kardelj took over the leadership. In its manifesto, CPS stressed that the nation's future lay within a federal Yugoslav State

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<sup>148</sup> Vida Deželak Barič: Organizacijska vprašanja Komunistične partije Slovenije 1941-1945. Doktorska disertacija, Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Ljubljana 1999, 9.

and that Slovenes should not give up their old goal—a united and free Slovenia.<sup>149</sup>

Membership of the CPS started to grow, increasing from about 250 members in 1937, to 650 in June 1940 and 800 in October 1940. In April 1941, at the beginning of the war there were approximately 1,200 members of the CPS, organized into 14 District Committees.<sup>150</sup>

The image of a Communist in the local environment just before the outbreak of the Second World War was intertwined in a strange blend. In a postwar testimony, a witness from Velenje stated that before the war, everybody avoided Communists since they were seen as 'rabid dogs'<sup>151</sup> and according to Janez Žmavc, who grew up in Šoštanj, the Communists in the town had the reputation of having a bad influence on the youth.<sup>152</sup> In 1926 in Pesje, an illegal party cell was established, the first one in the Celje area. In 1936 a new, similar association to *Svoboda*, was organized, called *Vzajemnost* (Reciprocity), in which leading members were Communists or their sympathizers. During the war, many inhabitants of Pesje would become the first fighters (*prvoborci*), such as Tone Ulrih, brother of Janko Ulrih, who was the leading cultural worker in Pesje.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>151</sup> ZAC, OLO Šoštanj 64, Statement: Zagorje, 1.12. 1945.

<sup>152</sup> Janez Žmavc: Otok Walcheren: Mladost v mojem Šoštanju. Cerdonis in Zavod za kulturo Šoštanja, Slovenj Gradec – Šoštanj 2005, 45.





Fig. 1.6. Mining colony in Pesje.

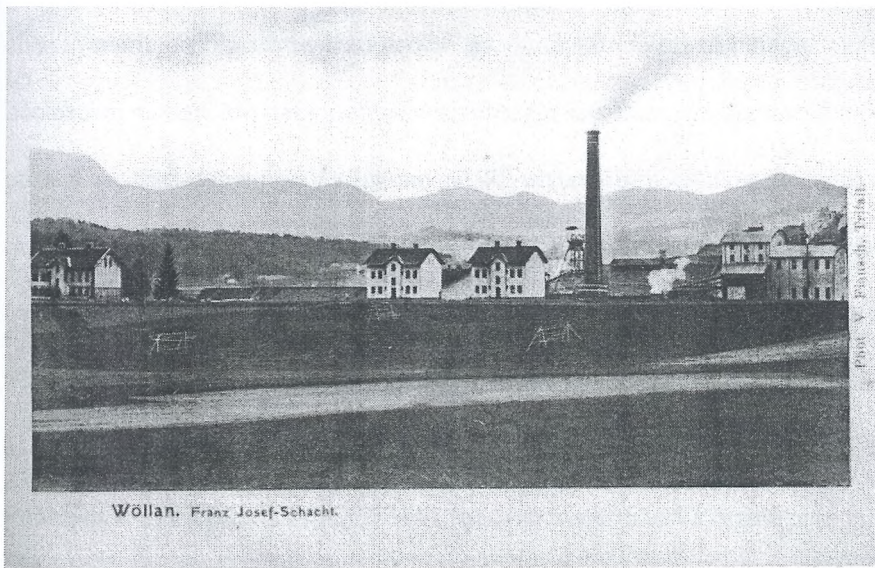


Fig. 1.7. Velenje Coal Mine on a postcard from around 1900

## Occupation, Resistance and Revolution

After the attack on Yugoslavia in April 1941, Slovenian territory was occupied by three states: Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Hungary.<sup>153</sup> The goal of all three occupiers was to carry out ethnocide on the Slovenes. The Nazis employed the most brutal methods, since they wanted to perform the *Umwolkung* in only a few months. All three states constantly violated international law by shooting hostages, sending people to concentration camps, systematically carrying out expulsions to empty the territory, carrying out forced mobilizations, etc. According to Slovenian historian, Tone Ferenc, Slovenian conditions during the Second World War, compared with the rest of occupied Europe, were among the hardest.<sup>154</sup>

The Šalek Valley, as territory in Lower Styria, became part of the Nazi occupational zone. The Nazi social order used racial and other discriminatory laws, as well as forced mobilization into the German armed forces, the *Wehrmacht*. In Velenje and Šoštanj 3,102 men, born between 1892 and 1929, were ready for German mobilization. An exodus of 220,000 to 260,000 Slovenes (one-fifth of all the population in the zone) was planned for this occupation zone for the five months (between May and October 1941).

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<sup>153</sup> Slovenians had already experienced the terror of all three regimes since 1920: in Fascist Italy, to which one-third of the Slovenian population belonged, and in Austrian Carinthia, where Slovenes were faced with an assimilation policy, and after the *Anschluss* in 1938 with plans for their permanent destruction by the Nazis.

<sup>154</sup> Mitja Ferenc (ur.) Tone Ferenc: Izbrana dela. Okupacijski sistemi med drugo svetovno vojno. Št. 1: Razkosanje in aneksionizem. Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 2006; št. 2: Raznarodovanje. Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 2010; št. 3: Nasilje in izkoriščanje gmotnih sil za potrebe okupatorskih držav. Oddelek za zgodovino Filozofske fakultete, Ljubljana 2009.



The Nazi propaganda, spread by the *Kulturbund* already before the beginning of the war, influenced those who were not nationally conscious and who were living under bad conditions. The center of Germanization in the Šaleška Valley was in Vošnjak's tannery.<sup>155</sup> The Nazi assimilation measures also included the abolition of organizations, the destruction of Slovenian literature and cultural heritage, renaming of Slovenian towns, school closures and the banning of the Slovene language in the administration and churches. Velenje was renamed as Völlan and people were forced to join the *Steirischer Haimatbund* (*Štajerska domovinska zveza*).<sup>156</sup>

The racial and colonization office of the SS performed racial and political examination by introducing the institution of the *Volksliste* to classify Slovenian people into four groups, based on their height, color of their hair, eyes, nose, cheekbones and skull shape.

According to their racial and political appropriateness for Germanization, people were classified into four groups: advanced German, German, hostile to German and very hostile to German. Obtaining the Green Card or German citizenship was a matter of life or death for many people. At the end of November 1942, 89% of the inhabitants of Šostanj and 86% of Velenje had obtained German citizenship.<sup>157</sup>

The brutal methods of the Nazis quickly started to change the attitude of the inhabitants towards the occupiers.<sup>158</sup> Soon, the Liberation Front (*Osvobodilna fronta*, OF) was established in Ljubljana in April 1941, uniting more than 15 organizations under the leadership of the CPS. The CPS took three strategically significant decisions:

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<sup>155</sup> Aplinc, 169.

<sup>156</sup> Ževart 1999, 313-325.

<sup>157</sup> Aplinc, 172.

<sup>158</sup> Milan Ževart: Okupacija in odpor, 1941-1945. In: Velenje. Razprave k zgodovini mesta in okolice, Velenje 1999.



establishment of the OF to provide the Party with legitimacy, leading the role in the armed resistance movement, and expanding the resistance across Yugoslavian borders into the whole Slovenian ethnic territory. Such an approach gave the CPS the leading role in the army and significant real power at the outset. Ljubljana, in the Italian occupational zone, was the center of the OF. Here, in the first half of 1942, partisans managed to create a liberated territory, which, after Italian capitulation in September 1943, became more extensive, covering Lower and Inner Carniola. During the war, the OF started establishing a new, people's government, its own economic and monetary system, etc.

In October 1943 in Kočevje, 120 members of the Slovene National Liberation Committee were elected to become the supreme body of the new people's authorities. In November 1942, the Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) was established in Bihać in Western Bosnia. The OF supreme bodies confirmed that the Slovenian resistance was a constituent part of the Yugoslavian resistance led by Josip Broz – Tito. AVNOJ became a political body, which, due to international circumstances, had not yet become an official representative body of Yugoslavia. This happened in November 1943 in the Bosnian town of Jajce, at the second session of the AVNOJ, where the decision was also adopted on the federal character of Yugoslavia. Party organization in the partisan army had a two-way orientation: the national liberation fight (*Narodno-osvobodilna borba*, NOB) and the revolutionary movement.

In 1941, the Communists in Slovenia represented the strongest political group in the army. Among an estimated 2,058 Slovenian partisans in 1941, there were 515 members

of the CPS and 251 members of the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije*, SKOJ), which represented almost 40% of all fighters.<sup>159</sup> The CPS developed its own organizational structure in partisan groups and became the only organized political group in the partisan units.

While the OF was a coalition, in the rest of Yugoslavia the national liberation struggle was conducted exclusively under the leadership of the CPY. In March 1943, the OF founding groups signed the Dolomite Memorandum, by which the Party obtained the exclusive right to develop as a political body and exercise a monopoly of power. The OF political pluralism was extinguished. The Secretary of the Central Committee (CC) CPS during the occupation was Franc Leskošek – Luka. Leskošek-Luka and Edvard Kardelj were also representatives among seven members of the CC CPY. At the beginning of the war, the CPS had about 1,200 members and, due to great losses, the number remained the same until the end of 1942.<sup>160</sup> Initially new members could not be accepted as members of the Party exclusively at their own request, but after estimation by the organization.

However, during the war, admission to the Party took place on a broader basis. The Party adjusted to the new situation and emphasized the struggle against occupation and for a new social order. In such complex and rather non-transparent conditions, individuals, especially those from a rural background, who eventually became a dominant social group in the Party, did not have an image of revolution or Soviet experience when

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<sup>159</sup> Deželak Barič, 406.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 453.

entering the Party.<sup>161</sup> In accepting a new member, it was important that the candidate had an unblemished past, was moral, disciplined, self-sacrificing, militant and comradely. For example, the Regional Committee of the CPS in Upper Carniola emphasized that "piety and theoretical lack cannot be a serious obstacle to acceptance".<sup>162</sup>

In 1944 in Styria, where the situation demanded extensive mobilization and quick and substantial acceptance into the Party, Leskošek – Luka, commissar of the large Celje district, expressed his dissatisfaction with the old Communists being in the way: *"Those old apostles think that they have some kind of pattern for organization and that the younger people have nothing to say at all. Younger people have respect for older ones, because those old guys know how to gain authority with old memberships and theoretical bullshit ... I sent all those old vipers into the army for a refresher course"*.<sup>163</sup> For the partisan fighters, being a member of the CPS was often equal to conscientious performance of military duties and brave fighting, which was also basic for affiliation to the CPS. At the end of the war, the CPS, despite huge losses, had 12,000 members, ten times more than three years earlier and, after 25 years, approximately the same number as at the time of its establishment in 1920.<sup>164</sup>

After the Italian capitulation, the partisan movement increased as well as the growth of party organization. This process differed across Slovenian territory: the most rapid was in Littoral, the former Ljubljana province and in Upper Carniola, but the slowest were in

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 416.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 453.



Styria, Carinthia and Prekmurje, where pressure from the occupiers was the strongest. Styria, East Carinthia and Prekmurje were united into the 4th operating zone, which at the beginning of 1944 had only 137 members of the CPS and 97 members of the SKOJ. The arrival of the 14th Division, one of the strongest partisan units, in Styria in February 1944, was not only important politically and militarily, but also meant substantial assistance for the Party to increase in Styria. People from the Šaleška Valley joined the partisans in the brigades of the 14th Division, mostly the Tomšičeva brigade. According to Toman, people welcomed the partisans, offering them food, drinks, tobacco, accommodation, etc.<sup>165</sup> The Division started to take initiatives, such as the proclamation of the Party's celebration of Workers' Day by attacking the Velenje Coal Mine on May 1, 1944.

Prior to the beginning of the Second World War, the Communists in the Šaleška Valley were organized into five cells with about 35 members and were part of the Celje District Committee, with Jože Letonja and Olga Vrabič as their representatives. At the beginning of the war, party organization in the Šaleška Valley became part of the Savinjsko district with Jože Letonja – Kmet as its Secretary until his death in September 1942. The Central Committee of the CPS was aware of the critical conditions in the 4th zone. They decided to send their members for reorganization. In spring 1943, the Šaleško-Mislinjsko District was established, with District Commissar, Tone Ulrih – Kristl, a pre-war Communist from Pesje and brother of Janko Ulrih, a well-known, popular resident of Pesje, whose funeral in 1940 developed into a real workers' demonstration.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Tina Toman: 14. divizija. Pohod in oskrba. Diplomsko delo, FDV, Ljubljana 2007.

<sup>166</sup> Ževart: Occupation and resistance, 325.

In June 1943, the district had only 3 members of the CPS, therefore substantial help was provided in early 1944. The most active members were Tone Ulrih, Franc Polh, Ela Letonja, Danica Badovinac and Anica Vipotnik – Ančka. Soon the Regional Committee proclaimed the Šalesko-Mislinjsko district as one of those districts where the OF was the best organized. In August 1944, the District had 19 members and 15 candidates of the CPS.

Conditions in Slovenian Styria in 1944 noticeably improved to the benefit of the OF as well of the CPS. In June 1944, the Šalesko-Mislinjsko District Committee announced that the bad opinion of the Communist Party had changed, which indicates an earlier widely present rejection of the Communists.<sup>167</sup> During the war, the CPS increased its power and used brutal methods to legitimize its authority. In November 1944, the Senate of the Military Court of the 4th Operating Zone, NOV, in the Upper Savinja area sentenced to death by shooting a certain A.M. from the Šaleška Valley, who had been accused of collaboration with the Germans.<sup>168</sup> The Command of the Military Court was aware of mitigating circumstances, but nevertheless approved the necessity to implement the judgment, since "the inhabitants are not disciplined".<sup>169</sup>

At the end of 1944, the Nazi pressure on the Šaleška Valley increased again with more hostage shootings. Some inhabitants started to obey Nazi orders again. But the resistance was already strong enough to succeed until Liberation. A German soldier described the

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<sup>167</sup> For conditions in Styria during the war see: Deželak Barič 206-325.

<sup>168</sup> ZAC, OLO Šoštanj 66, Letter of a Senate at the Commande of a Military Court of IV. Operating Zone NOV and PO Slovenia at Upper Savinja area (Vojaško sodišče vojne oblasti IV. operativne zone NOV and PO Slovenije, Senat pri komandi za Zgornje Savinjsko vojno področje), 2.11.1944.

<sup>169</sup> ZAC, OLO Šoštanj 66, Letter of Command of a Military Court of IV. Operating Zone NOV and PO Slovenia at Upper Savinja area (Vojaško sodišče vojne oblasti IV. operativne zone NOV and PO Slovenije, Komanda za Zgornje Savinjsko vojno področje), 2.11.1944.

area of the Šaleška Valley in a letter: *"In these hills there are no humans, only bandits; let's hope that the war is soon over, so that we can leave this devilish area."*<sup>170</sup> It was on the hillsides of the Šaleška Valley, in Topolšica, where one of the four partial capitulations by the German forces in South-East Europe was signed by General Aleksander Löhr, which ended the Second World War for the Slovenians. The losses after the war were enormous: 4% of the population had lost their lives in resistance, mostly in forced German mobilization.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Ževart: Occupation and resistance, 341-352.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.



## A Difficult Quest for Power Legitimation

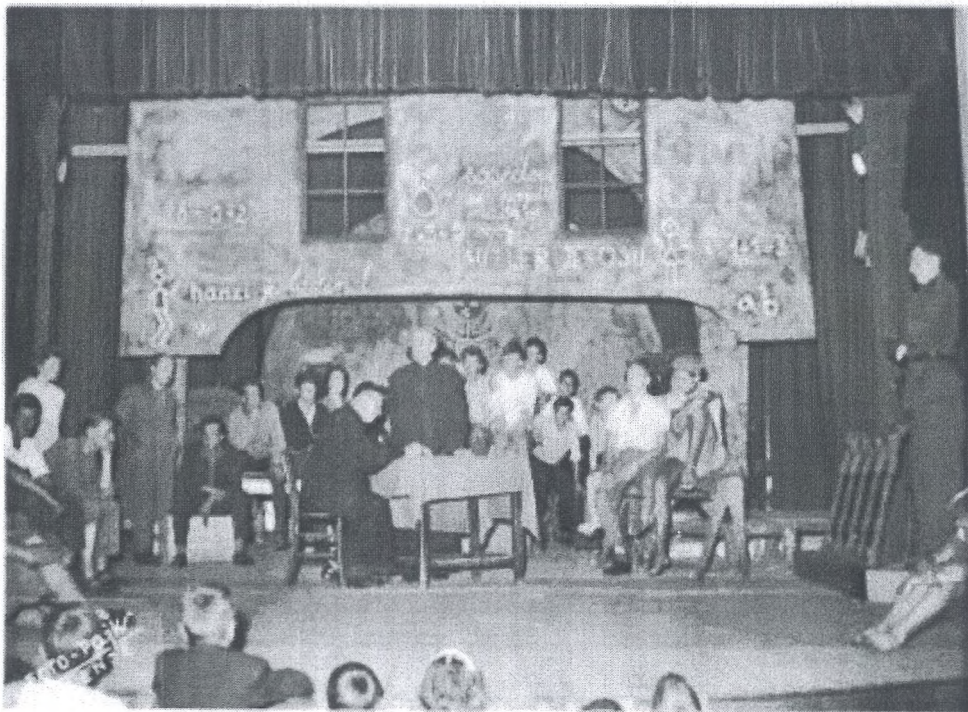


Fig. 1.8. Velenje's chief photographer, Volbenk Pajk, immortalized this scene of a play. We can assume that the play was performed by Velenje's amateur cultural association sometime at the end of the 1940s or at the beginning of the 1950s. The photograph succeeds in capturing the precise moment of intense drama that was going on between the audience and the actors on stage. Children in the first row of the audience form a kind of circle with the actors, mostly young men, silently sitting and staring at the center of the stage where there is an old wooden table, covered carelessly with a tablecloth. Around the table we can see two men, wearing long dark coats. One man is sitting and writing, while the one with blond hair is standing and speaking. The only other man standing up in the photo, on the extreme right, is a soldier or an official with his arms folded, looking strictly and seriously towards the table. The entire action is taking place in a house with graffiti on the walls. The graffiti states: 'Hitler is a donkey', 'The neighbors have eaten their cat'<sup>172</sup>, and 'Hanzi is hungry'. There are many very simple sums, wrongly calculated, such as:  $1+1=3$ . There is also graffiti in the room: 'Don't spit on the floor, think of the universal dive'. Under the inscription there is a bomb. There are also drawings, as if drawn by a child, of men and animals.

<sup>172</sup> The name, Hans, suggests that the person is German; Slovenians have many nicknames and jokes about the Italians regarding their food, such as Italians eating cats and pigeons.





Fig. 1.9. Another photo, most probably taken during a similar period of time on the same stage and with the same actors as in the previous photo. What we see is a rather idyllic scene from the Alpine Slovenian countryside in the early evening. Judging by the costumes the actors are wearing<sup>173</sup>, the village architecture, the church, the chapel and the mountains in the background, the scene could easily be placed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when Slovenian national awakening became more intense. The stage and the scenery behind is very full: an old man is sitting and leaning on his walking stick and saying something very interesting and wise, as the men and women are listening to him in amazement. Behind the group, there is another group of mostly young girls and boys, and behind them there are an old woman and a child sitting and listening. One man is holding an accordion, so we can assume that the audience is watching the scene of a village party or gathering.

<sup>173</sup> The stylized, usually Upper Carniolan version of festive folk dress had established itself as the national costume. The common Slovenian national costume was developed in the second half of the 19th century, during the time of national awakening for the Slovenes, when a costume from Bled was chosen as the primary national costume.

The foundation of new Communist authority in Slovenia and Yugoslavia emerged during the war. AVNOJ was recognized as a legal representative body by the Allies, who supported a postwar coalition between the partisans' and King's governments. In June 1944, Tito and the Prime Minister of the Yugoslavian government in exile, Ivan Šubašić, met on the island of Vis, reaching an agreement on the form of government after Liberation, leaving the issue of the Monarchy unresolved. In March 1945, a new temporary government of the Democratic Federative Yugoslavia (DFJ) was formed, including representatives of the former Royal Government in Exile. Tito became Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense and Šubašić was Deputy Prime Minister. In August 1945, the OF became part of the Popular Front (*Ljudska Fronta*, LF), which was established by the Communists as its front organization. The LF had a wide and, for most people, acceptable program: maintaining of acquisitions of the Liberation Fight, fair borders for the new Yugoslavia, 'Brotherhood and Unity' among its nations, reconstruction of the country, and improvement of economic and social conditions for all.

Before the elections of the Constituent Assembly in November 1945, Communist pressure had increased and in October 1945 Šubašić left the government. The LF won the elections. The newly elected Constituent Assembly permanently deprived the Royal *Karađorđević family* of all its rights, abolished the Monarchy and renamed the hitherto Federal Democratic Yugoslavia as the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (*Federativna ljudska republika Jugoslavija*, FLRJ). The 'new' Yugoslavia was immediately recognized by the Soviet Union, while the USA and the UK followed in December 1945. The first Yugoslavian Constitution of January 1946 proclaimed six



constitutive units with the right to self-determination and secession, as had already been adopted at the second meeting of the AVNOJ in Jajce. The Republics had their own Constitutions. The Slovenian territory was named the People's Republic of Slovenia and it was the first time in history that the word 'Slovenia' was the official and recognized name of a State or administrative political unit. Nevertheless, the results of the elections were the least satisfactory in Slovenia. At the end of 1945, Communist pressure in Slovenia had increased and the Slovenian Communists made efforts to strengthen discipline in the Party and its position toward the 'enemy' and 'reaction'.<sup>174</sup>

In the Šaleška Valley, most of the inhabitants joined the resistance, regardless of their political or ideological orientation.<sup>175</sup> In the Valley, the last battles were still taking place, even after German capitulation, when large crowds of hostile troops broke through the Valley towards Austria. Most of the Home Guard Army (*domobranska vojska*) moved to Austrian Carinthia to be handed over to the Brits. However, at the end of May, more than 1,000 refugees returned to Yugoslavia, where they were handed over to the Yugoslavian Army and the Secret Police (*Ozna*) and taken to camps and prisons. This period is still the most controversial in Slovenian postwar history. The number of people executed without trial exceeded 13,600.<sup>176</sup> The decision on the mass killing of collaborators was taken by the Yugoslavian Communist leaders and was certainly also approved of by the Slovenian leaders.<sup>177</sup> To most people, the Home Guards were collaborators, which reduced the interest in their destiny.

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<sup>174</sup> Peter Vodopivec: *Od Pohlinove slovnice do samostojne države: Slovenska zgodovina od konca 18. stoletja do konca 20. stoletja*. Modrijan Ljubljana 2006, 313-323.

<sup>175</sup> Ževart: *Occupation and resistance*, 352.

<sup>176</sup> Vodpivec, 311.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

The period immediately after the war was a time of enthusiasm as well as a time of the toughest repression, violence, hostility, and postwar revenge. In a semi-rural, Catholic community, such as that of the Šaleška Valley, the imposition of a new social and political order faced numerous problems. Probably the most alarming was the disordered and disorganized Party structure in the Valley. A lack of Communist cadres, the improper attitude and bad reputation discouraged people and alarmed Party members: *"Members of the Party don't know how to put things in order versus the Social Democrats, besides, cultural and educational work is still led by the old educational workers."*<sup>178</sup> *"The Secretary of the Velenje cell is a former member of OZNA and is pretty unpopular among the people",*<sup>179</sup> *"Comrade Tončka hasn't been much of a help, since at meetings she acts too dictatorially and unrealistically."*<sup>180</sup>

In the toxic environment of postwar political purges and pressure by the Communists to impose power, the local Party in the Šaleška Valley faced massive resistance and disapproval from the people, whether in regard to obeying the nationalization act, relation to the Church, working discipline or agrarian reform. Often cruel intervention by the authorities did not prevent or intimidate people from stating their forms of adjustment or defense.

The local case of the Šaleška Valley portrays a society in the first years of Communist rule in Yugoslavia, approximately until 1950, not based on fear, but on constant interaction and negotiation between the authorities and the people. The break with the

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<sup>178</sup> ZAC, 943, Občinski komite ZKS Šoštanj-Velenje, Okrajni komite KPS Mozirje, 16.5.1946.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 16.5.1946.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 943, 1.11.1946.

Informbiro was certainly an important milestone in Yugoslavian history. Since approximately 1949 in particular, the CPS invested much effort in strengthening its position in the Šaleška Valley and in legitimating the new Yugoslavian position by using and inventing new imagery.

### *Nationalization*

Already in November 1944, the AVNOJ Presidency issued a decree on the confiscation of the property of the occupiers and their collaborators, which was soon used also against Slovenian collaborators and opponents of Communism. Vošnjak's factory was nationalized, as well as the property of the owners of castles and villas in the Valley. The land was given mostly to the Coal Mine Company, the Electric Plant or to the Local National Committee. Many inhabitants of Velenje received decrees that their property was to be confiscated.<sup>181</sup> Usually they were accused by the AVNOJ decree of November 1944 of being of German origin, German nationality or of collaboration.

Sentences were serious, even death by shooting. The accused complained that they did not recognize the AVNOJ laws of 1944. The severe punishments did not stop people from writing complaints and credibility letters. It often came down to a matter of personal revenge derived from being on the *Volksliste*, particularly on the local level. In dozens of letters of complaints, people from Velenje claimed that they were not of German nationality, but always had been Slovenes, speaking the Slovene colloquial language. They added many testimonies of their credibility, sometimes more than 50,

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<sup>181</sup> Letters of accusations, complains, and testimonies are taken from ZAC, OLO Šoštanj 64 and 66.



written by their friends or acquaintances, usually in a clumsy, pencil handwriting, on small sheets of paper, to testify that they had always been conscientious Slovenes and supporters of the Liberation movement.

For example, Mr. Marn, an innkeeper from Velenje, was accused of having German nationality and because of that, his property would be confiscated. His wife wrote a letter to the Commission to defend her husband, saying that he had received the *Volksliste* Red legitimization through force. She added 14 letters of witnesses, stating that her husband was always a nationally conscious Slovene, a pre-war Communist and participant and supporter of the OF and the partisans.<sup>182</sup>

Local Communists were faced with the people's disapproval when officials obtained confiscated properties for themselves or when those who were considered as real war collaborators were not punished. At the Party meeting, a young Communist posted the question: *"Why does the widow of one of the most prominent collaborators and opponents of Communism get a pension after her husband's death? Please give me an answer, because people are asking what kind of authority we have not to correct such things?"*<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> ZAC, OLO Šoštanj 64.

<sup>183</sup> ZAC, 943, 4.11.1946.

## Clergy

Just for a very short time after the war, it looked as if relations between the authorities and the Catholic Church were going to settled. Partisan and Communist leaders publically admitted that the Catholics had joined the NOB *en masse* and had assisted in the partisan victory. But already after the fall of 1945, the pressure on the Catholic Church had started to increase, accusing not only the behavior of the Church hierarchy during the war, but also its 'reactionary' nature.<sup>184</sup> In May 1946, a District Committee of the CPS in Mozirje, a town not far from the Šaleška Valley, discussed the problem of a member of one of the cells having been the 40 year old cook of the local priest. She was accepted in the Party because she materially supported the partisans, but was very religious. "*She is in Church all the time and could unwittingly say something to the priest, if not somewhere else, then in the Confessional. She has to be expelled*".<sup>185</sup>

Community cohesion was shown in the collaboration between different institutions. Musicians of the Miners' Band played at different Church events, such as at Easter. The Communists in Velenje discussed how to confront "*reactionary clergy, who make use of deep religious feelings*".<sup>186</sup> A decision was taken to organize more cultural festivals and to build a cooperative house (*zadružni dom*). The intensions of the local Party were not very successful. When in 1950, during the Informbiro innervations, a member of the Slovenian government, Lidija Šentjunc, visited the District Committee of the CPS in Mozirje, members from Velenje and Šoštanj reported that "*the priests are announcing the*

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<sup>184</sup> Vodopivec, 326.

<sup>185</sup> ZAC, 943, 16.5.1946.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., September 1946.

*news from the pulpits, children are having Bible studies, Confirmations, members of the CPS are attending Church, the CPS hold meetings in front of the Church, and the candidate of the Party sings in the Church choir, so that he has better contact with people."*<sup>187</sup>

### *Agrarian Reform*

In August 1945, Yugoslavia passed an Agrarian Reform Act with a twofold goal. Firstly, to change ownership relations and to establish Socialist agriculture after the model of the Soviet Union. However, Yugoslavian agrarian reform did not mean the nationalization of the land and elimination of private property, but the distribution of land among the peasants. The second goal was to reward peasants for their contribution to the OF during the war and to win revolutionary changes for them.<sup>188</sup> Agitation for agrarian reform before the elections in November 1945 represented peasants as the 'allies' of the working class and made claims based on 'the old lawsuit' (*stara pravda*),<sup>189</sup> which referred to the Slovenian and Croatian peasants' rebellion in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The results of the agrarian reform in Slovenia were only partly successful, since the reform had not improved the conditions of those who received a maximum of 5 hectares of land. This was not enough to enable the owners to survive, without looking for an

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<sup>187</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS t.e.46. 1948-1950 a.e.1498 Okrajni komite KPS Mozirje, t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508 Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, 1949, Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, poročilo ekip and Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, Porocilo iz partijske konference na RLV, 8.11.1949

<sup>188</sup> Zdenko Čepič: Agrarna reforma in kolonizacija v Sloveniji 1945-1948. Založba Obzorja Maribor 1995, 5-9.

<sup>189</sup> Čepič, 79.



additional source of income. Agrarian reform also caused problems in supply, especially after the first Five-Year Plan prioritized rapid industrialization and consequently more people depended on agricultural production. Supply requirements caused a strengthening of the relationship of the authorities with the farmers. Measures such as redemptions (*odkupi*) or quotas of requisitioned produce (*obvezna oddaja*), tax requirements, and the price system, aroused discontent among the farmers. Farmers from Velenje started to write parables about the taxes or "*coming of the Englishmen and concentration of our army on the border*".<sup>190</sup> In May 1946, the Local Committee of the CPS Šoštanj - Velenje held a meeting, where the commissars reported that they faced passivity among the people and that there was not enough political activity among the peasants.<sup>191</sup>

### *Work Discipline*

In 1947, the first Five-Year Plan was accepted, which provided centralization, rapid industrialization, development of heavy industry, and electrification.<sup>192</sup> In the Velenje Coal Mine, coal was being excavated the entire time during the war for the purpose of the war industry. In 1945 the company had a total of 836 employees.<sup>193</sup> As they did not receive sufficient land through agrarian reform, the process of 'escaping the land' (*beg z zemlje*) began. Farmers who were not able to survive on small farms were seeking employment in the Velenje Coal Mine. Future Director of the Mine remembers that the

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 27.1.1947.

<sup>191</sup> ZAC, 943, 16.5.1946. ZAC 943, 27.1.1947.

<sup>192</sup> See: Jože Prinčič: Kapitalna, ključna kapitalna in temeljna investicijska izgradnja v Sloveniji, 1945-1956. Dolenjska založba, Novo Mesto 1992 and Jože Prinčič: Slovensko gospodarstvo v drugi Jugoslaviji. Modrijan, Ljubljana 1997.

<sup>193</sup> Seher, 454.

Coal Mine used to be called the 'chicken mine',<sup>194</sup> since most of the employees were peasants. There was an unfriendly atmosphere between the professional miners and peasants.<sup>195</sup> The Manager of the Coal Mine complained that production and working discipline were not adequate, mainly because the Coal Mine consisted of half-proletariat.<sup>196</sup>

On Christmas Eve 1947, some miners did not want to go to the mine and a certain K.Z. whispered to S.K.: "*Today is going to be hell*" (*Danes bo pa hudič*). Some miners spent the night in the pub. The report from the meeting of the Coal Mine cell two days later begins with: "*A Strike!*" The decision was made that the main culprits of the strike should be dismissed and get a label in their workbook, others should be excluded from the Union and have a deduction from their salary, while the money should be divided among the workers who went to work.<sup>197</sup> This example could testify to the awareness of the professional miners of their working rights, such as organizing a strike. But since Velenje Coal Mine consisted mainly of half-proletariat, peasants, what the management considered as a strike was the desire of the workers, coming from a very traditional background, to celebrate Christmas.

The "Christmas Strike" had important consequences for the next big religious celebration: Easter 1948. So as not to have any problems with the Party again, the Coal Mine Company management decided not to inform the company's Communist cell about the

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<sup>194</sup> Nestl Žgank: Spomini „Rdečega kralja“. Zapisala Damijan Kljajič in Vlado Vrbič. Karantanija, Ljubljana 1999, 97.

<sup>195</sup> ZAC, 943, 1.9.1947.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., September 1946.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 12/47, report from the meeting of the Coalmine cell, 26.12.1947.

decision they had made: Easter Monday was to be a non-working day.<sup>198</sup> The problem of the inadequate, weak Communist cadres in the Šaleška Valley was obvious, but that was soon to change.

### *Cominform*

Despite power being in Communist hands, political, social, and economic conditions during the first postwar years were very insecure. As earlier examples indicate, the Party organization on a local level was weak and often challenged or questioned. In these conditions, the break with Stalin came as a shock. The Soviet-Yugoslavian conflict was not a result of ideological differences, but of different views as to who should have the hegemony in Yugoslavia, in the Balkans and in the Communist camp. Yugoslavian leaders supported the position of equal relations and to lead an independent internal and foreign policy.

In March 1948, Moscow accused Tito and the Yugoslavian Communists of Trotskyism and finally, in June 1948, the Cominform expelled Yugoslavia, accusing it of betrayal and nationalism and urging members of the CPY to resist their leaders and to set up a new leadership. However, the Yugoslavian leaders publicly rejected the Cominform resolution and, at the Party Congress in July 1948, more than 2,000 delegates supported the Yugoslavian Communists and State leadership. After the exclusion, Yugoslavia found itself in international isolation, with threats coming from Moscow and conflicts with

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., Okrajni komite ZKS Šoštanj 3, year 1948. Zapisniki in dopisi OO ZKS Rudnika lignite Velenje, 5.3.1948.



other Communist countries. On a local level, the uncertain situation made people believe that *"our country is going into a big economic crisis"*.<sup>199</sup> Propaganda about the upcoming war and Yugoslavian isolation were common. The CPS committee at the Velenje Coal Mine reported: *"The English troops, with mainly chetnicks and ustasha, are already on the Yugoslavian northern border."*<sup>200</sup>

Even at the end of 1950, the Central Committee of the CPS, after visiting the District Committee in Šoštanj, reported that the hostile influences from the West and East made it possible to spread reactionary and Informbiro propaganda like: *"Yugoslavia depends on the USA"*, *"We give mines for food"*, *"The farmers are being destroyed"*, *"The division for Korea is prepared"*, *"The CPY is dissolved – The Socialist party is being established"*, or *"Tito was assassinated"*.<sup>201</sup>

Immediately after the break, the policy of Yugoslavian leaders was anything but straightforward. On the one hand, they rejected Soviet accusations and persecuted the so-called 'Cominformers', but on the other hand, through numerous measures, tried to prove obedience to Moscow and correct the mistakes criticized by Stalin.<sup>202</sup> In June 1948, the CPY had 468,175 members, and in Slovenia, 37,960 members out of the 1,391,897 inhabitants (97% of Slovenes).<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid., report 1/48.

<sup>200</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS, t.e.44, 1949 a.e.1467; poročila ekip iz raznih področij 1949 Informbiro, Elektrarna, Šoštanj and ZAC, 943, Okrajni komite ZKS Šoštanj 3, report 1/48.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508, 20.12.1950 Poročilo ekipe CK KPS na zaključni seji biroja OK KPS Šoštanj.

<sup>202</sup> Mateja Režek: Med resničnostjo in iluzijo. Slovenska in jugoslovanska politika v desetletju po sporu z Informbirojem (1945-1958). Modrijan, Ljubljana 2005, 19.

<sup>203</sup> Vodopivec, 332, 337.

Tito and other leading Communists were aware that an agreement with Moscow was no longer possible. A decision had been made for the unmerciful purge of those who doubted the decision of the CPY. 60,000 people were expelled from the CPY and more than 16,000 arrested or sent to camps. The Slovenian leadership also took advantage, expelling real or possible opponents. Not many of them were supporters of Moscow, but rather the older, pre-Tito generation of Communists. 2,200 people in Slovenia were suspected of being sympathizers of Cominform, far fewer than in the rest of Yugoslavia.<sup>204</sup> The Šaleška Valley too was given warnings to "*consolidate and clean SKOJ, because some unsuitable members have been noticed*".<sup>205</sup>

In October 1948, after the Republican Congress in Slovenia supported the State leadership, the Party Cell of the Velenje Coal Mine organized a public meeting in a newly built cinema. Comrade V.F. gave a report about the development of the CPY from its beginnings, during the time of the NOB, building Socialism, the position of the present CPY and its perspectives. Finally, he turned to the Coal Mine's problems and mentioned the necessity of building showers. At the end, he suggested that a certain comrade should be unmasked and expelled from the Party.<sup>206</sup> Exposure or unmasking at mass meetings was like the final stage of punishment and became constant practice in the next few years, especially in 1950. During this time, there were a lot of resignations by local managers and commissars, as they were convinced that they could not do their jobs properly and were afraid that others would think of them as of saboteurs.<sup>207</sup> Some commissars wanted

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 338.

<sup>205</sup> ZAC, 432, Okrajni komite ZKS Šoštanj 3, report 1/48.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 17.10.1948.

<sup>207</sup> ZAC, 432, KLO Velenje, 1946-1952, 5.5.1949.

to be dismissed, because they constantly received complaints or were being criticized, not just by commissars but also by farmers.<sup>208</sup>

In the speech of October 1948, it is one of the first times that Tito's name was mentioned in the local reports from Velenje. Since the war, the reports usually ended with: "*Death to Fascism – Freedom to the People!*" (*Smrt fašizmu – svobodo narodu!*) or after 1947 "*All for the plan!*" (*Vse za plan!*). After the Cominform resolution, Tito's name began to be mentioned more often in the reports of the Local Committee Velenje: *Let live FLRJ! Let live LRS! Let live the leader and teacher of our nations, Marshal Tito!*<sup>209</sup> Partisan resistance, suffering and the huge number of victims the country had suffered during the Second World War, were some of the reasons why the Yugoslavian leaders did not fall victim to the Moscow's pressure. The People's Committee stressed the partisan struggle in its letter to the District CPS in Šoštanj: "*We'll continue the work outlined by our fighters in the four-year fight. We'll show that we have full democracy and that the incitement by Cominform won't stop us on our only correct path*".<sup>210</sup>

After the Cominform resolution, Republican leaders increased their attention to fieldwork, to convince and discuss with local Party organizations about the situation in their area. In 1950, a member of the Slovenian government, Lidija Šentjurs, visited the District Committee of the CPS in Mozirje and members from Velenje reported that "*people are orientated towards the West with no danger of Cominform*",<sup>211</sup> while

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 30.6.1950, 1.8.1950, 19.9.1950.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 24.12.1949 letter of KLO Velenje to the Government Presidency LRS Ljubljana.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 24.12.1949.

<sup>211</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS t.e.46. 1948-1950 a.e.1498 Okrajni komite KPS Mozirje.



members of the CPS in Šoštanj stated that "*opportunism is present also among frontmen of the CPS, some are even attending Church*".<sup>212</sup> The commission of the CC CPS noted that members of the CPS in the Šaleška Valley were young, inexperienced people. There were 43 party organizations, of which 24 were significantly rural. Among 27 People's Committees, only 3 were of a non-rural character.<sup>213</sup> A lack of basic Party discipline and dull meetings with no conclusions were also noticed. On the one hand, only those who were saturated with Marxist literature and good speakers could be accepted into the Party, but on the other hand, a candidate was accepted simply by: "*You are going to stick with us*" (*Ti boš pa z nami držal*). What was more, voluntary contributions were collected on the streets of Šoštanj.<sup>214</sup>

After the Cominform resolution, changes in public events and celebrations occurred. Earlier, members of the CC CPS who had visited Velenje complained that the work and role of mass organizations in Velenje was not good and that cultural-educational work had almost completely died out.<sup>215</sup> In 1951, vast preparations were held for the celebration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OF, where between April 27 and May 1, 1951 all mass, sport and cultural participants would perform.<sup>216</sup>

One of the most painful criticisms of the Cominform resolution was regarding the strengthening of capitalist elements in the countryside. In January 1949, the CC CPY rejected the considerably tolerant policy toward farmers and enacted collectivization and

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508 Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, 1949, Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, poročilo ekip.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., Poročilo o delu komisije CK ZKS v okraju Šoštanj 29.10.1949 and Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, Poročilo iz partijske konference na RLV, 8.11.1949.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., Poročilo o delu komisije CK ZKS v okraju Šoštanj 29.10.1949 and Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, Poročilo obiska v okrajnem komitetu Mozirje.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, Poročilo iz partijske konference na RLV, 8.11.1949

<sup>216</sup> ZAC, 432, KLO Velenje, 1946-1952. 4.4.1951 and 27.4.1951.

tightened to the extreme the system of redeems (*odkupi*). During the preparations for establishing a collective farm in Velenje, the leader at a mass meeting stated that "*the masses should simply adjust to this idea.*"<sup>217</sup> According to Čepič, collectivization and the establishment of collective farms were not part of agrarian reform, but just the opposite.<sup>218</sup> The peasants, former 'allies' of the working class became its opponents. Integration of small, individual farmers into collective farms, was the Yugoslavian form of the *kolkhozes*. In contrast to the previous agrarian reform, where the authorities succeeded in convincing farmers not to be fully expropriated, the farmers understood collectivization as expropriation of their property.<sup>219</sup> The farmers' dissatisfaction was enormous. They complained mainly about the quotas of requisitioned produce (*obvezna oddaja*).<sup>220</sup> The authorities tried to increase discipline, since problems of respecting the authorities were great and the President of the Farm Cooperative Velenje was devastated, that "*servants (hlapci), that is, employees (uslužbenci) don't take any notice of the President.*"<sup>221</sup>

Later, in September 1951, soon before collectivization was recognized as a failure, the situation worsened insofar as members of the committee were denouncing one another and discussing with farmers what position someone from the committee had taken. The President made it clear: "*If this continues, I do not want to be President any more.*"<sup>222</sup> The process of collectivization was used to achieve economic interests, especially to secure

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., Meeting on 11. April 1949.

<sup>218</sup> Čepič, 254, 255.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>220</sup> ZAC, 432, KLO Velenje, 1946-1952.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 4.10.1950.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 24.9.1951.

food supplies during increasing industrialization. Until the end of 1951, when the farmers started to leave the collective farms *en masse*, the economic impact was null and the relationships on the countryside damaged.<sup>223</sup>

While the agrarian policy also a few years after the break followed the Soviet model, an alternative to Soviet State Socialism was being sought. In July 1949, the CC CPS organized visits to the Šaleška Valley and noted with dissatisfaction that, out of 1,761 employees of the Coal Mine, only 125 were members of the CPS. Even worse, most of the Party members were not miners, but from the management. The Party cell made excuses that the miners were apolitical, half-proletarians, who were working for their own interests and the money. The CC also noticed that working competition was not organized and that there was not an adequate number of policemen in the company.<sup>224</sup>

When, after a few months, the CC visited the Valley again, they noticed no improvements: *"In the entire district, there is no unified, strong economic leadership. At the Coal Mine Company, it is necessary to organize toilets and a Red Corner"*.<sup>225</sup> At the beginning of 1950, the Regional Committee described the situation at the Coal Mine administration as *"lukewarm, irresponsible, indulgent, apolitical and with no interest in increasing production. There is no discipline and no trust among Party members. The Director finds the Party to be an appendix of the management which has a very careless attitude to the Party, the Company and voluntary work on Sundays. He is not capable of*

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<sup>223</sup> Režek, 19.

<sup>224</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS, t.e.44, 1949 a.e.1467; Poročilo ekip iz raznih področij

1949 Informbiro, Elektrarna, Šoštanj, at the RLV 5.7.-9.7. 1949.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508, Poročilo o delu komisije CK ZKS v okraju Šoštanj 29.10.1949





*increasing and improving work at the Coal Mine Company.*"<sup>226</sup> By the end of the year, the seat of the Coal Mine Company was to be replaced by a new Director, from the General Directorate for Mining in Ljubljana, who was to remain in this position for another 15 years.

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 1949-1950 a.e.1508 Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, 21.1.1950, Zapisnik o delu komisije na RLV

## 2. PLANNING A SOCIALIST TOWN

Architecture had an important place in the Communist political vocabulary, since the success of development was often measured by the number of new apartments and industrial programs. Architecture also had a strong symbolic meaning, representing a country's cultural and national identity. Post-war necessity and the enthusiasm for building in a war-ravaged country coincided with the formation of a socialist society. Architectural development throughout the 1950s reflects a series of paradigm shifts in both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The adaption of the Sovietization process and prioritizing heavy industry after Czechoslovak and Yugoslav Communists seized power, accelerated urbanization and the planning of new settlements and towns. Due to the strong architectural and industrial tradition in Czechoslovakia, as well as an influential avant-garde, committed to Socialism and the Functionalist conception of architecture, the construction of Functionalist buildings continued in the country until the early 1950s.

In Slovenia, however, the most devoted interwar Functionalists, who were never really appreciated politically, were removed or set on the side after the war. The short period of unformed Socialist Realist rhetoric in architecture in Slovenia linked poetics and the monumentality of Jože Plečnik with Le Corbusierian emotional Functionalism.

Especially after the Yugoslav-Soviet split, both Yugoslavia and the Communist countries in Eastern Europe underwent changes in architectural production and expression.

Between 1950 and 1954, the Sovietization policies in Czechoslovakia imposed the Stalinist model in architectural form and practice.

However, the imposition was in no way total. Czechoslovakian architects developed a national form of Socialist Realism, called *Sorela*, celebrating the national heritage and portraying scenes from everyday life. On the other hand, after the split, Yugoslavia took the path towards greater decentralization in economic, social and cultural policies, which were blocked again at any time that central Party rule was undermined. After the mid-1950s, the imposition of self-management, the commune system, and opening up to the West greatly influenced town planning. New realities allowed Slovenian architects greater diversity in expression and autonomy in decision making. However, in "a society almost free"<sup>227</sup>, the post-*Cominform* "self-Sovietizing strategies"<sup>228</sup> (Rees 2008) in architectural practice were reflected in the paternal or patriarchal relationship of individual Federal, Republican and local Party apparatchiks towards (new) towns and interference in the professional decisions of architects.

The Communist regimes in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, in order to legitimize their rule and to provide social peace, were orientated toward consumerism. After the end of the Socialist Realist period in Czechoslovakia, the architectural leadership, which had remained committed to modern forms, began the widespread implementation of standardization and industrialization, in order to solve the housing problem. Methods architects used and implemented, however, were just a continuation of the interwar legacy.

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<sup>227</sup> Vesna Drapac: *Constructing Yugoslavia. A Transnational History*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 195.

<sup>228</sup> E.A.Rees: Introduction. *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe*. In: Balázs Apor, Péter Apor, E.A. Rees (eds.): *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe. New Perspectives on the Post-war Period*. New Academia Publishing, Washington DC, 2008, 13.



## 2.1 SOCIALIST MODERNISM

### Importance of Architecture in the First Czechoslovak Republic

After 1918, the diplomacy and propaganda of the new, successor states of the collapsed empires put in a lot of effort in order to stabilize the new order at home and to legitimize it to the Great Powers. At the heart of Czechoslovakia's propaganda effort, as historian Andrea Orzoff shows, lay the 'Czechoslovak' modern national myth.<sup>229</sup> According to this myth, the innately democratic, peace-loving, tolerant Czechs were repressed and victimized by authoritarian, aggressive, and reactionary Austrians. The 15th- and 16th-century historical periods, figures, and events (the Renaissance, Jan Hus, Jan Žižka, the Battle of White Mountain) were portrayed as the most successful and morally correct in Czech history. Czechoslovakia created of itself an island of democratic values and succeeded in persuading others of its European (Western) qualities –its

rationalism, tolerance, efficiency and adherence to democratic norms.<sup>230</sup> Czechoslovakia was searching for a new cultural identity, in which architecture played a significant role. Besides historical eligibility, the aim of architecture in Czechoslovakia was also to express the country's modern, industrial, and politically progressive character.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Andrea Orzoff: *Battle for the Castle. The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948*. Oxford University Press, 2009, 11.

<sup>230</sup> Orzoff, 9, 11.

<sup>231</sup> Kimberly Elman Zarecor: *Manufacturing a Socialist Modernity: The Architecture of Industrialized Housing in Czechoslovakia, 1945-56*. University of Pittsburgh Press 2011, 16, 17.

The vision of architectural practice was influenced by the debates and experiences of the avant-garde in Europe and America in the 1920s and 1930s, with initiatives such as the Bauhaus in Germany and the skyscraper boom in the United States. The progressive character of the new State was also represented by encouraging entrepreneurship and regulating good economic conditions for business. The Bat'a family and its Shoe Company, who in close connection with some of the best domestic and foreign architects planned and financed the construction of the company town in Zlín, represents the most famous example of capitalist expansion. Socialism had broad support among interwar architects in Czechoslovakia. Social problems were among most discussed concerns and government policy was increasingly focused on improving the lives of workers. The 8-hour working day, paid holidays, health and accident insurance, limitations on child labor and maternity leave for mothers were all introduced, while housing standards improved. The State provided loans and contributions to companies and individuals for building new apartments. Between 1921 and 1928, more than 21,000 family houses and more than 100,000 apartments were built in Czechoslovakia.<sup>232</sup>

*Architects of the Left: Devětsil and the Architectural Working Group*

In 1920, a Prague left-wing collective of artists, *Devětsil*, advocated Communism and the desire to overcome the autonomy of the aesthetic sphere.<sup>233</sup> Within *Devětsil*, two theories of Functionalism developed, which opened the debate in modernist circles about the aesthetic versus the utilitarian nature of modern architecture. The first theory of

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<sup>232</sup> Zdeněk Kárník: *České země v éře první republiky (1918 – 1938)*. (Czech Lands in the Era of First Republic. First Part). Díl první. Libri, Praha 2000, 518 – 523.

<sup>233</sup> Thomas Ort: Art and Life in Avant-Garde Prague, 1920-1924. *Modern Intellectual History* 7, no. 1, 2010, 71.

'Scientific Functionalism', promoted by Karel Teige, who admired Hannes Meyer, the Director of Bauhaus, shared its

ideological basis with Russian and Swiss Constructivism, particularly as practiced by the Soviet OSA group (*Union of Contemporary Architects*). The second theory, called 'Emotional Functionalism', promoted by Karel Honzík, Jaromír Krejcar and Evžen Linhart, idolized Le Corbusier, and wanted architecture also to consider the demands of human emotions, besides people's physical needs.<sup>234</sup>

In 1929, a left-wing orientated group of Czech intellectuals, the Left Front (*Levá fronta*), was founded, replacing the activities of *Devětsil* after it was disbanded in 1931. Founding members, among others, were Karel Teige and Julius Fučík and some of the members of the group's architectural section were architects Karel Honzík, Jiří Kroha, Lubomír Linhart and Jiří Novotný. Kroha, a Communist Party member and Professor at the Brno University of Technology, even became the first President of the *Union of Socialist Architects* founded in 1932. Teige's first disappointment with Soviet architecture occurred in 1932, after Boris Iofan's plan for the 'Palace of the Soviets' won the competition. Teige, a leftist, but never a member of the Communist Party, started criticizing the imposition of Socialist Realism in the Soviet Union. Teige's highly rationalized formulation of Scientific Functionalism had a significant impact on post-war developments.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Rostislav Švácha: *Form Follows Science: Karel Teige and Czech Scientific Functionalism, 1922-1948*. In: Rostislav Švácha, Sona Ryndová, Pavla Pokorná (eds.): *Forma sleduje vědu (Form Follows Science)*.

Jaroslav Fagner Gallery, Prague 2000, 48.

<sup>235</sup> Elman Zarecor, 21.



After Teige's death in 1951, the young generation of architects whom he had inspired, carried on his legacy. His followers, Karel Janů, Jiří Štursa and Jiří Voženílek, classmates at Prague's Technical University in the late 1920s, joined the architectural section of the Left Front in the 1930s. They formed the Architectural Working Group (*Pracovní architektonická skupina*) and represented the far left of Prague's leftist circles at the time. They believed that the industrialization of the building industry and the use of scientific methods were the most critical components of Socialist architectural practice.<sup>236</sup> Nevertheless, for the Czechoslovakian Communists and radical left, Soviet architecture represented a symbol, partly also a propaganda, but never a practical teaching or example of building solutions for towns and social housing.<sup>237</sup>

#### *The Capitalist Paradise: Zlín*

In 1937, founding member of the Architectural Working Group, Jiří Voženílek, surprisingly took on a position in the design offices of the Baťa Shoe Company in Zlín. Here, Tomáš Baťa, industrial magnate, tried to implement into his shoe manufacturing company the ideas he had learned in the United States, where he had studied industrial organization and construction. . Baťa tried to follow the example of American corporations to construct a full-service factory town modeled on the system of welfare capitalism.<sup>238</sup> Within his company, he established a Building Department, whose one top priority was the search for ideal housing types. In 1935, Tomáš's successor, Jan Baťa,

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid. 21-24.

<sup>237</sup> Strakoš, 58.

<sup>238</sup> Elman Zarecor, 231.

organized an international competition to generate new ideas for standardized single-family houses and duplexes. Le Corbusier was also invited as a member of the jury.

Later Le Corbusier worked on a master plan for Zlín, but further cooperation between Bat'a and the architect was not fruitful, since their views on the form of workers' living differed. Bat'a's proclamation on "living separately, working together,"<sup>239</sup> was not in tune with the architect's radical solution for the construction of a series of residential towers, instead of houses and small apartment buildings. The Bat'a Company began to expand throughout Czechoslovakia as well as abroad. The company did more than just export products, technology, architecture and its know-how; it also exported its model for life and work. Up to 1945, 24 companies had been set up in Czechoslovakia and one hundred abroad.<sup>240</sup> The Bat'a Company had a long history of architectural innovation. Unlike elsewhere in interwar Czechoslovakia, architects of the Building Department at the Bat'a Shoe Company mastered standardized brick and reinforced concrete constructions and experimented with prefabrication techniques for their overseas factories and company towns.

Bat'a also exported its architecture to Yugoslavia. For example, Bat'a's town of Borovo was established in the present Croatia, and, between 1935 and 1939, in the center of Ljubljana, the Bat'a building (now Nama) was designed by Croatian architect Franjo Lušičić. According to Bernik, Lušičić probably got the commission through the Bat'a

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<sup>239</sup> East European modernism; architecture in Czechoslovakia, Hungary & Poland between the wars. Themes and Hudson 1996, 21, 22, 100, 102.

<sup>240</sup> Ladislava Hornáková: The Building Expansion of the Bat'a Company. The Export of Architecture, Products, Commercial Philosophy, and Lifestyle. In: The Bat'a Phenomenon. Zlín Architecture 1910-1960, Prague, Zlín 2009, 113, 123.



architectural office at Zlín.<sup>241</sup> Bat'a and his town probably also indirectly influenced the views on workers' welfare in Vošnjak's Leather Company in Šoštanj in the Šaleška Valley, since we know that that company was selling its leather to Bat'a, who sensationally visited the Valley in his airplane.<sup>242</sup>

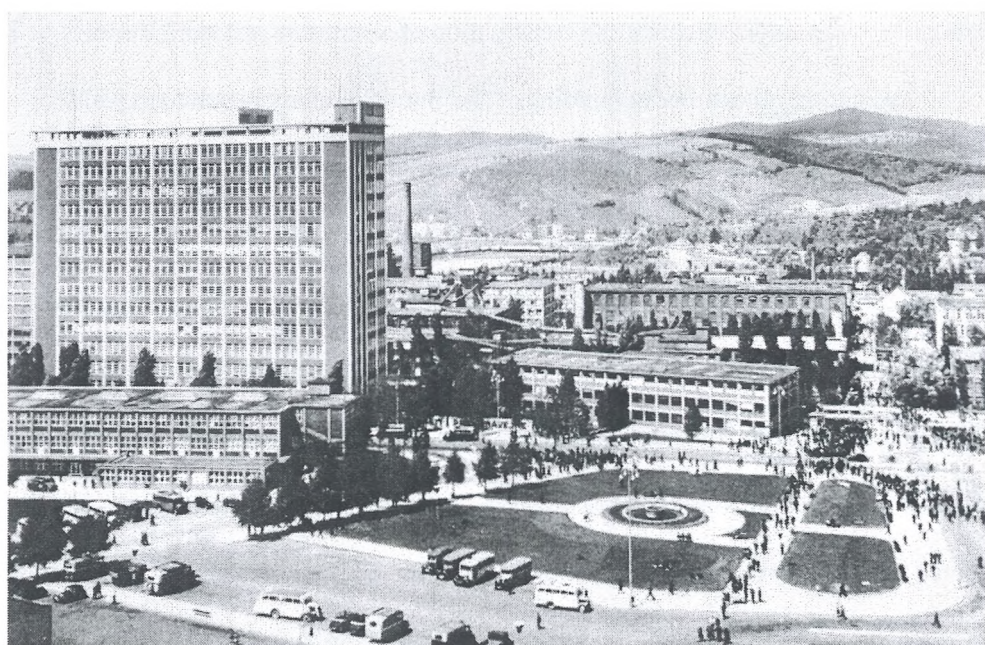


Fig. 2.1. Zlín, town center and workers' district in the back (1930s)

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<sup>241</sup> Stane Bernik: *Slovene Architecture of the Twentieth Century*, Mestna Galerija Ljubljana, Ljubljana 2005, 66, 67.

<sup>242</sup> Interview with historian Viktor Kojc from Šoštanj for the purpose of the exhibition *Vošnjaki*. Kunigunda festival, Velenje 2002.



Until the late 18th century, Moravská Ostrava, on the border between Moravia and Silesia,<sup>243</sup> was a small provincial town with a population of approximately 1,000 inhabitants who were engaged in handicrafts. In the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, large deposits of black coal were discovered, leading to an industrial boom and a flood of new immigrants in the following century, when several mine towers were raised in and around the city and the first steel works were established.

The mines in Ostrava were technically the most advanced in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and later in Czechoslovakia. This was followed by further industrial expansion and the creation of workers' settlements around the town. The Suchá and František pits were located in Prostřední and Horní Suchá, villages which were by the end of the 1950s incorporated into the new town of Havířov. Here, gradually extensive workers' colonies arose: The 'Old Colony' (*Stará Kolonie*) had existed since the 1870s, then there were *Nová Kolonie*, *Finské Domky*, *Hornické sídliště*, *Na Parceli* and *Amerika*.<sup>244</sup> Martin Jemelka, historian who in his work concentrates on the social and everyday life in the Ostrava workers' colonies, describes the development of the largest, the *Šalamoun* colony (1868-1977), established and maintained by the Vítkovice Coal Mine Company. In the mid-1920s, the *Šalamoun* colony had a total of 80 houses: dormitories, single-story houses, double-story houses, and workers' barracks.<sup>245</sup> The State and the Municipality

<sup>243</sup> In 1946 Silesian and Moravian – Moravská and Slezská - Ostrava joint together into Ostrava.

<sup>244</sup> Karel Kuča: *Města a městečka v Čechách a na Moravě. Part II, H-Kole*, Libri, Prague 1997, 46.

<sup>245</sup> Martin Jemelka: *Na Šalomouně: společnost a každodenní život v největší moravskoostravské hornické kolonii (1870–1950)*. Centrum pro HSD, OU, Ostrava 2008, 56-59.

supported the formation of construction cooperatives for settlement building outside the city center. One of the most significant interwar colonies, the *Jubilejní* colony of the Vítkovice Ironworks, arose South of the industrial area. Its planning and architecture were inspired by the concept of the 'Red Vienna'.<sup>246</sup> The atmosphere in the colonies with their semi rural character was cozy and domestic. Before the beginning of the Second World War, however, the colonies were being transformed into a more suburban formation.<sup>247</sup>



Fig. 2.2. Ostrava in 1946.

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<sup>246</sup> Strakoš, 62.

<sup>247</sup> Jemelka, 243.



## The First Post-War Years (1945-1950)

### *Emotional and Scientific Socialist Architecture*

According to the Two-Year Plan, announced in mid-1946, the intention was to build 125,000 apartments in Czechoslovakia.<sup>248</sup> Two plans, both representing visions of socialist modernity, but differing in their understanding of the nature of architecture, would be presented. The first was the plan for the collective house in Litvínov, which captured the interwar modern spirit and emphasized the emotional side of architecture, and the second was the Model Housing Development, which represented the scientific/technocratic side.

The collective house in Litvínov was planned near the city of Most in the borderlands of North Bohemia by two architects, admirers of Le Corbusier: Evžen Linhart, a former member of *Devětsil* and Václav Hlinský, who was aligned with the Union of Socialist Architects and the Left Front. Their plan was for a high-rise, high-density Collective House, situated on the outskirts of a village, in the countryside of the Most brown coal basin at the base of the Ore Mountains (*Krušné hory*) in western Czechoslovakia. The Litvínov design featured two symmetrical 13-story residential towers with a 7-storied central connector, relying on the work of Russian architect, Moisei Ginzburg, such as, for example, his Narkomfin Collective House in Moscow.<sup>249</sup> Two- and three-roomed units were proposed, as well as studio apartments and dormitories, together with public

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<sup>248</sup> Alice Teichova: *The Czechoslovak Economy, 1918-1980*. Routledge, London 1988, 115.

<sup>249</sup> Elman Zarecor, 45.



facilities such as: dining room, social club, ceremonial hall, library, study room, convenience store, barbershop, service kitchen, laundry facilities, school, nursery, gym, small casino, health clinic, boiler room, etc.<sup>250</sup> In 1947, the Building Department of the Ministry of Technology found this unique, high-style project, which met site-specific conditions, problematic. The most obvious problem was its cost, the second was ideological, arguing that the project was not Socialist, since it served only a small number of people.<sup>251</sup> It was only in 1959 that the second wing of the Collective House was completed.

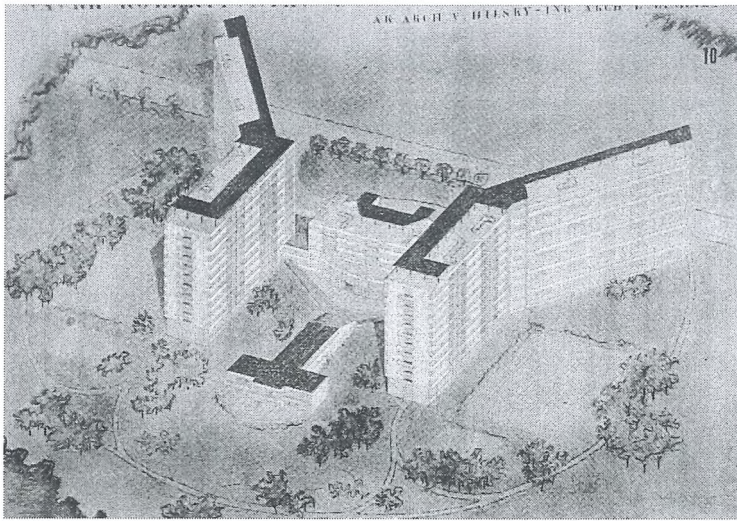


Fig. 2.3. Model of the Collective House, Litvínov (1946).

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid., 53.

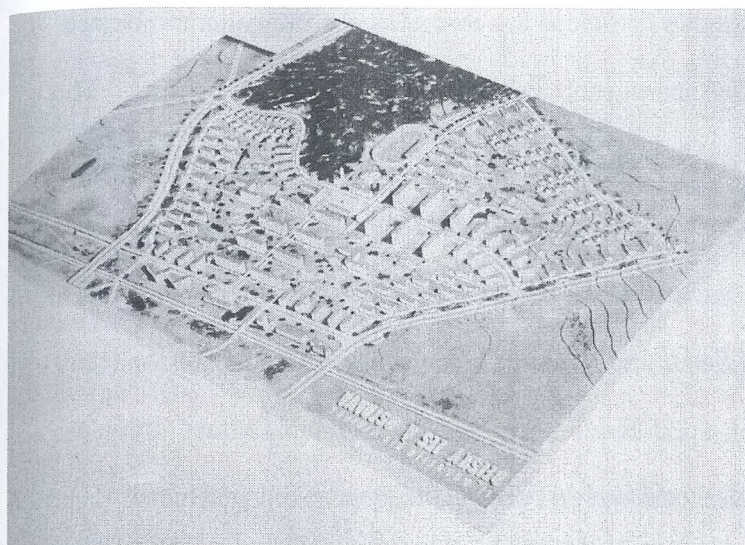


Fig. 2.4. Model Housing Development, Ostrava – Bělský Les (1948).

The second, more ambitious Two-Year Plan initiative, which offered a technocratic approach, was the project of Model Housing Development (*vzorné sídliště*). In order to achieve this goal, the ambitious number of apartments envisaged in the Two-Year Plan relied on simple and inexpensive housing to find the solution for the shortages in building materials and skilled labor. The solution was found in the Architectural Working Group's agenda of the 1930s. Here, standardization and 'typification' were proposed, i.e. the use of a limited number of building designs according to program types.<sup>252</sup>

The idea for the Model Housing Development was rather to build, instead of dispersed apartment houses in industrial centers, larger settlement units with the appropriate infrastructure, as was the case of the settlements in interwar Frankfurt and the new towns

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<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 54.



in the Soviet Union.<sup>253</sup> Housing was provided in a mix of single-family homes, terrace houses, and two- to five-storied apartment buildings, with a few taller buildings.<sup>254</sup> Three Czech cities were chosen as the pilot sites: Most, in the borderlands; Kladno, a mining city North of Prague, where the KSČ had been founded; and Ostrava, a mining and steel-producing city. The Ostrava site was the largest, with the plan of building 1,800 units to house 7,500 residents.<sup>255</sup> Jiří Štursa and Vladimír Meduna worked in the Ostrava team. The latter would be preparing a plan for new Socialist towns around Ostrava within a couple of years. Material and labor shortages, general disorganization, and a lack of urgency meant that little was accomplished at these sites in 1947 and 1948.<sup>256</sup> By 1948, in the neighborhood of Ostrava, which would become Ostrava-Bělský Les, only 15 of the 70 buildings planned for the first phase had been started.

All three Model Housing Development neighborhoods remained under construction throughout the 1950s (between 1950 and 1961, Ostrava-Bělský Les was known as Stalingrad). In all three cases, the majority of the developments were completed with standardized buildings developed in research institutes after 1948, illustrating the shift from individual commissions to mass production.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Strakoš 120.

<sup>254</sup> Elman Zarecor, 58.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.



### *The Two-Year Plan for Silesia*

Silesia was one of the regions in Czechoslovakia most destroyed during the war. After the war, the wide humanitarian movement, '*Building Silesia*' (*Budujeme Slezsko!*) was initiated.<sup>258</sup> Between 1946 and 1948, 4,300 apartments were planned to be built in Silesia. In 1947 the Regional Planning Committee commissioned 10 regulatory plans for bigger towns and 80 modifying plans. Among the planners and architects were Vladimír Meduna, Boris Jelčaninov, Jaroslav Turek and Evžen Friedl, with their designs based on Functionalist premises. After 1948, some of them eventually participated in the development of new Socialist towns in Ostravsko, but with a different architectural expression. The designs during the Two-Year Plan presumed that construction would occur in the neighborhood of already existing sites, sometimes in the proportion of several houses, sometimes a whole new district. Normally they were founded on the principle of apartment houses situated in a row, with free spaces intended for gardens. In the villages, family houses with farmsteads and sometimes also apartment houses were combined. They were all placed in gardens, and according to Strakoš, some looked like functionally modernized garden cities.<sup>259</sup>

In about 1946, big nationalized enterprises, especially the Ostrava-Karviná Mines, started to plan and construct complexes of apartment houses. There was a lack of a broader planning framework, which led to its deterioration into small and under-equipped residential units. This so-called Silesian type of construction, consisted of a dispersed

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<sup>258</sup> Strakoš 107.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 108.

location of isolated buildings, unconnected to the urban plan.<sup>260</sup> Against such a utilitarian approach, the vision was to build satellite settlements and combine some elements of garden cities with Functionalist zoning, i.e. independent solutions for housing, industry, recreation and connecting functions in the form of transportation networks.

In 1948, the construction began of the standby (*pohotovostní*) mining settlement in the Silesian village of Poruba, West of Ostrava, located outside the mining area. Unlike the examples where new apartment houses were freely located in a park, the settlement in Poruba represented an example of a barracks construction (*kasárenské stavení*). Houses were arranged in a row system, without any higher urbanization structure.<sup>261</sup> The settlement in Poruba represented the technocratic approach to planning and building that overcame the previous concepts of workers' colonies. There were, however, some improvements, such as the better location of standardized houses in a relatively cleaner environment with a better interior design.<sup>262</sup>

The Two-Year Plan for Silesia also concentrated on the villages East of Ostrava, where the town of Havířov was soon to be situated. The government organized a program called 'Lánska akce' for young men to decide on finding employment in industrial areas. Each company had to choose an area in which to build a specified number of apartments. The settlements that began to be constructed were not comprehensively controlled or managed by anyone, only guided by opinions and suggestions coming from the companies. The settlements were basically just overnight shelters, without any facilities.

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 118.

Examples of those settlements were Šenov-Šumbark and Ostrava-Poruba. Later, in 1956, when the new town was already in existence, the first chronicle of Havířov states that "in the fall of 1947, the first apartment blocks for a mining colony of 2,000 people started to be constructed and in the summer of 1949 the first 96 housing units were given to the miners, mostly from the old colonies. Earlier, they had come to see their future dwellings of three airy rooms, bathroom, balconies, central heating, electric washing machine."<sup>263</sup> The chronicle also noted that such projects, where only housing was provided, without outdoor facilities, were too expensive.<sup>264</sup>

### **Sovietization on Fertile Grounds**

#### *The First Phase of Socialist Architecture: Typification, Standardization and Industrialization*

The years between 1948 and 1953 are considered as the most dramatic years of the Communist period in Czechoslovakia, with major political, economic and social transformation. According to historian Lenka Kalinová, the year 1948 saw a double turnover. Firstly, in February the political system changed and then, in November, under pressure from the outside, the so-called 'hard line' was introduced, which meant speedily taking over the Soviet economic model and a further Sovietization of social areas.<sup>265</sup>

Markets were replaced with centralized and command planning. The previous supply-

<sup>263</sup> Státní okresní *archiv Karviná* (SOkA Karviná), *Kronika Havířov*, 1956, 5.

<sup>264</sup> SOkA Karviná, *Kronika Havířov*, 1956, 7.

<sup>265</sup> Lenka Kalinová, *Společenské proměny v čase socialistického experimentu*. Academia, Praha 2007, 114.





100 State-owned but individually managed 'national enterprises'.<sup>268</sup> In the new system of a planned economy, the primary goal of companies was not to make money, but to meet the planning quotas given to them by the State. Jiří Voženílek, the young interwar far-left architect, Teige's follower, who had worked in the design offices of the Baťa Shoe Company in Zlín since 1937, became the Director of *Stavoprojekt*. His familiarity with the 'Baťa system' was influential in the functioning of *Stavoprojekt*.

The emphasis on heavy industry demanded that architects deal with the housing shortages and provide new apartments as quickly and cheaply as possible. On the other hand, there was a search for a new mode of architectural design within the planned economy. As the Model Housing Development program of the Two-Year-Plan had proved unsuccessful and too expensive, the *Stavoprojekt* agenda for the first Five-Year-Plan, set to begin on January 1, 1949, was the reduction of choice and the restriction of designs to a limited number of types, known as typification. A Typification and Standardization Institute (*Typisáční a normalizační ústav*) was established at *Stavoprojekt*. In 1949, its Director, Erich Kohn, published an article in *Architektura ČSR*, in which he proposed eight guiding principles for the new building industry, among others, typification, industrialization and prefabrication.<sup>269</sup> According to the article, typification would reduce the variety and cost of buildings while improving the overall quality.

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>269</sup> Erich Kohn, Karel Storch, Miloslav Wimmer: Výrobní a technické prostředky. *Architektura ČSR* 8, 1-2, 1949.



<sup>270</sup> In May 1949, the Department of Housing at the Typification and Standardization Institute presented the *T-series* at the Ministry of Technology. By the end of 1950, the series consisted of eight housing types: the T40D and the T40E (small single-family houses); the T42 (a two-family house – duplex); the T51 (a row house); the T11 and the T12 (three or four rectangular blocks with three front entrance stairs); the T20 (a rectangular block with studio apartments), and the T60 (a tower with five to seven stories).<sup>271</sup> Starting in 1950, T-series housing units were being built across the country; by the end of the year, almost 17,000 units were under construction. This output represented more than 90% of all residential construction. Every apartment in the T-series buildings had its own bathroom, WC, kitchen, hot water, central heating, storage space, basement, laundry room and windows on two façades. The T-series represented progress, especially in industrial areas. In Ostrava, for example, mining families in the region had been living in temporary workers' colonies without indoor plumbing or modern heating. The apartments, like the ones in Poruba, were advertised as beautiful residences for miners, since they spent "*all day digging out coal without a ray of sunshine*" and they should thus "*have enough sunlight in the hours that they have for a little bit of rest*".<sup>272</sup>

In 1951, architects Alexa and Nový from the *Stavoprojekt* office in Ostrava published an article, criticizing Functionalist Urbanism and architecture as being chaotic, and praising

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 12-14.

<sup>271</sup> Elman Zarecor, 97-106.

<sup>272</sup> Quotation taken from: Elman Zarecor, 108.



Socialist architecture, among other things for its artistic value.<sup>273</sup> They gave an example of a workers' delegation coming to *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava from the Stalingrad company in Liskovec near Frýdek Mistek, who presented requirements from company meetings, which stated: "*We are very satisfied with the comfort and facilities of the apartments you have provided for us, perhaps they could be a bit bigger. However, make the buildings pretty (hezke).*" The authors stressed that the workers mentioned beauty and not mechanical issues.

By the early 1950s, the social agenda of the *Stavoprojekt* during the first two years of Communist rule, in many aspects in tune with the pre-February commitments of architects in Czechoslovakia, had met the stylistic expectations of Socialist architecture, Socialist Realism, as modeled in the Soviet Union. Czechoslovak Socialist architecture had entered its second phase.

#### *The Second Phase of Socialist Architecture: Socialist Realism*

During the first two years of Communist rule, Czechoslovakia enjoyed relative independence from the Soviet Union. Czechoslovakian architects also remained committed to modern forms. The debate by Czechoslovakian artists on the official Soviet style, Socialist Realism, could be followed since the 1920s and 1930s, when the style was developing in the Soviet Union and expanding to Europe. In the 1930s, Karel Teige seriously studied Socialist Realism, but his initial enthusiasm changed to disappointment.

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<sup>273</sup> Zdeněk Alexa and Otokar Nový: O zkušenostech a chybách práce ostravských architektů. *Architektura ČSR*, 1951, 276-278.

In his study of 1950, Teige rejected the Soviet style, comparing it with Nazi architecture.<sup>274</sup> In the late 1940s, his followers and younger members of the Interwar Left Front, Karel Janů and Jiří Voženílek, now occupying strong positions in the State administration, together with many other architects, also avoided the 'Sovietization' of Czechoslovakian architecture and rejected the Soviet rhetoric about progress, which did not apply to the already modern Czechoslovakia.

It was another member of the Left Front, Jiří Kroha (1893-1974), who tried to adopt Soviet Socialist Realism in Czechoslovakia. In 1918, Kroha graduated from the Technical University in Prague and was at first drawn to Czech Cubism and later to German Expressionism. In 1925, he was appointed Professor at the Brno University of Technology and transitioned to the Corbusian Modernist style. He also became increasingly active in the Communist Party. As was noted, he joined the Left Front and cofounded the Union of Socialist Architects. During the war, he was sent to a concentration camp for political prisoners for supporting the Soviet Union. After the war, he became even more dedicated to the Socialist cause and the Communist Party.<sup>275</sup>

In November 1947, the Communist Minister of Agriculture, Július Duriš, commissioned him to design the Slavic Agricultural Exhibition, which was being planned for the spring of 1948. Kroha's Exhibition design coincided with the Communist Party's promotion of a 'national road to Socialism', discussed in Chapter 1, and its attempt to connect itself with the symbols of the country's past. The 1948 Slavic Agricultural Exhibition in Prague,

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<sup>274</sup> Karel Teige: *Vývojové proměny v umění*. Nakladatelství československý spisovatel, 1966, 59.

<sup>275</sup> Elman Zarecor, 183.

which opened two months after the Communist coup, was the first opportunity for Czechs and Slovaks to see the artistic style known in the Soviet Union as Socialist Realism, although Kroha's interpretation had a decidedly Czechoslovakian flavor.<sup>276</sup> Kroha was soon promoted to Rector of the Brno University of Technology and when *Stavoprojekt* was formed in September 1948, Kroha was granted special status to run his own office in Prague. Kroha continued to promote Socialist architecture in the *Architektura ČSR* journal in 1948 and 1949. By 1950, Soviet-style Socialist Realism in Czechoslovakia also became the official style in architecture. The new pejorative nickname for this new style was '*Sorela*'. According to one suggestion, this was the name of a brand of pomade or shoe polish popular in the interwar years, and another suggests a combination of SOciálistický-REALismus-LAkomý (Socialist-Realism-Lakomý). Party loyalist Zdeněk Lakomý was the Head of the *Stavoprojekt* research initiative established to integrate Socialist Realist methods into the work of the regional offices.<sup>277</sup>

Two modes emerged to define an indigenous form of Socialist Realism. The first was the application of the style as the literal copy of Soviet examples. The second was an attempt to create a national Socialist style inspired by Soviet methods but with distinctly Czech and Slovak characteristics and depending on the set of types already in use at *Stavoprojekt*. According to Tereza Petišková, the Minister of Information, Václav Kopecký, supported the imitation of Soviet examples, while the Minister of Education and Culture, Zdeněk Nejedlý, argued that Socialist Realist art should derive from the

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<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 114.



national tradition of the region.<sup>278</sup> Kopecký's Sovietophile examples were the Hotel Internacional, Prague (1950-1957) and the Stalin Monument in Prague, with the beginning of the project in 1949, opening of the monument in 1955 and its demolition in 1962.

Among the inbuilt proposals following Kopecký's line was also a proposal for Nová Ostrava by Vladimír Meduna. On the other hand, Nejedlý's mode of *Sorela* attributed to deep-seated feelings of national pride and a sense of Czechoslovak regional exceptionalism.<sup>279</sup> Kroha's designs for a new Socialist town in Slovakia, Nová Dubnica, and the civic center for Ostrava-Stalingrad, referred to the Neoclassicism of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in detail to Russian and Central European traditions.<sup>280</sup> He also attempted to create an indigenous Socialist vocabulary based on historical Czech and Slovak exemplars. In his report on Nová Dubnica, Kroha attempted to link the present with tradition and suggested the use of a large amount of greenery and colors to give a picturesque and joyful character to the town.<sup>281</sup>

In Czechoslovakia, the Soviet slogan 'national in form, Socialist in content' suggested a return to the great 'national' moments in Czech and Slovak History, which were hard to identify. Following in the footsteps of the Czech national revival in the 19th century, architects located sources in the vernacular architecture of Czech and Slovak towns, as

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<sup>278</sup> Tereza Petišková: Oficiální umění padesátých let. In: Polana Bregantová, Lenka Bydřovská, Josef Hlaváček (eds.): Dějiny českého výtvarného umění 1939/ 1958. Academia, Praha 2005, 342-344.

<sup>279</sup> Elman Zarecor, 133, 134.

<sup>280</sup> Strakoš 132:

<sup>281</sup> Appending note on the new socialist town in Slovakia. See: Archiv města Nová Dubnica (Archive of the Municipality of Nova Dubnica); box Atelier národného umelce Jirího Krohy Praha: Průvodní zpráva nového socialistického města na Slovensku (Studio of the national artist Jiri Kroha, Prague: Primary Report on a New Socialist Town in Slovakia).

well as in what is referred to as the Bohemian Renaissance of the 16th century. Architects were expected to look for expressions, which, according to the official dictionary, should be based on the traditions of the people, to express their joy and the building (*budovatelské*) excitement. The Socialist Realist style should incorporate artistic works, monuments, reliefs, sgraffiti, presenting realistic forms, derived from the Renaissance, Classicism, and Historicism, with new 'Socialist' content such as work celebrations or the creation of a 'new man'.

The old Czech folk architecture and its typical Czech elements were introduced to Ostravsko from South Bohemia. The typified T-series buildings were 'dressed' with newly admired ornaments. In the early 1950s, entire new towns were built in the Czechoslovakian borderlands in the Nejedlý national form called *Sorela*: for example Poruba and Havířov in Silesia and Horní Slavkov and Sokolov in the westernmost part of the Republic.<sup>282</sup> Emphasis on presenting heroic themes from the past and folk expressions played a role in the nationally problematic regions like Silesia and the former Sudetenland in imposing a national identity and serving as a tool in the 'Czechoslovakization' of those border areas.

Architects who adopted *Sorela* for their architectural expression were in particular those young architects who had just completed their studies and were soon offered positions in the regional *Stavoprojekt* offices. One of them, Bronislav Firla (1924 -), born in Horní Sucha, who worked at the *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava and later in its branch in Havířov, remembers that there were two schools in Czechoslovakia. He was the student of the

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<sup>282</sup> Lubomír Zeman: *Architektura socialistického realismu v severozápadních Čechách*. Ostrava 2008.

national artist Jiří Kroha, whom he very much admires. The second school was that of Vladimír Meduna. According to Firla, the difference between the two architects was that Kroha formed new elements, whereas Meduna re-used the elements that had already been created (from the Renaissance or Baroque).<sup>283</sup>

Vladimír Meduna (1909-1990) was Kroha's student at the Brno University of Technology, where he graduated in 1935. During his studies, he attended the Marxist Club and the Left Front branch in Brno. In 1939 he became a member of the KSČ. Together with some other of Kroha's students, he assisted at the Slavic Agricultural Exhibition in 1948 in Prague. After February 1948, he became a member of the National Committee in Ostrava responsible for town planning. In 1951, he led the design team at the *Stavoprojekt* in Ostrava for the regional plan of the Ostrava-Karviná basin and for the new Socialist towns: Poruba, Havířov and Karviná. In 1951 he became an Associate Professor at the Technical University in Brno, where he encouraged young students to come to Ostrava.<sup>284</sup>

After Stalin's death in 1953 and criticism of Khrushchev in 1954 and 1956, the discourse on the new Socialist towns and Socialist Realism changed. In 1956, Kroha's atelier was closed and he was forced to retire from practice. On the other hand, from 1958 to 1976, Meduna served as Rector of the Technical University in Brno and later also as Head of

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<sup>283</sup> David Vigner (director): *Město zeleně*. Film o tom, jak na zelené louce vyrostlo město. Davi Film Studio, 2006, 23'.

<sup>284</sup> Křeslo pro hosta. Hlavní redakce publicistiky a dokumentaristiky, Československa televize Praha, 1985. Doc Ing. Arch. Jiří Kubín, Csc; Fakulta architektury VUT v Brně, Svaz Českých architektů. Vydáno u příležitosti sedmdesátých pátých narozenin zasloužilého umělce, inženýra architekta Vladimíra Meduny, Dr.h.c. nositele řádu vitéšného února a řadu práce, 1984. Strakoš, 157,



the Association of Architects (*Svaz architektů*). In 1968, *Architektura ČSSR* published an article in which the author remarked on the construction of new towns in Ostravsko as being a markedly overrated artistic side of architecture, but with a positive reception of tradition.<sup>285</sup>

For a limited period of time after August 1968, it was still possible to openly discuss architectural issues. However, from the beginning of Husak's normalization period, the maximum subjects permitted to be criticized were Historicism and Monumentality.<sup>286</sup> After 1989, the new Socialist towns, together with the prefabricated panel apartment blocks (*paneláks*), built with lower-quality materials especially during the normalization period, represented the repression and failure of the Communist regime. In 1992, however, in Havířov the Town National Committee agreed to include the oldest part of their town: a church, an old castle, and the part of the town constructed in *Sorela* style, on the Cultural Heritage List.<sup>287</sup> In 1994, the National Gallery in Prague arranged an exhibition headed by Radomíra Sedláková, called *Sorela*. Her article published in the Exhibition catalogue was entitled: "Not everything is entirely bad" (*Není vše tak úplně špatné*). She evaluated Nová Ostrava and Havířov very positively. For example, in Havířov she appreciated the "understandable composition of urban spaces".<sup>288</sup>

Confusing interpretations of the architecture of the first half of the 1950s, especially in regard to whether it was imposed by the Soviet Union, were also noticeable among the

<sup>285</sup> Marie Benešová: Letopis architektury 1918-1968. *Architektura ČSSR* XXII, 1968, 9-10.

<sup>286</sup> Strakoš, 24.

<sup>287</sup> Karel Kuča: Města a městečka v Čechách a na Moravě. Part II, H-Kole, Libri, Prague 1997, 47

<sup>288</sup> Radomíra Sedláková: Víra ve spravedlivější budoucnost. *Není vše tak úplně špatné*. Česká architektura padesátých let. Národní galerie v Praze, Praha 1994.

architects of the new towns in Ostravsko. In 2006, at the celebratory activities for Havířov's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, David Vigner's film: *Město zeleně (A Green Town)* had its premier. The director succeeded in obtaining testimonies of some of the first first architects and officers of the town, who had settled in Havířov. Architect Bronisław Firla, who studied in Italy, Poland (Wrocław) and Czechoslovakia (Brno) remembers, that for Havířov "design method was tradition. To understand the meaning of Historicism, historical architecture, study tours were organized in the South of Czechia and in Slovakia. I've always placed the dominant, because it was traditional. We gave a lot of attention to panoramic views. For the investor and the authorities, we had to draw persuasively. ... We were not conservative, even though we used historical architecture. We tried to plan modern elements and think about the future."<sup>289</sup>

Architect Zoja Wallerovaa (1924 - ) also settled in Havířov. She was the wife of Otto Waller, who worked at the *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava from 1953 and whose multi-story Waller-type were built in many Czechoslovakian towns. Ms. Wallerova won the most credit for processing the Land Plan for the Havířov agglomeration. In the film, she stated that 'the new part of Havířov was constructed in the so-called Socialist Realism or *Sorela* style, according to the model of that time from the Soviet Union."<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Vigner: *Město zeleně*, 23', 36' and 63'.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 37'.



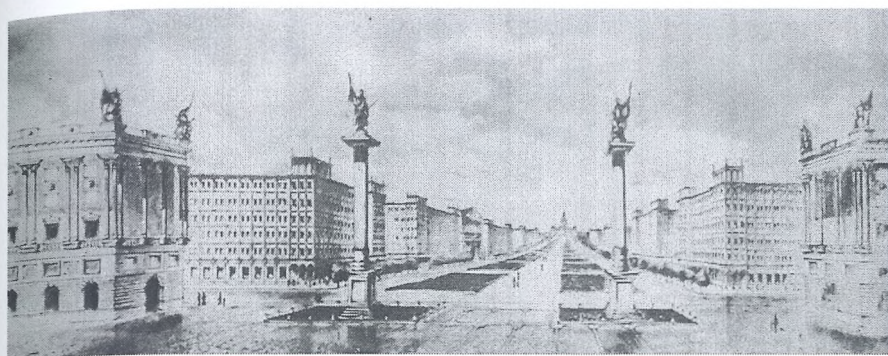


Fig. 2.6. Vladimír Meduna, Nová Ostrava (1951).



Fig. 2.7. A postcard of Nová Dubnica (about 1960).





Fig. 2.8. Detail from Nová Dubnica, showing a mother taking a walk with her two children, one carrying a Czechoslovakian flag, on a sunny day in an industrial town (2007).

*From Šenov-Šumbark-Bludovice to Havířov*

In 1949, a more realistic building plan for Šumbark, referring to the *Lánska akce*' program, was prepared by Boris Jelčaninov as an expansion of the Šenov-Šumbark settlement. The condition was that it was to be built in an area which was not under the influence of underground mining. In 1950, young people from the entire Czechoslovakia, recruited during the '*Lánska akce*', started to move into new Schools of Mining in Šenov-Šumbark and Šumbark-Bludovice. In Šumbark-Bludovice, the school consisted of two lateral buildings constructed in the middle of the fields in a Functionalist style. They soon became an object of conflict between the 'cosmopolitan' style, which is how new official discourse marked the Functionalist style, and the new emerging style of Socialist Realism. In the 1951 edition of *Architektura ČSR*, architects

Zdeněk Alexa and Otokar Nový criticized Functionalist Urbanism and architecture as being chaotic and inartistic and praised Socialist architecture.<sup>291</sup> They pointed out that, in November 1950, great discussion and conflict had taken place regarding a competition for the OKD apprentices' building in Fryštát and Šumbark. The problem was that the buildings were too 'cosmopolitan' and did not speak to young pupils about the "dignity and heroism of mining work".<sup>292</sup>

A contest for a new design was organized by *Stavoprojekt* and between 1951 and 1952, a central tract was constructed, which connected both buildings into one unit. The entrance hall of the central building was decorated by Ostrava sculptor, Karel Vávra, and painter, Václav Navrátil, giving the building the naturalistic and historicist details desired by the Socialist Realist style. In November 1952, the complex was named *Mining School Pavky Korčagina*.<sup>293</sup> The Pavky Korčagina building in Šumbark–Bludovice represented the shift between late Functionalism and Socialist Realism. As will be shown, the building stood out, when a year later a new town began to be constructed entirely in the Socialist style. In 1956 the first chronicle of Havířov noted that the architecture of the school appeared slightly lonely. The school was situated in what was then Havířov I, which was 'the oldest' part of the new town built entirely in the Socialist Realist style.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> O zkušenostech a chybách práce ostravských architektů (Experiences and Mistakes of Ostravian Architects). *Architektura ČSR* X, 1951, 7-9, 278.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Soviet writer, Nikolai Ostrovsky (1904-1936), wrote the novel: 'How the Steel Was Tempered' (Russian: *Kak zakalyalas' stal'*, Czech: *Jak se kalila ocel*) published as a serial between 1934-35 and as a book in 1936. The main character is a 15-year old boy, Pavel Korchagin, whom everyone calls Pavka, and who is fighting on the Bolsheviks' side in the Civil War (1918-21). In the Soviet Union, three films were produced based on this novel (in 1942, 1956, and 1975) and in China in 2000.

<sup>294</sup> SOKA Karviná, *Kronika Havířov*, 1956, 32.





Fig. 2.9. Pavky Korčagina building (about 1950).

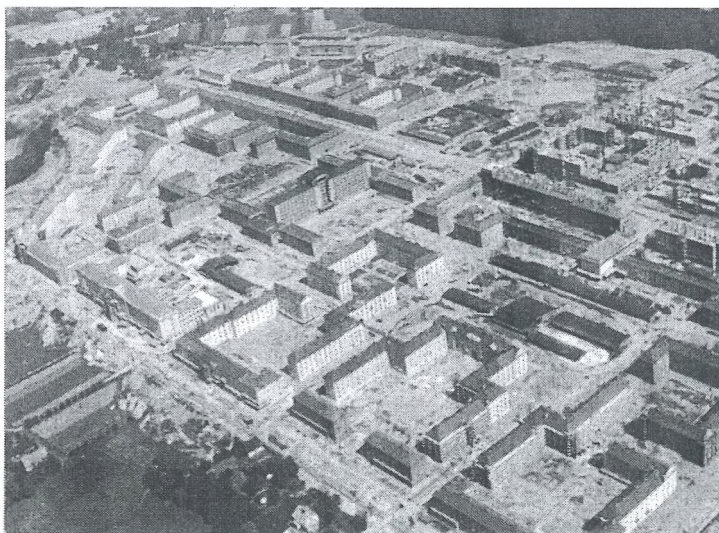


Fig. 2.10. Havířov under construction with the Pavky Korčagina building in the center.

In Chapter 1, the KSČ national vision of Socialism after the 1946 elections, pursued under the slogan "the Czechoslovak Road to Socialism", was discussed. According to this



vision and within a Two-Year Plan, the Party implemented a series of independent economic policies that reflected the country's existing high level of industrialization and standard of living. By late 1949, the relative independence from Moscow that had defined the first years of Communist rule was already coming to an end.<sup>295</sup> The Tito-Stalin split and expulsion of Yugoslavia from *Cominform* in June 1948, as well as tensions in Korea in 1948-49, made Stalin put more pressure on the Eastern Bloc countries to prove their loyalty to the Soviet Union. In January 1949, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (*Comecon*) was established. It economically linked Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Soviet Union. Members were expected to pool resources and develop specific products to market to all members. Czechoslovakia's role was the production of heavy machinery and other raw materials – consumer capital goods.<sup>296</sup> Proving loyalty to the Soviet model, Czechoslovakia allowed heavy industry to dominate the planned economy.

The Minister of Heavy Industry, Gustav Kliment, announced a program for the Ostrava region that included the construction of a new ironworks in the Kunčice district on the outskirts of Ostrava and the increase of the production capacity at the Vítkovice Ironworks. Consequently, more housing for industrial cities like Ostrava had to be provided. In March 1951, the Commission of Town and the Regional Committee of KSČ (*Komise městského a krajského výboru KSČ*) approved the master plan for the Ostrava-Karviná basin, drawn up by the Ostrava Department of *Stavoprojekt*, headed by Vladimír Meduna. In May 1951, the plan was approved by the Economic Council and the Bureau

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<sup>295</sup> Elman Zarecor, 119-120.

<sup>296</sup> Hans Renner: *A History of Czechoslovakia since 1945*. Routledge, London 1989, 21.

of the KSČ Central Committee (*Hospodářská rada i předsednictvo ÚV KSČ*). In August 1951, the project "*Postavíme města socialismu*" ("*We Are Building the Cities of Socialism*"), which projected the construction of Nová Ostrava (later Poruba) and Šenov-Šumbark (later Havířov) was approved by Minister Kliment.

The dimensions of the projected settlements were: Nová Ostrava: 150,000 inhabitants, the mining towns of Šumbark-Bludovice and Karviná: 60,000 inhabitants each.<sup>297</sup> The Secretariat for the Construction of Socialist Cities was led by Vladimír Meduna, who was also the general planner of the new towns. At the time, Meduna was Assistant Professor at the Technical University and his students, such as Rudolf Spáčil, Zdeněk Spaček and Zdeněk Alex, came to work in Ostrava after their graduation. Spaček was later to become Director of the Regional Institute for the Construction of towns and villages in Ostrava and the chief planner of Havířov. According to Benatzky, the final version of the plan for new settlements was significantly influenced by the architects' visit in November 1951 to the construction site of Nowa Huta, another 'new Socialist town' near Krakow in Poland.<sup>298</sup> In addition, in October 1952 some of the architects from Ostrava joined a delegation of architects from Czechoslovakia on a visit to the Soviet Union.<sup>299</sup>

The first structure of what would become the new town of Šumbark–Bludovice (later Havířov) was the building by Pavky Korčagina in semi-Functionalist/*Sorela* style. The building was situated along the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century imperial road between Opava and Těšín. It was this road which was chosen by the architects to be the main street of the town,

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<sup>297</sup> Jindřich Benatzky (ed.), *Havířov*. Havířov 1995, 82.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> Strakoš 162.

latter called Gottwaldova Street.<sup>300</sup> The first two quarters of the new town were situated along this main road. According to the Government Resolution of March 1952, the new plan for Šumbark-Bludovice had to be officially approved by the Soviet advisers.

Vice-President Viliam Široký decided to call together a special group of experts from the Soviet Union. In July 1952, the Ministry of the Interior led by Václav Nosek (1945-1953) convened a meeting about the construction of the new Socialist towns in Ostravsko in order to concentrate on the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the construction. But the preparations did not go so well. In 1959, the chronicler of Havířov wrote that "*various counterclaims (protinavrhy) appeared against the idea of the new towns, which sought to undermine their construction. It entirely succeeded during the Slánský trial [November 1952], when the preparations for the construction of Socialist towns stopped. Contradictions arose between the central authorities and were clarified by the Soviet experts*<sup>301</sup> (architect Verigin from Leningrad). Inspection confirmed the correctness for the construction of the three towns. After a while, the project continued, virtually by 'moonlighting' (na černo)."

<sup>302</sup>

It is difficult to determine who was against the construction of the new towns, what the contradictions were, and why, even after the confirmation of the Soviet experts, the work continued almost illegally. Kevin McDermott indicates that widespread social discontent with the economic and material situation in Czechoslovakia in the second half

<sup>300</sup> Zděnek Špaček: Výstavba Havířova. Architektura ČSR XXII, 1963, 161; Firla 37'.

<sup>301</sup> Vznikly kontraverze mezi ústředními orgány, kteří byly vyjasněny tím, že došlo k pozvání sovětských expertu.

<sup>302</sup> SOKA Karviná, Kronika Havířov, 1959, 13



of 1951, which culminated in demonstrations and strikes by Communist and non-Communist workers in Brno and elsewhere, contributed to Slánský's detention.<sup>303</sup> The authorities urgently needed a scapegoat for the failings of the economy and the seeming breakdown in Party discipline and the unpopular 'Jewish' Slánský seemed appropriate.<sup>304</sup> But the Slánský case also had unintended and counterproductive political consequences for the ruling elite. Not only the citizens, but even the KSČ members questioned specific Ministers and even the Prime Minister, Antonín Zápotocký, and President Gottwald, on how it was possible that Slánský and his co-conspirators were able for so long to have avoided detection of their 'criminal' activities.<sup>305</sup> Also among Slánský's co-conspirators was Slovak Vladimír Clementis, Foreign Minister (1948-1950), who was accused of 'bourgeois nationalism'. According to Blaive, show trials liquidated two radical wings of the KSČ: the Stalinist one of Slánský and the 'national' one of Clementis.<sup>306</sup>

It is evident that personal rivalries among the Party elite played their part during the Slánský affair, but the question remains whether there was a faction among Party leaders which was against the construction of the Soviet-pleasing towns? In April 1953, the architects from Ostrava sent a letter to President Zápotocký (in reply to his letter of January 1953), in which they explained to him that "until 1950 we were captive to the cosmopolitan, Functionalist ideas on architecture and town planning. ... But with the expertise of architect Verigin from Leningrad we realized the magnitude of the task."<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> McDermott, A "Polyphony of Voices"?, 848.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

<sup>306</sup> Muriel Blaive: *Promarněná příležitost. Československo a rok 1956 (A Missed Opportunity. Czechoslovakia and the Year 1956)*, Prague, Prostor, 2001, 131.

<sup>307</sup> Quotation taken from Strakoš, 177.

Architect Verigin indeed became the Soviet advisor for new towns in the Ostrava region, together with architect Remezov, who actually recommended the same as their Czech colleagues had done: to reinforce typification, industrialization, as well as the artistic concept of architecture.<sup>308</sup> A quarter (*čtvrť, obvod, okrsek, sektor*) for between 7,500 and 10,000 inhabitants was taken as the basic unit, followed by a town district (*okres*) for at least 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants. Šumbark-Bludovice would consist of a center and 11 quarters.<sup>309</sup> The authors of the urban plans for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd quarters for 6,300 inhabitants with 1,800 housing units, were the architects of the Ostrava *Stavoprojekt*: Zdeněk Spacek, Rudolf Spáčil and Drahomír Machát. The *Stavoprojekt* Olomouc and Opava was in charge of the construction of the first apartments.

The first phase of construction of Šumbark-Bludovice was called *Stavařov* (*stavař* = builder), where the first workers were accommodated. Architect Firla remembers that he moved to *Stavařov* with the first group of architects.<sup>310</sup> *Stavařov* was also known as *Na Koreji* (At Korea) as a reminder of the ongoing war in Korea. The main street of Šumbark-Bludovice was named Gottwaldova, after Klement Gottwald (1896-1953), Czechoslovakian President and long-time Party head. His personality cult was very present in Ostravsko: the ironworks in Kunčice were renamed as the New Ironworks of Klement Gottwald. The ironworks in Vítkovice were renamed as the Vítkovice Ironworks of Klement Gottwald. The orthodox Party leader who Stalinized the Party in

<sup>308</sup> Dušan Janák, Zdeněk Jirásek: Sovětští poradci a ekonomický vývoj v ostravsko-karvinském revíru. Open Education&Sciences, Opava 1996, 64. Strakoš, 163.

<sup>309</sup> Strakoš, 166.

<sup>310</sup> Vigner: Město zeleně, 21'.

the 1930s and tried to do the same with the country after 1948, died just a few days after Stalin. Contemporary Czech historiography often portrays him as a Czech patriot, who invented the theory of the 'national path to Socialism', making him a positive figure. This averted the blame for all that went wrong (the trials, death sentences) to the Soviets.<sup>311</sup>

Gottwald died in uncertain times in Czechoslovakia, when the Party elite faced the limits of their hegemony during the turmoil of economic dissatisfaction (Brno November 1951, Plzeň June 1953) and the undermining of Party legitimacy and morality regarding the Slánský affair. The weak de-Stalinization in Czechoslovakia after 1953 to 1956 never really questioned the work of Gottwald, and his role in the show trials and processes remained unclarified to the public. He was remembered for his modesty and credited for his merits in the victory of Socialism.<sup>312</sup> The entrance of the main Gottwaldova Street in Šumbark–Bludovice/Havířov was created in 1953, during the 'high season' of *Sorela* and the street carried Gottwald's name until the end of the Communist period.

What was it like? Architect Firla remembers, that he and architect Kellner drew the entire main street, 300 meters long – one from the right, the other from the left side. They called the drawing 'A Thousand Clouds', because of the clouds they drew in order to soften the hard and uniform architecture.<sup>313</sup> They were drawing, of course, typified buildings. Finally, however, Gottwaldova Street did not look like a boring, uniform street, since, like so many other houses in Šumbark-Bludovice, the façades were decorated with ornamental frescoes, terracotta accessories, and sgraffiti.

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<sup>311</sup> Blaive: Internationalism, Patriotism, Dictatorship and Democracy, 55-68.

<sup>312</sup> Blaive: Promarněná příležitost, 118.

<sup>313</sup> Vigner: Město zeleně, 37'.



In 1959, the chronicle of Havířov praised the 'older' architecture of Havířov I and II, when comparing it with the recent architecture of Havířov III. To the chronicler, Havířov III served as *"a classroom of a modern quarter, without much aesthetic ambition, where houses with plain façades are ordered in a row of parallel formations."*<sup>314</sup> On the other hand, according to the chronicle *"houses in Gottwaldova Street were adorned with historical motives, with dolphins, and various arabesques of modern stylized flowers. In Havířov I, the side streets form shapes like in historical towns. Havířov I was constructed by workers from České Budějovice. Perhaps this is the reason why this part reminds one of Renaissance South Bohemian towns constructed during the 16th century by the Italian masters working there. Houses in Havířov are much bigger than those of the Renaissance, but the decoration is similarly rustic, as on the houses in Český Krumlov, Telč, České Budějovice and Jindřichův Hradec"*.<sup>315</sup>

The architecture of Šumbark–Bludovice/Havířov probably came closest to Nejedlý's image of Socialist national architecture in Czechoslovakia. The pearl of the Renaissance-like buildings was the *Kino Radost* (Cinema Joy). Šumbark–Bludovice was governed by the MNV Šenov, MNV Šumbark and MNV Dolní Bludovice. This organizational structure was very complicated, therefore in 1954 a suggestion was made for town independence, which was approved by the government. In December 1955, in *Kino Radost*, the new town of Havířov was declared. A notable example of the authorities' call for the participation of the population and a way of making the new town more domestic and 'theirs' to the local residents was the contest launched for a name for

<sup>314</sup> SOkA Karviná, Kronika Havířov, 1956, 32.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 33.

the new town with a prize of 800 crowns. More than 2,300 names were proposed, reflecting the atmosphere of the time, but also the preferences of the residents. The suggestions to celebrate names of the Communist hierarchy were: *Melsgottwald* (Marx-Engels-Lenin-Gottwald) or *Gottwaldův Horníkov* (Gottwald's Mine Town). It may be noted that Gottwald's name was dominant in this hierarchy. The struggle for peace was captured in names such as *Ostravský Míromilov* (Ostrava Peace-Loving Town) or *Všemír* (Allpeacetown). Work was suggested by names such as *Čestprácov* (Honor the Work Town). There were also examples of coining a name to represent the new way of life: *Lidobudovatelov* (People-Builders' Town) or *Budosociokolektivov* (Socialism-Builders' Town). There were names reflecting the industrial character of the town, like *Stokomínů* (A Hundred Chimneys), which was most probably an allusion to Prague's nickname *stověžata* (The City of a Hundred Spires). Last but not least, the new names also reflected its old regional identity, like the name *Slezákov* (Slezak Town).<sup>316</sup> The chosen name: *Havířov* (Miners' Town), denotes the industrial character and the main occupation of the people who were living there.

The official declaration of a new town also reflected the organizational structure of *Stavoprojekt*. The chief architects who worked on the plans for Havířov were employed by the *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava. But after the declaration, *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava opened its new branch in Havířov. Many of the architects moved to Havířov permanently.

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<sup>316</sup> Vigner: Město zeleně; Strakoš, 165; L. Císařová: Lidé v soutěži o jméno dnešního Havířova bojovali o hlavní výhru, osm set korun. In: Havířovsko, 1999, 52, 2.



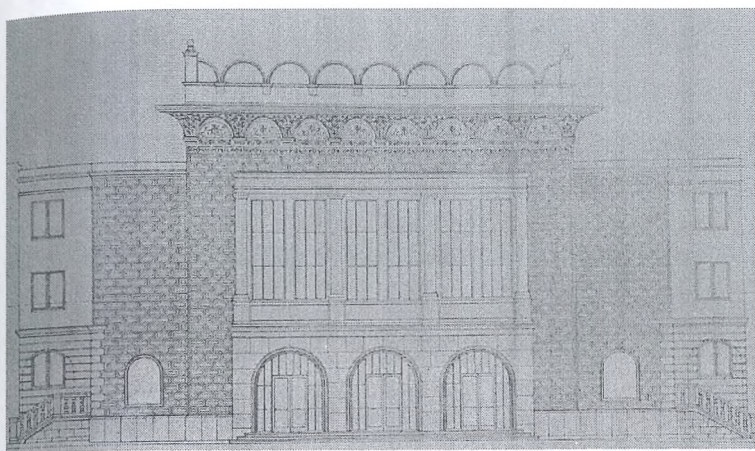


Fig. 2.11. Kino Radost (Cinema Joy).

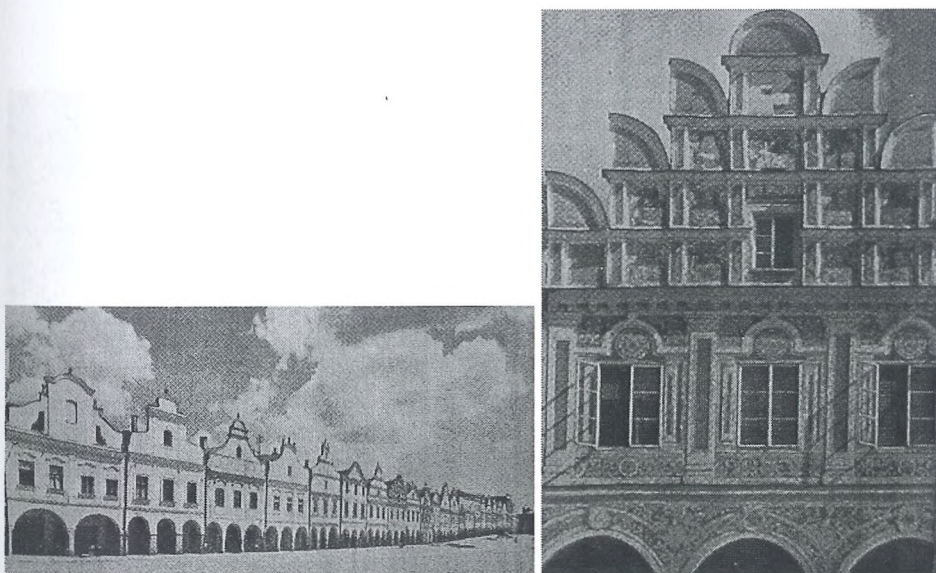


Fig. 2.12, 2.13. Main Square and restored house facade in Telč.



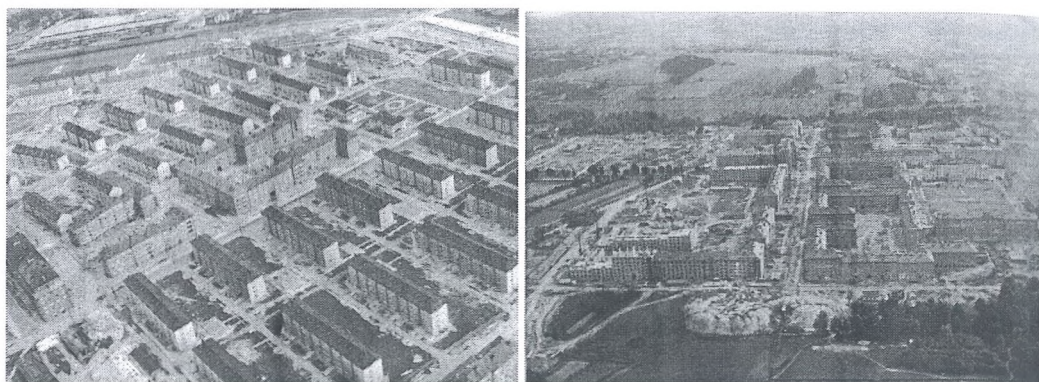


Fig. 2.14, 2.15. Havířov under construction.



Fig. 2.16., 2.17. View of Havířov and Gottwaldova Street.



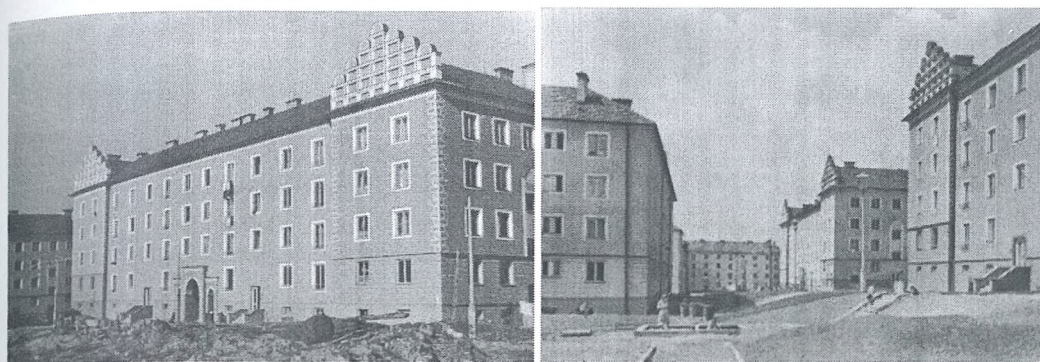


Fig. 2.18., 2.19. Details from Havířov.

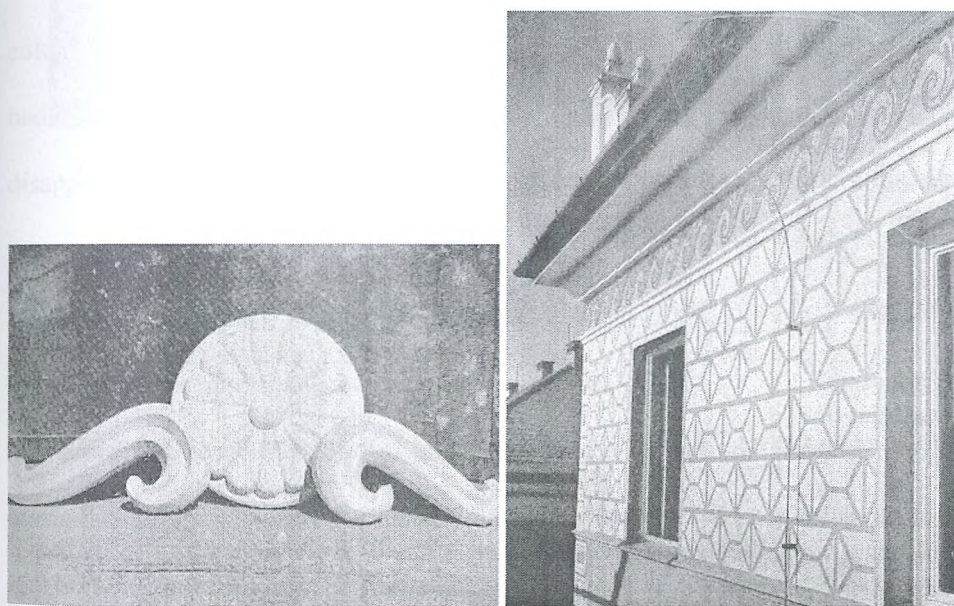


Fig. 2.20., 2.21. Prefabricated elements and decorative panel.

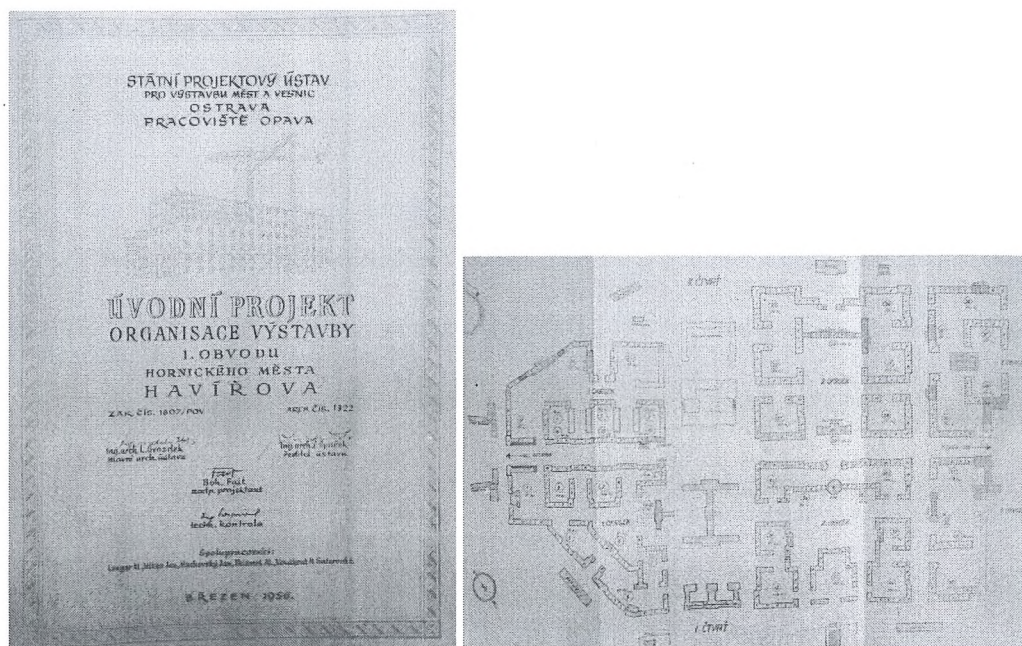


Fig. 2.22. Opening project for the organization of construction of the First District of Havířov (1956)

Fig. 2.23. Plan of of Havířov (1956)

### Quiet de-Stalinization

At the end of 1955, when the town of Havířov was officially declared, it was already the advent of a new era in the Communist world. In order to deal with his political enemies and legitimize his power, Nikita Khrushchev, the new Head of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death, denounced Stalinism and orientated his policy towards a relaxation in the economy, cultural production and foreign relations. Already in November 1954, Khrushchev had made a speech at the All-Union Confederation of Constructors in Moscow where he denounced the 'uselessness in architecture'.



For Czech architects, the new situation meant the end of Socialist Realism. Architects in Czechoslovakia, also those of the younger generation who had started their professional life in the early 1950s, tried to return to the country's Modernist roots and create new architectural forms. Others were forced to retire from practice, which is what happened in 1956 to the most important architect of Socialist Realism in Czechoslovakia, Jiří Kroha. In many regards, the political and social situation in Czechoslovakia differed from its Communist neighboring countries or from the Soviet Union. The years between 1948 and 1953 rocked Czechoslovakian society with elite purges, mass repression, and economic, cultural and social transformation. Those workers in traditional industrial centers, who had tried to defend their traditional workers' rights and to demonstrate their disappointment with poor working and living conditions, were particularly dissatisfied.

Social tensions reached their height between 1951 and 1953. At first the authorities tried to resolve the critical situation with powerful tactics, but 1953 was a significant political milestone for Czechoslovakia.<sup>317</sup> Changes in the leadership in the Soviet Union, changing economic and social policies in many Soviet Bloc countries, and social crises in neighboring countries, caused the authorities in Czechoslovakia to make some compromises in the social sphere in order to stabilize and strengthen their legitimacy. The Party turned towards a strategy of 'Socialist consumerism'.<sup>318</sup>

In 1954 and 1955, instead of a new Five-Year Plan, two One-Year Plans, called the 'New Course', were implemented. They reduced investment funds for industry, while directing

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<sup>317</sup> Kalinová, 192.

<sup>318</sup> Kevin McDermott: Popular Resistance in Communist Czechoslovakia: The Plzeň Uprising, June 1953. In: Contemporary European History, 19, 4, 2010, 287.

more resources to the production of consumer goods. Between 1953 and 1959, there were eight price reduction schemes: one in each year and two in 1956. The consequences of price reductions were an increase in personal consumption, improved living standards, and the release of tensions in society. Together with careful handling of Gottwald's role and personality cult after his death, the tacit social agreement between 1953 and 1956 enabled the authorities to transform the political passivity of the population in the 'revolutionary' 1956 into satisfying its economic needs.<sup>319</sup>

The organization of architectural practice in Czechoslovakia was already beginning to change by early 1954, as the State Design Institutes attempted to recapture some of the technological enthusiasm of the first years of Socialist architecture.<sup>320</sup> After two years without long-term planning, the Second Five-Year Plan was finally implemented in January 1956, which returned the economy to its earlier focus on investment in heavy industry. At the same time, architectural practice also underwent a new institutional shift with the establishment of the Central Administration for Housing and Civic Building (*Ústřední správa pro bytovou a občanskou výstavbu*), henceforth the Central Administration which was charged with overseeing all the construction of housing developments and their related civic buildings, including hospitals, schools and recreational facilities.

The Central Administration was a subordinate organization of the new State Committee for Construction (*Státní výbor pro výstavbu*), of which Jiří Voženílek was appointed

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<sup>319</sup> Muriel: Promarněná příležitost, Kalinova.

<sup>320</sup> Elman Zarecor, 288.

Deputy Director. At the same time, Karel Janů became Deputy Director of the new Ministry of Building (*Ministrstvo stavebnictví*). Both appointments signaled the return of a technocratic approach to housing and architectural practice.<sup>321</sup> The post-1956 'little normalization' did not relate to the mass exchange of people, but rather just to redeployments within existing staff. In the Czech lands, 28,000 people in the central organs were screened and a quarter was reassigned to manual work or sent into retirement. This screening, like the one after 1968, was an effective weapon to silence critical voices against the regime.<sup>322</sup> To appease the population, the authorities tried to increase their living standards. In this regard, the old *Stavoprojekt* agenda, which called for standardization and industrialization, going the way of prefabricated buildings, walked hand in hand with the new orientation.

### *Return to Modernist Roots*

In 1955, it was decided to build a new House of Culture in Havířov. Miloš Fojtik, who at that time had just taken up office as Vice-President of the Town's National Committee (MeNV) Havířov, remembers the first ceremonial dig. However, after that for a very long time nothing happened on the construction site.<sup>323</sup> It was only in 1961 that part of the new House of Culture, named after Petr Bezruč, was first opened. The whole building was only completed in 1963. The *Petra Bezruč House of Culture* was designed by architects Blažej Heiser and Radim Dejmál from the *Stavoprojekt* Ostrava. The smooth block building with a flat roof was free of ornamentation and other accessories.

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid., 289.

<sup>322</sup> Kalinová, 213.

<sup>323</sup> Vigner: Město zeleně, 52', 53'.



In the language of the interwar *Devětsil*, 'scientific Functionalism' was represented by this severe architecture, although, with the red outlines around the windows, it also was a reference to Czech Cubism. Even though the exterior of the building lacked any ornaments - reminders of the great Czech history and happy Slovak people - the name of the building after Silesian/Czech poet Petr Bezruč, made it clear what nationality was the soul of the town.

As noted in Chapter 1, Bezruč, who died just recently (in 1958), had warned in his poetry against the German and Polish danger. Although modest in its external appearance, the building had an excellent level of technical equipment and comprised a large theatre with a seating capacity of 555 and a puppet theatre with a seating capacity of 106. The interior design of the building boasted a decorative window mosaic and a modern drop scene. After it was opened, the building served as the most important social facility in the town.



Fig. 2.24. The Petra Bezruč House of Culture (1955-1961/3)

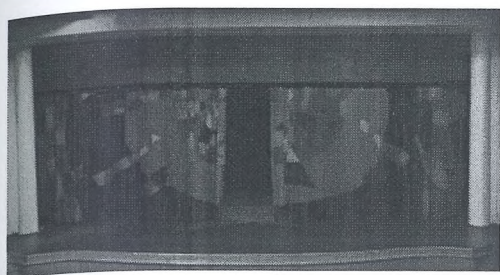


Fig. 2.25. Interior of the Petra Bezruče House of Culture.



Fig. 2.26. Hospital and Clinic in Havířov (planned 1958-1963; constructed 1964-1969).

The building of the *Labužník* (Gourmet) grocery store, may be classified in the more 'emotional' branch of Functionalism. It was designed between 1954 and 1957 by Bronisław Firla, a young architect, who had already actively participated in the planning of Havířov during the *Sorela* period. *Labužník* was typical for its distinctive shape with a rounded front corner and for its neon sign: '*Labužník*', which has remained on the building until the present day. The *Labužník* grocery store represents a variation of the Brussels style, which was to mark the post-Expo 58 period.





Fig. 2.27., 2.28. *Labužník* grocery store (1954-1957) by day and by night (1968).



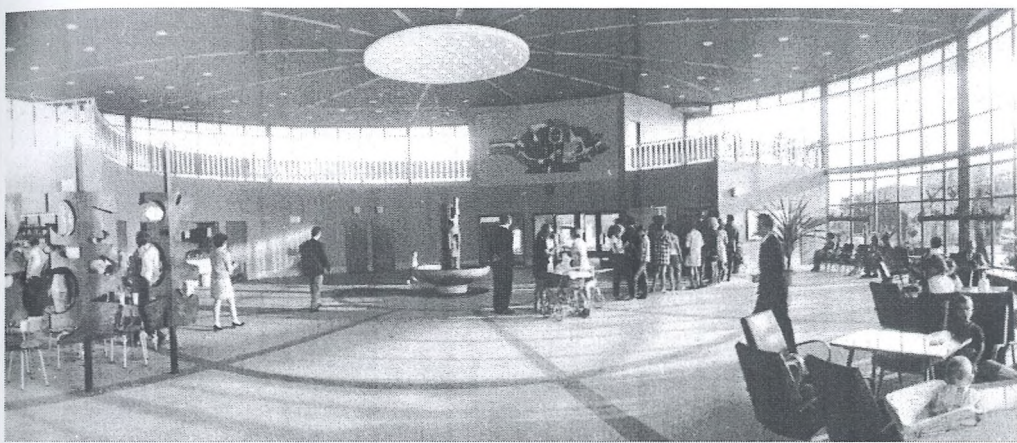


Fig. 2.29., 2.30. The building and interior of the Bus Station in Havířov.

Between April and October 1958, Brussels hosted Expo 58, also known as the Brussels World Fair, the first major World Fair after World War II. The Czechoslovak exposition, *One Day in Czechoslovakia*, was a huge success and was awarded with the Gold Star for the best exhibit. Czechoslovakia's pavilion consisted of two structures: the pavilion itself and a restaurant. At the end of the World Fair, the restaurant was transported back to Prague, where, between 1961 and 1990, it was used for its original purpose in Letna Park. This means that for one year, until 1962, this ultra-modern building stood just a

couple of meters away from the biggest statue of Stalin in the world (which, for a long time had been the only one in Communist Europe).

Expo 58 motivated Czech and Slovak architects and designers to search for a new authentic style in architecture and the applied arts. What was called the 'Brussels style' focused on new materials and technologies, on glass, steel, plastic, colors and geometric motifs. It emphasized the collaboration between architects and designers, offering a consensus between Functionalism and a strong visual effect.<sup>324</sup> In the Ostrava region, three train stations were built in the Brussels style: Ostrava-Vitkovice (1963-1967), Havířov (1964-1969), and the Ostrava main railway station (1966-1974). The main station in Havířov was designed by the architect Josef Hrejsemna and sculptor Václav Uruba. They gave the building some innovative elements of the future Brutalism.<sup>325</sup>



<sup>324</sup> Authors' collective. *Bruselský sen. Arbor Vitae*, Praha 2008. Oldřich Ševčík, Ondřej Beneš: *Architektura 60. let, "Zlatá šedesátá léta" v české architektuře 20. století*. Grada, Praha 2009.

<sup>325</sup> <https://www.sites.google.com/site/vlakovenadrazihavirov/o-budove-vlakoveho-nadrazi>



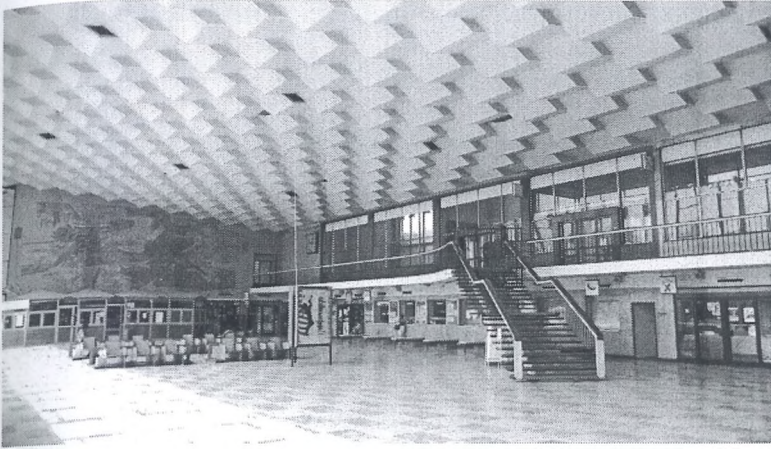


Fig. 2.31., 2.32. Train Station in Havířov (1964-1969).

#### *Tacit Consensus: Family Houses and Paneláky*

In the course of the 1950s, three types of construction were possible: corporate (*podniková*), where an enterprise constructed apartments for its employees; individual construction, and cooperative construction (*družstevní*) (from 1959 in Havířov, when the Housing Association (*Stavební bytové družstvo*) was founded). Individual construction in Czechoslovakia became very popular after 1953, when the authorities were orientated towards increasing the personal consumption of the population. Miners employed in the OKD were already able to increase their income in October 1951, after the Party and the government passed a resolution to increase measures in the OKD, so the company almost doubled miners' wages.<sup>326</sup>

Miners, particularly if they were shock workers (*úderník*), whose income was even higher, were able to build their own family houses. The architects of Šumbark-

<sup>326</sup> Kalinová, 163.



Bludovice/Havířov had to count on land on which new, individual buildings would be constructed. In 1954 in Dolní Bludovice, 28 family houses began to be constructed, mostly within what was known as the 'Miners' Scheme' (*hornická akce*), by which active miners were entitled to purchase cheaper building materials in the form of a loan with 2% interest. The chronicle of Dolní Bludovice made it clear, that "the strong construction rush indicates good earnings of the villagers."<sup>327</sup> The chronicler from Dolní Datyně also wrote that "the housing culture in the village made remarkable progress after the government introduced support for building within the 'Miners' Scheme'. 14 new apartment houses were built, as well pleasant, neat villas. In addition, 7 family houses were built privately, apart from the 'Miners' Scheme'."<sup>328</sup> In the Regional Archives in Opava dozens of approvals to build family houses could be found, signed between 1954 and 1955 by a representative of Department for Construction at the KNV in Ostrava or the ONV in Český Těšín.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>327</sup> SOKA Karviná, Kronika obce Dolní Bludovice, 1954, 54.

<sup>328</sup> SOKA Karviná, Dolní Datyně in 1955, 108.

<sup>329</sup> Zemský archiv v Opavě, fond: Severomoravský Krajský národní výbor Ostrava; karton: 434, značka: 1879; poznámka: II. část, odbor výstavby.

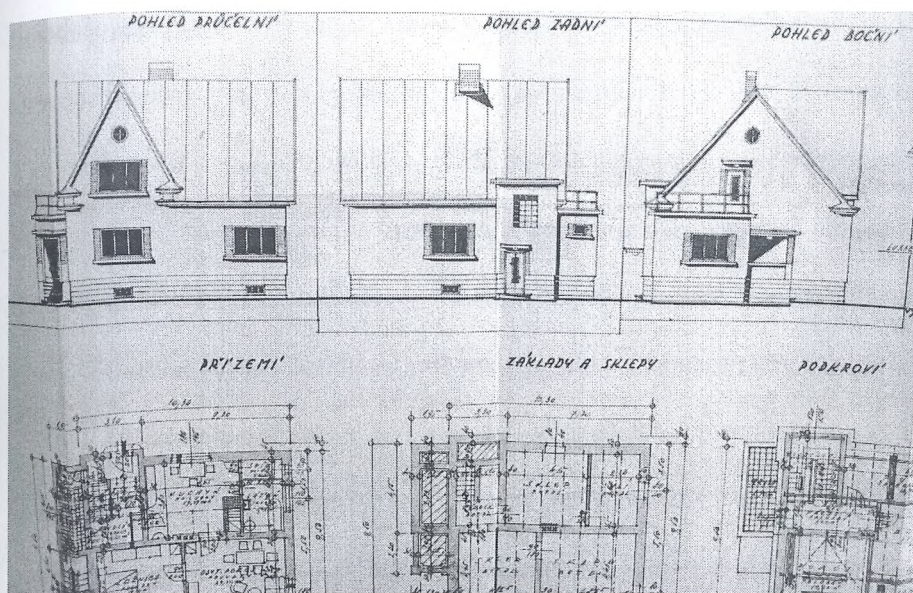


Fig. 2.33. Plan for family house for Jan Folwarezný, a pensioned miner, apartment (být) in Dolní Bludovice. Ground plan dimensions: 9,5 X 10,3 sq.meters. The construction materials were to be provided by the OKD.

### Chcete stavět rodinný domek?

Se zájmem jsme v minulých dnech četli usnesení ÚV KSČ k řešení bytové otázky. Mezi jiným se zde hovoří o tom, že v zájmu zamezení dlouhodobé rozestavenosti je nutné, aby si budoucí družstevníci a individuální stavebníci opatřili včas potřebné finanční prostředky dlouhodobým pravidelným spořením. K tomu účelu budou finanční ústavy organizovat prostřednictvím státních spořitelů účelové stavební spoření.

Rada KNV v Ostravě přijala usnesení, jímž se upravují platné směrnice státního výběru pro výstavbu a povolování staveb rodinných domků a ostatních staveb soukromým stavebníkům.

*Celá naše rodina ukládá na vkladní knížky*

nebudete stavebník propíacet v penězích, neboť faktury za materiál bude prodejna zasílat

Fig. 2.34. Article 'Do you want to build a family house?', addresses all members of the family, encouraging them to save money in their Savings Books.



After 1959, when the last price reduction scheme was implemented, the optimism of the late 1950s was replaced with disappointment at the beginning of the next decade when the economic stagnation became more and more obvious. However, during the time of Socialist Realism, the *Stavoprojekt* experimented with new industrial building technologies and housing prototypes. The most intense research and experimentation occurred in the area of prefabricated building panels for use in mass housing projects.<sup>330</sup> Panel technology was not new to architects in Czechoslovakia. Architects working in the Baťa Company's Building Department in the interwar years were particularly engaged with prefabrication methods as part of the company's campaign to expand Zlín and build Baťa cities around the world. During the war, research by Baťa architects led to the first large-panel construction in Czechoslovakia.<sup>331</sup>

In the early 1950s, much of the research on panel construction for residential apartment blocks was conducted at the new *Institute of Prefabricated Buildings* (*Ústav montovaných staveb*), with its headquarters in Prague and with branches in Brno and Gottwaldov (formerly Zlín). The first mass-deployed structural panel building (Czech: *panelový dům* or *panelák* for short) was designed by two former Baťa architects, Bohumil Kula and Hynek Adamec, at the Institute's Gottwaldov branch in 1950. They named the series the 'G-buildings' (*G-domy*), with the letter G signifying Gottwaldov. Within five years, the *panelák* was the basis of a nationwide building strategy that would attempt to alleviate once and for all the decades-old housing shortage in the country.<sup>332</sup> Panel technology would not have determined the formal or even spatial qualities of a building, but rather made design and construction quicker and more cost-effective than traditional

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<sup>330</sup> Elman Zarecor, 224.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 225.



building methods. The transformation from traditional to industrial methods succeeded, as more housing units were built for less money.<sup>333</sup>

The move towards panel construction was a compromise position. Architects and the State accepted the compromise, because it was seen as the only practical solution for meeting the demands of the planned economy, given the available resources and political goals.<sup>334</sup> The first panel buildings in Havířov were constructed between 1956 and 1957.<sup>335</sup> In the following years, apartment construction rapidly increased: 1,500 apartments in 1958, 1,100 in 1959, and over 1,500 in 1960.<sup>336</sup> At the same time as the panel buildings, Zápotockého Street was constructed with two high-rise buildings, new restaurants, cafés and shops.<sup>337</sup> After Gottwald's death, Antonín Zápotocký (1884-1957) became the new President of Czechoslovakia. He had earlier served as Prime Minister. Antonín Novotný (1904-1975) became the General Secretary of the KSČ.<sup>338</sup> If Gottwaldova Street in Havířov had a carnival atmosphere, filled with patriotic and folk elements, then Zápotockého Street had a more technical and formal appearance, just like that which Czechoslovakia was heading towards.

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<sup>333</sup> Eva Pýchova: Česká bytová výstavba v období 1945-1964. *Umění* 54, 5, 2006, 420-32.

<sup>334</sup> Kim, 227.

<sup>335</sup> SOKA Karviná, *Kronika Havířov*, 1959, 15.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>338</sup> After Zápotocký's death in 1957, Novotný, as earlier Gottwald, would held, until 1968, two most powerful state positions: as the General Secretary and as the President.



Fig. 2.35.,2.36. Panelák construction in Havířov.



Fig. 2.37. Trida Antonína Zápotockeho (1970).



## 2.2 ARRIVAL OF MODERNISM IN THE SLOVENIAN PROVINCE

One of the most important acquisitions for Slovenes in the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was the establishment of the University of Ljubljana in 1919. Among the five faculties, the Technical Faculty was also established, where Viennese-educated Ivan Vurnik (1884-1971) tried to set up a Department of Architecture. He attempted unsuccessfully to bring on board his compatriot, architect Maks Fabiani, as well as collaborating with Jože Plečnik (1872-1957), by then already a celebrated and charismatic lecturer and architect from the Otto Wagner school. Vurnik at first tried to find the type of architecture that would correspond to the Slovenian national style, for which purpose he reinterpreted the traditional forms of Carniolan peasant art. One of the highlights is the multicolored, patterned building of the Cooperative Credit Bank (*Zadružna gospodarska banka*) in Ljubljana.

In the late 1920s, however, he completely rejected the search for a national style and turned to a purely Functionalist architecture introduced into Slovenia from Germany.<sup>339</sup> He created his own department at the School of Architecture, where he promoted the ideas of the Modernist movement. Within conservative institutional Ljubljana of the 1920s, there was a prevalent resistance to modern solutions in urbanism and architecture. At the Ljubljana International Fair of 1924 the police were given the nod that painter Avgust Černigoj, who had met with the Bauhaus School in Weimar, should be expelled

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<sup>339</sup> Stane Bernik: *Slovene Architecture of the Twentieth Century*, Mestna Galerija Ljubljana, Ljubljana 2005, 24.

from town due to his avant-gardism and social activism.<sup>340</sup> On the other hand, Plečnik remained faithful to his poetics, based on a personal renewal of the classical language of architecture.<sup>341</sup>

The late 1920s and early 1930s were the most active periods in the Modernist transition of Slovenian architecture. Vurnik's students were committed Modernists, but also Plečnik's graduates slowly but inexorably slipped away from the teacher's influence (most dramatically, his first assistant, France Tomažič). After their graduation, some Ljubljana architectural students decided to spend some time in centers like Vienna or Prague and, between 1927 and 1939, seven Slovenian architects spent time at the Le Corbusier workshop in Paris. A growing middle class of businessmen and top-ranking civil servants were willing to enter into a dialogue with the Modernists, since it had become both fashionable and modern to own a new house designed in a new style. At the end of the 1930s, Vurnik was the most committed, informed and consistent Modernist, or rather Functionalist, in Slovenia.<sup>342</sup> Together with Functionalists, Vladimir Šubic, France Tomažič, Stanislav Rohrman and others, he made plans for a new type of architectural image, residential housing for workers, especially in Ljubljana and Maribor.

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<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 34.





Fig. 2.38. Ivan Vurnik: Maribor Workers' Colony.

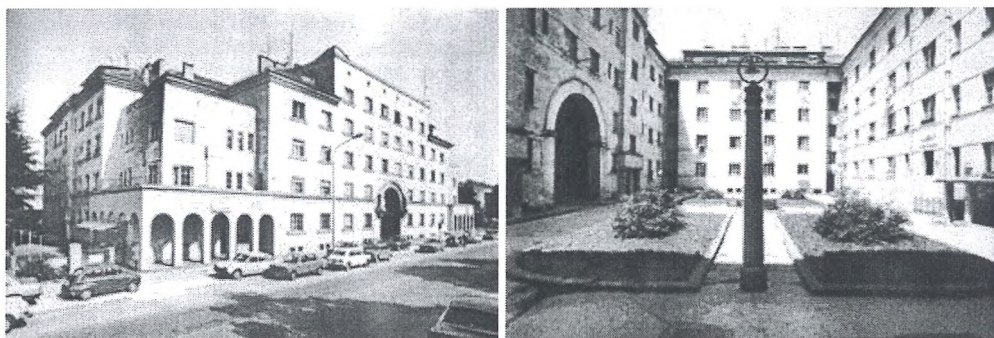


Fig. 2.39., 2.40. Vladimir Šubic, Meksika, Ljubljana 1927. The Municipality of Ljubljana ordered a plan for a residential building for its employees. Šubic many times visited what was called 'Red Vienna', where the local Social Democratic government invested in residential construction for its workers and employees. Like the buildings in Vienna, these in Ljubljana also had more communal areas, especially bathrooms and laundries.



## Politics and Architects: The Shining Stars of the First Post-War Years

Architect Vurnik was the protagonist of the most radical Modernist chapter in the interwar period, but after the war he was sidelined to the margins of the architectural establishment. Furthermore, Šubic ended his life in 1946, aged 59, while constructing the new Brčko-Banoviči railway line. He was sent there by the authorities after having been 'pardoned', to do socially useful work.<sup>343</sup> Pushed out Vurnik, 'removed' Šubic and retired Vladimir Mušič, meant the departure of the main protagonists of the first Slovene Modernist-Functionalist generation. On the other hand, the post-war Plečnik seemingly accepted the new social conditions, without any obvious ideological reversal. He had a certain kinship with the newly rediscovered Classicism of the Socialist variety. His creativity was in many ways in harmony with the meanings sought by socio-realist architecture, which took its inspiration from the heroism of the antique, and timeless aesthetics of the Classicist architectural vocabulary.<sup>344</sup> Plečnik's designs for the numerous monuments to the Resistance are to be found up and down Slovenia, his last two works were the renovation of Križanke (1952-1956), a monastery in Ljubljana that was nationalized after 1945, and the garden pavilion at Tito's Brioni (1955-1956). The most significant architectural idea for the Slovene Parliament must have been the Plečnik one (1947). The idea that was perhaps closest to the socio-realist aspirations, was unrealized.<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Janko Zlodre: Vladimir Šubic. Architect-builder or about petrified angel. In: Arhitekt Vladimir Šubic, ed. Tadej Glazer, Ljubljana 1992, special number of AB, 2,4,145.

<sup>344</sup> Bernik 105.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 106.

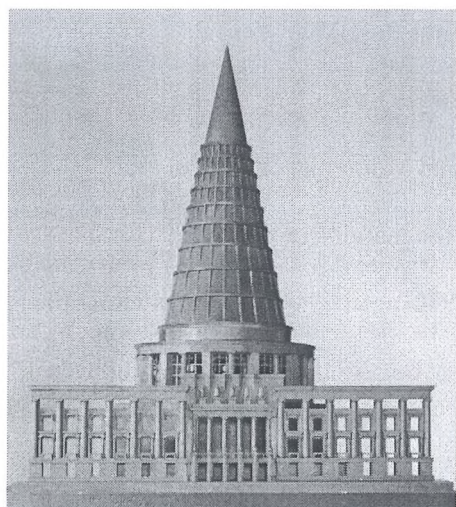


Fig. 2.41. Jože Plečnik, model of Slovenian Parliament (1947).

Fig. 2.42. Vinko Glanz, Plečnik's graduate (1927), Slovenian Parliament (1954-1958).

During the first decade after the war there were well established and mostly still active old-school architects, who had had their training in Europe. However, there was mostly a young generation of architects, who were studying or had just completed their studies at the Ljubljana School of Architecture. Plečnik's graduates, who embraced Modernism, were among the most active architects. Slovene Modernism stems from Plečnik and the Plečnik spirit was powerfully present in the architects who were active during the first years of the post-war renovation.<sup>346</sup>

This chapter concentrates on three of Plečnik's students, who between 1947 and 1956 drew up the urban plans for three new towns in Slovenia: Edvard Ravnikar for Nova Gorica, Danilo Fürst for Strnišče/Kidričevo and Janez Trenz for Velenje. Special attention is paid to the relationship between the architects and the authorities in decision-

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 105.



making competences and the architects' adjustments to preferred styles and the shifting political and economical situation in Yugoslavia.

### *Nova Gorica*

One of the goals of the partisan resistance in Slovenia during the Second World War was the incorporation of the Slovenian ethnic territory lost after the First World War to Italy and Austria. After the end of the war, the Yugoslavian army was under pressure from the Western allies, first to withdraw from Southern Carinthia and soon also from Trieste, Gorizia and Pula. The Venecia Giulia province was divided into two zones: Zone A (Trieste, Gorizia and Pula districts) was administered by the Anglo-Americans and Zone B (the rest of the territory up to the former Rapal border between Yugoslavia and Italy) was administered by the Yugoslavian authorities. Mass demonstrations with slogans such as: "*We don't want what's foreign, we don't give what's ours*" (*Tujega nočemo, svojega ne damo*), that took place during the conferences of Foreign Ministers in London in September 1945 and during the Peace Conference in Paris in summer 1946, were not just a tool of Communist propaganda, but also the expression of genuine public outrage. People found the incorporation of Venecia Giulia, Trieste and Southern Carinthia into Yugoslavia to be the result of the partisan and Allied war victory.<sup>347</sup>

In fall 1947, already in the heat of the Cold War, the decision was made that Yugoslavia would receive the whole of Zone B and part of Zone A (territory up to Gorizia). Trieste was to become a special territory under the patronage of the United Nations, named the

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<sup>347</sup> Vodopivec, 330.

*Free Territory of Trieste (Svobodno Tržaško ozemlje)*, divided between the Anglo-American and Yugoslavian zones. The Slovenes were openly dissatisfied with those decisions taken at the Peace Conference in Paris. Mass protests organized by the Yugoslavian authorities were not just a result of political pressure, but also a widespread belief that a new injustice had occurred for the Slovenes in Paris. This consolidated the position of the Communist authorities, who mobilized the anti-Allies and anti-Italian feelings to their support.<sup>348</sup>

The loss of Gorizia meant a serious effect on urban and economic functions, since the traditional urban center was left without its natural hinterland and vice versa. Despite the belief that the border with Italy was only temporary and that finally Gorizia would be incorporated into Yugoslavia, the CC CPY decided already in 1946 to build a new town on the Yugoslavian side. On the initiatives of the local committees, the first two plans for the new town were drawn up by the Plečnik student, Božidar Gvardijančič, employed at the Republican construction company of *Primorje*. After September 1947, when Littoral, without Gorizia, became officially incorporated in Yugoslavia, the construction of the new town began under the competence of the Republican Ministry of Construction and Minister Ivan Maček–Matija.<sup>349</sup> He opposed architect Gvardijančič's decision as to the site on which to begin the construction of the new town. Later, at a meeting with town residents, the Minister anecdotally explained his decision of that time: "*On the site where your town stands today rumors spread that it was windy. I asked how it was possible that the Italians in Old Gorizia could withstand this wind? There was no way we could agree*

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 330.

<sup>349</sup> Vinko Torkar: Ravnika's Nova Gorica. In: France Ivanšek (ed.): *Hommage à Edvard Ravnikar 1907-1993*. France in Marta Ivanšek, Ljubljana 1995, 33.



*on where to start to build the new town. Then I went on pilgrimage mountain Sveta Gora, today you call it Skalnica. I checked with binoculars and walked the terrain. Finally I realized that we would do less harm if we started to build the new town in this area. So you see, this is how the decision of where to build Nova Gorica was made.*"<sup>350</sup>

In the helter-skelter of fall 1947, the Minister ordered the preparation of new projects by three architects, from which the plan of architect Edvard Ravnikar was selected. Architect Edvard Ravnikar (1907-1993) was of the third generation of architects educated at the Ljubljana School of Architecture by Professor Plečnik. He graduated in 1935 together with his classmates, Edvard Mihevc, Marjan Tepina and Danilo Fürst. After the Second World War, they all became very influential in Slovenian architecture. Ravnikar called attention to himself by being Plečnik's assistant at the National University Library in Ljubljana. He was one among seven Slovenian students studying at the Le Corbusier workshop in Paris and was aware of the theoretical discussions of Modernism. After the Liberation, he immediately began employment as Chief Architect at the Ministry of Construction. From 1946, he served as Honorary Professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana. In 1951 he initiated the publication of the *Arhitekt* journal, which was the voice of the already accepted principles and views of Western architectural achievements.<sup>351</sup>

Ravnikar managed to find a common denominator in his work, a synthesis between Plečnik and Le Corbusier, sources that could easily be considered irreconcilably

<sup>350</sup> Anja Medved and Nadja Velušček (directors): *Mesto na travniku*. Videoesej o Novi Gorici, Kinoateljce, Nova Gorica 2005.

<sup>351</sup> Bernik 100.

disparate.<sup>352</sup> According to architectural historian, Vladimir Kulić, "if realized, these designs could have been a uniquely Yugoslav contribution to the search for a 'new monumentality', containing specifically Yugoslav connotations for their indebtedness to Plečnik and yet being cosmopolitan and modern for their Corbusian link."<sup>353</sup>

In 1947, during the time when Ravnikar received the invitation to plan Nova Gorica, he had been working on a proposal for the buildings of the Presidency and the Central Committee of the CPY and a plan for New Belgrade as the Federal Capital. His proposal was an adaptation of the *Ville Radieuse* for a city of Socialist administration, in which Le Corbusier's monumentalization of capitalist business was replaced with a celebration of the State and the Party. The scheme anticipated the future iconic Modernist capitals such as Le Corbusier's Chandigarh and, even more closely, Lucio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's Brasilia. His proposal was the most highly ranked by the professional jury of the Central Committee competition, although the Party leadership chose to organize a second, limited round of the competition to find an appropriate design.<sup>354</sup>

In his plans for Nova Gorica, Ravnikar again referred to Le Corbusier's planning ideas, imagining the "design of a city as if under the sky of Provence".<sup>355</sup> His plan was an orthogonal modern town with freestanding buildings amidst greenery. The central area of the city, Travnik (*Meadow*), is designed to end the only city diagonal - historical links

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<sup>352</sup> Aleš Vodopivec: Moderna galerija. 20. stoletje: arhitektura od moderne do sodobne: vodnik po arhitekturi, Ljubljana: Zavod za varstvo kulturne dediščine Slovenije, 2001.

<sup>353</sup> Vladimir Kulić: Land of the In-Between. Modern Architecture and the State in Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945-65. Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of The University of Texas at Austin in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The University of Texas at Austin, May 2009.

<sup>354</sup> Kulić.

<sup>355</sup> Torkar, 372.



with the old Gorizia.<sup>356</sup> The architects at times compromised their beliefs by adorning Modernist concepts of public buildings with heroic architectural sculpture and Ravnikar's urban architectural planning of Nova Gorica was no exception. The Council Assembly building was designed by architect Vinko Glanz (1902-1977), another Plečnik graduate (1927).

The construction of Nova Gorica was funded from the Federal and Republican reserves. It was expected that Nova Gorica would become "a small New Belgrade", "the westernmost beacon, which alerts to the danger of the reactionary West",<sup>357</sup> or as architect Ravnikar commented, the town should "shine over the border".<sup>358</sup>

In September 1947, before the beginning of the work on Nova Gorica, a mass of 5,000 people was addressed by some of the leading Federal and Republican politicians: Boris Kidrič, the Federal Minister for Industry, Miha Marinko, Republican Prime Minister, Franc Leskosek-Luka, Republican Minister for Industry and Mining, and France Bevk, a member of the Executive Committee of the OF.<sup>359</sup> The new ambitious project could not be realized without the mobilization of force and voluntary workers. At the Central Committee of the People's Youth of Yugoslavia, a decision was made to send 3,000 young people from Slovenia and 2,000 from other parts of Yugoslavia to the construction site of Nova Gorica.

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<sup>356</sup> <http://www.evidenca.org/?object=95>

<sup>357</sup> Nova Gorica, I, II, st. 13, 11. Junij 1948.

<sup>358</sup> Ivanšek, 183.

<sup>359</sup> Mesto na travniku, 10°50''

The Federal, Republican and local youth working brigades became the main driving force of the construction of the new town. After the youth brigades left, the Front Brigades (*frontne brigade*), volunteers from the nearby villages, were organized. In 1951, financial problems arose and in the following years the Federal and Republican grants dried up. The Yugoslavian search for a new political orientation after 1948 was not in accordance with the Cold War competition and demonstration of political superiority towards the West, which was earlier reflected in the plans for Nova Gorica. The finances for Nova Gorica became a local responsibility. It was impossible to continue with the work according to architect Ravnikar's plans.

In the mid 1950s, Nova Gorica was only half-constructed and economically very weak. The Local Committee (OLO) again ordered a new general plan from architect Gvardjančič in collaboration with architect Viljem Strmecki. Gvardjančič plan, drawn up between 1953 and 1958, did not follow Ravnikar's idea.<sup>360</sup> According to architect Torkar from Solkan near Nova Gorica, suggestions for changes were made by the local authorities according to their 'taste' and not because of economic reasons.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Torkar, 56.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.



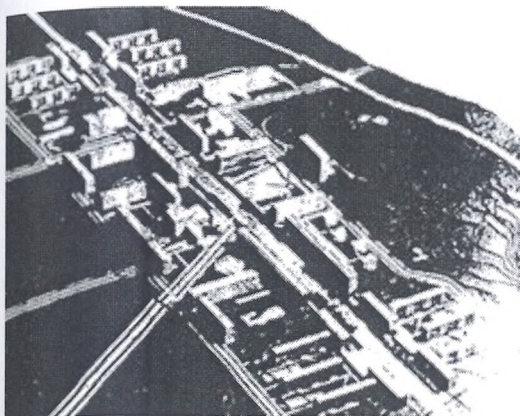


Fig. 2.43. Edvard Ravnikar, Urban plan for Nova Gorica (1947-1951).



Fig. 2.44. Vinko Glanz, Town Hall in Nova Gorica (1948-1955).

### *Litostroj*

The Slovenian Communists who took over political power after the end of the Second World War did not continue the economic plans of the 1930s in the Drava Province. The high-ranking Party functionaries were very well aware of the concepts of Soviet industrialization and they made Soviet economic theory and practice the basis of

industrial planning in Slovenia.<sup>362</sup> The priority was heavy industry, especially metallurgy and machine building. Franc Leskošek-Luka (1897-1983) was Republican Minister for Industry and Mining between 1945 and 1948 and between 1948 and 1951 (58?) Federal Minister for Heavy Industry. At the time of his ministerial roles, his Ministry published a bulletin, *Industrijski vestnik (Industrial Magazine)*. From spring 1946 the magazine started to publish articles, which described in detail the Soviet building methods and declared that "*our factories will not produce pianos, coffee grinders and other consumables, but will concentrate on the production of raw materials and machines*".<sup>363</sup> The Soviet planners also recommended the building of tall, light factories, in which workers would feel good.

The first Five-Year Plan, 1947 to 1951, was uniform and mandatory for the whole of Yugoslavia. Slovenia could regulate only the development of industry of Federal importance: electricity, coal, alumina, aluminum and other raw materials. The prevalent concept of 'industrialization and electrification' was replaced in 1947 by the concept of 'capital construction' or 'capital investments'.<sup>364</sup> Architects played a crucial role in the process of post-war reconstruction in restoring the towns and countryside damaged by the war. Among the priorities were the construction of industry and housing. In 1947 construction began on a new company for the molding of turbines and other castings in Ljubljana's northern district of Šiška, called *Titovi zavodi Litostroj (Tito's Institutes Litostroj)*. In the summer of that same year, the Slovenian daily, *Slovenski poročevalec*,

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<sup>362</sup> Jože Prinčič: Kapitalna, ključna kapitalna in temeljna investicijska izgradnja v Sloveniji, 1945-1956. Dolenjska založba 1992.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid, 124.



published an article stating: *"Litostroj will be our exemplary industrial company with a thousand windows. It will be a real garden town with houses situated in a park. Litostroj is going to be the most beautiful part of Ljubljana."*<sup>365</sup>

The important order to construct industrial facilities (that would prove to be one of the biggest and most modern in Yugoslavia) and a housing complex was given to another Plečnik graduate in 1936, architect Edo Mihevc (1911-1985). In 1936 Mihevc became a member of the CPS. During the Second World War, he received the rank of Commander and was a member of the Supreme Headquarters of the National Liberation Army. After the Liberation, he represented Yugoslavian authorities in Trieste for Venezia Giulia and Trieste, and later became Head of the Cabinet at the Republican Ministry for Industry and Mining. In 1946 he was appointed as Associate Professor at the Department of Architecture in Ljubljana, where he lectured on housing and industrial buildings. He also ran his own architectural office in Koper.<sup>366</sup>

Similarly to what had taken place earlier between Vurnik and Plečnik, antagonism developed in the Faculty between Mihevc and Ravnikar. According to art historian, Peter Krečič, those students who wanted to study architecture in the modern sense, went to Mihevc.<sup>367</sup> Compared to Ravnikar, Mihevc did not publish much and avoided the media, as well lacking the charisma of Ravnikar. Professionally, Mihevc was a specialist in housing. His connections between Functionalism and Regionalism were of particular

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<sup>365</sup> Slovenski poročevalec, 29. avgust 1947, 203, 3.

<sup>366</sup> Vesna Teržan: Edo Mihevc, arhitekt. Mladina, 2, 11.1.2012.

<sup>367</sup> Statement of Peter Krečič at the symposium on Edo Mihevc. Faculty for Humanistic Studies, Univerza na Primorskem. In: Teržan.

value. He is the creator of the famous *Kozolec* in Ljubljana of 1957, a variation on Le Corbusier's *L'Unité de habitation* in Marseille, and the building of *Metalka*, famous for its technological innovation with the 'hanging façade' of prefabricated aluminum panels. In 1949, together with Miroslav Gregorič, he received the 1st prize for designing the Litostroj industrial facilities . With this design of the buildings situated in a park, Mihevc introduced the norm for planning industrial housing neighborhoods for workers. The main consideration was bigger, standardized kitchens and bathrooms.



Fig. 2.45. Edo Mihevc, Tito's Institutes Litostroj (1950). In the foreground are apartment blocks and in the background are Tito's Institutes.



Besides Ravnikar and Mihevc, also Danilo Fürst (1912-2005) belongs to the third generation of Plečnik students at the University of Ljubljana. After his graduation in 1935, he went to Vienna for a few months and later worked as the town architect of Bled. His excellent organizational skills and understanding of the economy made him one of the key architects regarding rationalization and standardization in post-war Slovenia.<sup>368</sup> He co-established a company called *Projektgrad*, for producing standardized plans for the reconstruction of the most war-damaged settlements. Later he was sent to Bosnia, where he managed the site on the Brčko-Banovići railway line. If this railway line had been fatal to Šubic, Fürst won a medal here as the leader of the most successful site. In late 1947, following a decree, he was reassigned to the *Projektivni zavod* design institute in Maribor, where he took the lead in planning and constructing the *Factory of Alumina and Aluminium (Tovarna glinice in aluminija)* in Strnišče near Ptuj in North-Eastern Slovenia.

Due to its good infrastructural facilities, Strnišče served as a prisoner camp during the First World War. At the beginning of the Second World War, the German trust, the *Vereinigte Aluminium Werke*, started to build a factory for alumina and a camp with barracks for 5,000 people. After the withdrawal of the Germans, a camp for the enemies of the Communist system and other suspected people was established. In particular the Republican Minister for Industry and Mining, Franc Leskošek-Luka, approved the further

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<sup>368</sup> Nataša Koselj: Arhitekt Danilo Fürst. Oris življenja in dela. In: Revija SRP (Svoboda, resnica, pogum) 21/22.

construction of the factory.<sup>369</sup> The new plan, on an area of four square kilometers, imitated a Soviet 'Socialist commune', with the administration building, restaurant, dormitory and residential area situated in a pine forest on the main road to the factory. All the houses would be equipped with central heating, but without kitchens, since in order to relieve the housewives, a communal restaurant was provided. It never justified its purpose, since the residents soon started to install kitchens in their apartments.<sup>370</sup>

In 1950, at Fürst's invitation, Ravnikar, with his young student, Stanko Kristl, also designed a project of a residential area in Strnišče, but it was never realized. This plan moved away from the Le Corbusierian or interwar German Functionalist models, as were used for Nova Gorica and Litostroj. In the 1950s, the more organic Scandinavian models, sensitive to topographical conditions, became increasingly popular in Slovenia. In November 1950, Dubrovnik hosted the first Conference of Yugoslavian Architects, where Ravnikar presented the development of modern urbanism in Slovenia.<sup>371</sup> He claimed that it was very difficult for small and geographically diverse Slovenia to undertake cumbersome new constructions. Uniform and standardized blocks were the typical appearance of a more administrative rather than a professional procedure.<sup>372</sup> He further questioned whether the increased migration from the countryside to the towns really was an inevitable consequence of industrialization.<sup>373</sup> What he proposed, instead of

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<sup>369</sup> Tiha smrt (The Silent Death), video-film about incinerators in Kidričevo (Transcript) <http://sterntal.wordpress.com/2011/01/05/kratka-zgodovina-kidricevega/> and [http://www.talum.si/si/onas/nagovor\\_predsednika.php](http://www.talum.si/si/onas/nagovor_predsednika.php)

<sup>370</sup> Koselj.

<sup>371</sup> France Ivanšek (ur.): Referati članov arhitektno sekcije Društva inženirjev in tehnikov LRS na 1. Posvetovanju arhitektov FLRJ v Dubrovniku 23.-25.XI.1950. Published by Arhitekturna sekcija inženirjev in tehnikov LR Slovenija, Ljubljana 1950.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 11.



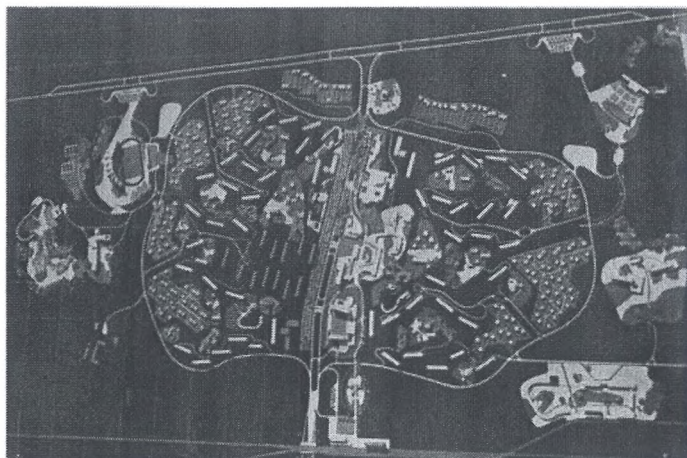
building big new towns, was the effective use of technology for decentralization and the allocation of the population along the main transport connections. He especially concentrated on Ljubljana and Kranj, as well as Strnišče: "The idea of a new town with 10,000 inhabitants is at first glance indeed more convenient, but its realization is more difficult and expensive. A possible solution would be decentralization and a railway connection between Strnišče and Ptuj. Concern for the housing of the population would in that way become instead of a State, a local and individual concern. ... Too much attention and work has been spent on the apparent necessity of an apartment block, and not enough on individual houses, in combination with efficient transport technology."<sup>374</sup>

Between 1947 and 1954, 14 blocks and 20 four-apartment buildings were built for about 1,000 employees of the factory in Strnišče.<sup>375</sup> In April 1953, less than two weeks after the death of Boris Kidrič (1912-1953), Miha Marinko, the first post-war President of the Slovenian Government, renamed the settlement as Kidričevo. He was one of the creators of a planned economy based on the Soviet model and, until his death, Federal Minister for Industry. He was President of the Slovenian government (1946 to 1953) and President of the CPS (1948 to 1966).

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>375</sup> Tiha smrt.



Edvard Ravnikar and Stanko Kristl:  
Model of new city Strnišče-Kidričevo, 1950

Fig. 2.46. Edvard Ravnikar and Stanko Kristl, Model of the new town of Strnišče, 1950 (Unrealized)



Fig. 2.47. Postcard of Kidričevo (1962)



## **In Search of a Different Way**

### *Planning a Mining Colony*

The first two post-war Directors of the Velenje Coal Mine were Franc Kenda (1902-1971) and Jože Gostiša (1907-1964), both born in the traditional mining town of Idria in western Slovenia. Unlike their forerunners, who had earlier studied mining in Příbram in Bohemia and in Leoben in Upper Styria, they were the first generation of students at the Department of Mining at the newly established University of Ljubljana. The department was part of the Technical Faculty, where architecture was also studied. After his graduation in 1926, Kenda was employed at the Velenje Coal Mine where, just before the beginning of the war, he also served as its Director and during the war as Plant Manager. Gostiša, on the other hand, spent one year in France, where he became familiar with the modern methods of excavation of thick coal layers. During the war he was employed at the iron ore mines in Upper Styrian Eisenerz, where he became familiar with the construction of mine buildings and the equipment of large shafts. In June 1945, he took up the position as Plant Manager at the Velenje Coal Mine, while Kenda again became Company Director.

In February 1947, Kenda was sent to Hungary as a member of the Yugoslavian Reparations Commission. Later, in 1949, he moved to Ljubljana, where he worked at the Directorate for Coal. From here he called for Gostiša in Velenje to work with him at the

Directorate.<sup>376</sup> In July 1946, when both were still in Velenje, the Velenje Coal Mine Company had requested permission for building a housing colony, since the miners from France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, who were invited to return back home, had found living conditions in Velenje appallingly bad, as they were accommodated in barracks. The so-called 'temporary buildings' (*provizoriji*) were financed mostly by the Coal Mine Company, while in 1948 nine barracks were financed by the Federal Ministry.

My interviewee from Velenje, a former worker in the laundry, used to live in the provisory, before her family moved to a family house. She has very pleasant memories of life in the provisories: "*It was a feeling of coziness; everything was low, we had a garden. Even this was much better than the place from where we had come.*"<sup>377</sup> Although those buildings were meant to be only temporary, they served as accommodation until the mid-1980s.<sup>378</sup> According to the plans of the Republican Design Institute Ljubljana (*Projektivni zavod*) and partly also the Federal Institute for Design (*Zavod za projektiranje*) in Belgrade, new typified apartment buildings were constructed, with 18, 16, 14, 10, 6, 5 and 4 apartments in each building.<sup>379</sup> In 1950, at the meeting of Yugoslavian architects in Dubrovnik, Danilo Fürst discussed the 1949 plan for the anticipated building of temporary apartments. He pointed out that those already built in

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<sup>376</sup> Seher, 401, 417.

<sup>377</sup> Interview with Zofka Seme, January 2009.

<sup>378</sup> This is very well documented in a film by Milan Marič: *Na robu* (On the Edge). Kino klub Gorenje, Titovo Velenje.

<sup>379</sup> Damijan Kljajič, Velenje, razprave o zgodovini mesta in okolice. Mestna občina Velenje, 1999, 378-379.



Velenje, were four two-room apartments, with a kitchen, 30-cm thick outer walls, a small basement, a flush toilet, but without a bathroom.<sup>380</sup>

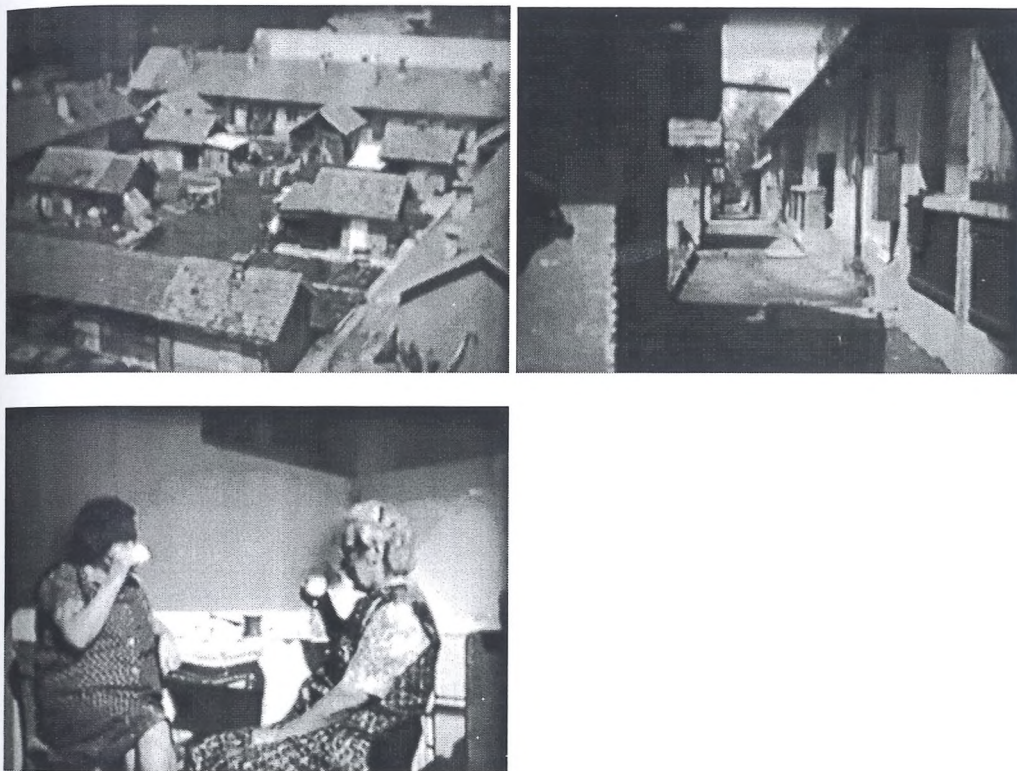


Fig. 2.48.-2.50. The cozy environment of the temporary buildings (provizoriji) in Velenje (mid-1980s).

In May 1947, *Projektivni zavod Ljubljana* proposed a regulatory plan for Velenje, drawn up by Plečnik student, Marjan Šorli. In the office of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, a special survey was undertaken among the leading local representatives, before the

<sup>380</sup> France Ivanšek (ed.): *Problemi arhitekture in urbanizma LRS. Referati članov arhitekturne sekcije Društva inženirjev in tehnikov LRS na 1. Posvetovanju arhitektov FLRJ v Dubrovniku 23.-25.XI. 1950*, Ljubljana 1950, 46.

Republican Ministry for Building approved the plan.<sup>381</sup> According to the local history of Pesje, inhabitants of Pesje earnestly fought for Pesje as the Valley's old mining settlement, to become the center. But the plan provided for the regulation of a settlement for the new-comer miners between Pesje and Velenje. Three settlements with a communal new center were planned. The center comprised apartment buildings and dormitories, and a settlement of family houses situated in a park, close to the main shaft.<sup>382</sup> The land needed for the construction of the new settlement was given by the Nationalization Act to the Velenje Town's People Committee (KLO), the Velenje Coal Mine Company and the Power Station. I am not aware of the reason why Šorli's plan of 1947 was not implemented.

The next plan conceived in March 1948, by the architect Viljem Strmecki (1914 - ), also from the *Projektivni zavod*, partly fulfilled the wishes of the Pesje inhabitants. Architect Strmecki was born in Malfacone (Trzič) in Italy. In 1939 he graduated in Ljubljana as a student of Vurnik. During the war he worked on the liberated territory in the section for construction. At the end of the war, he became the Head for Slovenian Littoral and later Head Assistant for Zone B. After the war, he first worked at the *Projektivni zavod* and later at the *Republican Secretariat for Urbanism*. In the 1950s, he designed urban plans for the Selška Valley, Brežice, Celje, Idrija, Ankaran, Litija, and as mentioned before, Nova Gorica.<sup>383</sup> Strmecki was a true Vurnik student. For example, at the Yugoslavian

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<sup>381</sup> AS, fond 233: Ministrstvo za gradnje LRS 1945-51, t.e. 39.

<sup>382</sup> [www.Pesje](http://www.Pesje).

AS, fond 233: Ministrstvo za gradnje LRS 1945-51, t.e. 39.

<sup>383</sup> Mušič Marjan. Slovenski biografski leksikon. <http://nl.ijs.si/fedora/get/sbl:3313/VIEW/>

competition for a 'typified row house' (*tipizirana vrstna hiša*) in 1948, he received the 1st prize.<sup>384</sup>

The houses planned by Strmecki for Velenje miners were also a great example of Functionalism. Living spaces were South-facing, whereas additional facilities and all the stairways faced North. The shape of the houses was very close to the common notions of miners, such as traditional gable roofs, instead of flat, modern ones. The apartments offered all the possible conveniences of the time and had basements, laundries, and an abundance of greenery around the building.<sup>385</sup> Strmecki planned two centers for Velenje: the first was Novo Velenje (*New Velenje*), East of the old shaft and the second was Novi center (*New Center*), between the new shaft and Pesje. New apartment blocks, family houses, shops, schools, a hotel, clinic, infrastructure for sport, culture, and administration were planned for both centers. For the next few years, approximately until 1955, the plans for New Velenje started to be realized. After about 1953, however, the plans began to change again.

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Nande Korpnik: Pripoved Velenja, 7-8. In: Arhitekturna delavnica Velenje 2000, Velenje 2000.





Fig. 2.51. Viljem Strmecki, the plan for Novo Velenje (20.3.1948).



Fig. 2.52. Novo Velenje in approx. the early 1950s. On the left is Velenje Castle, below are the villages of Velenje and Stara vas.





Fig. 2.53. Carnival in the main, Kidričeva Street in Novo Velenje.



Fig. 2.54. Janez Trenz, Tabor Store on the ground floor of an apartment block in Kidričeva Street in Novo Velenje (1953)

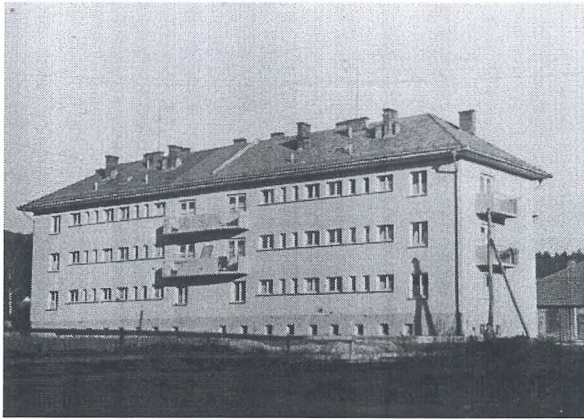


Fig. 2.55.-2.56. Different types of apartment buildings in Novo Velenje.

### *Turning Points*

The end of Soviet influence in Yugoslavia caused the second purge within the CPY and of the leading workers in the companies. Real and imaginary sympathizers of the Soviet Union and anti-Titoists were removed. From the second half of 1948, special commissions checked on the organization and personnel in companies. Local committees



started to keep accurate records on the cadres and to send theirs on for further training.<sup>387</sup>

In mid-1949, after Director Gostiša joined Kenda at the Directorate for Coal in Ljubljana, the Velenje Coal Mine experienced an episode of two quick change-overs of Director.

In the next year and a half, two Directors, Edo Štern and Franc Hvale, were sent to the company. They both came from traditional mining areas, Zagorje and Trbovlje. During the war they joined the partisans, where Štern served as a radiotelegraph operator and Hvale as a member of the National Security Army (*Vojska državne varnosti*) brigade. In 1946 they both finished their Secondary Technical School education in Ljubljana.<sup>388</sup>

When a delegation from the Central Committee visited the Valley, work at the coal mine was not described in a positive light.<sup>389</sup> A few months later, the Regional Committee

could not confirm any progress: *"The administration is lukewarm, irresponsible, and indulgent, mainly uneducated half-proletarian, apolitical and with no interest in increasing production. There is no discipline and no trust among Party members.*

*Director, comrade Edo Štern, finds the Party as an appendix of the management and has a very careless attitude towards the Party and the company. He, as well as the whole management, do not attend the meetings or voluntary work on Sundays. He is not capable of increasing and improving the work at the Coal Mine Company".*<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>387</sup> ZAC, 432, KLO Velenje, 1946-1952, 6.3.1950: the KLO secretary was sent to political school for four months.

<sup>388</sup> Seher, 419, 420.

<sup>389</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508, Poročilo o delu komisije CK ZKS v okraju Šoštanj 29.10.1949

<sup>390</sup> AS, 1589/III CK ZKS t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508 Okrajni komite KPS Šoštanj, 21.1.1950, Zapisnik o delu komisije na RLV

The Directorate for Coal in Ljubljana also experienced personnel changes in 1949/1950. Both post-war Directors of the Velenje Coal Mine became engineers at the Directorate. Together with a new Director, France Popit-Jokl, and a new Deputy Director, Nestl Žgank, the Directorate initiated a thorough reform of personnel management of the Slovenian mines. A special commission, led by Žgank, started to visit Slovenian mines in order to find out why the production of coal was not increasing. According to Popit and Žgank, the reason was not a lack of miners, as was claimed by the engineers (among them Kenda and Gostiša), but problems in the company organization and management.<sup>391</sup>

The Republican Central Committee, together with Popit, decided to send Žgank as a new Director to the Velenje Coal Mine to improve conditions in the mine and increase production, a position which Žgank at first refused. Why did the Party leaders decide to send Žgank to the province to take over a problematic company? In April 1950, former Director of the Velenje Coal Mine and member of the Gostiša Directorate, blamed Žgank as Deputy Director for being too authoritarian at Party meetings, where no one dared to express a criticism or to criticize the immoral behavior of the leaders.<sup>392</sup> In a similar period, an undated, anonymous letter was addressed to the Central Committees in Ljubljana and Belgrade, to the Office for State Security for Slovenia, the Ministry for Mining and to Lidija Šentjunc. The letter accused Žgank of procuring benefits, *Cominform* and careerism. It also touched on his personal life, that after he had divorced

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<sup>391</sup> Nestl Žgank: spomini »rdečega kralja«. Edited by Damijan Kljajič and Vlado Vrbič. Karantanija, 1999, 45.

<sup>392</sup> AS, 1589/III, Centralni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije, a.e.707-727, t.e.29. Problematika na ministrstvu za rudarstvo LRS, 15.4.1950.

his first wife, he married the niece of a former leader of the Conservatives in Celje.<sup>393</sup> As Žgank remembers, Stane Kavčič, Minister of the Slovenian Government, Lidija Šentjura, Member of the Slovenian government and France Popit-Jokl, who in June 1950, two months after Gostiša's accusations, became the new Director of the Directorate for Mining, persuaded Žgank that he had to agree, as that was his duty as an old Communist.

Nestl Žgank (1909-2004) was of rural origin, born in Prebold, not far from Velenje. Professionally he was a carpenter. According to Jurij Fikfak, Žgank belonged among the type of Director who joined the Communist Party already before the Second World War and who needed to pass a test to be recognized as the one to endeavor to fulfill the ideals of Socialism and to do everything to improve the lives of workers.<sup>394</sup> Finally, in December 1950, without any enthusiasm, Žgank came to Velenje as the Director of what he called the 'chicken mine'.<sup>395</sup>

During the first years of Žgank's directorship in Velenje, the construction of Novo Velenje continued on the right bank of the Paka River according to Strmečki's plan. By about 1953, the decision started to arise to move the center to the left bank and, instead of a colony-like town, to build a modern one. Among the reasons why and how this was possible, at least the following issues have to be taken into account: the imposition of self-management and the commune system, the State's openness to Western cultural

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid., t.e. 4517.

<sup>394</sup> Jurij Fikfak and Jože Prinčič (eds.): *Biti direktor v času socializma: med idejami in praksam*. Založba ZRC, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana 2008.

<sup>395</sup> Žgank, 49.



influences, the Republican decision to increase the production of lignite in Velenje, and the power accumulated in the hands of local authorities.

After its expulsion from *Cominform*, Yugoslavia found itself in a dire situation. As an enemy of both the Soviet Union and the United States, the State had few trading partners and even faced an approaching famine. Both Cold War superpowers also militarily threatened Yugoslavia. In response, the Yugoslav Party leaders began criticizing both the State Socialism of the Soviet Union and the State Capitalism of the United States as hopelessly bureaucratic and monopolistic. They started encouraging the withering away of the State, which would move the State closer to Communism.<sup>396</sup> Yugoslavia started to develop a new, Yugoslav model, which aimed to decentralize the State and the economy, create a worker-based economic democracy, move away from the State (or private) ownership of the means of production to a 'social' or 'general people's' ownership and expand the role of the market in the economy.<sup>397</sup>

The Yugoslav leadership sought to decentralize and dismantle the State by devolving State tasks to the Republic and enterprise level. Firstly, the individual Republics took over many administrative tasks from the central government, such as the supervision of electric power, mines, agriculture, forestry, light industry and public works.<sup>398</sup> Secondly, in place of the State intervention in enterprises, workers' councils were supposed to take control of the factories and realize economic democracy within the workplace, known as

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<sup>396</sup> Johanna Bockman: *Markets in the Name of Socialism. The Left-Wing Origins of Neoliberalism*. Stanford University Press, Stanford, California 2011, 78.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>398</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet: *The Three Yugoslavias. State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Washington D.C. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2006, 295.

self-management. In June 1950 the Federal Assembly passed the *Act on Self-management*. The Workers' Council (*delavski svet*), Governing Board (*upravni odbor*) and Company Director represented the structure of self-management. According to Režek, the power of the workers' councils was more or less only symbolic, since the Director and the State authority, who appointed the Director, wielded the real control over the company.<sup>399</sup>

A further step in decentralization was the new regulation of municipalities and districts. A gradual transfer of local authority from districts to municipalities, the so-called 'commune system' (*komunalni sistem*), started to be more intensively considered in 1953. According to Kardelj, only a territorially, economically, and socially transformed municipality could become a commune.<sup>400</sup> In July 1954, the prevailing opinion of Slovenian political leaders was to form communes in strong industrial and rural centers or a commune with an industrial center and rural surroundings.<sup>401</sup>

In June 1955, the Federal Assembly proposed an Act on the organization of municipalities and districts. The Act defined municipalities not just as political-territorial organizations, but as self-managed socio-economic communities. The Slovene Assembly adopted the law one month later. Decision-making on economic and social matters was formally transferred to the municipalities. These included the calling of elections for company Directors, public administration of communal companies, the statutes

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<sup>399</sup> Mateja Režek: *Med resničnostjo in iluzijo. Slovenska in jugoslovanska politika v desetletju po sporu z Informburojem (1948-1958)*. Modrijan, Ljubljana 2005, 31.

<sup>400</sup> Edvard Kardelj: *Nekaj nalog pri graditvi komunalnega sistema*. In: *Problemi naše socialistične graditve*, IV. knjiga. Cankarjeva založba, Ljubljana 1960, 160.

<sup>401</sup> Režek, 152, 153.



regulating individual firms, the right of dissolution of Workers' Councils and Company Boards, prescribing municipal tax etc.<sup>402</sup>

Wavering between centralization and decentralization, between more liberal and authoritarian orientation, was the story of the Yugoslav Communists since expulsion from the *Cominform*. Yugoslav Communists were searching for a new image and role of the Communist and the Party and soon trends for recentralization were again reinforced. Efforts of the Yugoslav leaders to invent an alternative to the Soviet system, to determine a new role for Yugoslavia in international politics, and to consolidate their power reached its peak in November 1952, at the Sixth Congress, where Yugoslav communists confirmed the break with Stalinism and entrenched self-managed Socialism. The decision was also reached to rename the CPY as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) (*Zveza komunistov Jugoslavije*, ZKJ).

However, not all Party leaders approved the decisions of the Sixth Congress, which called for democratization and liberalization. For example, the commissar of the CC, Aleksandar Ranković, Minister of Internal Affairs and one of the most powerful men in Yugoslavia, accepted democratization, as mentioned by another commissar, Milovan Đilas, not out of his beliefs, but "as a disciplined Party member".<sup>403</sup> Tito was also supposedly not pleased with the internal decentralization of the Party, but tended more towards a strong Federal leadership.<sup>404</sup> Very soon this was proven right, since in January

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<sup>402</sup> Josip Globevnik: *Komuna in problem njene graditve*. Uradni list LRS, Ljubljana 1955.

<sup>403</sup> Milovan Djilas: *Druženje s Titom*. Zaslou, Beograd 1990, 161.

<sup>404</sup> Režek, 53, taken from: Joze Smole: *Pripoved komunista novinarja (1945-1980)*. ČZP Enotnost Ljubljana 1994, 142.

1954, Tito accused Đilas of revisionism and attempts at the liquidation of the LCY. Đilas was an advocate of democratization and liberalization and expressed his opinions in a series of essays published in the newspaper, *Borba*. His removal from the Party, together with condemnation of 'anti-Socialist deviations' and 'anarcho-liberalism' at the Party plenums, deviated the Party far from its decisions taken at the Sixth Congress.

After the expulsion from *Cominform*, the CPY also abandoned Soviet-style cultural politics and soon opened up the State to Western cultural influences. This had positive effects for the image of Yugoslavia in the West, who sought the country's economic and political support. However, those cultural influences were problematic at home. After Stalin's death, Yugoslavia started to approach the Soviet Union and attempted to find a balance between East and West. As Dean Vuletić shows by the example of popular music, it was only from the late 1950s that Western-style popular music began to be appropriated by the Party.<sup>405</sup> The years between 1955 and 1961 are considered as the years of the 'Yugoslavian miracle', when the index of the industrial production was the highest in Europe.

By the mid-1950s, instead of heavy industry, the priority turned towards light industry and consumer goods. It was at the Seventh Congress of the CLY in 1958 in Ljubljana, where the decision was made to accelerate economic development and to increase household consumption.<sup>406</sup> In order to remain faithful to the Socialist path and

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<sup>405</sup> Dean Vuletić: *Yugoslav Communism and the Power of Popular Music*. Dissertation, Columbia University 2010.

<sup>406</sup> Igor Duda: *U potrazi za blagostanjem. O povijesti dokolice i potrošačkog društva u Hrvatskoj 1950-ih i 1960-ih*. Srednja Europa, Zagreb 2005, 44-46.



consolidate its legitimacy, the political leaders succeeded in offering attractive Western models, which were symbolic markers of openness and modernity, but emphasized and gave expression and form to the Yugoslavian own cultural and political identities. This, what Kulić describes as 'in-betweenness', was tolerated by the people and the Party and is what made Yugoslavian Socialism unique.<sup>407</sup>

The path of the Yugoslav leaders, torn between democratization and liberalization on the one hand and a more authoritarian policy on the other, affected the provincial realities in different ways. As will be shown by the example of Velenje, the more concentrated power given to the Company Directors in Velenje was used to create a specific environment and way of life of the 'Velenje commune'.

Three weeks after Žgank became Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company in December 1950, the Republican delegation from the CC visited the District Committee in Šoštanj. The delegation recognized that working discipline in the coal mine needed to improve and that miners should be allowed to build their own family houses near the mine.<sup>408</sup> This was Republic-wide orientation. In 1952, 4,522 family houses, almost all free-standing, had started to be built. The architects were not fond of building family houses because of their space consumption. In 1967, 67% of all the dwelling area was represented by free-standing family houses.<sup>409</sup> Architects offered other solutions.

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<sup>407</sup> Kulić (2009). Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, Wolfgang Thaler: Modernism In-Between. The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia. Jovis 2012.

<sup>408</sup> AS 1589/III CK ZKS t.e.47. 1949-1950 a.e.1508, 20.12.1950 Porocilo ekipe CK KPS na zaključni seji biroja OK KPS Sostanj

<sup>409</sup> Andrej Mercina: Arhitekt Ilija Arnautović. Socializem v slovenski arhitekturi. Ljubljana 2006, 12.

In 1952, the main Slovenian architectural journal, *Arhitekt*, published an article, *Hiša na Ježici* (*House in Ježica*), planned by architects Edo Mihevc.<sup>410</sup> This was a ground-floor family house with a garden, very convenient for a housewife, just like "the old homes in the countryside".<sup>411</sup> The article compared old farmhouses with American family houses, where the household center serves to relieve the housewife. In Velenje, individual family houses were foreseen already in the first post-war urban plan of 1947. Later the miners were encouraged to build their own family houses, since this was one of the solutions of dealing with the enormous lack of accommodation facilities. However, the miners had to ensure that they could provide sufficient building materials as well a workforce. Usually their family members or friends helped them to build their houses after working their shifts in the mine.

From the story of Ivan Srebotnik, a miner from Velenje, with a family of five, we learn that at first he had to buy some land from his future neighbors, then he ordered a design for the house, which had to be approved by a commission in Maribor. Then a local commission did an on-site inspection of the terrain. Before obtaining the building permission, he had to ensure that the house would have an indoor, tidy toilet and, if possible, electrical lighting.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> *Arhitekt* 2, 1952, 14.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> ZAC 432, KLO Velenje, 1946-1952, Report from 31.7.1950.



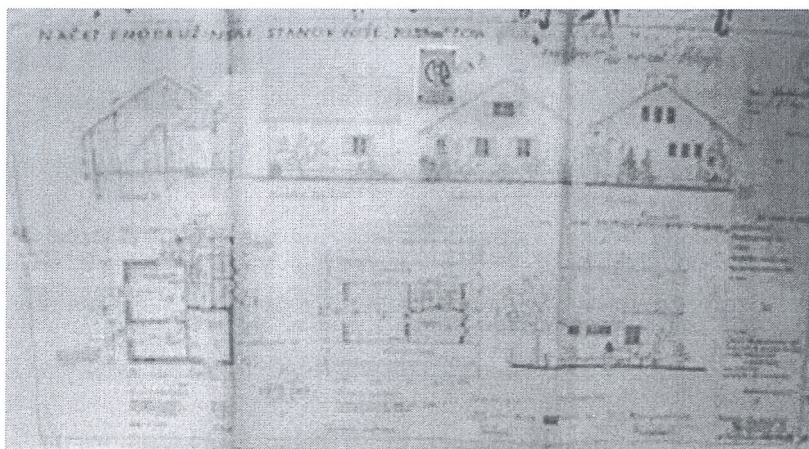


Fig. 2.57. Design for a family house for Stane Lovše from Velenje (70.25m<sup>2</sup>). The plan was drawn up by architect Stane Lovše, Maribor 1949.

Building family houses was not only limited to individual decisions. In 1951, the Velenje Town Committee ordered a plan at the *Institute for Urban and Communal Technics* (*Zavod za urbanizem in komunalno tehniko*) for a settlement of individual houses, with a children's playground and shops. The Institute provided 49 houses, but it soon transpired that more people were interested.<sup>413</sup> The settlement was called *Jezero (Lake)*, since there was a lake nearby, which had come into existence due to the sinking of the mine. Mostly high-ranking members of the Coal Mine Company's administration moved to the settlement, including Director Žgank, whereby the settlement was considered as a settlement for the upper class.<sup>414</sup>

<sup>413</sup> ZAC; fond 432: KLO Velenje 1946-52, t.e. 2.

<sup>414</sup> Interviews with town inhabitants.

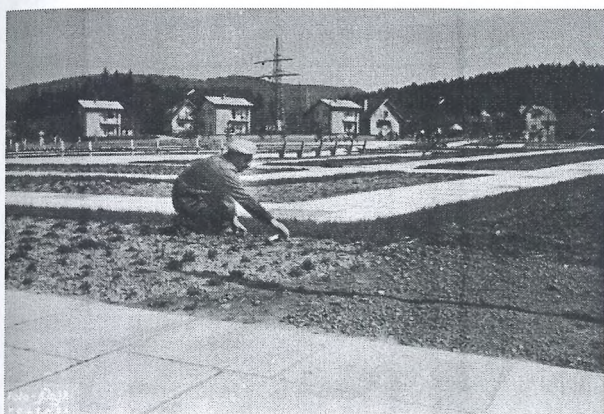


Fig. 2.58. Family houses in the 'Jezero' settlement.

Fif. 2.59. People's Park with the 'Jezero' settlement in the background. The gardener is probably the Austrian, Paul Filipisky.

The aforementioned settlement of provisories began across the big lawn from the *Jezero* settlement, where within a few years the large *Sončni park* (*Sunny Park*) would be established, and further on from there, *Novo Velenje*. In 1953, *Novo Velenje* received the new Miha Pintar-Toledo Primary School, named after the soldier in the Spanish Civil War and partisan commander, killed near Velenje. This school was planned as a pavilion type, which was a Western style of school architecture and at the time still very rare in Slovenia.



It was only a year later that the *Arhitekt* dedicated an article to schools, in which some of the leading Slovenian architects, like Ravnikar, Fürst and Gaspari, together with medical doctors and teachers, discussed what a new, modern school should look like. Examples in particular from Switzerland and the USA recommended a ground-floor school, in contact with Nature and with an abundance of light.<sup>415</sup> The school in Velenje was planned by architect Honjec from the Projektivni biro in Celje. The Municipality of Velenje obtained a loan for the building of the school, but substantial assistance was provided by shock workers from Velenje and from the coal mine, youth brigades (the one from Velenje was named Janko Ulrih, after a pre-war Communist and partisan from Pesje), and financial resources provided by the Coal Mine Company.<sup>416</sup>



Fig. 2.60. Franc Hudobreznik, the Mayor of the Municipality of Velenje laying the foundation stone for the new Miha Pintar Toledo School (1953).

<sup>415</sup> *Arhitekt* 12/13 1954, Od stare k novi soli. Referati in materiali s posvetovanja o gradnji sodobne sole. Ljubljana 1954.

<sup>416</sup> Žgank, 102.



Fig. 2.61. Miha Pinter Toledo Primary School, Projektivni atelje Celje, Arh. Honjec (2008).

In 1952, Žgank, the Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, saw tourism as the '*industry of the future*' and wanted to organize the lake surroundings to provide better conditions for the miners living in the colony, where they could spend their free-time away from the mine and, at the same time, welcome miners and their families from other mines.<sup>417</sup> Volunteers laid out the area around the lake and built the hotel, the *Jezero* (Lake) restaurant, a village of holiday cottages, an open-air summer cinema, paths around the lake and a lakeside stadium. The Austrian gardener, Paul Filipsky also designed a mini-golf course. The restaurant was designed by architect, Oton Gaspari, who was later the architect of the House of Culture in the new center. The Coal Mine Company could only provide wooden planks as building material, since some barracks were being torn down. For this reason, the architect designed a plan for a wooden restaurant. The lake

<sup>417</sup> Velenjski rudar, 10. June 1953, 1.



became quite a popular tourist destination and soon the local newspaper published an article entitled: *"Velenje has become a tourist town"*<sup>418</sup>.



Fig. 2.62. Oton Gaspari, Jezero Restaurant (about 1953).

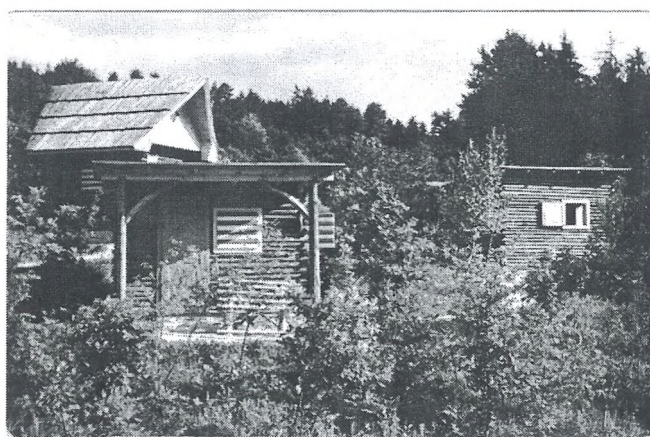


Fig. 2.63. Wooden bungalows beside Velenje Lake. Postcard sent to Maribor in 1958.

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 3. July 1953, 1.

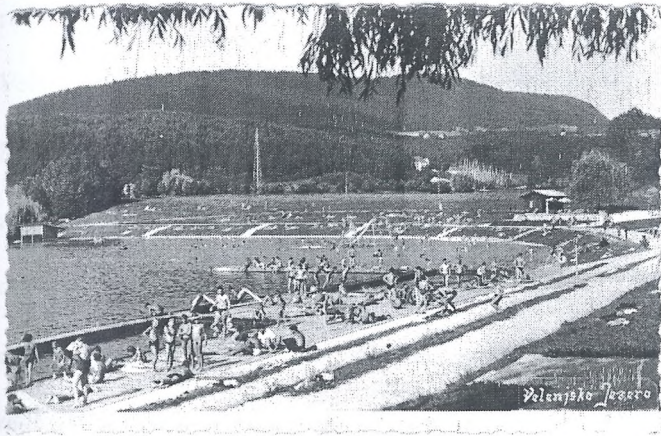


Fig. 2.64. Velenje Lake. Postcard sent to Kranj in 1964.

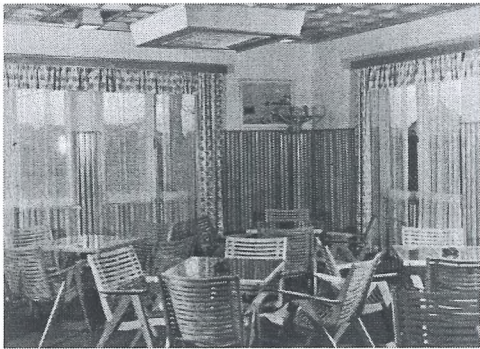


Fig. 2.65., 2.66. Interior of the Jezero Restaurant (about 1953).

*A Long Quest For a New Center*

At the end of 1950, Žgank began his 'punishment' as Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. In Velenje he presented himself as a disciplined, modest man, whose only concern was to increase production and to provide better conditions for the workers.



Indeed, as Director he started with the reorganization of the company, introduction of payment by effect (*plačevanje po učinku*), and improving workers' employment conditions, for example, by standardizing the toilets and washrooms at the shaft. He also initiated and regularly participated in voluntary shock-work schemes, by which, together with other miners, he improved and embellished the coal mine surroundings. But this was not just around the coal mine. Žgank also became the President of the *Workers' Educational Union Svoboda (Freedom)*, which was an umbrella organization for a Music School, Cinema, Library, Choir, Theatre and Workers' University. Also here he initiated and participated in voluntary shock-work schemes, such as the one to organize the lake surroundings.

In the *Velenjski Rudar (Velenje's Miner)* company newspaper, articles started to be published on improvements at the Company and crediting Žgank for it. An article from February 1953, entitled "*Recognition of a Man*" with Žgank's photo beside it, praised Žgank for his "*persistence and consistency to raise productivity and enable the Company to move from last to first place.*"<sup>419</sup> After the introduction of self-management and the commune system, Žgank as Director was given greater power and decision-making competences. My interviewees all agreed that, after Žgank's arrival, Velenje underwent exponential development, but also that he managed the Company with a firm hand and knew how to maintain discipline.

The attitudes of two high-ranking Slovenian leaders in regard to Velenje are in favor of the argument that the leaders in Ljubljana did not have great expectations for Žgank to

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<sup>419</sup> Velenjski rudar, 15.2.1953, 3.

radically improve conditions and production in Velenje, but offered him a Directorship in Velenje as they wanted to get rid of him at the Directorate for Mining. Ivan Maček—Matija, post-war Minister for Construction and responsible for building Nova Gorica and, after 1953, President of the Economy Committee (*Odbor za gospodarstvo*) and Member of the Federal Executive Board thought that building "*a new, modern town for miners is out of the question*". According to Žgank, he let him know, that "*no one needs your coal and that Velenje miners can, like those in Zasavje and other mining towns, live in temporary arrangements (provizoriji) and colonies, which are the most suitable for them*."<sup>420</sup> The second opponent was Miha Marinko, long-time member of the CC CPY and CC LCY and Secretary of the CC CPY and LCY. Marinko was born near Trbovlje and was regarded as an ally of the traditional mines in Zasavje (Trbovlje, Hrastnik, Zagorje ob Savi). According to Žgank again, he drove around Velenje incognito at night to see what was being built in Velenje, for example, the tourist facilities around the lake.<sup>421</sup>

The increased production enabled the Velenje Coal Mine Company to invest and direct the money into the construction of a new town. This made the authorities in Zasavje jealous, since despite a long mining tradition, they could not increase production or substantially improve miners' working and living conditions. Žgank therefore was fighting many battles: with his beliefs as a Communist, to prove that he was right, or perhaps to gain revenge on the Republican leaders in Ljubljana, to compete with traditional mines in Zasavje and to prove that he was not a Director of a backward

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<sup>420</sup> Žgank, 200.

<sup>421</sup> Žgank, 204.



provincial mining company. Žgank also traveled a lot on business and was able to compare the working and living conditions of miners, especially in West Germany and Austria.

During one of his trips to West Germany, he was impressed by the settlement of the Siemens Company, admiring its building arrangement, its square-shaped market, and its abundance of green areas. On another business trip to Zeltweg in Austria, he admired a park around the hotel where he was staying. He asked the gardener of the park, Paul Filipsky from Graz, to come to Velenje.<sup>422</sup> Filipsky did come, many times as Žgank's family guest, and at first did some landscaping around Velenje Lake.

In 1954, the Republican Economic Committee planed an increase in the production of lignite at the Velenje Coal Mine from one to three million tons per year.<sup>423</sup> On the other hand, Žgank noted that the plans for the increase of lignite extraction to more than three million tons were made in Belgrade: *"Republican and Federal leaders wanted tons of coal, but no one thought under what conditions the miners in Velenje were living. For them it was all the same whether they were living in provisories, which reminded me of henhouses. Workers in my company expected to have better apartments, with running water, sewerage, heating systems, electricity and telephone connections".*<sup>424</sup>

Among the few who supported the idea to provide better living facilities in Velenje was Leskošek-Luka, at the time a member of the Federal Executive Committee and Žgank's

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<sup>422</sup> Žgank, 130-132.

<sup>423</sup> Seher, 480.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 97, 102, 107, 128.

comrade from partisan times.<sup>425</sup> The arrival of Nestl Žgank as Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company is usually seen as a turning point in Velenje's development. With the dictum: "*I did not fight with the partisans so that new houses could be built that look exactly like the old ones,*" he decisively and authoritatively rejected architect Strmecki's design concept. The buildings and the whole town of Novo Velenje that were being built after 1948 according to Strmecki's plan, although with all modern conveniences of the time, reminded Žgank of traditional miners' colonies, which he was striving to improve. In addition, in comparison with miners' towns in the West, Novo Velenje was less attractive.

At the end of 1954, the Velenje Coal Mine Company ordered a new plan at the *Slovenija projekt* in Ljubljana. In 1946, the Republican Ministry for Construction (*Ministrstvo za gradnje LRS*) established *Projektivni zavod* (*Design Company*), where Strmecki drew up the first plans for a new Velenje. In 1949, the company did some internal reorganization and renamed the company as the *Slovenija projekt*. Former Plečnik student, Janez Trenz, was the chief architect.<sup>426</sup> Trenz (1914-2005) had studied architecture in Ljubljana and in 1938 graduated as a student of Plečnik. Although he did not study at Le Corbusier, as did Ravnikar, his colleague a few years senior, he was well aware of Le Corbusier's ideas.<sup>427</sup>

Trenz was not new to the Šaleška Valley. As a new employee at the *Slovenija projekt*, he first came to Velenje in 1948 and officially worked for the Municipality of Šoštanj. First

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 196, 197.

<sup>426</sup> Bela Sever: *Slovenija Projekt*, Enciklopedija Slovenije, XV, Ljubljana 1998, 381.

<sup>427</sup> Ana Kladnik: Vse je pogojeno s pokrajino, tu pa so majhni grički: intervju z arhitektom Janezom Trenzem. *Naš čas*, 21. April 2005, 16.





he designed buildings for the Coal Mining Company, such entrance tower to the shaft.<sup>428</sup> Later he also made plans for the new headquarters for the Coal Mining Company in Šoštanj (later the Town Hall of Šoštanj). According to architect, Nande Korpnik, this plan was very radical and it should also be considered that the original idea was for Šoštanj, as the 'old capital', to remain the center of the Valley.<sup>429</sup> In the new plan of December 1954, the old idea of the construction in Pesje was abandoned, but the center was still predicted on the right bank, in Novo Velenje.

In March 1955, the plan was discussed in Šoštanj, where the town authorities did not approve of the new 'megalomaniac plan' that had been provided for Velenje.<sup>430</sup> Leskošek-Luka attended the meeting and supported the plans of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. Another discussion was held on the regional level, at the Celje District People's Committee (*Okrajni ljudski odbor, OLO*), also in the presence of Leskošek-Luka, who suggested moving the new economic and cultural center for 30,000 people East of the current Novo Velenje, where there were no layers of lignite. In the report we find a note that the Minister had already ordered a new General Urban Plan at the Republican Council for Urban Planning (*Svet za urbanizem LRS*). It was also suggested that the *Municipal People's Committee (Občinski ljudski odbor, ObLO)* Šoštanj order a new plan, despite the fact that the Coal Mine Company would remain the main investor in the new town.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid.

<sup>429</sup> Correspondence with Nande Korpnik 2008-2010.

<sup>430</sup> Seher, 483.

<sup>431</sup> ZAC; fond 180: ObLO Šoštanj-Velenje, t.e. 278.

In May 1956, at the Celje OLO, the Committee for Urbanism, in the presence of Leskošek-Luka, decided to approve the construction on the left bank. However, it was necessary to regulate the river, since the land was too swampy to build on. In July 1956, a new meeting was held at the Coal Mine Company in Velenje in the presence of Žgank, Leskošek-Luka, Trenz, Pogačnik, Jerman (OLO Celje), where a decision was reached for the *Slovenija projekt* to prepare a new General Plan<sup>432</sup> and *Projektivni atelje* a new Regional plan for the Šaleška Valley.<sup>433</sup>

The new General Plan for Velenje was designed by architect Trenz in September 1956 and later approved by the Municipality of Šoštanj. However, it was never realized. The plan predicted a road running through the middle of the center, which the Coal Mine Company Director Žgank did not like, since he wanted a center without any traffic.<sup>434</sup> Žgank asked his family friend, Austrian gardener Filipsky, to design a new plan for the Velenje town center, just like the one he had seen in West Germany. According to Žgank, Trenz and Pogačnik later processed Filipsky's plan for the center with a big main square instead of a road in the center. Since Žgank was not sure if anyone would try to stop the building of the center according to this unapproved plan, he ordered the terrain to be prepared and the concrete foundations to be poured as soon as possible, that was 'overnight.'<sup>435</sup>

The two most dominant buildings planned and later built on the square were the

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<sup>432</sup> ZAC; fond 180: ObLO Šoštanj-Velenje, t.e. 22.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Seher, 483.

<sup>435</sup> Žgank, 133.



Administration building of the Velenje Coal Mine Company and, on the opposite side, the House of Culture. The square represented a concentration of modern architecture. The buildings of the Town Hall and the red building of the People's University were situated on a side of the big square. The Town Hall in particular was the most consistent derivation of Le Corbusier's expression, with the building floating freely on pillars.

Before waitress Sonja Šafar from Lower Carniola was invited to come to Velenje, she had worked in the best hotels in Ljubljana. When she arrived in Velenje, she was 26 years old, married with two children. Her husband immediately got a job at the RLV and the family received an apartment in the *Hartman* block (named after the architect who designed it), next to the newly built Workers' Club on one side of the main square. Ms. Šafar remembers how proud she was to have an apartment among doctors and engineers. When first arriving in Velenje she had met Ms. Lap in the old Velenje, beneath Velenje Castle and had felt quite disappointed that that was to be her future home. But then Ms. Lap took her to the main Tito's Square and she was fascinated: "*There was marble on the surface of the square. There was also marble on the facades. I was amazed at the wealth of this town.*"<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> Interview with Sonja Šafar, January 2009.

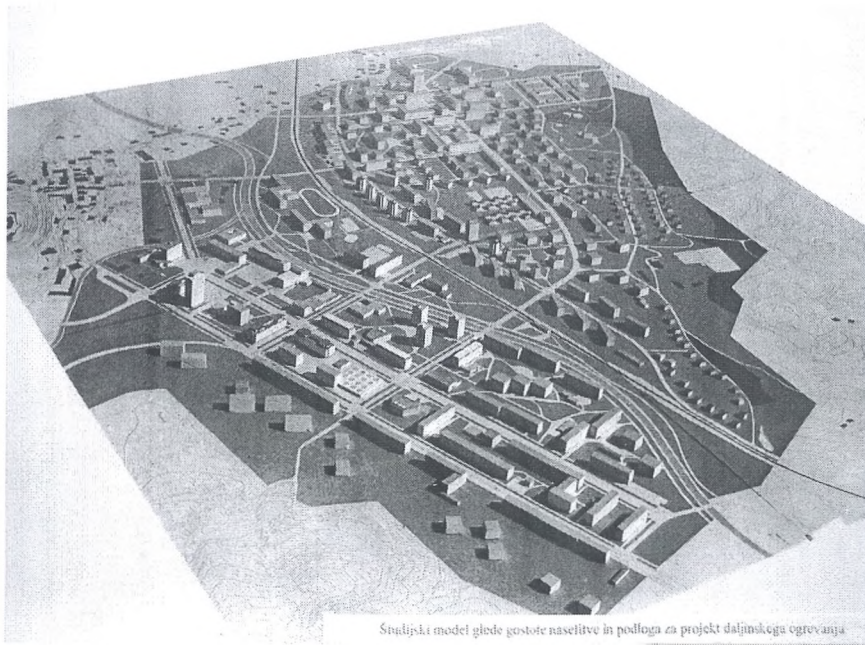


Fig. 2.67. Model presenting Strmečki's Novo Velenje on the right bank of the Paka River and Trenz's Velenje on the left bank.



Fig. 2.68. Ciril Pogačnik, Franc Šmid, Janez Trenz, Urban Plan for Velenje (1956-1959). Prešern Fund Award, 1962.





Fig. 2.69. Excursion of Partizan Association through Velenje's new center under construction. The photo shows buildings around the lower part of the main square. In the background, the Paka Hotel, to the left is the apartment block with, on the ground floor, the Velma Store (Velenjski magazine), the RLV skyscraper, Administration building of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. On the extreme left is an apartment block. The banner reads: Spoznavaj svojo domovino in še bolj jo boš ljubil. ('The more you know of your homeland, the more you love it').

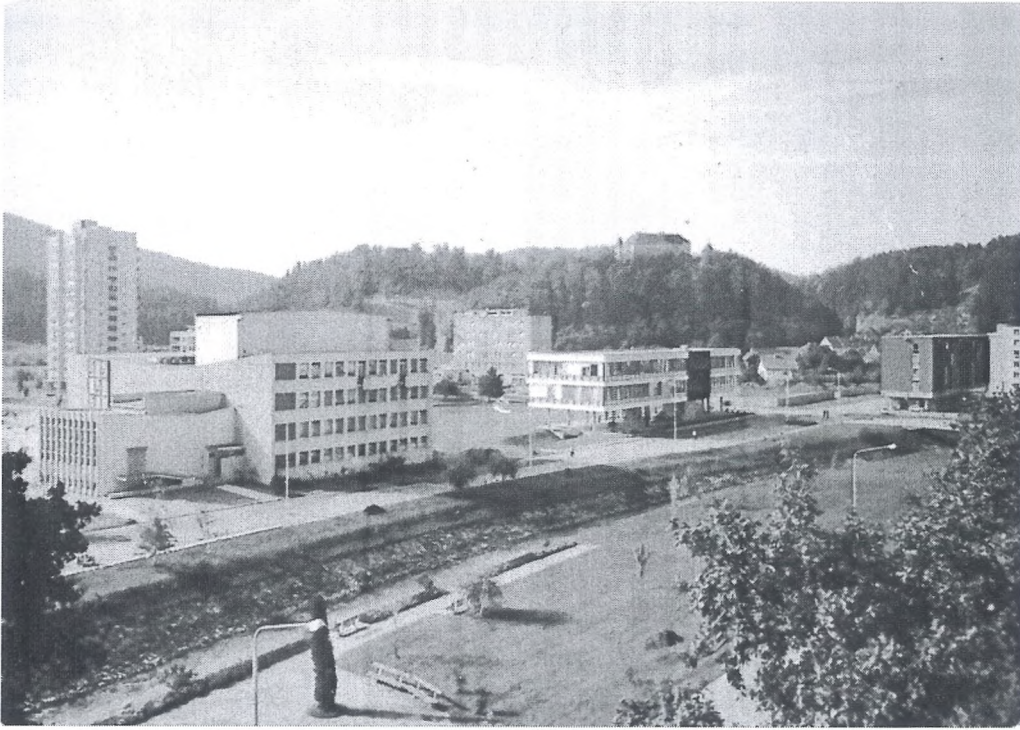


Fig. 2.70. View from the right side of the river bed to the new center of Velenje. In front, from left to right: the House of Culture, Town Hall, Post Office (red block). In the background, the skyscraper and hotel.



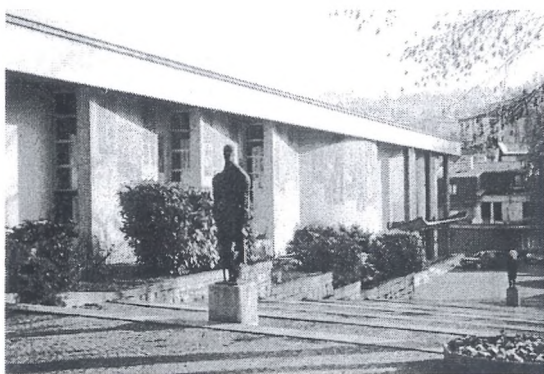


Fig. 2.71., 2.72. Oton Gaspari, Marko Zupančič, Workers' and Cultural House, Trbovlje (1952-1956).  
Emil Navinšek, Workers' and Cultural House, Zagorje (1957-1959).

It was only in 1960 that *Arhitekt*, the main architectural magazine in Slovenia, presented the developments in Velenje. The article written by Braco Mušič, however, did not concentrate solely on Velenje, but on social centers in Slovenia. The article stated that "*Velenje is a single example of a simultaneously developed settlement with a center obviously lacking the urban condensation and attractiveness*".<sup>437</sup> Articles in foreign architectural magazines were more lenient. In 1961, *Neue Heimat* from Hamburg credited Velenje for its abundance of greenery and exceptionalism, since "*Yugoslavia has not*

<sup>437</sup> Braco Mušič: Naši družbeni centri, *Arhitekt*, 1960, 6, 81.

always succeeded at the same time in taking all the municipal services to new settlements in operation, as was the case in Velenje".<sup>438</sup> Probably as a response to Mušič's article, Oton Gaspari, the creator of the House of Culture in Velenje, wrote an article for *Arhitekt* in 1962 solely about the social centers in Velenje, advocating the possible use of the House of Culture.<sup>439</sup> The new center in Velenje and its architecture received recognition at home in 1962, when architects Janez Trenz, Ciril Pogačnik and Franc Šmid received the Prešernova Prize (*Prešernova nagrada*), the most prestigious award for cultural developments in Slovenia in the past year, for their urban plan for Velenje.

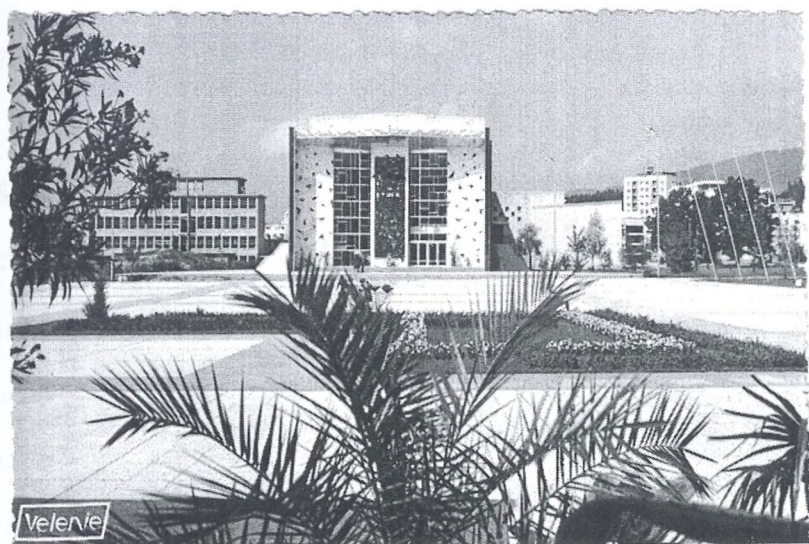


Fig. 2.73. Oton Gaspari, The House of Culture seen from the Coal Mine Company Headquarters (1959).

<sup>438</sup> Paul Göstl: Velenje, eine neue Stadt in Jugoslawien. In: Neue Heimat, Monatshefte für neuzeitlichen Wohnungsbau, Hamburg, 1, 1961, 40.

<sup>439</sup> Oton Gaspari: Družbeni center v Novem Velenju. *Arhitekt*, 1961, 3, 40-43.



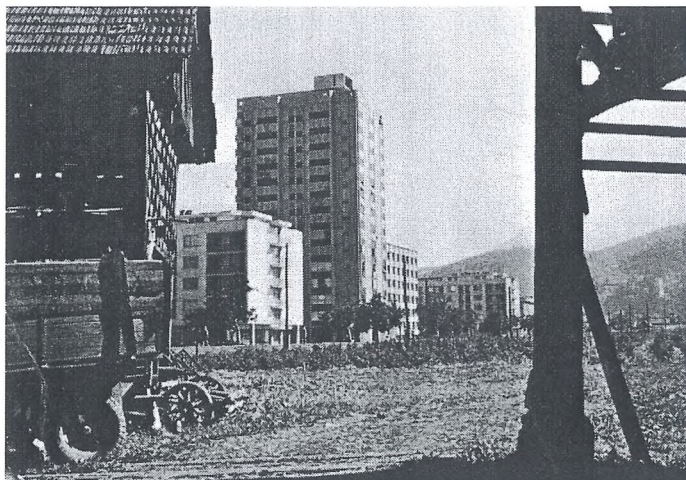


Fig. 2.74. Ilija Arnautović and Milan Mihelič, Skyscraper seen from Velenje village.

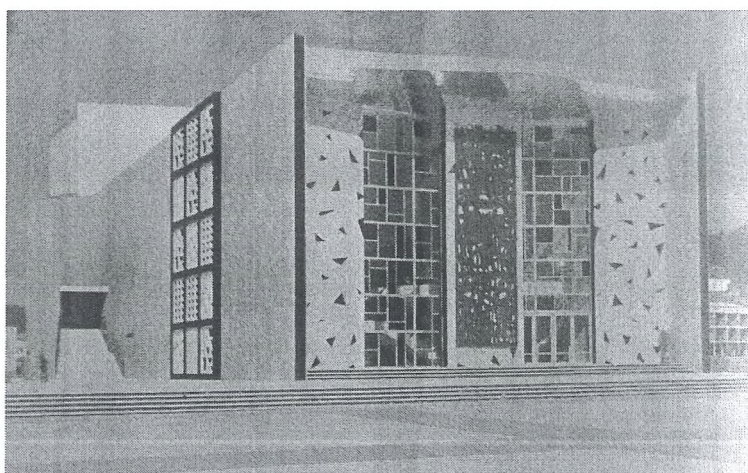


Fig. 2.75. Facade of the House of Culture, Velenje.

Fig. 2.76. Decoration on the facade the House of Culture Velenje, created by sculptor, Stojan Batič.

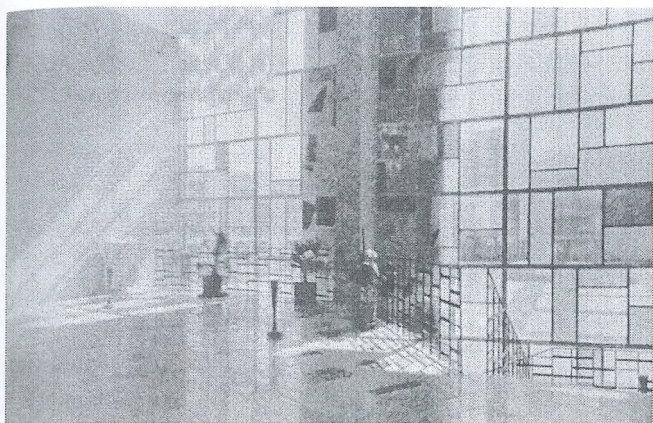


Fig. 2.77. Interior of the House of Culture, Velenje.

*Towards Post-Modernism, Prefabrication, and Self-Sufficiency*

Some of the first buildings built on Velenje's new main square already indicated the changes in architecture in the late 1950s. If the characteristics of Modernism in architecture are indicated by simplicity and clarity of form and the elimination of unnecessary details, as represented in the buildings of Trenz (the headquarters of the Coal Mine Company) and Aljančič (the Town Hall) on Velenje's main square, then Gaspari's House of Culture was already reaching towards post-Modernism. The entrance of the building is not accentuated, it feels like a stage with natural scenery. Also, if you look at the building from the side, the perspectives change.





Fig. 2.78. Stanko Kristl, Commercial-residential block (1960-1963). Awarded the Prešeren Fund prize in 1964.

According to Korpnik, the beginning of a new phase in the architectural development of Velenje is represented by the early 1960s' apartment building designed by Stanko Kristl, a young Ravnika student, who assisted his Professor in Kidričevo.<sup>440</sup> The design of the building has different concepts. The dwellings are grouped around three staircases. The design of the facades is diametrically different, with the rear façade being highly graphic. The abstract composition is composed of different-sized windows, vertical bands, bay windows and air vents.<sup>441</sup> When Leskošek-Luka saw Kristl's block for the first time, he turned angrily to Žgank saying: "*Nestl, what kind of apartment blocks are you constructing in Velenje? This looks like nothing at all!*" But Žgank replied: "*Comrade Luka, don't say that, because the creator of that block has just received the Prešernova Prize and those who awarded it to him certainly know what they are doing and what is*

<sup>440</sup> Interview with Nande Korpnik, 2008.

<sup>441</sup> <http://www.evidenca.org/?object=80>.

*beautiful!"* After that, according to Žgank, Leskošek-Luka did not say another word and never mentioned the apartment block again.<sup>442</sup>

The only 12-storey skyscraper in Velenje, as anticipated in Trenz's main urban plan as the town's western landmark, was designed by architects Ilija Arnautović (1924-2009) and Milan Mihelič (1925), both students at the Prague Technical faculty between 1945 and 1948. In the early 1950s, they both graduated in Ljubljana as students of Prof. Ravnikar but, as far as Arnautović was concerned, he tried to distance himself from Ravnikar's charismatic personality.<sup>443</sup> According to Aleš Vodopivec, Arnautović was an architect with a social mission, who used his technical knowledge to solve the problems of accommodation and living.<sup>444</sup> He sought the lowest price of apartment that would be accessible to the largest number of people.

In 1955 Arnautović and Mihelič designed the two- or three-roomed apartment skyscraper with a centrally situated sanitary core.<sup>445</sup> The new technical realization and innovations were recognized as a major achievement of Slovenian residential architecture and in 1958 shown at the *Family and Household* exhibition in Zagreb.<sup>446</sup> Those types of apartments were realized in Ljubljana and Velenje. In Velenje, one of the first residents of this block in 1961 was the Lap couple, originally from Kočevje, but who came to Velenje from Ljubljana. Their move was paid for by the RLV, since Director Žgank had invited Mr.

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<sup>442</sup> Žgank, 199.

<sup>443</sup> Mercina, 24.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>445</sup> By central sanitary knot is meant that all attachments and pipes from the kitchens, toilets, and bathrooms meet together in the central horizontal attachment in the building.

<sup>446</sup> Mercina, 140.



Lap to come to Velenje in the position of Director of the new hotel that was built two minutes away from his new home.

The Lap couple resided in a first-floor apartment. Later, it was suggested to the couple that they move into a family house, which they declined, since they felt very comfortable in the apartment.<sup>447</sup> The skyscraper, a symbols of progress, fired people's imagination. Before the summer school holidays in 1963, children from the Serbo-Croatian-speaking area visited Velenje. Their impressions were published in the Velenje local newspaper, where one child described how he had warned his friends on the bus: "*Look out carefully through the window; we are approaching little New York!*"<sup>448</sup>

The realizations of the first skyscrapers by Mihelič and Arnautović in Ljubljana and Velenje, Mihevc (the pre-war Communist professor at the Faculty for architecture) in Koper, represented the first steps towards the completely prefabricated construction and mass building of residential skyscrapers in Slovenia. Since its establishment in 1950, *Arhitekt* had mostly published architectural and construction development in Scandinavia (Sweden) and West Europe (West Germany). In 1960, however, an extensive article on prefabricated building in the Soviet Union was published. The author, Jože Uršič, described the visit by a Slovenian delegation of architects to Moscow and Leningrad, where they found "*despite some faults in quality, this kind of building very fascinating,*

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<sup>447</sup> Interview with Ms. and Mr. Lap, January and September 2008.

<sup>448</sup> »Pažljivo gledaj kroz prozor, sad dolazi onaj mali New York!« School Essays titled: *Our Town – our Mirrow*, Rudar, 22. June 1963, 3.

due its the scope and level of industrialization. In prefabricated construction about half of the works are transferred to the factory."<sup>449</sup>

Ideas of standardization , typification, and industrialization were set as the necessary methods for the realization of the First Five-Year Plan in 1947. The first examples were quite modest, such as the semi-prefabricated *Hitrogradnja* (rapid building) system designed by Danilo Fürst.<sup>450</sup> At the end of the 1950s, Croatian architects developed the *YU60* and *YU61* prefabricated systems for the *Jugomont* construction firm, while in Serbia, engineer Branko Žeželj from the *Institute for the Testing of Materials of Serbia* (*IMS*) developed a skeletal system, known as *IMS Žeželj*.<sup>451</sup>

However, in Yugoslavia there were never any standard apartment types devised to be built across the whole country. The reasons, according to the editors of *Modernism In-Between*, were political: "the lack of central power to impose one universal standard and the freedom of construction companies to act according to the requirements of the market".<sup>452</sup>

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<sup>449</sup> Joze Uršič: *Montažna gradnja stanovanj v ZSSR*. 1960, 6, 43.

<sup>450</sup> Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, Wolfgang Thaler: *Modernism In-Between. The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Jovis 2012, 175.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.*



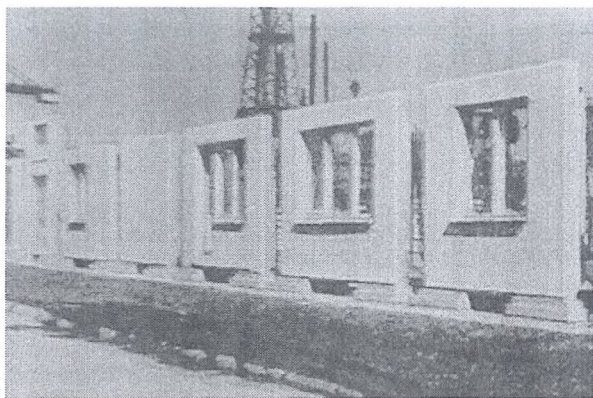


Fig. 2.79. Photo of the elements of the DSK 1 Collective Combine in Leningrad, published in *Arhitekt* 1960.

In the post-war period, most of the plans for industrial and housing facilities were designed in the design institutes in Ljubljana. Until 1960 it was already clear that the developmental plans of the Velenje Coal Mine Company would ascend to six million tons of lignite per year and therefore new infrastructure would be needed. Relations between Director Žgank and architect Trenz were tense. Firstly, the architect was not fond of the manner in which the Austrian landscape architect was involved in the design of the town center. In addition, Žgank wanted Trenz to move to Velenje, which Trenz refused to do. Trenz's final break with Velenje was when the decision was made to build the 'EFE', 14-story skyscraper in the center, which destroyed Trenz's idea of a center with a maximum of 12-story buildings and his idea, that: *"everything is conditioned by the landscape, and here [in the Šaleška Valley] are small hills"*<sup>453</sup>.

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<sup>453</sup> Kladnik: Vse je pogojeno.

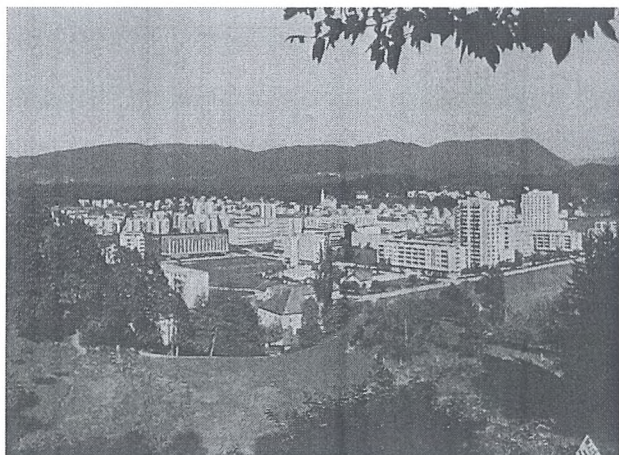


Fig. 2.80. 'EFE' skyscraper (1966).

Fig. 2.81. Velenje in 1966 with two skyscrapers in the center.

According to Trenz, the designer of the 'EFE' skyscraper was an architect from *Projektivni biro*, which was a design institute established by the Velenje Coal Mine in 1960.<sup>454</sup> Building materials were bricks made from fly ash—waste material<sup>455</sup> of the Coal Mine Company. In 1960, a factory for the production of bricks from fly ash was established in Šoštanju. The *Slovenian Construction Company (Slovensko gradbeno podjetje, SGP) Vegrad Velenje* was the pioneer in using this new material in Velenje and elsewhere in Slovenia and Croatia. In 1970, when Leskošek-Luka opened a new factory for brick production in Velenje, the local newspaper reported that, in 1961, 4.8 million bricks were produced, but in 1967 already 15.5 million. In 1961, 7.5 workers were

<sup>454</sup> Interview with Janez Trenz, 2004.

<sup>455</sup> Szuzsa Gille: *From the Cult of Waste to the Trash Heap of History: The Politics of Waste in Socialist and Postsocialist Hungary*.



needed to produce 1 million bricks and, in 1969, only 2.6 workers.<sup>456</sup> In 1963, *Projektivni biro* separated from the Coal Mine Company and operated as an individual, self-managed company,<sup>457</sup> beginning a new architectural period for Velenje.

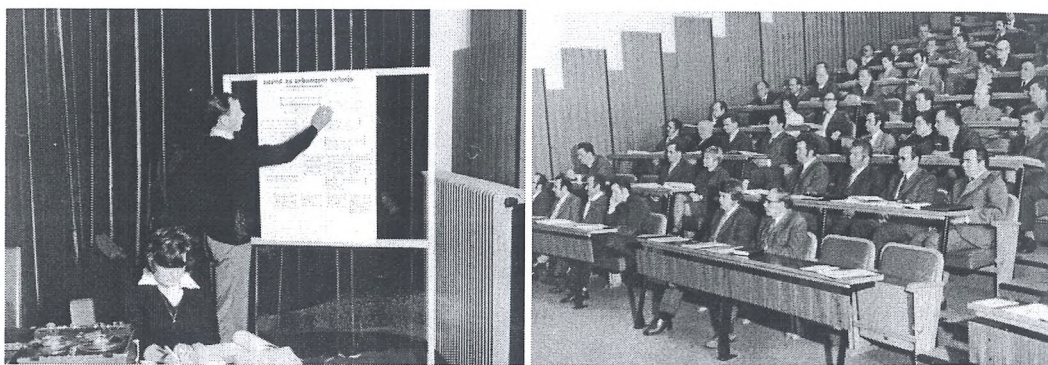


Fig. 2.82. Fig. 2.83. Representative of the Velenje Institute of Urban Planning (Zavod za urbanizem Velenje) at the Velenje Municipal Assembly.

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<sup>456</sup> Šaleški rudar: glasilo SZDL občine Velenje. 16.10.1970, 6, 20.

<sup>457</sup> Seher, 502.

### 3. BETWEEN FUTURE EUPHORIA AND LOST UTOPIA

Workers were of extreme importance for the legitimacy of communist regimes. In the words of Mark Pittaway, socialist society was "a society based on productive labor".<sup>458</sup> This chapter shows two modes of working methods, each prioritizing overtime work. The Czechoslovakian case presents miners—shock-workers, who competed with their co-workers in the company, as well as with the miners within the socialist world. The Yugoslavian case illustrates "voluntary" work, which entailed residents working after their regular working hours, free of charge, in order to improve their living environment. Both methods resulted in concrete privileges, such as receiving an apartment, which this chapter is mostly interested in.

In Czechoslovakia, attracting labor to the key sectors of the economy became one of the cornerstones of the housing policy in the 1950s. The problem was not only to convince workers to come and work in heavy industry. It was more important to keep them there. The problem of labor fluctuation was manifested most characteristically in the mining industry, where as little as 17% of new recruits remained in their mining jobs.<sup>459</sup> Housing, provided by the State, came to be considered an ideal tool to "convince" workers not to change their employment. As the Yugoslavian case shows, "voluntary shock-work" enabled workers to contribute to the building of a new town and new housing facilities for themselves. Besides the economic effects, this also contributed to

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<sup>458</sup> Pittaway (2004).

<sup>459</sup> Johan Jeroen De Deken: *Social Policy in Postwar Czechoslovakia. The Development of Old-Age Pensions and Housing Policies During the Period 1945-1989*. European University Institute, Florence 1994, 106.



greater cohesion within the community. In both cases, the keenest were the married, male shock-workers, who obtained privileges to obtain new apartments. As the chapter further illustrates by the example of apartment distribution, despite the formal existing equality between men and women, this was not always the case.

Development within the planned economy often led to disharmony between planners and contractors on the one side and inconvenience among users on the other. This chapter presents the changing nature of promises and expectations. Self-managed policy, on the other hand, enabled the local authorities a high level of, but not total, autonomy in decision-making,

### 3.1 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COMMAND ECONOMY

#### **Those who do not Work, will not Receive Apartments**

The new town of Havířov was originally planned for approximately 50,000 people. Later plans, after 1957, presumed to increase the estimated capacity by 1980 to 63,000 and even (unrealistically) to 122,000 inhabitants. The town obtained its demographic base from a large number of immigrants. In 1956, Havířov had 16,232 inhabitants. Between 1956 and 1965, on average 5,200 people migrated to Havířov, while on average 1,500 people migrated out of the town. Until 1965, therefore, the number of inhabitants in Havířov increased to 69,856.<sup>460</sup> Regarding ethnic composition, Czech dominated (84%), then Slovak (8,7%), while autochthonic Poles represented 5,7%.<sup>461</sup> The intense influx of immigrants was due to the working opportunities in the new town, especially in the Ostrava-Karviná Coal Mine Company (OKD) and in the construction industry. While, in 1956, Havířov had 6,104 apartments, by 1964 the number had increased to 17,245.<sup>462</sup> As this part of the chapter attempts to show, the extreme migration of a predominantly male workforce caused problems in the stabilization of the workforce, the provision of sufficient apartments, and the establishment of equal working and welfare conditions for women.

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<sup>460</sup> Radimír Prokop: Havířov - město pozoruhodného vývoje, Měst. NV Havířov 1966.

<sup>461</sup> Jílková, 3.1. Charakteristika období let 1956-1965 (pages are not numbered).

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.



### *Shock Workers, Drunks and Slackers?*

The stabilization of the workforce in Ostravsko was a process dating from the time of the Two-Year Plan when it came to the recruitment of the labor force organized by the State.<sup>463</sup> All companies from the whole of Czechoslovakia had to send 1% of their employees to the OKD for a minimum of 5 months. During the Two-Year Plan, one of the most important plans for Ostravsko was also the construction of new apartments. In January 1948, transit workers represented a good 22% of all OKD employees. 54% of all OKD workers were unqualified, which as a consequence resulted in a high number of accidents, illnesses, a high percentage of work absenteeism, and alcoholism.<sup>464</sup> In July 1953, before the *Act of Absence and Fluctuation* was implemented, fluctuation was even considered being made punishable.<sup>465</sup> The first measure to compromise the power of employees in connection with the change of political course in 1953 (described in Chapter Two), was the annulment of the Act of Absence and Fluctuation.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> After the Second World War, as a consequence of the expulsion of German population, a problem of the lack of workforce appeared. Therefore, there was a special attention for workforce mobilization. The original plan from 1947, to get into the industry 200 thousand workers, was even exceeded. Kalinová, 80.

<sup>464</sup> Jaroslav Bakala (et al.): *Dějiny Ostravy*. Sfinga, Ostrava 1993, 427.

<sup>465</sup> Kalinová, 185.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.



Fig. 3.1. The description states: *Boldly to the tasks in the year 1959.*

Fig. 3.2. Beating the Karaganda (Donbas) Record, 1960.

The stabilization of the workforce presented an enormous problem well into the 1960s. In 1962, half of the workforce was composed of people not permanently settled in the town.<sup>467</sup> In the newspaper of the pit, where most of the miners from Havířov worked, articles such as, *Almost like a trade in people (Téměř jako obchod s lidmi)*, were frequently published. There were complaints about the many temporary workers (*brigadir*) who did not want to sign permanent job contracts. If they signed a contract for another year, they would receive a bonus from the parent company which sent them to the Ostrava region. *The temporary workers are being bribed to go to work in the mine, even though they have never seen the mine from the inside. Later those bribes are used for buying Octavia cars and televisions.*<sup>468</sup>

<sup>467</sup> Důl Dukla, 22. 6. 1962.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 9. 2. 1962.





Fig. 3.3. Miners receiving honors: the Red Flag of Work, the Red Star of Work, the Honor for Job Loyalty, the Honor for Job Dedication, 1955.

Mostly young, single men joined up to work in the mine, where they were seeking new challenges. Those new, inexperienced miners entered the traditional proletarian environment with which they were not familiar. They started to establish a new way of working within what Lewis Siegelbaum, in the case of the Soviet Union, defines as "recordomania".<sup>469</sup> To meet the goals of the economic plan, the individual collective teams in the OKD competed with each other within the so-called "Brigades of Socialist Work" (*brigáda socialistické práce*). The new working culture was promoted by a militant rhetoric, which also pervaded in Party discourse for the recruit of new workers.

The Czechoslovakian President, Antonín Novotný, encouraged the miners, sending them telegrams every time they achieved a new record. In 1962, for example, Novotný wrote to the miners of the Dukla pit that they were *good pupils of the Soviet masters* and wished

<sup>469</sup> Lewis H. Siegelbaum: *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-41*. Cambridge University Press 1990, 43.

them further success at work as well as in their personal lives.<sup>470</sup> For the shock-workers (*úderníky*) or Stakhanovites, as they were known in the socialist world (after the Soviet shock-worker Aleksei G. Stakhanov), it was not surprising to work on their days off without a break for lunch or to work double shifts. Cases were known when, after the competition, the best miners were so exhausted that they took more than one month's leave of absence from work.<sup>471</sup>

The names of the best shock-workers or leaders of the individual winning collectives (*předák*) were made public. The winners received titles such as the *Knight of the Socialist Competition* (*vítěz socialistické soutěže*), or were awarded with honors, such as *Work of the Red Star* (*rad rude hvězdy práce*) or *Working Fidelity* (*vyznamenání za pracovní věrnost*). The slackers (*bulači*) represented the antipode of the 'knights of socialist labor'. Propaganda against them increased, particularly when finances for payment to the best shock-workers began to run low.

Shock-workers were not popular among other workers, who thought that they represented some kind of "inaccessible caste" which, in addition to higher wages, obtained further benefits.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Důl Dukla, 15. June 1962, XI, 25, 1.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., 27. October 1962.

<sup>472</sup> Kalinová, 162.



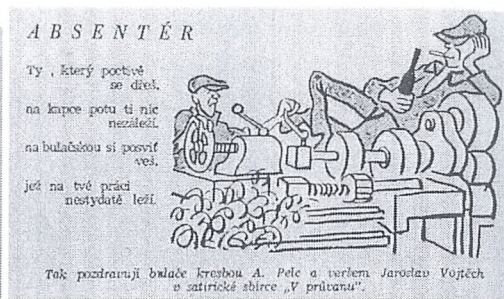


Fig. 3.4. *We don't need such workers amongst us!* The picture illustrates a fraudster, a drunk and a lazy man (bulač), 1960.

Fig. 3.5. Bulač, 1956.



Fig. 3.6. Drunks in front of the House of Culture, 1955.

Shock-workers also had better opportunities to obtain better apartments. The *Office for the Management of Apartments* at the OKD, which was in charge of 26,000 apartments in the region, made decisions as to who would receive specific apartments, according to a preference list. Here shock-workers or those with good "work ethic" (*pracovní morálka*) and family men were given priority. According to Radimír Prokop, a former professor at

Ostrava University and a resident of Havířov, the distribution of apartments was fairly equal. This means that apartments in, for example Gottwaldova Street, where he lived, were inhabited by miners, white-collar workers, as well as the President of the MNV.<sup>473</sup> There were differences in the size and quality of the apartments, and a certain degree of social stratification was recognized, but these differences were not too extreme. So that there were not, on the one hand, workers living in very poor conditions and, on the other hand, local elites living in luxury homes. This being said, it can be argued that the society in Havířov was fairly equal.

However, it was necessary to distinguish who were the "best of the best" also among the shock-workers themselves. Those people were granted, besides honor and glory, also special treats, such as, for example, ten days of recreation in Karlovy Vary with their wives.<sup>474</sup> To be the best in the team brought not only material benefits, but also opened the door to promotion and to move up from the mine into the white-collar professions. For example, on a Party initiative, the former best shock-worker began to study at law school and eventually became the President of the District Court in Karviná.<sup>475</sup>

In Czechoslovakia, a specific working-class culture, that had already been generated in the First Republic, was confronted with State attempts to establish a new working-class culture within the centralized management and hierarchical structure of decision-making.<sup>476</sup> According to Peter Heumus, even in the most industrialized areas in Czechoslovakia, a majority of the workforce retained its ties to the land, maintaining a

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<sup>473</sup> Interview with Radimír Prokop (1926-2010), 2008.

<sup>474</sup> Důl Dukla, 9. August 1962.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid., 29. June 1962.

<sup>476</sup> Pittaway, 90, 91.



'worker-peasant' existence. Working-class political action was moderate, if not apolitical, highly decentralized and centered on enterprise.<sup>477</sup> Socialist transformation also changed wage relations from hourly-based forms of payment to remuneration based on production, which made Stakhanovites very unpopular among the traditional workers.<sup>478</sup> The clash between traditional values and beliefs in the equality of all, and the Stakhanovites, was frequently resolved through the acceptance of the collective ethos embedded in established shop-floor cultures by the Stakhanovites themselves.<sup>479</sup>

### *Dilemmas of Havířovian Women*



Fig. 3.7. Woman voting for Peace (Mír), 1964.

Fig. 3.8. Woman voting, 1954.

<sup>477</sup> Peter Heumos: Die Arbeiterschaft in der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik: Elemente der Sozialstruktur, organisatorischen Verfassung und politischen Kultur. *Bohemia*, 29, 1, 1988, 50-72.

<sup>478</sup> Pittaway, 91.

<sup>479</sup> Christiane Brenner and Peter Heumos: Eine Heolidentypologie der Tschechoslowakei: Zur Einführung' in Silke Satjukow and Rainer Gries (eds.): *Sozialistische Helden. Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*. Ch. Links, Berlin 2002, 240, 241.



Fig. 3.9.-3.10. Family, 1955 (Miner's Day), 1959 (May 1<sup>st</sup>).

In order to stabilize the workforce in the OKD, the authorities encouraged family life. Although, from the late 1940s onwards, economic plans in Czechoslovakia predicted "that the number of gainfully employed women will be increased",<sup>480</sup> women in Havířov were confronted with a remarkable shortage of jobs and the traditional views of a woman's role in society.

The pre-communist women's movement in Czechoslovakia (originating already in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the Czech lands) was very active, strong, and differentiated. In 1918, with

<sup>480</sup> The Economics of Communist Eastern Europe, 390. Quotation taken from: Pittaway, 92.



the birth of the first Czechoslovak Republic, women won the right to vote. In 1923, a new feminist platform was established in the form of the Women's National Movement (*Ženská národní rada*), which was gradually joined by more than 70 associations.<sup>481</sup> The expanded notions of gender equality and citizens' rights that had started to emerge in the interwar period were undermined under Nazi occupation. According to historian, Melissa Feinberg, the experiences of the war years framed the attitudes towards women and labor in post-war Czechoslovakia.<sup>482</sup> By early 1939, most women had lost the right to work if they were married and then, later in the year, all women were barred from political organizations. At the end of the war, these rights were restored and a new framework emerged which positioned women as "independent and productive workers."<sup>483</sup> Yet many of the gender attitudes cultivated during the war remained.

According to Tomasz Inglot, in the late 1940s Czechoslovakia attempted a 'transformation of social policy'. The National Insurance Act, adopted in April 1948 but prepared before February 1948, created a modern, well-integrated system of social protection in the country. Even within the Soviet bloc, Czechoslovakia was praised as a leading model of a post-war 'socialist welfare state'.<sup>484</sup>

With regard to family welfare, already in 1947 some compensations for the relatively low wages were given. To support the employment of women, those measures included

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<sup>481</sup> Hana Havelková: *Otazníky českého ženského hnutí po roce 1989*. In: *Kapitoly z dějin České demokracie po roce 1989*. Paseka. Praha – Litomyšl 2008, 217 – 223.

<sup>482</sup> Melissa Feinberg: *Elusive Equality: Gender, Citizenship, and the Limits of Democracy in Czechoslovakia, 1918-1950*.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 165-68.

<sup>484</sup> Tomasz Inglot: *Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia*. In: Alfio Cerami and Pieter Vanhuysse: *Post-Communist Welfare Pathways. Theorizing Social Policy Transformations in Central and Eastern Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan 2009, 76.

maternity allowances, child allowances, a reduction in tax and rent, cheap services, nurseries and other educational facilities. This social income considerably contributed to the improvement of the overall situation of working-class families, who gradually began to take them for granted and did not appreciate their real value.<sup>485</sup> A relatively comfortable social system became the fundamental pillar of maintaining the communist regime in Czechoslovakia.

Post-war socialist states embraced the prediction of early socialist thinkers, that *women's participation in paid labor would facilitate their economic autonomy, which would allow them greater control over their lives. In turn, men's recognition of women as equal workers would abolish patriarchal attitudes and practices.*<sup>486</sup> As the following examples from Havířov show, the reality was very different.

In Havířov, the position of women was discussed by the *Women's Committee (Výbor žen)*, that worked as a special committee within the National Town Committee (MNV).<sup>487</sup> The Women's Committee took care of the social circumstances of the women in the town, especially of divorced, single mothers.<sup>488</sup> Each town district had its own office of the Women's Committee (11 altogether), where, at first, the members were all housewives. Membership was voluntary, nevertheless each member was encouraged to persuade other women to join the Committee.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Kalinová, 166.

<sup>486</sup> Jill Massino and Shana Penn (eds.): *Gender Politics and and Everyday Life in State Socialist Eastern and Central Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan 2009, 2.

<sup>487</sup> OKD Archives, 1401.

<sup>488</sup> SOKA Karviná, MestNV Havířov (1954) 1955 – 1980, Activities of Women Commission in Havířov, 1958-1960.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.



Considering that most apartments were distributed to men and that female unemployment was extremely high in Havířov (in 1958 over 70%),<sup>490</sup> divorced women found themselves in an extremely difficult position. For example, in December 1960, the apartment administration of the main mining company in the Ostrava-Karviná region sent a form to all the main centers where their employees lived: Ostrava, Poruba, Havířov and Karviná, about how to deal with cases when a tenant left the family or gave notice, because he was divorcing his wife. A form was issued to be sent to the wife in order to state the clear and understandable rules. It was formulated as follows: *We have been informed that your husband has left you and the family has stopped paying the rent.* Alternatively, in a second version: *Your husband has divorced you and has given notice of no longer paying the rent.* Then the form continued: *We are appealing to you to let us know within 15 days if you agree with the given notice or not. If you agree, it is necessary to vacate the apartment. In the event of you disagreeing and intending to remain in the apartment, you are obliged to pay the rent. If we do not receive your written reply within 15 days of today's date, we consider it as an acceptance that you will continue the rental agreement. The rent will be charged to you from the date on which your husband left you or gave notice.*<sup>491</sup>

If a woman could not afford to pay the rent, she could occupy an alternative, cheaper apartment. A certain Ms. Hložková from Havířov, a mother of three children, whose husband was in prison, was not able to pay the full rent. Therefore the District Court in

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<sup>490</sup> Jílková, 82.

<sup>491</sup> OKD Archives, Households Administration, 9/79, 6.

Ostrava made the decision (by a female Judge) that: *Ms. Vlasta Hložková must vacate the apartment. As substitute, however, she will receive another apartment at a lower rental.*<sup>492</sup>

Women were employed mainly as shop assistants, teachers, nurses and doctors. Out of a total of 1,950 employed women, about 1,100 were employed in Havířov and another 850 worked in other towns. Approximately 1,000 women were unemployed, because there was a lack of jobs and the predictions were also not good.<sup>493</sup> With women being employed, and no longer homemakers, new problems and issues emerged, such as childcare, since not sufficient kindergartens had been planned.

Just before Christmas 1963, there was discussion at the MNV in Havířov, in the presence of the Women's Committee President, about the complaint by Ms. Konečná, a mother of three children, regarding the bad relationship with her husband, a miner and member of the Communist Party. While unemployed, her husband paid her 1,200 Kč per month. However, when she found employment, he had at first paid her 600 Kč, and later nothing. She could not find a place for her 17-month-old child in a kindergarten and therefore she was forced to leave the child with a babysitter, who was paid 400 Kč per month from her monthly salary of 950 Kč. Since she had found a job, the situation in the family had become impossible. Her husband also assaulted her. At the MNV meeting, the decision was taken to speak to her husband. In the case of his non-cooperation, the Party members would be informed about it.<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> SOkA Karviná, MestNV Havířov (1954) 1955 – 1980, Activities of Women Commission in Havířov, 1958-1960.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.



Despite being employed, it was not compulsory for a woman to receive an apartment. In the summer of 1960, the MNV in Havířov received a complaint written by a 22-year-old woman from Havířov, protesting at the decision of not receiving an the apartment, made by the Apartment Commission of the National Enterprise Bytostav (*Národní podnik Bytostav*), where she was employed. Until her maternity leave, she was living in the block of flats (*svobodaren*) owned by her employer. In 1959, during her maternity leave, she stayed with her parents in Žilina in Slovakia. After she returned to work, the company, without any explanation, refused to let her move into the apartment where she had lived before her maternity leave. For that reason, she was forced to move in with her sister, who lived with her husband, a miner, and four children in a two-bedroomed apartment. The apartment was too small for such a big family and her sister was urging her to move out. She asked the MNV to help her obtain an apartment.<sup>495</sup> The only additional information as to how the story continued, could be found in the answer she received from the MNV explaining that *Bytostav* needed empty apartments in order to accommodate its employees and, as she was married (although she had never mentioned that she was married), her husband should make an application for a new apartment at the institution where he was employed.<sup>496</sup>

The 1950 Constitution in Czechoslovakia granted equal rights to women. Between 1948 and 1957, the proportion of women in the labor market increased from 22% to 42% of the

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid., N 14.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

total.<sup>497</sup> The abovementioned examples illustrate how, in the case of Havířov, institutional care for mothers, pregnant women and children was poorly organized and inadequate for women to be able to be employed, to support themselves and not to harm family relationships.

Women's unemployment in Havířov and a shortage of jobs for women were constantly discussed at the MNV and the Women's Committee. The following example shows how the possible solution to women's employment in the town, in the form of developing light industries, was disregarded in order to support the less industrialized Slovakia. In 1959 only 30% of the women in Havířov were employed, which was more than a 3% decrease on the previous year.<sup>498</sup> In the late 1950s, the town further developed heavy industry, where there were not sufficient employment opportunities for women. In the case of finding employment out of Havířov, there were commuting difficulties and the lack of childcare facilities.

According to the Havířov chronicler: *The situation would improve considerably if the town expanded its selection of job opportunities by developing light industry.*<sup>499</sup> At the time, the national company, Tesla Rožnov pod Radhoštěm, was expanding, which could have solved the problem of Havířov's female unemployment. A Special Commission of the CC KSČ even made a decision to build a factory on Havířov territory.<sup>500</sup> *The first*

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<sup>497</sup> Mita Castle-Kanerova: Czech and Slovak Federative Republic: The culture of strong women in the making? In: Chris Corrin: Superwomen and the Double Burden. Women's experience of change in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Scarlet Press, 1992, 109.

<sup>498</sup> Chronicle of Havířov, 1959, 24.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.



*contacts were made between representatives of the MNV Havířov and the Tesla company. Immediately the projection of an investment for the manufacture of neon lights began. Soon, however, the Government made another decision, within the framework of industrializing Slovakia, to expand the Tesla company to Slovakia. The Ministry of Engineering, however, still offered 14 million Crowns to any company which would like to build in Havířov.*<sup>501</sup>

It would only be in the mid-1970s, and after The Constitutional Law of Federation of 1968 was adopted which transformed the unitary Czechoslovak State into a Federation, when a light industry company would be established in Havířov.

### **From Small Errors to a Great Catastrophe**

Czechoslovakia was the first European communist country to claim to have completed the transition from capitalism to socialism. With the approval of a new Constitution in 1960, the 1948 Constitution of the People's Democracy was replaced by a new Constitution whereby the country called itself the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR). This allowed Novotný, the General Secretary of the KSČ and, after Zápotocký's death, also the President of the country, and the hard-liners to proclaim the Party's leadership of the nation successfully in all areas of Czechoslovakian life.<sup>502</sup> The aim of

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid., 25-27.

<sup>502</sup> William M. Mahoney: The History of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Greenwood 2011, 207.

this part is to present the difficulties, attempts and failures in the pursuit of better living and working conditions.

### *Tolerancing, Kidding, Condoning, and Planning*



Fig. 3.11. Builders in Havířov, 1959.

The giant *Ostrava-Karvina Coal Mine Company* had a special National Office for the Management of Apartments (*Sprava sídlišť n.p.*). The company had about 26,000 apartments for their workers in 11 towns in the region. Each town had a central office and additional offices responsible for the distribution and maintenance of the apartments. One such office was the Apartment Commission in Havířov (*Středisko Havířov*). The reports of the *Sprava sídlišť* pointed out the problematic and unresolved relationship and coordination among investors, suppliers and tenants of the apartments.



In the new Havířov apartments, most of the problems encountered by residents concerned the inadequate heating system, hot water supply, mold in the apartments and the mud in the streets outside the apartments. Residents reported these problems to the caretaker of the apartment building, who was also a member of the local Apartment Commission in Havířov. When the caretaker did not react to their complaints, they took the matter further, either to the MNV in Havířov or directly to the *Sprava sídlišť*.<sup>503</sup>

However, when even this had no effect, in 1960 they wrote a letter to the Czechoslovakian State President, Antonín Novotný, to explain the problems arising from the inadequately heated apartments.<sup>504</sup>

Let us take a closer look at the background of that letter, as an excellent example of relationships between the leader and people, showing people's enthusiasm for, reliance on, and hope in the highest authority. In April 1953, workers from the Ostrava region working on the construction of a new mining town had sent a letter to the First Comrade of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Zápotocký, regretting the loss of their beloved leaders, Stalin and Gottwald, and very joyfully congratulating him on his entrance to Prague Castle as the second President of the Communist Republic. In their letter, the workers promised

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<sup>503</sup> OKD Archives, Administration of the housing estate, no. 16–26 and SOKA Karviná, MěstNV Havířov (1954) 1955–1980, no. 14.

<sup>504</sup> Complaint made by the workers about the heating system and distribution of hot water in a letter to the President of Czechoslovakia Antonín Novotný on 8 January 1960. SOKA Karviná, MěstNV Havířov (1954) 1955–1980, no. 14.

they would work even harder to fulfill the quota of the First Five-Year Plan, and, in great detail, described to him the number and date when the apartments would be completed.<sup>505</sup>

However, a good seven years later, in December 1960, a new and much more formal and cold letter (a kind of petition) from the newly built town of Havířov was submitted to the President of Czechoslovakia, Antonín Novotný, at Prague Castle. In the letter, three street committees (*Uliční výbor*) in Havířov, with 14 pages of signatures from men and women living in the apartment building, explained to the President that, while they were residing in modern apartments, the heating system was not good, as was the fact that they were paying for hot water, which they were not receiving. Thus they appealed to the President, for the sake of the health of their children, now that winter was approaching, to provide a quick solution so that the Christmas holidays would be joyful.<sup>506</sup>

Although the responsible committees constantly received complaints from residents, interviews with the first town residents of Havířov testified that people were generally satisfied with the urban apartments, as they were bright, with a bathroom, central heating, gas, and the housewives were thrilled to have a big kitchen.<sup>507</sup> The communal inconveniences made life less pleasant, but residents still tried to overlook them in the hope of eventual improvement. One of the ways in which residents tried to overcome these inconveniences of the urban communal organization was to make jokes of them.

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<sup>505</sup> Opava Regional Archive, Severomoravský krajský národní výbor Ostrava, 2091, I.

<sup>506</sup> SOKA Karviná; MěstNV Havířov (1954) 1955–1980, N. 14.

<sup>507</sup> Jílková, 89.



The design as well as construction of the projects in Havířov were mostly carried out by one of the design institutes within *Stavoprojekt*. After the miners, construction workers (*stavbaři*) were the second largest workers' group in the town. Even one of the first parts of the town was called *Stavarov*, where most of the construction workers lived. They came from all over Czechoslovakia. As they were employed by one of the design institutes, they were responsible for a particular task. Problems arose when the coordination between individual institutes, the OKD and the MNV committees etc. was not adequate. A common well-known joke that went around Havířov referred to the failures in construction work. The joke was: *It is a Saturday afternoon. Work on the road is going ahead at full speed. The last piece of asphalt is about to be laid. Suddenly a man with a pickaxe arrives and says: 'Reverse, boys, reverse, so we can dig it up again on Monday! We forgot to connect the pipe.'*<sup>508</sup>

But the humor was mainly centered on the muddy streets. For example, if people in Ostrava met people with mud on their shoes, they knew that they came from 'Korea', which meant from Havířov.<sup>509</sup> For a long time, the streets and sidewalks of Havířov were covered in mud, since the first priority for the constructors was to build apartment houses and no one took care of the sidewalks. The mud was very annoying in the daily lives of residents: *If you lost your shoes in the mud, they were lost forever.*<sup>510</sup> Ms. Fojtiková remembered that everyone wore rubber boots, the so-called *šedimori* (from *šedi* – sediments and *moře* – sea). Without them it was impossible to go anywhere. *At the bus station, there was a special booth in which to take off one's shoes and put boots on. For*

<sup>508</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1957, 23.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 1956, 41.

<sup>510</sup> Vigner: *Město zelene*.

example, when we went to the theater in Ostrava, we first walked in our boots to the bus station, where we put our nice shoes on.<sup>511</sup>

The mud became a typical characteristic for Havířov and people identified it with the town. When Slovakian writer, Libuša Mináčová, published her book in 1961, which story took place in Havířov, the title of the book did not praise the glory of the new town, but rather reflected its everyday realities: *Mud on the Street. (Blato na ceste)*.<sup>512</sup> Identification with the mud even went so far that in 1960 a proposal was made for the *šedimor* in the mud to become an emblem of the town.<sup>513</sup>

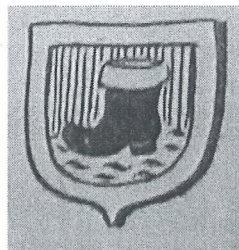


Fig. 3.12. A family moving to Havířov having to wade through the mud.

Fig. 3.13. Suggestion for a boot (*šedimor*) in the mud to become a town emblem, 1960.

### *Town Conference*

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Libuša Mináčová: *Blato na ceste*. Slov. Spisovateľ, Bratislava 2961.

<sup>513</sup> *Hlasý Havířova*, December 1960.



In December 1959, the local newspaper, *Hlasý Havířova* (*The Voices of Havířov*), as New Year's greetings, published a funny, but cynical caricature of what they wished for in 1960 for the various groups in the town. For example, their wish for the constructors was *to build many apartments within a super-plan, and especially to bear in mind: the more tiny, hidden defects, the greater the bonuses.*<sup>514</sup> To the residents of Havířov, New Year's greetings were that they *keep on complaining about the lack of cultural activities in Havířov as loudly as before. But then, when the program is well organized, rather choose to stay at home.*<sup>515</sup>



Fig. 3.14. František Podoba, the first Mayor of Havířov (1955-1970).

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<sup>514</sup> *Hlasý Havířova*, December 1959, 3.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*

Mocking, ironical and sarcastic comments were very common in the everyday vocabulary of Havířovians. They were a method of demonstrating, without direct confrontation and in a humorous way, the anomalies that were taking place in the town. The town authorities were very well aware of the deficiencies in the urban infrastructure and services and did not overlook those kind of comments. From 1955, the President of the National Committee in Havířov was František Podoba. He was barely ever mentioned in the local newspapers or in the town Chronicle, although he was, according to a 1961 chronicler, considered *a good Mayor, who successfully managed complicated working conditions on the National Committee. Moreover, if necessary, he also grabbed a shovel himself.*<sup>516</sup> He ended his function as the President of the MNV of Havířov in 1970, when the measures of the post-1968 normalization period started. At that time he, as one of my interviewees stated, had to move to Prague, where he became a ticket vendor in one of Prague's Metro stations.<sup>517</sup>

In December 1960, the MNV of Havířov under Podoba's leadership, initiated a big event: a conference on housing and living in new towns and settlements. The main purpose of the conference was to consider the construction of a socialist town, not only from the technical and operational aspects, but also from the social aspect. The main organizational partner of the conference was the Research Institute for Construction and Architecture in Prague. The conference was part of the statewide discussion on housing (see also Chapter 5).

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<sup>516</sup> Chronicle of Havířov, 1961, 15.

<sup>517</sup> Interview with R.P., Havířov 2008.



The conference was attended by 153 delegates from new towns and settlements, representatives of different ministries and national committees, planners, etc. The invited delegates came from the whole of Czechoslovakia. Representatives from the new English town of Harlow, with which Havířov was to become twinned, were also invited. However, as we can read in the organizational notes, there was a ban on the Poles from attending.<sup>518</sup> The papers at the conference were mainly related to the questions of living in new towns, problems of health care, hygiene, education, women's employment and social ownership.<sup>519</sup> It is difficult to say how the conclusions of the conference were reflected in the further development of the town. However, the conference could be considered as an important step towards a stronger town government initiative to tackle local problems and to improve urban living conditions.

### *The Accident*



<sup>518</sup> SOKA Karviná, MěST NV Havířov (1954) 1955-1980, 14.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

Fig. 3.15. *Work safely*, 1961. Ironically, the newspaper of the Dukla Coal Mine published an issue dedicated to safety at work just a month before the disastrous mining accident.

In the second half of the 1950s, the Dukla Coal Mine started extensive renovations. New technical methods for mining were introduced. But the level of safety still lagged behind. Belt conveying, which was an extraordinary threat to safety facilities already in the 1940s, was especially problematic. For the period between 1946-1950, the incomplete statistics of the OKD indicated a total of 22 cases of fires on conveyor belts, but between 1950-1960 there were already 64 cases.<sup>520</sup> On July 7, 1961 the coal conveyor belt most likely caused the most devastating accident in the Dukla Coal Mine. On that day, the fire was noticed in the afternoon, but there was no alarm raised to start evacuation. Only when the fire broke out fully, did the first miners begin coming to the surface. Those few miners who managed to escape were rescued, the others did not have sufficient oxygen to follow. 108 miners died in the fire, aged between 17 and 57.<sup>521</sup> Among them, 62 were married.

Families of the miners found themselves in a very difficult situation. The widows of the deceased miners began to receive widow's pensions. The miners' children received money in Savings Books, which they were able to obtain at the age of 18 years. Many women, because of their children, could not remain single, so they re-married.

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<sup>520</sup> Jaroslav Čihař et al.: 50 let od tragédie na dole Dukla. Klub přátel hornického muzea v Ostravě, Ostrava 2011.

<sup>521</sup> J. Tesař, L. Suchan: Rozbor havárie na dole Dukla v OKR. In: Aktuality hornického výzkumu 1963, 55, 5-8.



Jana Jílková's interviewee remembered that a lot of widows remarried miners. Children, whose fathers had died in the accident, became miners.<sup>522</sup> It was very distressing for the miners to return to the mine. Many of them were afraid to resume underground work and never returned to this profession. Also young upcoming miners mostly decided on other careers. The authors of the 1971 Ostrava anthology featured the negative psychological and employment consequences of the fire. The events affected the whole OKD, so that the situation had to be resolved by the ČSSR government.<sup>523</sup>

In August 1962, the District Court in Karviná sentenced nine people for the fire of July 1961 in the Dukla Coal Mine. Among them were the Director, Technical Manager, Production Manager, Safety Controller, two foremen, the Head of Prospective Planning and a fitter. They were accused of violating their personal responsibilities in a direct or indirect connection with the tragic events, in respect of their obligations to ensure safe working conditions in the mine, as regulated by the Mining Act. Except for one, who was acquitted, all the accused were sentenced to between two and four years' imprisonment.<sup>524</sup>

Jílková interviewees remember that *those engineers who were sentenced for the tragedy were not guilty. In fact, the accident was caused due to neglecting safety standards and due to the quest for high working performance. The wife of one sentenced engineer, who was a mother of two children, was dismissed from her job in an Ostrava Primary School*

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<sup>522</sup> Jílková, 3.3. Hornická tragédie na dole Dukla a její vliv na každodenní život.

<sup>523</sup> M. Gargulák, B. Cerman: Sociálně-ekonomický vývoj Ostravsko-karvinského revíru v letech 1945-1969. In: Ostrava socialistická. Sborník studií k výstavbě města v letech 1945-1970, Ostrava 1971, 348.

<sup>524</sup> Čihař et al., 63.

*and took up a new position in the Dulní Suchá Primary School. Her husband was in prison for five or six years.*<sup>525</sup>

The tragedy at the Dukla Coal Mine came as a shock, not just to Havířov, where most of the miners lived, but also in the wider Ostravsko region and in the whole of Czechoslovakia. The remembrance ceremony was held in Ostrava, where the first signed organizer was the Regional Committee of the KSČ. A memorial to the victims of the accident was erected in the area of the Dukla Coal Mine. The Dukla miners received hundreds of telegrams expressing condolences from individuals and organizations, not only from Czechoslovakia, but from around the world, from socialist and capitalist countries, from State leaders, communist party representatives and from the mining collectives or representatives of Trade Unions. For example, among others, letters of condolences came from the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party, the President of the GDR, Walter Ulbricht, the CC of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its First Secretary, Nikita Khrushchev, the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the government delegation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and the President of the Republic of Cuba, Osvaldo Dorticos. Condolences were also expressed by miners from Karl-Marx-Stadt (the present-day Chemnitz) and Cottbus in the GDR, miners of the German-Soviet friendship brigade working in Cvikov in Northern Bohemia near the border with the GDR in former Sudetenland. Foreign students from the Republic of Mali, Sudan, Iraq, Indonesia and Latin America, who were studying in Holešov near Zlín, sent their letter of condolences in which they stated that their real friends had died in the accident, since *the work of the miners enables us to study*

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<sup>525</sup> Jilková, interviews with contemporaries from Havířov.



*in your country*.<sup>526</sup> Many telegrams were sent by Trade Unions from the Soviet Union, China, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Korea, Yugoslavia, the German Democratic Republic, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Japan, Cuba and Vietnam.<sup>527</sup>

The accident certainly caused shock within the communities of Havířov and Ostravsko, at the OKD, but also within the local and regional Communist Party. The newspaper of the Dukla Coal Mine reported that, after the accident, the Regional Committee (KV) of the KSČ held an extraordinary meeting, where the causes of the Dukla Coal Mine disaster were examined and, at the same time, the safety situation at the OKD was assessed.<sup>528</sup> A few days later, a meeting of the KV KSČ, a conference of the communists at the Dukla Coal Mine, was organized, where members were informed about the conclusions of the meeting on a regional level.

One of the results was that the Company Committee of the KSČ (*Závodný výbor*), in collaboration with many other organizations, held a *Month of Exemplary Workplaces* and many other different events, dealing with the improvement of work safety. In addition, it was emphasized that there should be increased rigor, discipline, order and safety in the workplace: *All workers must unite to increase alertness and vigilance. They must report all violators of order and discipline, because those dangerous elements have not yet disappeared. Often people were sent to the OKD with dubious moral and political*

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<sup>526</sup> Čihař et al., 97.

<sup>527</sup> Důl Dukla, 17. July 1961, 2.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 4. August 1961, 2.

*profiles. Workers at the OKD must consistently cleanse their territory of 'bulač' and people who have been punished several times and exclude them from their ranks.*<sup>529</sup>

After the accident, the enemy within was emphasized even more strongly. *Důl Dukla* reported that *after the accident, 37 new workers came to work in the Dukla Coal Mine. They show high political awareness. They could set an example to those who want to leave. They need to realize that their attitude helps the gentlemen in the West, to whom our successes are a thorn in the eye, and who use our failures to their great joy and delight for their propaganda purposes.*<sup>530</sup>

It was also considered as "high political awareness" to continue with production in order to assist the national economy and to fulfill the Plan. In so doing, *a tribute to the death of the mine-heroes would be best provided.*<sup>531</sup> The miners from the Dukla Coal Mine were always presented as those among the best who had never disappointed. Also soon after the accident, there was a call not to disappoint and *to fight* for the fulfillment of the Plan.<sup>532</sup> At the end of August 1961, the Dukla Coal Mine began to operate on a full scale again.

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid. 25. August 1961, 1.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 17. August 1961, 1.



### 3.2 FLEXIBILITY AND LIMITS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT

#### Competition with Tradition

##### *The Miners*

According to the first census after World War Two, 16,541 people were living in the Šaleška Valley in 1948. By 1953, the population had increased, mostly in Velenje, where the number doubled, from 1,121 in 1948 to 2,553 in 1953. This also meant that, in 1953, Velenje became the most populated town in the Valley. The trend of migration to Velenje continued and between 1955 and 1960, 1,635 people moved to Velenje.<sup>533</sup> The vast majority of the population was of Slovenian nationality. During the 1950s, there were no major migrations of people from other Yugoslav republics. In general, it was a migration within Slovenia, where most of the immigrants were from neighboring rural areas, which were experiencing the "flee from the village to town" or "flee from agriculture to industry" phenomena. In 1961, however, already 487 people of other nationalities lived in the Valley,<sup>534</sup> which indicated the beginnings of economic migration from other Yugoslav republics to Slovenia and increasing industrialization of the Šaleška Valley.

The leader in development in the Valley was the Velenje Coal Mine Company. In 1946 the Company was established by the decision of the Federal government as a company for the production of lignite. In September 1950, it began to be managed by the newly

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<sup>533</sup> Kljajič, 368, 369.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid, 369.

established Workers' Committee of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. In December of that year, Nestl Žgank became the new Company Director. In 1945, the Company excavated 182,000 tons of coal, in 1948, 410,000 tons, in 1953, 883,000 tons and, in 1955, already over 1 million tons.<sup>535</sup> The amount of excavated coal depended on the Company's management, mine mechanization and the number of employed miners. In 1945, the Company employed 457 miners and 379 administrative employees. In 1951, there were already 887 miners and 739 administrative employees, and in 1955, there were 1,404 miners and 698 administrative employees. In 1966, employment reached a peak with 2,794 miners and 890 employees in administration.

For the first post-war years, the typical management of production consisted of shock-work competitions which contributed to the rapid increase in production. In 1948, the Velenje Coal Mine Company announced 167 shock-workers.<sup>536</sup> On the other hand, as Nestl Žgank remembered, when he arrived in Velenje, the Company had a problem with miners who, instead of working, were sleeping in the mine. In addition, there was a huge alcohol problem.<sup>537</sup>

In January 1953, the Union of the self-managing Velenje Coal Mine Company started to issue a weekly newspaper, *Velenjski rudar* (*Velenje Miner*), later called *Rudar* (*Miner*). There was not a single article praising individual shock-workers or shock-work competitions, instead there were articles discussing how to improve relationships and working conditions in the mine. The new Director, Žgank, however, was a supporter of shock-work. He regarded it as useful for its economic impact, as well as a means of

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid, 372.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid.

<sup>537</sup> Žgank, 78.



regulating relations within the collective. As the new Director, he noticed tensions between the administrative employees and miners. Administrative employees insulted the miners by calling them 'rats', while miners called the administrative employees 'crickets' (*čriček*).

At a meeting with administrative employees, Žgank proposed that they should also work in the mine in order for the miners to see that they cared about increased production.<sup>538</sup> The first "shock-work" of the administrative workers in the mine was scheduled for the night from Saturday to Sunday and Sunday morning. Many real miners also joined this initiative, in which the most committed and enthusiastic worker was the Director himself. According to Žgank, *"the miners were arguing about who was going to work with me. I showed and proved to them that the Director also knows how to undertake work."*<sup>539</sup>

These initiatives became very popular and also the production of coal soon increased. Instead of about 800 tons of coal, the "volunteers" excavated up to 3,400 tons of coal per day. Since the amount of income from the sale was higher, the wages of the miners, who were paid in terms of the number of loaded carts, also increased. Enthusiasm for the shock-work was obvious according to Žgank: *"When we go into the pit, the miners sing, when we return, they also sing. The administrative workers join them with great enthusiasm, although they do not get paid for their work in the pit. In addition, they have to bring their own lunch."*<sup>540</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

Besides the "voluntary" shock-work in the mine, the Company also organized voluntary work in order to improve the mine surroundings. The main entrance to the mine, for example, was given a new motto, inscribed: *Honor and Power to the Work* (*Delu čast in oblast*). As already indicated in Chapter 2, the new Director, Žgank, also reorganized the regular work and payment of miners. In order to get rid of lazy and less efficient miners (those were mainly farmers who often stayed at home during the summer), he proposed to the miners the dismissal of those who were not effective enough and that the Company would distribute salaries only to the hard-working miners.<sup>541</sup>



Fig. 3.16. Entrance to the Velenje Coal Mine Company. Inscription stating: *Honor and Power to the Work*, 1951.

To increase production, the Velenje Coal Mine Company tried to professionalize the work in the company by making professional miners out of former farmers, as well as by

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<sup>541</sup> Ibid., 85, 86.



introducing new methods and mechanization of production, with most of the equipment bought in Belgium and the United States.<sup>542</sup> In the 1955 film, *Life of Velenje Miners*, one of the miners states that "*with new mechanization, the work is now easily done, my father suffered much more*".<sup>543</sup> Besides good equipment, the Company also took care to improve the conditions of the facilities which were important for the miners' safety, health, and wellbeing. In this regard, new showers and changing rooms were provided, while the ambulance and restaurant were modernized. Moreover, the Velenje Coal Mine Company built new holiday facilities in Fiesa on the Slovenian coast, where its workers could spend their vacations.

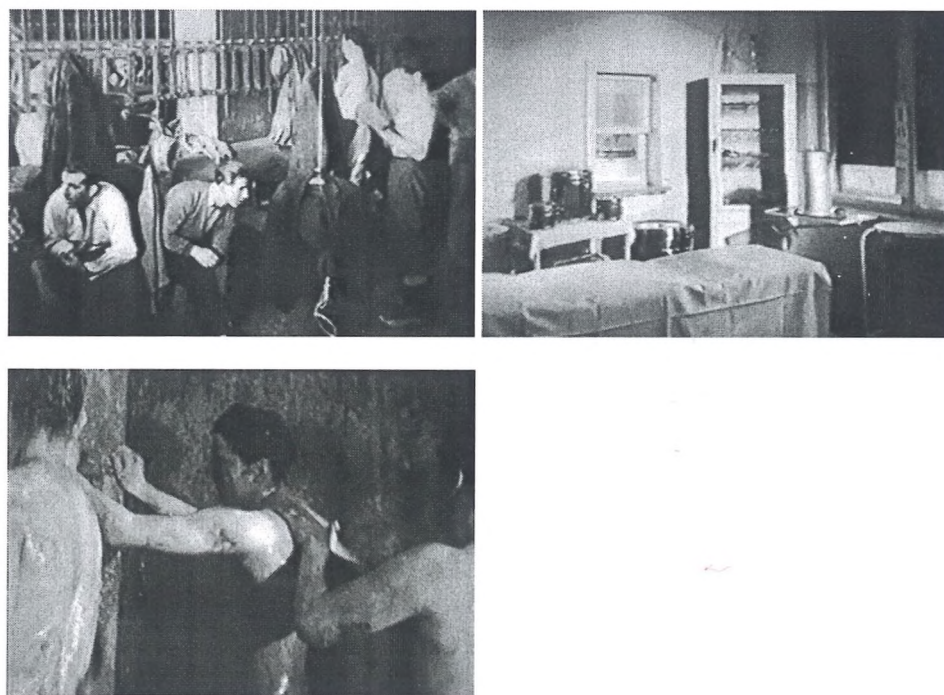


Fig. 3.17.-3.19. Changing Room, ambulance and showers at the Velenje Coal Mine Company, 1955.

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>543</sup> Film Archive of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. *Life of Velenje Miners*, 1955.

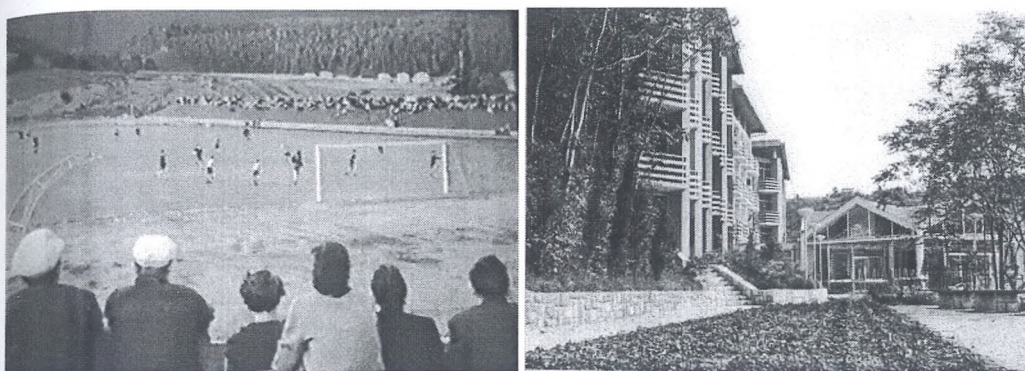


Fig. 3.20. Football field at Velenje Lake, 1955.

Fig. 3.21. Holiday facilities of the Velenje Coal Mine Company in Fiesa, architect Janez Trenz.

### *The Volunteers*

Chapter 2 presented the plans and visions for transforming "a chicken mine" into a modern mine and for competing with traditional mining areas, included also the construction of many new workers' apartments. Immediately after the war, the Velenje Coal Mine Company first of all started to build apartments, using its own workers as laborers. In 1950, when more construction work was required, the Company formed an independent Construction Department, which was in service until 1965 with its 500 workers.

Regarding the facilities that were built by the Company's Construction Department, the documents indicate that they were built on the Company's "own account" (*v lastni režiji*). Between 1953 and 1965, during the time of the most active construction activities in Velenje, the Company alone could not manage to carry out all the construction work.



Therefore, it hired other Slovenian construction companies: Gradis Ljubljana, Beton Celje, Ingrad Celje, Gradbenik Šoštanj and Gradbeno podjetje Dravograd.<sup>544</sup> In addition, in 1957 a new company *Vegrad*, short for *Velenjski gradbenik (Velenje Constructor)*, was established by the Šoštanj District Committee in order to carry out construction and communal work in the Šaleška Valley. In 1965, when the Company already had 710 workers, the Company's Construction Department also joined *Vegrad*.

Chapter 2 presented the difficulties and insecurities in planning the new town. Most of the decision-making and financing was undertaken by the Velenje Coal Mine Company. This was a great financial burden on the Company. Director Žgank remembered: "*As we could not get enough money from Republican or Federal funds, we did a lot of work voluntarily.*"<sup>545</sup>

Immediately after the war, volunteers from Velenje started to repair the damaged equipment of the Coal Mine. In addition, volunteers helped those whose homes had been demolished during the war. Between 1946 and 1948, volunteers repaired roads, built the cinema in Novo Velenje, a Communal building (*zadružni dom*), children's playgrounds, etc. As was seen in Chapter 2, between 1952 and 1953, volunteers enhanced the surroundings of the lake by building a summer cinema, a settlement of holiday cottages, the *Jezero* restaurant and a kindergarten.

Between 1954 and 1955, volunteers from Velenje helped to build a new stadium near the lake and to construct a new Primary School and ski jumps. In July 1956, altogether 4,075

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<sup>544</sup> Seher, 487.

<sup>545</sup> Žgank, 97.

volunteers helped to beautify kindergartens, sporting facilities and walking paths around the lake. They performed a total of 16,056 working hours, with an average of between 200 and 250 people working per day.<sup>546</sup>

In September 1956, the biggest voluntary initiative began in Velenje, with the regulation of the flow of the Paka River. The SZDL—the biggest mass organization (*Socialistična zveza delovnega ljudstva, Socialist Union of the Working People*)—agitated in the local newspaper: "*People of Velenje! Our unity and self-sacrifice will again be demonstrated at the shock-work for the regulation of the Paka River. ... Regulation of the river is of great importance for the future development of our industrial town. Let all members of the SZDL contribute to its development by volunteering.*"<sup>547</sup>

The response was massive, since the volunteers contributed 36,145 hours of voluntary work and regulated 270 meters of the riverbed. In July 1957, the regulation of the river continued. In 67 days, 2,653 volunteers, or 70% of all the inhabitants of Velenje, had contributed 54,449 working hours and regulated 700 meters of the riverbed.<sup>548</sup> Besides the regulation of the river, they also started digging the trenches for plumbing and telephone cables.

In April 1958, a special committee for voluntary work at the Velenje SZDL decided to clean and beautify the surroundings of the apartment blocks, children's playgrounds, and the People's Park (*Ljudski Park*). It was also decided to regulate another 250 meters of

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<sup>546</sup> Kljajič, 282.

<sup>547</sup> Velenjski rudar, 1. September 1956.

<sup>548</sup> Kljajič, 282.



the river. In 1958, volunteers also began on the construction of the Gaspari House of Culture on the future main square.<sup>549</sup>

The organization of voluntary work also continued after the opening of the new town center in 1959. Between 1959 and 1961, the Velenje volunteers had contributed 340,000 of voluntary working hours. During this period, a competition for voluntary work was even organized together with volunteers from Celje. Between 1962 and 1963, young Pioneers and Juniors (*pionirji in mladinci*), during their 12,000 hours of voluntary work, built a new roller-skating park, a new playground and a holiday home.

Between 1947 and 1959 (until the opening of the new town center), volunteers completed 558,000 working hours and, in the next five years, an additional 450,000 working hours. In total, they contributed over 1 million voluntary hours to the value of 500 million Dinars. During this entire period (1947 to 1964), there were also many smaller voluntary initiatives, organized by the residential communities and committees, schools, Pioneer organization, and others. In 1969, the last big voluntary initiative was organized in Velenje, called: *A Town to a Village*, in which a new road was built. In the 1970s, the voluntary initiatives were replaced by the so-called self-contributions (*samoprispevki*). However, in 1974, after an earthquake in Kozjansko in South-Eastern Slovenia, Velenje volunteers built a new school there.<sup>550</sup>

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid., 383.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid., 384-386.



Fig. 3.22. Voluntary work for river regulation, 1956



Fig. 3.23. Meeting of the voluntary workers. On the extreme left is Nestl Žgank, Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. Novo Velenje on the right bank of the river is in the background.





Fig. 3.24. The Velenje Coal Mine Company Director with a shovel in his hands.



Fig. 3.25. A banner at the end of voluntary work on the river regulation. The inscription states: *In 41 days with 4,865 participants and 20,291 hours, we regulated 440 meters of the Paka River, 1957*



Fig. 3.26. A banner at the voluntary work site, stating: *Our Successes – Our Pride!* On the extreme right is Franc Leskošek-Luka, 1957.



Fig. 3.27. Opening of the voluntary work initiative in the Velenje People's Park with a brass band and choir, April 1961.

At the Velenje Museum, voluntary work comprises most of the photo material regarding the construction of the new town. The work was organized during the weekends and in the afternoons, after Company working hours. Volunteers were divided into groups, each



working on a certain segment. Voluntary work had a major impact on the life of the community. People joined voluntary work in order to provide better living conditions for themselves as quickly as possible. Voluntary work was also praised in the Velenje Anthem, emphasizing the community contribution to the building of Paradise:

There, where yesterday  
a farmer still plowed with his bulls,  
where there were many puddles and floods,  
a miracle happened overnight:  
all the old is gone and  
Paka is now subdued, burbling  
the song of the future.

To our pride  
the town already shines in the sun,  
this is our contribution  
to all our community.  
Velenje you are beautiful,  
like a real Paradise.<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>551</sup> Archive of the Music School Fran Korun Koželjski Velenje.

Tam, kjer včeraj še / kmetič je z voli oral, / tam, kjer manjkalo / mlakuž ni in poplav, / zgodil se čudež je  
čez noč, / zdaj staro vse je proč, / in Paka ukročena žubori / spev bodočnosti.

Vsem nam zdaj v ponos / mesto že v soncu žari, / v njem naš doprinos / vsej naši skupnosti. / Velenje  
krasno ti si zdaj / zares kot pravi raj.

Voluntary work was an important tool to consolidate the power of the local authorities. The administration of the Velenje Coal Mine Company was certainly part of the local authorities. Director Žgank regularly organized and participated in the initiatives. Mass participation in the voluntary work was also easily used for political agitation. One of the high-ranking Party leaders, Franc Leskošek-Luka, visited Velenje during the voluntary work.

To keep the working morale of the volunteers high, at the end of a voluntary season, the volunteer committee organized formal celebrations for the voluntary workers, at which the most diligent and ambitious volunteers received medals. The celebrations were usually followed by festivities with a barbecue and dancing. The photos of these events present a very domestic atmosphere, with the celebrations reminiscent of a village party. Bearing in mind that most of the volunteers had migrated to Velenje from the countryside, voluntary work with the final festivities could be seen as the makings of a transformation and conversion of village community work and celebration into an urban form.





Fig. 3.28. Speeches during the voluntary work, 1957.

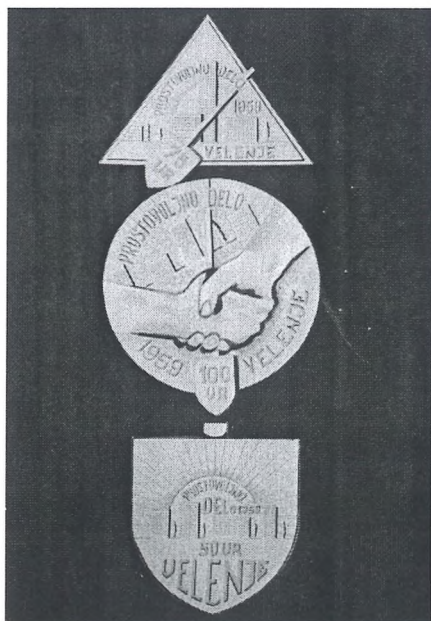


Fig. 3.29. Badges for 50, 75 and 100 hours of voluntary work, 1959.



Fig. 3.30. The main celebration at the completion of voluntary work on the main Tito Square, 1959.



Fig. 3.31. Awarding the best voluntary workers.



Fig. 3.32. Barbecue at the end of voluntary work, 1959.





Fig. 3.33. Festivity at the end of voluntary work, 1959.



Fig. 3.34. Dance at Velenje Lake at the end of voluntary work, 1959.



Fig. 3.35. Dancers in folk costumes at Velenje Lake celebrating the end of voluntary work, approx. 1955.

Although the majority of Velenje residents were happy or indeed enthusiastic participants in voluntary work, the work was not strictly speaking 'voluntary', since a specific number of hours of voluntary work was a condition for the acquisition of the right to housing. In 1960, the Management Committee of the Velenje Coal Mine Company decided that each worker who had received an apartment but had not yet fulfilled the conditions for voluntary hours, needed to pay 55 dinars for each unfulfilled voluntary hour.<sup>552</sup>

The decision of who would receive specific apartments was made by a special Apartment Committee organized within the framework of the Velenje Coal Mine Company's management structure, that operated under conditions of a priority list as well as with the personal data of the candidates for the apartments. In order to obtain an apartment, one had to be employed by the Velenje Coal Mine Company or other public services

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<sup>552</sup> Archive of Velenje Coal Mine Company; U 14.



important for the town's development and to have a family.<sup>553</sup> In particular, having a family put one in a privileged position for receiving an apartment. There was also criticism of the Apartment Committee in that they gave the benefit of better apartments to certain individuals. However, the Committee mostly defended themselves by stating that these were just the rumors of envious wives.<sup>554</sup>

There were different kinds of apartment categories available for which different rents were payable. For example, in Velenje there were 7 apartment categories. A 1<sup>st</sup> category apartment would have a bathroom, an English toilet, electricity, water drainage installations, and include the right to use the laundry room and the basement. Category 1 apartments were also situated near the town center. At the other extreme, Category 7 apartments meant a very poor apartment, or rather, barracks.<sup>555</sup> These were supposed to house miners only until they moved into proper apartments. In 1953, the author of an article in a local newspaper argued that they could be good places to live in, only if housewives would take good care of them (instead of going out to work for a priest and neglecting their husband, children and home in this way).<sup>556</sup> An examination of the distribution lists of the first residents and their social status in three blocks situated in the town center shows that, in spite of the omnipresent idea of equality, a certain degree of social stratification did indeed exist, in which the technical and academic intelligentsia had greater status in the strata of the social elite.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid. Regulations on leasing the apartments of Velenje Coal Mine Company.

<sup>554</sup> Velenjski rudar, 15. November 1953, 11, 6.

<sup>555</sup> Rudar, 3. April 195, 2.

<sup>556</sup> Velenjski rudar, 1. May 1953, 4-5, 3.

<sup>557</sup> By distribution lists I mean lists, made by a committee of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, with names of the employees, their personal data, like married/singel/number of children, working grade, communist party member, and where and what kind of apartment is provided.

As already noted, the Category 1 apartments were situated in the town center. The Personnel Department of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, which was responsible for hiring, contracts, and employee issues, received 85 requests for the changing of family apartments and all the applicants wished to live in the town center.<sup>558</sup> Although apartments in the center were more expensive, they were close to a range of services and entertainment. The Hotel, restaurants, buffet and both taverns of the *Paka Catering Company* became the centers of social life in Velenje.



Fig. 3.36. Speeches at the 40th anniversary of the LCY 1919-1959 at the summer cinema at Velenje Lake, 1959.

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<sup>558</sup> Rudar, 18. January 1962, 2.



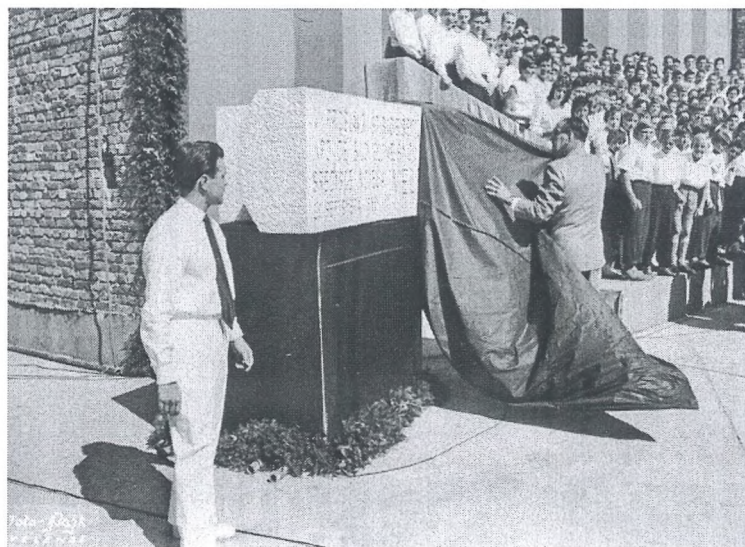


Fig. 3.37. The opening ceremony of the town center. Franc Leskošek-Luka unveiling the cornerstone - a plaque, 1959.



Fig. 3.38. Filming the miners on the main Tito Square in Velenje at the opening ceremony of the town center with many spectators on the top of the apartment building in the background, 1959.



Fig. 3.39. The opening ceremony of the town center; the entrance of the House of Culture is covered in a banner with the miners' sign and inscription: *Srečno!* (*Good Luck!*), 1959.

The massive voluntary initiatives in Velenje, together with the prosperous Velenje Coal Mine Company and satisfied workers had a significance not just on local, but also on Republican and Federal levels. In January 1958, in the traditional mining area of Zasavje (the birthplace of the Slovenian Communist Party, as well as of Miha Marinko, long-time Secretary of the CC CPS / LCS), the first massive organized strike in socialist Yugoslavia took place. 5,200 out of a total of 6,600 miners in Trbovlje, Hrastnik and Zagorje went on strike, due to low salaries, the management's attitude to workers, the situation in the municipalities, concerns over the prospect of the mines, etc. The miners claimed that they were striking against bureaucratization and claimed 50% of the profits for themselves.<sup>559</sup>

<sup>559</sup> Božo Repe: Stavka rudarjev v Trbovljah. In: Slovenska kronika XX. Stoletja, 231.



For the Slovenian and Yugoslavian leaders, the strike was upsetting and undermined their belief that self-managing socialism provided peaceful and non-conflicting development.<sup>560</sup> The Secretary of the CC LCY, Edvard Kardelj, immediately called for self-criticism from Party members as, in his view, the events in Zasavje were only a symptom of the disease which was raging in the LCY. Among the main drawbacks in the LCS, Kardelj indicated excessive consumerism, careerism and privileges.<sup>561</sup> Analysis of the strike grew into a dramatic debate on the political situation in the country. The discussion showed that the strike had not only happened due to the low wages and poor working conditions of the miners, but also due to the feeling of marginalization of Slovenia toward the Federation and due to the anti-Yugoslav mood, which prevailed throughout the country.

The events in Zasavje were the reason for calling an extended meeting of the CC LCY in February 1958, which was attended by the members of the Executive Committee and by the Republican Party leaders.<sup>562</sup> After the meeting, the CC LCY addressed a letter to the Party organizations in which the future tasks of the Communists were presented. Party leaders deplored the bureaucracy, privileges and corruption of officials at the local level, irresponsibility and indiscipline of the communists, deficiencies in the functioning of the economic system, but they also recognized the growth of nationalism and chauvinism in Yugoslavia. In the following months, Party organizations around the country repented of their bad deeds and carried out significant staff changes in regional and local Party

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<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Režek, 185.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 187.

committees, SZDL and labor unions.<sup>563</sup>

In April 1958, the seventh Congress of the LCY was convened. Its primary task was to adopt the program of the LCY, the third and last in the history of this Party. The document was prepared by a large team, headed by Kardelj. It was broken down into ten chapters, in which a vision of socialism formed in the decade since the adoption of the last program, was formulated. In the first chapter, the authors of the program greatly simplified the development of modern capitalism, since they did not take into account the great changes in developed Western societies, such as the formation of the European Economic Community or the development of the general welfare system. The second chapter looked at the socialist systems where communist parties were in power, and argued for the concept of equal international cooperation and solidarity between the communist, socialist and other left-wing parties. In regard to the international relations, the program offered an alternative to the bloc's policy with the introduction of active and peaceful coexistence. A special chapter was devoted to the Federation and national relations in Yugoslavia, with recognition of individuality, equality and the right to self-determination of all Yugoslav nations. In addition, brotherhood, unity and Yugoslav socialist patriotism were emphasized. An important part of the program was devoted to the experience of the Yugoslav revolution, the development of socialism and the so-called socialist democracy. The authors noted that the role of the State in the direct control and management would decrease, while its functions would be taken up by the self-managing bodies. Leaders in socialist development were seen as the manufacturers, working collectives, communes and socialist organizations, while communal property was

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<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 188, 189.



considered as the foundation of socialist democracy.<sup>564</sup>

Comparing conditions in the Zasavje region with Velenje leads to the conclusion that Director Žgank was winning his battle: the former "chicken mine" was becoming one of the most successful mines in the country. The miners were not just willing to work in the mine, together with other inhabitants of Velenje, but were substantially assisting in the building of a new, modern town after their shifts, which distinguished the town from other mining towns or mining colonies. Although the Republican and Federal leaders were not interested in the plans for a new Velenje or were even opposed to them, the 1959 opening came at the right time and could be used to show the correctness of the Yugoslavian way and the consolidation of its power during a time when, according to Režek, "the cracks in the monolith" were showing.

The most important event of the 1950s in Velenje took place on September 20, 1959, with the opening ceremony of the new center of Velenje. At first, the opening ceremony was planned for Miners' Day on July 3, but because most of the buildings had not yet been completed, the ceremony was postponed to September, although even then some buildings had not yet been finished.

A week before the official ceremony, the Tourist Association of Velenje had organized "Beautification Week". Throughout Beautification Week, people from the Šaleška Valley could attend many cultural events with concerts, folklore performances and lectures. On September 20, more than 20,000 Velenje residents and people from surrounding areas

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<sup>564</sup> Ibid., 196-199.

gathered in front of the House of Culture in Velenje. The façade of the House of Culture was not yet completed and therefore it was covered with a large curtain. The ceremony began at 10 a.m. with a procession in which 1,000 people participated. Although the inauguration was attended by a number of local and regional authorities and Party leaders, the only high-ranking leader to attend the opening was the long-time member of the Executive Committee of the CC LCY as well as member of the CC LCS and supporter of the new, modern Velenje, Franc Leskošek-Luka. After the ceremony, Leskošek-Luka unveiled a plaque which read: *"In celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the KPJ, the center of the new Velenje was officially opened on 20.9.1959."*

### *The Women*

The increasing development of heavy industry, especially the Velenje Coal Mine Company, welcomed an increasing number of men for permanent employment each year, while prospective plans showed that industry would undergo further development and an even greater male workforce would be needed. Consequently questions arose as to what to do with the female workforce. There were ongoing discussions at the Velenje Coal Mine Company about solving the problem of female unemployment.

In her research on the position of Slovenian women during the transition to socialism, historian Mateja Jeraj makes some comparisons with their position in interwar Yugoslavia. At that time, Slovenian women were subordinated to the men in their family, professional, and political lives. Women were primarily expected to be good mothers and



housewives. A considerable number of women were obliged to seek employment for economic reasons, since the Slovenian average worker's salary was often not sufficient for a family to survive on. Women were paid less than men for doing the same job. Slovenian women in the interwar period also did not have political (voting) rights. The program of the CPY, which also included demands for female equality and a socially fairer society, was in tune with most of the women's associations, who also fought for the political rights of women, equal pay for men and women for equal work, etc.<sup>565</sup>

During World War Two and the communist revolution, the Party leadership decided to establish a special women's organization: *The Anti-Fascist Women's League* (*Antifašistična fronta žensk*). At first its purpose was to draw women into the National Liberation War. Another important issue that arose during the war was that women in Slovenia (in the liberated territory) were given the right to vote for the first time. After the war, the *Anti-Fascist Women's League* helped in rebuilding the State and resolving social issues, promoting the full employment and education of women, children's issues, and women's participation in government. However, its main purpose was to educate women, especially rural women and to draw them away from the influence of their adversaries, such as priests and religious prejudices. The CPY was constantly arguing that women's issues were a part of the greater working class struggle and rejected the establishment of independent women's organizations. In 1953, after the *Socialist Union of Working People* took over the political education of all citizens, the *Anti-Fascist Women's League* was abolished. Committees of the former women's political organization were renamed as committees of the *Union of Women's Associations* (*Zveza*

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<sup>565</sup> Mateja Jeraj: Slovenke na prehodu v socializem. Cloga in položaj ženske v Sloveniji 1945-1953. Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana 2005, 334, 335.

*ženskih društev*), but its work was very modest and limited.<sup>566</sup> The only document I have found on the organization intended only for women in Velenje, was an article in the local newspaper on establishing the *Association for Advancement of Housekeeping (Društvo za napredek gospodinjstva)*.<sup>567</sup>

The Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company remembered that, at the beginning of the 1950s, food supplies in Velenje stores were insufficient. Providing enough food for the family depended on women's inventiveness. The Director's wife did not go out to work, but instead bred pigs, chickens and rabbits at home.<sup>568</sup> The food shortages caused a lot of frustration among women, as they needed to wait for hours in order to buy any food. According to Director Žgank: "*My wife woke up at 2 a.m. in order to line up at the butcher's to get a decent piece of meat for New Year's dinner. However, while she was waiting, the night shift ended at the mine and the miners, who had purchasing priority, bought up all the meat while she returned home without anything.*"<sup>569</sup>

Being a housewife was the most common occupation for women in Velenje in the late 1940s and most of the 1950s. Among 18 women, aged 21 to 42 who gave birth between December 1955 and January 1956, all, with the exception of one who was a shop assistant, were homemakers. Also, among 7 women who got married in this period, 1 was a homemaker, 2 were characterized as domestic help and 4 were farmers.<sup>570</sup> I would argue that, as there were no job possibilities for women, but since every citizen had the right to get a job, being a homemaker was considered a full-time-job. For example, in the

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<sup>566</sup> Mateja Jeraj: Communist Party, Anti Fascist Women's League and the realisation of the Equality of Women in Slovenia (1943 – 1953). *Arhivi* 26 (2003), 1, 161.

<sup>567</sup> Velenjski rudar, 29. November 1956, 5.

<sup>568</sup> Žgank, 54, 55.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>570</sup> Velenjski rudar, 7. Februar 1956, 6.



*Rudar* newspaper homemakers are constantly mentioned together with other professionals until the early 1960s.

While, in the first Yugoslavia, female education was of secondary importance, socialist Yugoslavia, on the other hand, supported the education of women as well as the education of all citizens.<sup>571</sup> The problem, however, arose after their schooling regarding difficulties in finding employment. In 1962, the local newspaper in Velenje questioned: *"What to do with young girls, who have just finished 8 years of primary education and have neither the conditions for further schooling or a chance to be trained in some trade, because of the trade shortage? In front of the Employee Institution, that began its work just at the beginning of this year, every day new problems arise, demanding immediate solutions, especially by the women, whose husbands have low salaries, widows with low or no pensions, women, who are socially endangered, out-of-wedlock mothers with no resources, and, as already mentioned, girls - teenagers, especially from low-income families."*<sup>572</sup>

Although the promotion of women in political and governmental bodies did not evolve in line with expectations, in 1946 the Slovenian Parliament had 7.5% of women and in 1953, 9.3%, whereas, before the war, women did not even have the right to vote in this area.<sup>573</sup> Only those women who were members of the Communist Party had any chance to engage in political life. The percentage of women in the Party in the period between 1945 and 1953 ranged between 25% and 32%, while the representation of women in local leadership was significantly lower, between 9% and 15%. Between 1945 and 1953, eight women were in the Slovenian Party leadership. All were born between 1909 and 1916,

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<sup>571</sup> Jeraj (2005), 336.

<sup>572</sup> *Rudar*, 18. January 1962, 6, 7.

<sup>573</sup> Jeraj (2005), 337.

and all but two had at least secondary education. All had been included in the CPY since before the Second World War and had participated in the Liberation movement. Except for one, all were wives of revolutionaries (among others, of Tone Tomšič, Edvard Kardelj, Boris Kidrič and Sergej Kraigher). The most important were Vida Tomšič and Lidija Šentjunc, who were also members of the Yugoslav Communist Party leadership.<sup>574</sup> As previously mentioned, the situation on the local level differed greatly from the Republican one. I did not examine in depth the participation of women in the political and governmental bodies of Velenje or the Šaleška Valley and am also not aware of any individual women who stood out or played a more important role in the local Party organization or in the decision-making processes at the local level. The wife of probably the most important man in the Valley since 1950, the Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, Vida Žgank, was a housewife and was never employed in Velenje. As the analysis of the photos from the Velenje Museum shows, she also very rarely participated in Velenje public events, such as the opening of the new center or the visits of numerous delegations. In contrast to her husband, there is also no evidence that she participated in any voluntary work.

On the other hand, the wife of the high-ranking supporter of Velenje, Marija Leskošek (born Dečman), had been a member of the Party since 1938. As a member of the Party, she also participated in the Liberation movement during the war and in 1945 was awarded the Order of Courage (*red hrabrosti*). She had completed a five-year Primary School education and, as stated in a Party form in November 1945, she worked as a housewife.<sup>575</sup> As noted in photos from the Velenje Museum, she accompanied her

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<sup>574</sup> Ibid., 320-326.

<sup>575</sup> AS, 1558 (1), Franc Leskošek, Anketni list, Marija Leskošek.



husband many times on his visits to Velenje. However, it would be hard to say that she presented a model of a brave and confident socialist revolutionary woman, since she always appeared, in contrast to her husband, restrained, inhibited and modest.

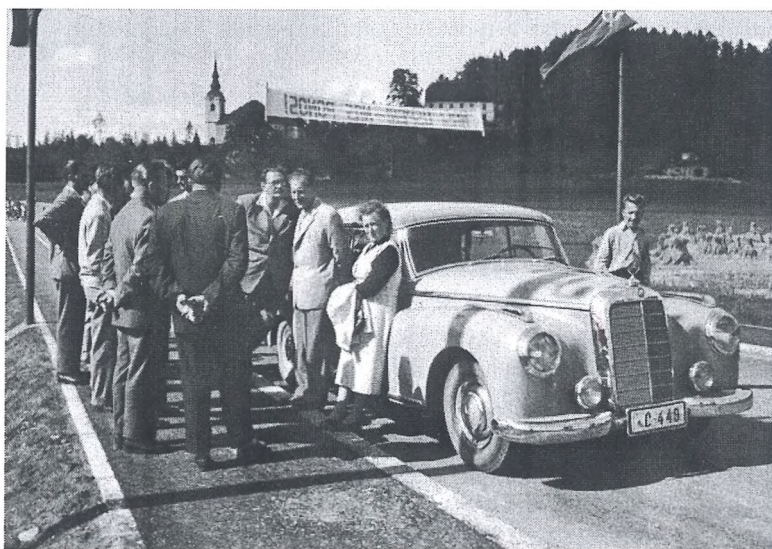


Fig. 4.40. On the extreme right, the wife of Franc Leskošek-Luka leaning against the car.

In 1956, the *Socialist Union of Working People* wanted to beautify New Velenje, arrange and tidy up the parks and sports fields, regulate the river flow and build new roads. This was also welcomed by most of Velenje's housewives. In an interview for the local newspaper, one of them stated: *"Above all, we, the housewives, who are in the apartments all day long with our household work and worries, feel the need to tidy up the parks and walking paths. Housewives, especially those with young children, find it very hard to relax from daily chores. We will certainly attend voluntary work to create a*

*better society for ourselves and our children".*<sup>576</sup> In numerous photos from the Velenje Museum, representing voluntary work during the river regulation, we see female volunteers digging the soil and doing the same work as men.



Fig. 3.41. Female volunteers, 1957.

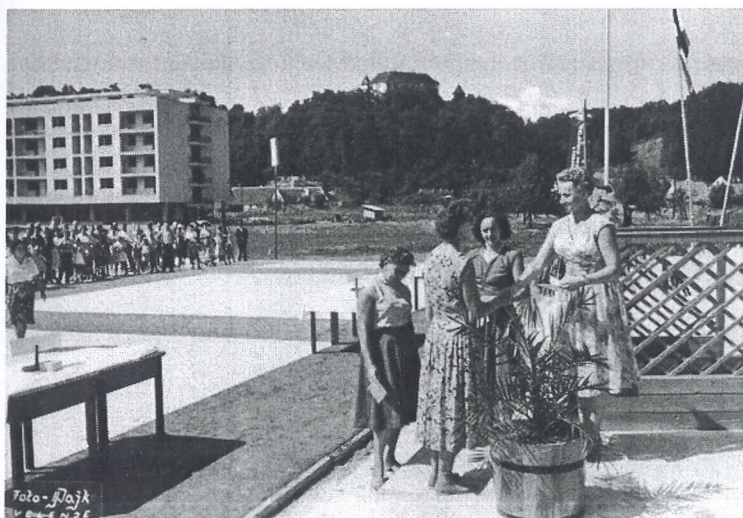


Fig. 3.42. Women receiving awards at the volunteer ceremony, 1959.

<sup>576</sup> Velenjski rudar, 15. August 1956, 2.



In January 1962, *Rudar* reported that of the total of 7,099 employees in Velenje, 1,387, or 18.1%, were female employees, most of them employed in the administration of industry (896), in commerce, agriculture, catering, or trade.<sup>577</sup> The article continued that, among the unemployed women, most of them were unqualified. Women that fulfilled the conditions were justified to receive monetary compensation and health insurance. The article concluded that it was necessary within the next five-year plan also to develop light industry, where an exclusive female workforce could be employed.<sup>578</sup>

After World War Two, in the village of Gorenje, about 15 km from Velenje, the Local Committee for Industry established the *Gorenje Metallurgic Company* from a former private blacksmith's workshop. This Company started to be more successful in 1953, with the arrival of a new Director, Ivan Atelšek. The employees were mainly people from the village, who dedicated their extra working hours in order to voluntarily built a new, bigger workshop. There were constant misunderstandings among authorities in the region about the Company's development. Atelšek was even expelled from the Party for a while, because of his ambitions. He remembered: "*Perhaps the most important factors in Gorenje's prosperity was the work organization and the management. Self-management was a wonderful motivation. It made it possible to achieve something from nothing. That was a great image for the managers and the workers. We could say to the workers: This is yours!*"<sup>579</sup>

In the late 1950s, the Gorenje Company had about 130 employees, half of that number were women, mostly unskilled workers. After production increased, the Company

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<sup>577</sup> Rudar, 18. January 1962, 6, 7.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> Gorenje Archive, History of the company, author unknown.

employed even more women. The working conditions were very bad. As the Velenje Coal Mine Company was seeking a solution to provide jobs for the miners' wives, its Director offered its old Company houses to the Gorenje Company, which were nevertheless still much bigger and better than those of the Gorenje Company in the village. The idea was to relocate the Gorenje Company to Velenje. Gorenje workers were against this solution, since it meant that they would have to drive to work every day, or move to Velenje. Finally, also with the interference of Franc Leskošek-Luka, the Company had to move to Velenje. The chronicler and a former employee of the Gorenje Company described Leskošek-Luka's vulgar and authoritative way of commanding. In 1958, when he and Žgank visited Gorenje and the employees were not enthusiastic about moving to Velenje, Luka said: "*Don't you mess around, here in the back of beyond!*"<sup>580</sup> After the Gorenje Company had moved to Velenje, women represented 70% of the Company's workforce. The work attitude of the male workers in Gorenje started to deteriorate. They would rather have looked for work in a coal mine, where the salaries were higher and where it was easier to get an apartment. However, also the traditional patriarchal attitudes of women's work being of less value, motivated men to rather find employment elsewhere. Also, soon petit bourgeois arguments began to spread, which were kept in Velenje until the 1990s. Young girls were told that if they did not study enough, they would only find employment in the production of the Gorenje Company.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Gorenje Archive, History of the Company. The quotation in Slovene reads: "*Kaj se tu v tej vukojebini zajejavate*". The literal translation of "vukojebina", a vulgar word in the Serbian/Croatian language, would be inappropriate for use in a formal context. To understand the broader meaning, we could use "godforsaken middle-of-nowhere" or "back of beyond". S translation for "zajejavati" I used a milder version of "mess around".

<sup>581</sup> Gorenje Archive, History of the Company. Authors memories.



Nevertheless, it seems that in the 1960s women were content to find employment, at least in the respect of the second salary in a family being important for the improvement of personal standards of living, which had started to increase.



Fig. 3.43. The manufacturing barracks of Gorenje in Gorenje village in the Šaleška Valley.

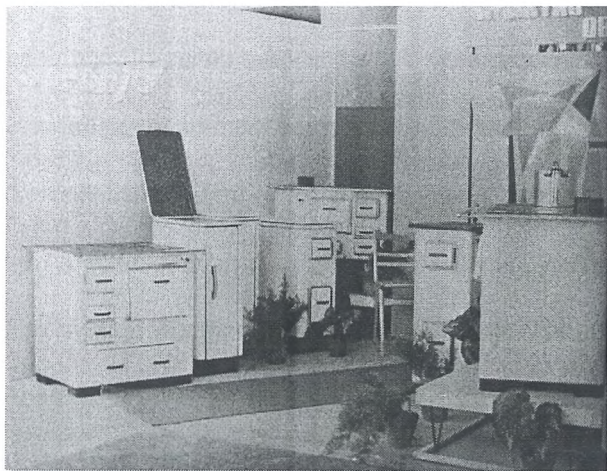


Fig. 3.44. Gorenje at the fair in Belgrade, 1959.

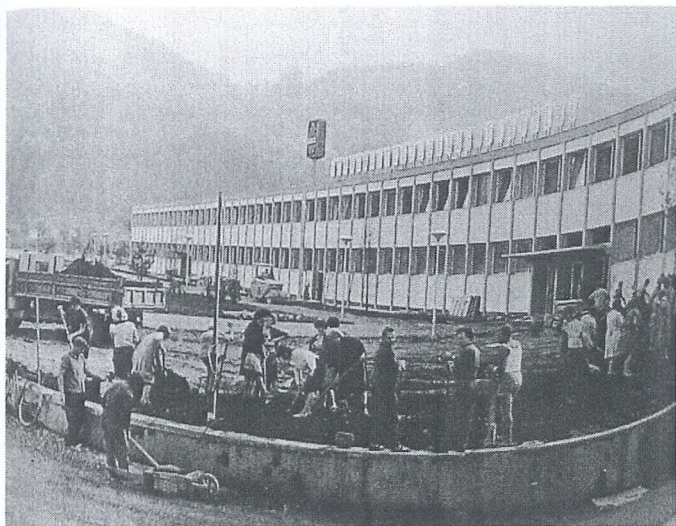


Fig. 3.44. Gorenje in Velenje, 1963.

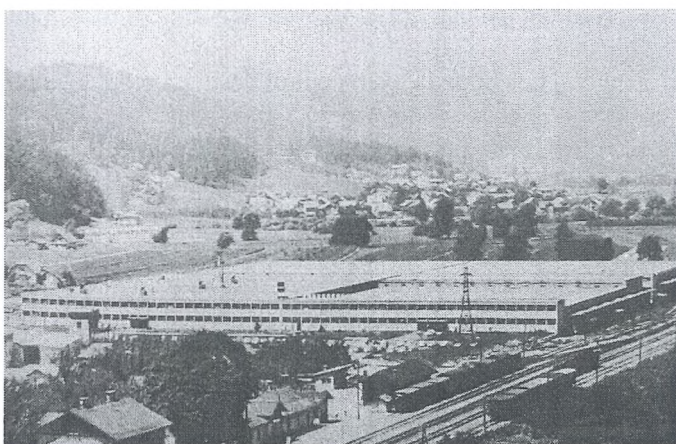


Fig. 3.46. Panoramic view of Gorenje in Velenje, 1964.



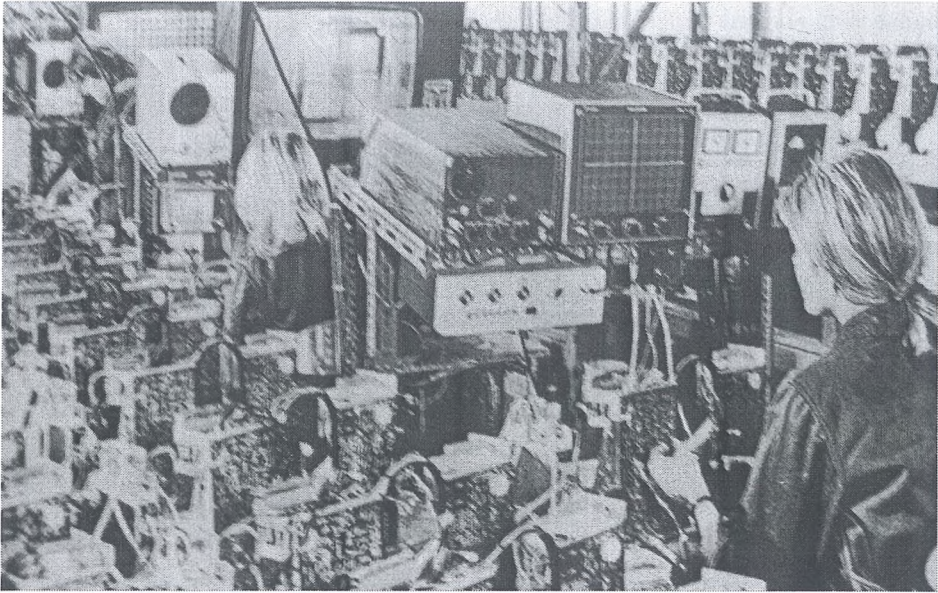


Fig. 3.47. Work in Gorenje, 1969.

### **Disappointments and Inhibitions**

#### *The Conspiracy*

The rapid developments and general enthusiasm among people in Velenje in the 1950s have been presented thus far. Although the community in Velenje succeeded in grasping the opportunities of the Yugoslavian decentralized system and turning it to its own advantage, also more critical voices were heard. In 1956, for example, the local newspaper published a special sarcastic column beginning with the question: "*Would you believe it if someone told you that..*", and then among other statements: "*...that the Jezero restaurant has improved its service and reduced the prices?; ...that housewives from*

*Velenje decided at a special meeting not to cook at home any more, but to feed their families in the miners' canteen, which is well known for its extremely tasty food, absurdly low prices and professional service?; ...that we will eat good bread, since the Velenje Bakery will not sell old and unhealthy bread any more?; ... that the Velenje Butchery will completely change its attitude to consumers and from now on sell only quality meat?; ... that our distributors will provide our working people with splendid and low price stores for the winter?; ...that our stores will be supplied with a variety of cheap fruit?"<sup>582</sup>*

This article corresponded to the broader problem of the late-1950s. At that time, Federal leaders supported a program for more rapid development of living standards, especially in towns and industrial centers. However, when a special committee at the CC LCY identified that the standard of living had stabilized, at the same time it noticed a considerable increase in the prices of food and services, but not an appropriate increase in wages. It was in 1963, when another article in the local newspaper described Velenje as one of the most expensive towns in Slovenia.<sup>583</sup>

In 1960, all forms of consumption (investments, budget, salaries, and so on) in the country began to grow much faster than production and productivity. Consequently, prices increased as well as the cost of living, the foreign trade deficit and illiquidity in international transactions. In June 1961, the Federal Executive Council proposed to the Federal Assembly the adoption of a stabilization program. The program prevailed on measures to increase production and cut spending. These measures proved to be effective, as, in the following year, economic growth was restored.<sup>584</sup> But the plan was not carried

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<sup>582</sup> Velenjski rudar, 15. September 1956, 6.

<sup>583</sup> Rudar, 20. November 1963, 6.

<sup>584</sup> Jože Prinčič: Gospodarski zastoj. In: Bojan Balkovec et.al.: Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja, Nova revija, 1997, 256.



out entirely, which in 1965 led to economic reform. The reform was based on the recognition of a free market, wiser use of economic criteria and the removal of all administrative brakes or State intervention in economic life. Economic reform, at least in the first two years, brought about a number of positive effects, but, in 1967 it demonstrated the negative effects, that in the following years almost wiped out the original reform efforts.<sup>585</sup>

In addition to economic problems, conflicts within the Party leadership also deepened, due to the problems regarding national conflicts. In March 1962, an enlarged session of the Executive Committee of the CC LCY was held in Belgrade, where a schism arose between a centralized and democratic bit-stream. The former saw the solution of the Yugoslav political and economic crisis in the centralized management of society, in a strong and uniform Party and in repressive apparatus. The latter advocated decentralization, self-management and the consideration of economic laws within the socialist system. Tito did not decide on either of the two factions, although he intimated that he was inclined to centralization.<sup>586</sup>

Despite the principle that the State was to withdraw from economic life, there were many problems in the transition to a market economy. State and Party leaders continued to promote decision-making abilities in the economy, especially during the economic downturn. Velenje, as we have seen, so far grasped the opportunities of self-management and a communal system. However, two plans for Velenje in the mid-1960s definitely completed the series of successful local decision-making and self-determination.

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<sup>585</sup> Prinčič: Gospodarska reforma. In: Slovenska kronika, 290.

<sup>586</sup> Repe: Konfiteor slovenskega cekaja. In: Slovenska kronika, 261.

The first one to be mentioned was the establishment in 1964 of a trade company, *Veletrg*, short for *Velenjska trgovina* (*Velenje's trade*). *Veletrg* was established in order to regulate the sale of coal at the Velenje Coal Mine Company and to provide the Company with an uninterrupted supply of various materials without intermediaries. In this way, the Company could sell the coal and buy materials at lower prices. At that time, the Velenje Coal Mine Company was one of the biggest clients of the *Metalka* trade company from Ljubljana. According to Žgank, the Director of *Metalka* was close to Miha Marinko.<sup>587</sup> It is not clear from the sources whether it was due to Marinko's intervention, but in March 1965 *Veletrg* received a summons from the Commercial Court of Slovenia. Its Director, Martin Turk and Žgank, as Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, became accused persons. The Prosecutor accused *Veletrg* of monopoly in the sale of coal and unlawfully pecuniary advantage. The Court in Ljubljana found *Veletrg* and Žgank innocent. In his memoirs, Žgank claims that Marinko and Ivan Maček Matija wanted him to be convicted.<sup>588</sup> It is not clear if it was due to their intervention, but the Prosecutor appealed to the Supreme Commercial Court in Belgrade. In May 1965, the Court in Belgrade found Žgank guilty and prohibited him from performing managerial duties in the Velenje Coal Mine Company.<sup>589</sup>

Žgank claimed that he formally had to resign from his position as Director due to the fictional *Veletrg* affair. But the real reason that he had to leave, according to Žgank, lay somewhere else: in the *Velenje Electro-Chemical Combine Project* (*Energokemični kombinat Velenje, EKK*).<sup>590</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Žgank, 166.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid., 187.



The Prospective plan of Velenje for the period between 1953 and 1962 stated that within ten years the Velenje Coal Mine Company would employ 2,700 workers and excavate 2,200,000 tons of coal. In September 1954, the representatives of the Velenje Coal Mine Company and Šoštanj and Velenje Power Plants consulted with representatives of the Boris Kidrič Ljubljana Chemical Institute. They decided to start the design of a concept for the construction of gas production and a chemical combination to dry the lignite and increase its caloric value from 3,200 to 5,200 calories. The first experiments to dry Velenje lignite were already carried out in 1948 in Most in Czechoslovakia. In December 1960, an agreement was signed to establish business associations called *Electro-Chemical Combine (Energokemični kombinat Velenje, EKK)*.

In the following month, January 1961, the Republican Executive Council approved the investment program. The initial financial plan between the EKK and the Republican Executive Council was that they would try to obtain 50% of the investment funds from Federal sources. In the case of this not succeeding, then the entire investment would be provided by Republican funds.<sup>591</sup> Despite partial approval of the program, serious concerns soon arose as to whether the investment was sufficiently justified. The investment was becoming increasingly politically important.

The Slovenian Commercial Bank, which should have allowed credits for the project, pointed out its illiquidity many times. However, in discussions with the Republican Executive Council, the Bank continued to credit the EKK. In early 1966, by order of the Bank, Dr. Aleksander Bajt from the Institute of Economics of the Faculty of Law (who, despite many concerns, was leaning more in favor of the investment) ended his term of

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<sup>591</sup> Božo Repe: Velenje Electro-Chemical Combine as an Example of Socialist Type (Non)Enterprise. In: *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* XXXIV, 1994, 122.

expertise. Despite the fact that the equipment supply had already been completed in April 1966, in July 1967 all the committees of the Republican Assembly adopted the proposal of the Executive Committee of the SRS on the liquidation of the EKK.<sup>592</sup> This decision was already made under the presidency of Stane Kavčič, the reform-orientated politician, who became the President of the Republican Executive Committee in 1967. According to Repe, Kavčič was indeed the most responsible for the liquidation of the EKK, but under already far too chaotic conditions.<sup>593</sup> One of the Deputies depicted EKK as one of "*the greatest unnatural economic disasters in Slovenia*".<sup>594</sup> No one has ever taken political responsibility for the failure of a project worth tens of millions of dollars.<sup>595</sup>

Interestingly, in 1964, just before the agony involving the EKK began, Slovenian film director, Franci Križaj, released a film called *Zarota (The Conspiracy)*, which almost predicted the future events around the EKK.<sup>596</sup> The film, with some of the best Slovenian actors in the main roles, was shot in Velenje, proving the town's photogenic possibilities. In many scenes, an impression was given that events in the film were taking place in a big, modern city. The film presents how, during an Executive Committee discussion on a very important issue that would have major consequences on the economic development of the country, the Deputies had not received a very important survey done by a professor and his team on how to save the energy industry (the parallel to Aleksander Bajt). The survey was removed by the Secret Police, whose headquarters were situated in the House of Culture in Velenje. The film depicts the work and methods of the Secret Police and its deviations from the ideals of the socialist system. After its release, the movie was banned.

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<sup>592</sup> Kljajič, 373, Repe: Likvidacija Energokemičnega kombinata Velenje. In: Slovenska kronika, 302.

<sup>593</sup> Repe (1994), 131.

<sup>594</sup> Repe (1997), 302.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid..

<sup>596</sup> Franci Križaj (director): *Zarota*, Viba film, 1964.



As already noted, after being accused in the *Veletrg* affair, Žgank had to end his directorship of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. When he became aware of the judgment of the Court in Belgrade, he burned his Party Membership Card in anger.<sup>597</sup> In 1966, he retired and bought himself a machine for plastics' processing for his home garage. However, he still had the major support of the local community. In 1969, Ivan Atelšek, Director of Gorenje, convinced Žgank to stand as a candidate, as an employee of Gorenje, on the list for Committee members for the Velenje Assembly.<sup>598</sup> He was not only elected as a Deputy, but at the first session after the elections, the Deputies elected him as Mayor, or President of the Velenje Municipal Assembly.



Fig. 3.48. – 3.49. Signing a contract for the EKK in the office and in a restaurant, about 1955.

<sup>597</sup> Žgank, 190.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid., 251.



Fig. 3.50. Visit of Edvard Kardelj to Velenje.

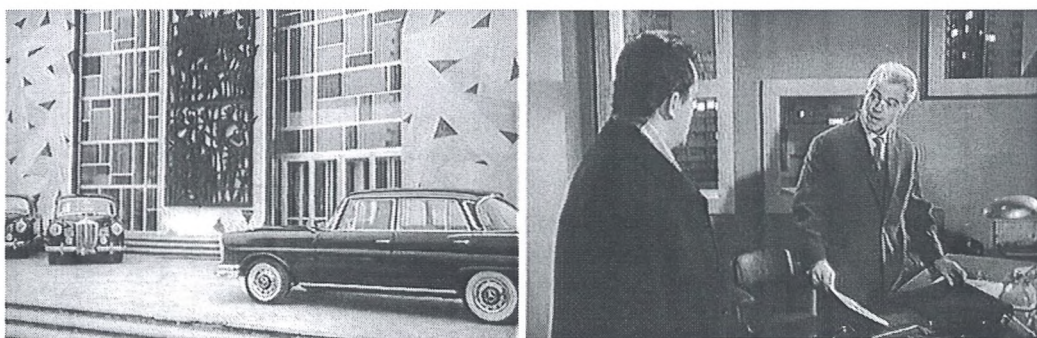


Fig. 3.51. The opening scene of the movie, Zarota. Black Mercedes Benz cars at the entrance of the House of Culture, representing the building of the Control Commission, 1964.

Fig. 3.52. Office of the Control Commission situated in the House of Culture in Velenje. The Velenje Coal Mine Company administrative building and the first Velenje skyscraper in the background, giving the sense of a big city, 1964.



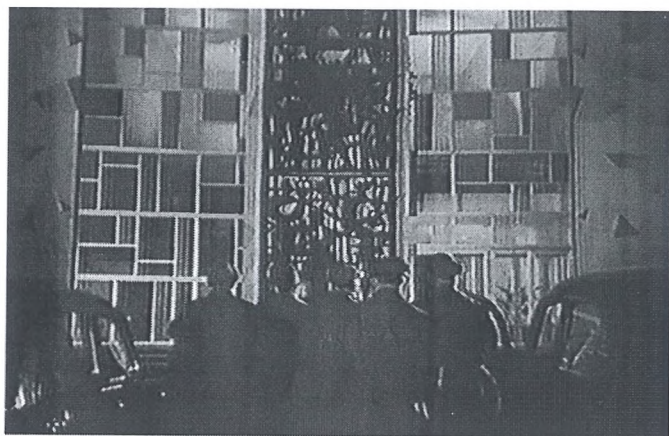


Fig. 3.53. The House of Culture in Velenje, as the building of the Control Commission in the movie, Zarota, 1964.

#### 4. IDENTITIES DISPLAYED AND CONTESTED

If we were taking a stroll through Havířov in 1962, we could start at the *Cinema Joy* (*Kino Radost*) on *Gottwaldova Street*, named after the long-term Czechoslovakian communist leader and first President of communist Czechoslovakia. The Cinema building is new, although it looks like a renovated Renaissance building. *Gottwaldova Street*, together with the parallel street *Of the Second Five-Year Plan*, are built in the *Sorela* style, the Czechoslovakian version of the Socialist Realist style, used approximately between 1950 and 1955, which emphasizes elements from the Czech Renaissance (copying from the Moravian Renaissance towns), but also uses elements from Slovakian rural life.

As we walk down *Gottwaldova Street*, we arrive at the *Square of Victorious February* (*Náměstí Vítězného února*), named after the communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in February 1948. Here, just recently, a new store has opened—it is *Gourmet* (*Labužník*), a Functionalist building, inspired by the Expo 58 Brussels World's Fair. It will only be in the mid-1970s when the statue of Lenin is erected here.

From this point, we could turn left and rest in a lovely park behind the *Cinema Joy* next to the *Boy with a Fish* (*Hoch s rybou*) fountain, or we could carry on straight ahead to *Zapotockeho Street*, named after the second communist Czechoslovakian President, Antonín Zápotocký (President until his death in 1957), constructed in the late 1950s in a very modest Socialist Modernist style. Passing the tallest building in the center, we can hardly miss seeing the sign on the top of the building: *All for Peace and Socialism*. The sign is also visible from the very beginning of the 2,5 km- (1,5 mile-) long *Zapotockeho*



*Street*, which became the main entrance to the town. It will be in 1973 when *The Future* (*Bodoucnost*)—a large shopping mall—is opened in this street. Before we reach our final destination, *On the Embankment* (*Na nábřeží*), near the Lučina River, where we can take a seat and relax in the *Asterix* restaurant, we pass the *Rosa Luxemburgove* Primary School in *Patrika Lumumby Street*, named after the Congolese Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba.

Our tour of Velenje begins after the opening of the new town center. We begin in the main *Kidričeva Street*, which connects Novo Velenje on the right bank of the Paka River with the new center on the left bank. This street was named after Boris Kidrič, leading Slovenian communist, a partisan, member of the Yugoslavian *Politburo*, Minister of Industry, who died in 1953. Then we turn into *Cankarjeva Street* in the new center, designated as a pedestrian-only street, named after the Slovenian writer, Ivan Cankar, who is regarded as the founder of Modernism in Slovenian literature and considered to be the greatest writer in the Slovenian language. Walking down this street, we pass a four-storied apartment block, inhabited mainly by doctors and professors, with a barber store and an *Express Buffet* on the first floor. We pass the *People's University*, the façade of which is painted red, and a restaurant and bar called the *Workers' Club*, before entering the large *Tito Square*, named after Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslavian President.

On the left side of the Square, we see the white, modern, square building of the town's largest coalmining company. In front of the building, there is a floral decoration in the shape of the letter L, in honor of Franc Leskošek-Luka, Slovenian communist and member of the *Politburo*. On the right, we see the post-Modernist House of Culture.

Further down on the right, we arrive at the square, glass building of the Municipality, built on pillars. As we continue our walk, we pass *Velenje* store (*Velenjski magazin*) and cross *Šaleska Street*, named after the Šalek Valley, where the town is situated. We reach Hotel Paka, named after the town's river. As we take a seat on the hotel terrace and order a cup of Turkish coffee, we view the only skyscraper in the town at that time, displaying at the top of the building a miners' sign with the inscription: *Good luck! (Srečno!)*. We admire the mighty Velenje Castle on the hill behind us, where the new Republican *Coalmining Museum* was established.

This chapter discusses the utilization of public spaces. The introduction to this chapter cites two examples in order to discuss the different identities of both towns (local, regional, national, socialist, professional) as they developed and were presented in the 1950s and 1960s. The chapter tries to define the identities that were important for the internalization of the ideology. This chapter examines the public sphere as a world where local, national, and Utopian elements, codes, or symbols, went hand in hand to form a "socialist world" in which, in the words of Czech semiologist, Vladimír Macura, people were able to handle mechanical and mindless (*bezmyšlenkovitě*) tasks.<sup>599</sup> The chapter aims to recognize which identities and elements in the public space arose anew, were prioritized, and which were transformed. The Slovenian town named the public spaces by using mostly local names (the river, the valley, the town), or names of national (Slovenian) importance (names of Slovenian writers, poets, Slovenian partisans and communists), strongly emphasizing its mining identity. The most important (and almost the only) elements to emphasize the Yugoslavian and socialist identity were the names of

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<sup>599</sup> Vladimír Macura: *Šťastný věk* (a jiné studie o socialistické kultuře), Academia, Praha 2008, 10.



*Tito Square* and the red building of the *People's University*. The Czechoslovakian example, on the other hand, gives us an image of local, national, federal, international and strong communist (Utopian) identities.

## 4.1 BETWEEN LOCAL, NATIONAL AND SOCIALIST IDENTITIES

### **Making the Town for Ourselves**

#### *Festivals and Celebrations*

The population in Havířov increased very quickly: in 1956 the town had 5,000 more residents, coming from all parts of Czechoslovakia. Before moving to Havířov, they practiced the customs and spoke the languages of their home towns. People of many different nationalities resided in the town: 82% of Czech nationality, 12% of Slovak nationality, 4% of Polish nationality. There were also residents of Hungarian and other nationalities, all with different social and individual customs. The diverse, international composition of the population was, according to the chronicler of Havířov, not appreciated by the town authorities, since they found it hard to instill local patriotism and develop a common dialect and customs.<sup>600</sup>

According to the chronicler, at first the interaction between the newcomers and locals was restrained and cold and it took time for them to become accustomed to one another. In the second phase, the newcomers became friendlier with their neighbors, mostly by using the communal services in their homes. In the next phase, people met at social events. Slowly, new local traditions and festivities began to develop with the participation of an increasing number of town residents. What authorities were hoping for as the final

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<sup>600</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1956, 41.



phase in the development of relationships among residents was the stabilization (*stabilizace*) of social and cultural activities.<sup>601</sup>

Searching for a town identity, as well as a more ambitious approach to the appearance of the town, was a constant process between the town authorities and residents. In 1959, the Havířov chronicler wrote that "the town has a tasteless installation of TV aerials and a patchy arrangement of green areas, which fully indulge the fantasy of the inhabitants."<sup>602</sup> For example, it happened that some residents, in their efforts to improve the appearance of the town, tried to create an original decoration in front of their homes, which sometimes bordered, according to the chronicler, on tastelessness (*nevkusnost*): on green areas, there appeared concrete or brick constructed castles in every possible or even impossible historical style. Dwarfs, frogs and turnips were also popular.<sup>603</sup> In addition, the new, post-*Sorela* parts of town were on the list of problematic, unattractive and monotonous neighborhoods. A suggestion was made to resolve the problem with vivid colors on the façades, paying special attention to color harmony and quality.<sup>604</sup>

In 1959, a delegation from the Havířov National Committee visited Gottwaldov, where it became inspired by their organization of Street Committees. Thus far, there were 26 Street Committees in Havířov, that is approximately one for every 1,500 inhabitants. After the reorganization in 1959, 73 Street Committees were established. Street Committees were the intermediate link between the National Committee and residents. They were composed of 5 to 15 residents of a certain quarter. Their basic tasks were to provide assistance to the National Committee to improve the appearance of the town, to

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid. 1959, 28.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid., 1962, 13, 14.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

obtain residents to carry out the necessary maintenance of streets, public spaces and houses, to carry out the control of the work of building caretakers, to maintain cleanliness, organize cultural and health education work and to ensure participation at residents' meetings, etc.<sup>605</sup>

The reorganization of the local Town Committee towards the more adequate participation of town residents in performing communal work had a reference in the nationwide activity called *Akce Z* (*Initiative Z*). *Akce Z* (Z stands for *Zvelebování – beautification*) was officially voluntary, unpaid work and was meant as assistance in areas where State or Municipal authorities could not handle these tasks, whether for financial reasons or due to poor planning.<sup>606</sup>

In Havířov, before the celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Liberation, a special initiative was announced: "*For a more beautiful town of Havířov*". *Bytostav*, the special administration for housing estates at the Ostrava-Karviná Coal Mine Company, made a special plan, providing for those who were responsible to conduct specific tasks. Among the responsible persons would be *Bytostav*, special cleaners (*čistící četá*) and tenants. For example, according to this plan, the tenants were responsible, amongst other items, for painting ornamental gardens.<sup>607</sup>

The following year, 1961, in honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the KSČ, the National Committee in Havířov decided that each resident should do 11 hours of "voluntary" work (*brigádnických hodin*). During the year, 735,321 "voluntary" hours were performed,

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid., 1959, 33.

<sup>606</sup> For example: Jiří Mareček: *Zeleň na vesnici: Akce Z, TEPS místního hospodářství*, Prague 1966. Bohumil Kavka: *Zeleň v obcích a krajině : Akce Z, TEPS místního hospodářství*, Prague 1966.

<sup>607</sup> Archive of the OKD, 1401, Akce k 15. výročí osvobození "Za krásnější město Havířov".



which meant more than 14 hours per resident.<sup>608</sup> Those Street Committees who had contributed the most to the improved quality of life in the town, were awarded at a ceremonial session of the National Committee.

The most noticeable example of demonstrating the success in the decoration and embellishment of the town was an annual festival, which began in 1973, called *Havířov in Flowers* (*Havířov v květech*). In the beginning, the festival was part of *Initiative Z*. The celebration took place in September, starting with a floral exhibition of nurseries from all over Czechoslovakia. The exhibition was accompanied by a floral parade, with numerous floats, decorated by gardeners and florists from Havířov, Prague, Bratislava and, in the late 1970s, even from Poland and East Germany. Brass bands, dance and folklore groups, and even a presentation of a rural wedding, were all part of the parade.<sup>609</sup>



<sup>608</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1961, 3.

<sup>609</sup> Photo material of the Těšínska Museum.



Fig. 4.1. - 4.2. *Havířov in Flowers*, early 1973. This was an authentic local festival, celebrating the beauty and color of a young town and comprising local, regional, national and socialist identities.

For the purpose of instilling local patriotism, old local identities were not merely recognized, but also promoted. The Havířov chronicler reported two events in November, 1957. The first and lesser reported event was the death of the Czechoslovakian President, Antonín Zápotocký. A catafalque was installed in *Cinema Radost (Joy)*, where people could sign a condolence list and bring flowers. The commemoration took place in front of the *Parky Karčagína* building at the same time as the main ceremony in Prague.<sup>610</sup>

The chronicler gave a more extensive report, however, on the 'Golden Wedding' of a couple from Wallachia, residing in Havířov. At the gala ceremony, the spouses wore their Wallachian costumes and the *Ogari* folklore group accompanied them, singing songs from their home towns. The main speaker was The town's Mayor, František Podoba. According to the chronicler, the wife of 50 years wished that her fellow countrymen

<sup>610</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1957, 9.



could see how the town cared for its older inhabitants. At the end of the ceremony, *Ogari* performed outdoors, in front of the building of the National Committee.<sup>611</sup>

The *Ogari* ensemble promoted Wallachian dancing in Havířov and regularly performed at local celebrations. Wallachia, *Valašsko*, is the easternmost part of Moravia, close to the border with Slovakia. The Wallachians migrated over the Carpathians from Southern Romania to Moravia between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. On their migratory route, the Wallachians gradually lost their original language, with the exception of some Romanian words used in their dialect, but retained much of their culture (especially folklore, songs and costumes). From the ethnic point of view, they were originally a Ruthenian-Romanian population, while in the written sources they were called Wallachians or Ruthenians.<sup>612</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> May 1957 celebrations were described by the Havířov chronicler as follows: "The celebration was very joyful and attended by approximately 10,000 people. Members of the National Front were in the parade on Gottwald Street heading towards the *Parky Karčagina* building, where a big stage was erected. Here different cultural groups performed, among them also the *Ogari* ethnic group in their beautiful Wallachian costumes, which spectators enjoyed very much."<sup>613</sup>

Promotion of ethnic diversity was not just a matter on the local level, but was also encouraged on a national level at the greatest and most important festivity in Czechoslovakia, the *Spartakiáda*. *Spartakiáda*, named after Spartacus, the Thracian

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<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

<sup>612</sup> Ladislav Baletka: *Růžďka, pohled do historie obce na Valašsku*, Vsetín 1998. Ilja Burian, Bohuslav Burian: *Dějiny protestantismu na Vsetínsku*, Vsetín 1993. T.J. Winnifruth: Romanized Illyrians, the ancestors of the modern Vlachs. In: *Badlands-Borderland: A History of Southern Albania/Northern Epirus*, 2003, 44.

<sup>613</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1957, 9.

gladiator, who led the slave revolt in ancient Rome, was an attempt to incorporate the *Sokol* tradition within a socialist context. The *Sokol* (Falcon) movement, first founded in Prague in the 1960s, was primarily a youth sporting movement and gymnastics organization. Soon the training extended to all classes and eventually also to women. Although officially an institution "above politics", the *Sokol* played an important part in the development of Czech nationalism, providing a forum for the spread of mass-based nationalist ideologies. The movement also became very popular in other Slavic populated regions of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The *Sokol* organized what were known as *Slety*—massive festivals with gymnastic-theatrical performances. During the Austro-Hungarian period, as well later in the First Republic, the *Sokol Slety* demonstrated health, strength and Czechness, leading to the illusion of national unity.

According to Macura, the *Sokol Slety* celebrated the *Sokol* (*sebeoslava Sokola*), while the *Spartakiáda* celebrated the people (*sebeoslava lidu*). Parades organized in different regions represented unity, the oneness of the Czechoslovakian people, together with the uniqueness of the region. People browsing through the streets of the capital were overindulgent towards the representatives of the Party and government, i.e. the representatives of their own, "people's power", recognizing in them their own sovereignty.<sup>614</sup>

The dance festivities in the stadium were part of the first *Spartakiáda* in 1955. Those dance festivities had their roots in the ethnic dance performances of the Moravian *Sokol* at the 5th festival in 1907. However, in 1955 their aim was different. Dance groups that came from all over the country were to represent Czechoslovakia as a whole, as a unity, to demonstrate common joy at the unchanging "state of mind" of the new socialist

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<sup>614</sup> Macura, 152.



people.<sup>615</sup> In 1960, the Havířov local newspaper reported with enthusiasm that the "Wallachian" ethnic group, *Ogari*, had performed the "Song of a Native Land" (*Píseň rodné země*)<sup>616</sup> in the Strahov stadium in Prague at the 2nd nationwide *Spartakiáda*. It was not the original Silesian tradition, present in the territory of Havířov for centuries, but the Wallachian one that was presented at a nationwide celebration as being representative of the region. The reason for the Wallachian ethnography becoming so popular in Havířov and eventually being taken for granted as the town's ethnic heritage, could be found in the migration of workers from Eastern Moravia to the new town, as well as in the similarity of the Wallachian culture to that of the Slovaks, who, after the Czechs, represented the second largest national group in Havířov.



Fig. 4.3. Ethnic group of Silesian dancers, 1957.

Fig. 4.4. *Ogari*, Wallachian folklore group, 1959.

Fig. 4.5. Golden Wedding in original Wallachian costumes, 1957.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>616</sup> Hlasý Havířova, August 1960, 4.



Fig. 4.6. Haviřov, a town of the future. Our newest town, without tradition, 1957.  
Fig. 4.7. Libuše Mináčová: Haviřov, *Mesto osudov* (*The Town of Destiny*), 1960.



Fig. 4.8. The newest town in Czechoslovakia, full of strollers, 1961.



Fig. 4.9. The text under the photo reads: *Let's do everything for our children to be able to live in communism!* 1961.

The stylized world of post-war people's democracies embraced a future paradise by creating a myth out of childhood and youth, which represented the most appropriate material for the new, socialist person. In the socialist emblematic, children and young people were the oft-used and abused symbols of the new era. The youth were presented as the model generation of communism, which embodied new ideals and was unburdened by past legacies.<sup>617</sup> The socialist world always appeared as the onset of a young world, and in this sense, as a world-child, as a world for children, and as a world of the future with children and youth as its real citizens.<sup>618</sup> The childish aspect created a powerful protective filter for the socialist world. Everything was curtailed or adapted according to the needs of the childish perspective: the complex was moderated to the simple, the tragic to the optimistic, and the reflective to the enthusiastic.<sup>619</sup>

Havířov responded to this perspective in two ways. Firstly, it was the newest town in Czechoslovakia. Its youth was immediately a subject of great potential. The town was represented as the town of the future, as a town without tradition, the town of destiny, where everything was still open and possible. The second aspect related to the population structure. Mostly young people or young couples had moved to Havířov, and soon started to have children. In 1958, 40% of the total population in Havířov was under 18 years of age and only 2% were older than 60.<sup>620</sup> Miloš Fojtík, Vice-President of the Town

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<sup>617</sup> Macura, 163.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid..

<sup>619</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>620</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1958, 143,144,

Committee, remembers that on September 1<sup>st</sup>, when the new school year began and he saw all the children on the streets of the town, he had tears in his eyes.<sup>621</sup> The town was characterized by children and new-born babies.

The analysis of photographic material from the mid-1950s to the early-1970s shows the huge number of strollers in the town. The importance of children was visible in the town's public sphere. For example, in 1953 when a nursery school in the former Šumbark was built in the Socialist Realist style, one of the sgraffiti depicted children, accompanied by the inscription: *Children are the future of the nation (Děti budoucnost národa)*.

#### *Striving for World Peace*

The Coal Mine Company was the most important employer of Havířov residents. The name of the coal mine situated in the village of Suchá was the *František Josef Mine*, named after Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph. During the First Czechoslovakian Republic, the mine was renamed as *Důl Suchá (Suchá Pit)*. In October 1949, the pit was renamed as *Důl Dukla*. Dukla is a Polish town, about 350 kilometers from Suchá/Havířov, bordering on Slovakia, not far from Ukraine. It was in Dukla, where between September and October 1944, the Battle of Dukla Pass on the Eastern Front between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union took place. The battle, also known as the Dukla-Prešov Offensive, was one of the most terrifying battles on the Eastern Front. The Slovak National Uprising rebelled against the Nazis and was almost crushed, before the Soviet Army finally came to its aid. In 1949, the same year as the Suchá Pit was renamed as the Dukla Pit, the Czechoslovakian government erected a memorial and cemetery south-east of the Dukla border crossing, in Vyšný Komárnik, the first liberated village on Czechoslovakian

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<sup>621</sup> Vigner: Mesto zeleně.



territory.<sup>622</sup> In Czechoslovakia, the Battle of Dukla Pass was remembered and celebrated as a great success, achieved with the aid of the Soviet Union, who did not just help the country towards liberation, but also to build socialism.<sup>623</sup>



Fig. 4.10. Entrance to Dukla Stadium, 1960.

The end of the war, a quest for peace and the building of socialism were attributes within the socialist world. Anything connected with the East was associated with peace and anything connected with the West was associated with war. However, peace was not considered as something calm, quiet and harmonious, but as a battle with fierce fighting.<sup>624</sup> The myth of socialism as a kingdom of peace is closely connected with the myth of socialism as a world of fighting, which at first appears as a paradox. Both myths are related to the central vision of Paradise. Peace is a necessary part of the life in Eden, but the path leading to it is filled with struggle.<sup>625</sup> The Apocalypse, the disastrous battle at the threshold of the "New World", "The Last Battle", was also a popular part of the

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<sup>622</sup> Branislav Jamnický, Zdeněk Andreis: *Dukelsko-prešovská operace*, Velká vojenská knihovna; sv. 64, Praha 1957.

<sup>623</sup> Especially in Slovakia it was remembered as a great battle of Slovak National Uprising.

<sup>624</sup> Macura, 36-38.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

socialist eschatology. "The Last Battle" can be viewed in two ways, related to the double meaning of Utopia: as that already achieved, or as a future Utopia.<sup>626</sup> Paradise was built on the escalation of polarity to non-Paradise. Also great historical events tend to adopt this perspective to be transformed from non-Paradise to Paradise.

The construction of a new town in Šumbark-Bludovice/Havířov coincided with the Korean War. The first part of the new town that was under construction was called *Na Korei* (*On Korea*). Mr. Firla was employed on *Na Korei* as an architect. He remembers that everything was full of mud, disordered and people found it hard to believe that one day a whole town would arise there.<sup>627</sup> As people in Korea were fighting for socialism, a better tomorrow, so people working on *Na Korei* were planning and building a future Paradise. Remembrance of the end of the war and reminders of living in peace and socialism were fully present in the everyday life of Havířovians, whether it was in the local newspaper or incorporated in the town's architecture. For example, one of the buildings of a school complex built in 1955 had a sgraffiti depicting the idealistic image of the 1945 Liberation, accompanied by the inscription: *1945-1955: The Ten-Year Anniversary of Peace*. Another inscription: *For Socialism – For Peace*, which was hard not to notice, was placed on the top of a building in the town center, apposite the *Labužník* building.

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>627</sup> Vigner: Mesto zeleně.





Fig. 4.11. Sign *For Socialism – For Peace* on top of the building.



Fig. 4.12. *For Socialism – For Peace* during Havířov in Flowers.

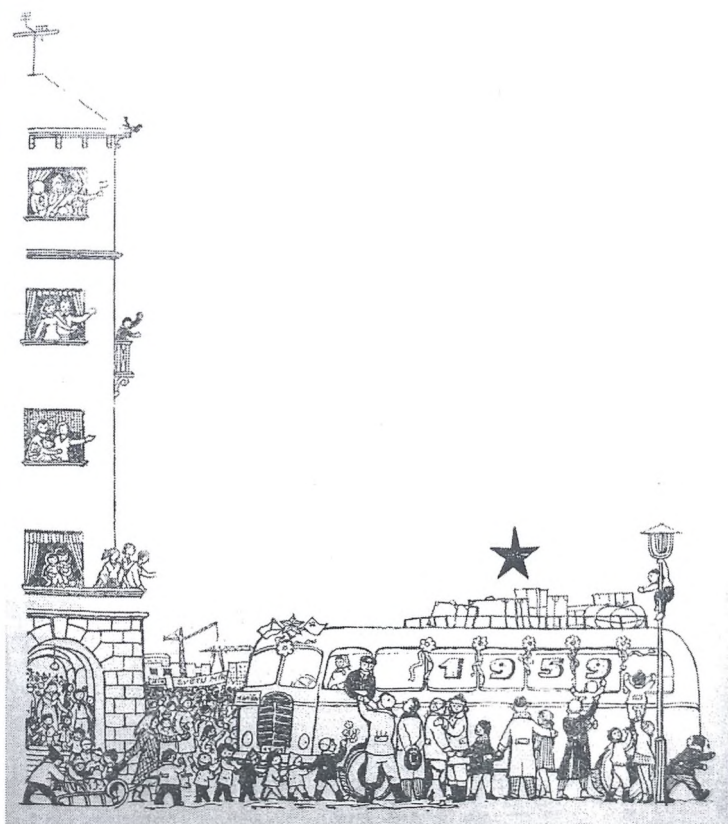


Fig. 4.13. Pioneers of Havířov. Banner reads: *Peace in the World*, 1959.



Fig. 4.14. *We are voting for peace – for socialism*, 1960.





Fig. 4.15. Fifteenth Anniversary of the end of the war, 1960.

Anti-war, anti-Fascist, youth, and a socialist identity were also interlinked during the preparations and decision making for the opening of the first museum in Havířov. In March 1960, the new *Museum of Socialist Construction* was established. At first, according to the town chronicler, the concept of the new institution was not clear. A decision was taken that the first task would be the preparation of an exposition dedicated to the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Havířov being declared an independent town. The exhibition should present, through the example of Havířov, the scope of changes that had occurred in Czechoslovakia under the KSČ leadership. In addition, the inhabitants of Havířov should help with the preparations by collecting interesting material. This exhibition would later be part of a permanent exhibition.

The intentions for the new museum were, however, confronted with many uncertainties, such as an unclear concept, financial difficulties, as well as the location of the museum.

Two options were considered for the location: the new Petr Bezruč House of Culture in Havířov or the old Castle in Životice. The National Committee decided on the first option.<sup>628</sup> A year later, in 1961, the *Museum of Socialist Construction* was still confronted with many difficulties. The idea was born to establish another museum, the *Museum of Anti-Fascist Resistance* in Životice and to combine it with the *Museum of Socialist Construction*.<sup>629</sup> This, however, did not materialize.

In 1963, the *Museum of Socialist Construction* was taken over by the Regional National Committee in Karviná. Although the Museum was still seeking a permanent location, work on the permanent exhibition began. Also, two exhibitions were presented in the Petr Bezruč House of Culture, where the museum was temporarily housed.<sup>630</sup> On 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1963, the anniversary of the Životice tragedy, the *Museum of Anti-Fascist Resistance* was also opened in the old Castle in Životice. The Museum was established by an initiative of the Regional Committee of the KSČ for the purpose of collecting documents related to the illegal struggle of the Czech and Polish communists in Těšínsko.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> The Chronicle of Havířov, 1960, 70.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid., 1961, 74.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid., 1963, 20.

<sup>631</sup> Ibid., 1964, 27.





Fig. 4.16.–4.17. Direction to the *Museum odboje* (in Czech), *Muzeum walki* (in Polish), Havířov – Životice, 1963.



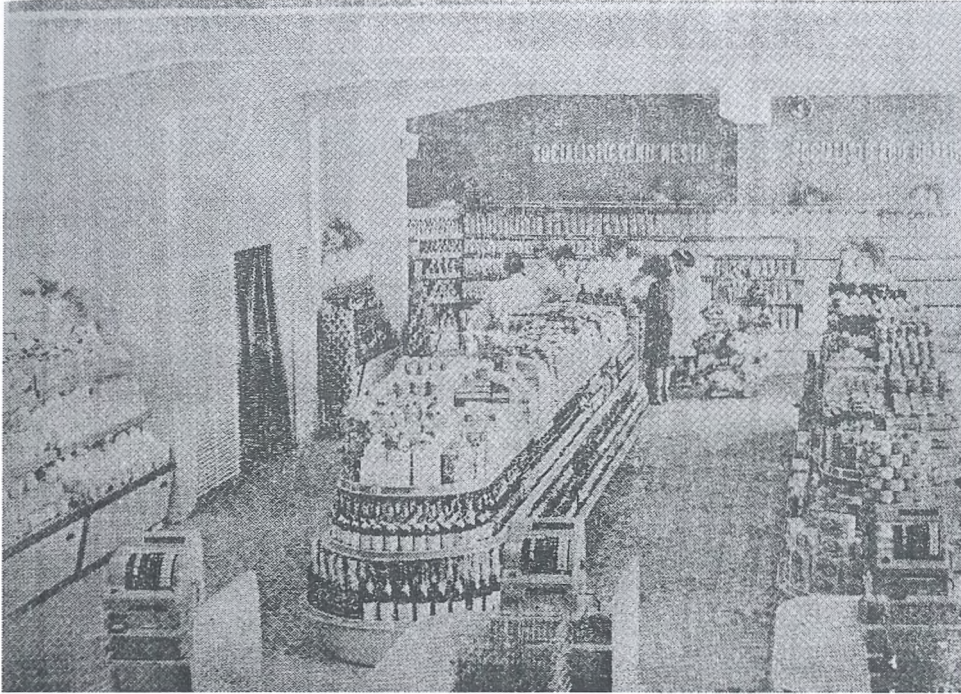


Fig. 4.18. Interior of self-service store. The sign on the wall reads: *For a socialist town – with socialist service* (*Socialistickému městu – socialistickou obsluhu*), 1962.

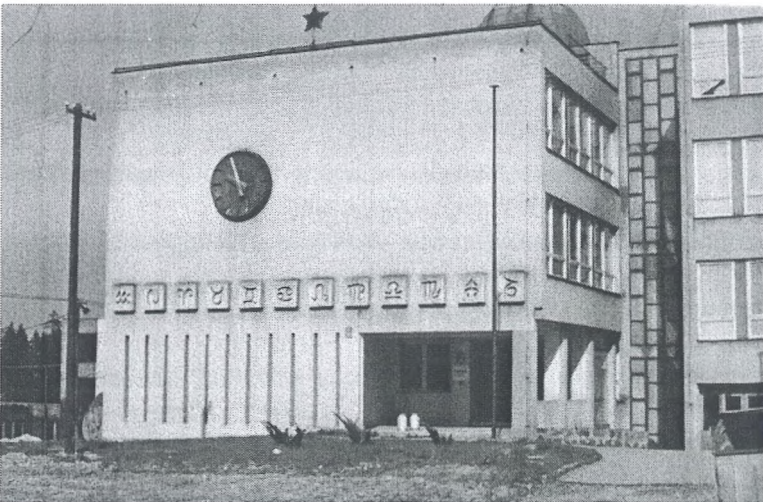


Fig. 4.19. High School in Havířov: 5-pointed star on the roof, horoscope signs on the façade, and observatory behind.



## Welcome to Havířov

### *Interest From Abroad, Reticence at Home*

Havířov was visited by numerous delegations from all around the world. For example, in 1958 the town was visited by Bulgarian, Italian, Armenian, Romanian, French and Belgian delegations. The most space in the chronicle was given to the Hungarian government delegation, when the town was festively decorated with bilingual signs and even the mud was covered with asphalt.<sup>632</sup> In 1959, delegations from Bolivia, Holland, Spain, Finland, Norway, the Communist Party of Sweden, Hungary and the Soviet Army visited the town.<sup>633</sup> In the same year, the Havířov chronicler highlighted the delegation from London, where one of the participants stated: "*I have seen your beautiful new town and spoken with its residents, who believe in themselves and in a socialist future. This is wonderful and inspiring for a visitor from a capitalist country. We need to work harder in order to achieve a socialist Britain soon*".<sup>634</sup>

Interestingly, Havířov did not see many visits from the top-ranking Czechoslovakian leaders. In April 1956, when the new *Cinema Radost (Joy)* was opened, the first film to be screened was the historical drama of 1955, *Rudá záře nad Kladnem (The Red Glow Over Kladno)*, which was the film version of Antonín Zápotocký's book of the same title. This was the second time a film was made of Zápotocký's novel during his presidency, which he held from Gottwald's death in 1953 until his own death in 1957. The film *Rudá záře nad Kladnem* presents the founding of the KSČ in Kladno in 1921. Two months

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<sup>632</sup> Ibid., 1958, 24.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid., 1959, 34.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid.

after the screening, in June 1956, Zápotocký visited Havířov quite unexpectedly, according to the town chronicler.<sup>635</sup> After visiting the town of Lískovec near Frýdek-Místek, the President decided to take a look of the new mining towns around Ostrava. He arrived in Havířov in the early afternoon. The town residents did not know about the visit and, according to the chronicler, many found out about the visit only from the evening news on Czechoslovakian Radio. The President was welcomed in Havířov only by the town representatives, led by the President of the MNV, František Podoba. In conversation with Podoba, the President commented on the difficulties of town construction with the poetic words: "*A grand cause is born out of pain*".<sup>636</sup> At the improvised ceremony in the ceremonial hall of the MNV, the President received flowers from the children of couple R.<sup>637</sup>

### *Opportunities in the "Third World"*

Peter Zídek, one of the few Czech historians to research the foreign policy of communist Czechoslovakia towards the Third World countries, emphasizes that Czechoslovakia, as part of the Soviet bloc, played a unique role in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s and had the best diplomatic position in Africa among the Soviet Bloc states.<sup>638</sup> In the late 1950s, Czechoslovakia had become an important player on the African continent by re-establishing the old contacts of the pre-February Czechoslovakia in this territory (a Baťa

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<sup>635</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>636</sup> Ibid.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid.

<sup>638</sup> Petr Zídek: Československo a francouzská Afrika, 1948-1968, Libri, Prague 2006, 315.



subsidiary in Nigeria, *Považska Engineering* in Addis Abeba, trade with the Union of South Africa, etc.).

The degree to which Czechoslovakia managed to penetrate African politics was quite extensive. Even with its position as a Soviet satellite, Czechoslovakian foreign policy managed to find its own specific area of activities, such as the export of military materials. In the case of India, Soviet tractor exporters faced competition in intra-socialist commercial competition from Czech manufacturers, who totally dominated the Indian tractor market.<sup>639</sup> In addition to pro-Soviet orientated countries, which were often treated preferentially, recipients of Czechoslovakian special aid, such as Obote's Uganda or Gowon's Nigeria,<sup>640</sup> remained neutral or even pro-Western. Communist propaganda in Czechoslovakia dealing with African states had already started in the late 1940s in the print media, on radio, in film and, from the mid-1950s, also on television. The *Days of Solidarity* and *Days of Friendship* were popular TV documentaries.<sup>641</sup>

In 1961, the University of 17<sup>th</sup> November for foreign students was established. Soon also African Studies had been established as an independent faculty of Charles University in Prague. Czechoslovakia first offered scholarships to students from the Third World in more extensive numbers from 1956 onwards. The number of students rose: from 196 students from Africa, Asia and Latin America in 1958, to 581 two years later. The plan issued by the *Politburo* was to have 4,000 of these students by 1965. Most of the students

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<sup>639</sup> Andreas Hilger: *Revolutionsideologie, Systemkonkurrenz, oder Entwicklungspolitik: Sowjetische-indische Wirtschaftsbeziehungen in Chruschtschows Kaltem Krieg*. Archiv fuer Sozialgeschichte 4, 2008.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

<sup>641</sup> Zidek, 106.

coming from Africa were from lower middle class families (60%), 17% were from the middle and ruling classes, the rest were from farming and working families. In Czechoslovakian society, the contact with a greater number of people of different color was not very positive. Students coming from wealthier families received additional money from home which could be spent in Tuzex stores, where one could only buy with foreign currency, and they also could travel to the West. Very soon incidents with racial connotations occurred. Already from the late 1960s, there was a move towards closing the University of 17<sup>th</sup> November, which took place in 1974.

While Americanists constantly invoke the Cold War context, showing how educational development and university research were weapons in the "battle for the Third World", not so many examine in any depth the Soviet or European communist countries' activities in the Third World.<sup>642</sup> The Third World countries, distrustful of their former Western colonizers, regarded the socialist system of European countries and the Soviet Union as a socially and politically stable and effectively functioning system, in contrast to the instability experienced in many Third World countries.<sup>643</sup> They were seeking a model that would best provide the stability and sustained growth that they wished to develop in their own countries.

African students in particular were coming to Havířov to be educated on the working methods in the Coal Mine. We find articles in the local newspaper describing delegations and students from Africa, Asia and Latin America coming to town, in particular between

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<sup>642</sup> David Engerman: The Second World's Third World. *Kritika* 12.1 2011, 183+. Academic OneFile, 2011.

<sup>643</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein: *Yugoslavia and the Non-aligned World*. Princeton University Press, 1970.



1959 and 1963.<sup>644</sup> Some of the Havířovians were probably seeing people of a different race and color for the first time. Articles on 200 students coming from Africa and Asia to visit the town emphasize how the people of Havířov displayed no hint of contempt or racial hatred.<sup>645</sup> In Havířov, the spirit of Africa was also present in the public everyday life of the town, when a street in Havířov was named after Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo, after his assassination in 1961.



Fig. 4.20. Three African students visiting Důl Dukla. The title reads: *Freedom to Africa! Freedom to the people of Congo!*, 1961.

Fig. 4.21. Delegation from Ghana in Havířov, 1960.

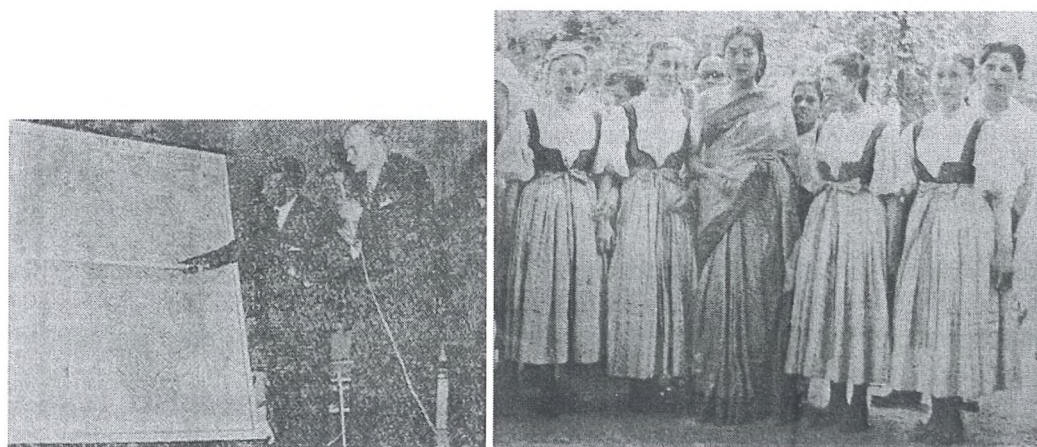


Fig. 4.22. Students from Guinea and Ivory Coast, 1962.

<sup>644</sup> Hlasy Havířova, 1959-1963.

<sup>645</sup> Ibid., September 1959, 3.

Fig. 4.23. Indian girl among girls from Těšínsko, 1960.

### *Comparison with the West*

Besides the visits by delegations and foreign students coming to Havířov, tourism was an important element in demonstrating the town's (socialist) successes and interaction with others. International tourism was organized by *Čedok*, the national travel agency. The Government had an interest in promoting the tourist industry in order to earn convertible currency but, until the mid-1960s, State authorities were extremely suspicious of foreign, mainly Western contacts. At the beginning of 1964, entry visa procedures were simplified and the accommodation for foreign visitors was improved. Between January and September 1964, 375,000 foreign visitors came to Czechoslovakia, of whom about one-sixth were from Western countries.<sup>646</sup> In 1966, most of the Western tourists coming to Czechoslovakia were from Austria and West Germany and stayed for an average of six days,<sup>647</sup> mostly visiting historical sites and spa resorts.

In Havířov, there was a branch of *Čedok* that organized trips for local tourists traveling within the country or abroad. In 1960, *Čedok* in Havířov reported 800 trips to the countries of the socialist Bloc and 3,360 trips of individuals in their own cars (mostly to Yugoslavia). However, I am not aware of any services *Čedok* in Havířov provided to foreign tourists. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, foreign tourist guidebooks on Czechoslovakia promoted the industrial town of Ostrava and newly built towns around

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<sup>646</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid., 168.



the city.<sup>648</sup> But in the case of tourists arriving in Havířov, they would have had difficulty in finding overnight accommodation, since the first hotel was only built in 1966.

In general, the residents were quite enthusiastic about their new town and considered the design of the town and their apartments as modern and comfortable. However, they found many ways of expressing their dissatisfaction about disturbing elements (for example, mud on the sidewalks, defects in the apartments, etc.). The following is an example of a complaint about inadequate public transport: *"Hey, you friends, tourists, who in previous years had to look at Czech castles in order to find a book in which to enter your signature and comments. Thanks to the Czechoslovak Travel Company, your work is now much easier. On the Ostrava- Havířov route, a bus runs with such perfectly clean sides, that it is possible to sign your name, express your hidden artistic talents or send a message to a friend free of charge, for example: 'Long live Joseph!'"*<sup>649</sup>

It is hard to tell how enthusiastic Havířov residents were about making greater efforts to develop their town into a more tourist-attractive one. However, they found a way of using tourism and visitors to negotiate with the authorities to satisfy their own needs. The following is an example of how a member of the *Esperanto Club* in Havířov argues for the provision of better conditions for the Club, using the 'excuse' of an Austrian visitor: *"The Esperanto Club was visited by T.G., an important visitor from Austria, who had corresponded with the aid of the international language, Esperanto, with B.P., a member of our Club. We welcomed her with joy, like a dear member of our family. She was the first international Esperantist in Havířov. We were ashamed that we could not welcome her in pleasanter surroundings, but in the zinc lobby of the Town National Committee.*

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<sup>648</sup> Jiří Chyský: Czechoslovakia, Nagel/Geneva 1959. Leo Mot'ka: Touring Czechoslovakia, Prague 1962.

<sup>649</sup> Informátor Havířova, 10. April 1958, 2.

*Our feeling of shame continued when we entered the 'delegated' venue in order to have our meeting, which was full of cigarette smoke and cigarette ends. Our guest told us a lot about her country, about the peaceful Esperanto movement in Austria and the longing of the ordinary Austrian people for peace. She also admitted that, due to American propaganda, she had not heard anything good about Czechoslovakia. Thanks to her Esperanto correspondent, she now realizes how untrue the American propaganda is and is convinced how nice the people in Czechoslovakia are, how they can work hard, have good manners, how they dress nicely and how contented they are. We are very proud that, with the aid of Esperanto, we are able to make more friends for our People's Republic. Our town left a strong impression on our visitor. She admired our efforts and work on the town construction and was very sorry that our Esperanto Club does not have its own venue for its meetings."*<sup>650</sup>

Czechs and Austrians had roughly the same percentage of car ownership before the war, but by 1960, the Austrians had three times as many per capita (most of the rest of Eastern Europe only reached the 1960 Czech level in the 1970s).<sup>651</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1950s, the automobile was still a luxury item in Austria and only a decade later would it become a means of mass transportation.<sup>652</sup> Instead of proudly showing off their success to their neighbors, the Havířovians felt shame in the belief that the conditions they were offering capitalist visitors were not on a better or at least on an adequate level to what they believed existed in other countries.

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<sup>650</sup> Ibid., 20. December 1957, 2.

<sup>651</sup> Mark Mazower: *Dark Continent. Europe's twentieth century*, New York, 280.

<sup>652</sup> Reinhold Wagnleitner: *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War. The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War*, Chapel Hill 1994, 294.





Fig. 4.24. The first hotel in Havířov, 1967.

Fig. 4.25. A map of Ostravsko in a guide to Czechoslovakia.

## 4.2 CONSOLIDATING THE MYTHS

### Whose Town?

#### *The Godfathers*

Chapter 2 discussed the background of the Velenje Coal Mine Company Director, Nestl Žgank, his rural origins, acceptance into the Party, participation in the resistance movement during the war, his work in Ljubljana at the Directorate for Coal and finally his arrival in Velenje, where he was determined to improve the working and living conditions of the miners.

He was an authoritative Director, making progressive, sometimes even not completely legal decisions in the Company as well as in the town development, where he interfered in the work of the architects. There arose opposition and obstacles to many of his decisions. However, they came mostly from Party apparatchiks on the local, regional or republican level and not from the workers in Velenje. They saw in Žgank a hard-working man, who was trying to solve their problems at work and to provide better living conditions at home.

After his arrival in Velenje, conditions did indeed improve. Žgank not only encouraged and organized, but always also participated in the voluntary work, whether this was to embellish the surroundings of the shaft, leisure facilities around the lake, or the regulation of the river flow. In photos taken on-site during the voluntary work, Žgank is wearing his overalls and working along with the others. In addition, all my interviewees state that he



was very involved in the voluntary work and that, thanks to him, Velenje developed so rapidly.

The photo collection from the Velenje Museum, Žgank's written memoirs and testimonies by Velenje residents provide an image of Žgank as a hard-working, determined and modest communist, who tried to bring about change and present himself as a role model. In spite of his authoritarian attitude, by participating in the voluntary work, he gave the impression that he was part of the community. In addition, workers could observe how the town, and their new homes, were growing before their eyes. Most credit for this was given to Žgank.

Contrary to Žgank's public image within the collective, his private life, as will be shown in Chapter 5, displays another side of the Company Director who declared himself to be a devoted communist, but who acquired a rather bourgeois lifestyle.



Fig. 4.26. Franc Leskošek-Luka in a tie and Nestl Žgank in overalls at the regulation of the flow of the Paka River, 1958.



Fig. 4.27. Ceremony at the opening of the town center. Franc Leskošek-Luka is in the center, sitting on the highest chair. On the left is his wife and on the right is Nestl Žgank. In the background are the still empty apartment blocks and a skyscraper.

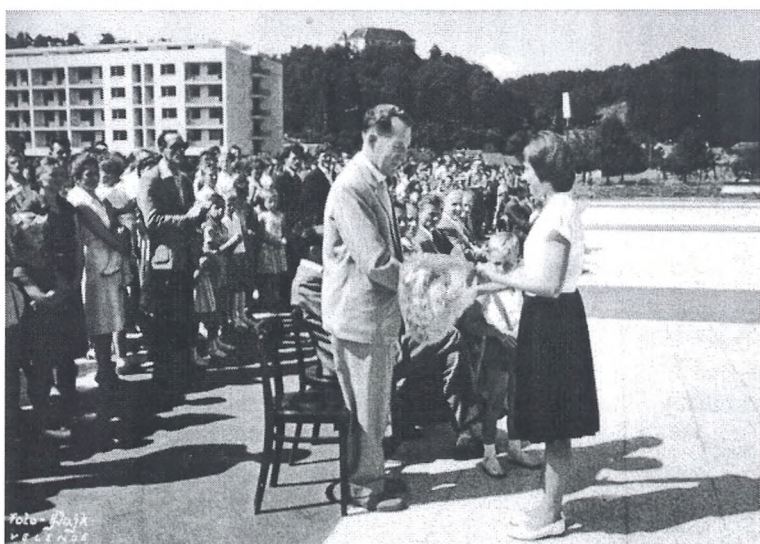


Fig. 4.28. Nestl Žgank receiving flowers at the main ceremony at the end of the voluntary work, 1959.



The paternalistic attitudes of Party apparatchiks towards certain towns or areas caused suspicions and unproductive demonstrations of power. Miha Marinko, Secretary of the Republican Central Committee of the League of Communists, who was born in Trbovlje, could not accept the fact that in Velenje a new town was under construction. He criticized Žgank at public meetings, accusing him of anti-socialist behavior and posing questions, such as why did the workers in Velenje need apartments, parks, stores, etc.?

It was Franc Leskošek–Luka, member of the Federal Central Committee of the League of Communists, who advocated the new town construction and who supported Žgank when necessary. But then, according to Žgank, he also took credit for the success. Žgank knew that, although the competences of the local communities in the newly introduced communal system and the increased competence of companies under self-management, which allowed more independence in decision-making also concerning town development, it was nevertheless necessary to have a patron or protector at the Party summits. It was also important to have the right one at the right time. Therefore, when in 1966 Žgank lost his position as Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, that was as a result of his patron, Leskovšek–Luka, not being of adequate support to him. In Žgank's memoirs, his disapproval and disappointment with Leskovšek–Luka's behavior and attitude are sensed.

According to Žgank, Leskovšek–Luka *"never wanted to expose himself too much, but cared only about having a good time. His main problem was alcohol. He wanted to have a small cottage in Velenje, where he could stay during his visits to the town. His visits were numerous and very tiring. He had a lot of time just to sit in pubs, where he conversed for hours and drank a lot of alcohol. Many nights we sat with him till morning,*

*when he finally went to bed, but we all had to go to work. We listened a hundred times to his never-ending and repetitive stories. He was also very unpredictable. It did not happen only once that he threw his plate on the floor, because he did not like the food."*

Leskošek-Luka's very direct, uncouth and even rude style of speech has already been mentioned in previous chapters. His fairly easy-going lifestyle is demonstrated by the following incident in which he participated in a Velenje Coal Mine Company meeting, when the financial issues for further investments were under discussion. He argued with Žgank as to why he *"complained so much, when he had so much money to sit on. When there is no more money left, then we can discuss it, but certainly not now!"* Once, when Luka was asked in company what he thought about Žgank, he replied: *"He is a quite all right scamp, but he does everything in his own way."* The photo that reflects the relationship between Žgank and Leskošek-Luka is from the time of the town construction, when Žgank and Leskošek-Luka were on a visit of the construction site. The former was dressed in dirty overalls and the latter in a nice suit and tie. Supporting the construction and further development of the Velenje Coal Mine Company and new town gave Leskošek-Luka a privileged position in the local community. On a hill above the town, not far from Žgank's new family house, Leskošek-Luka had his own wooden cottage, which was, despite its modesty, called *Luka's Villa (Lukova vila)*. In the town center, just in front of the Velenje Coal Mine Company Headquarters on the main Tito Square, there was a floral decoration in the shape of the letter 'L' for 'Luka'. At important local events, Leskošek-Luka's photos were present or his name was inscribed, just as in 1959, during the ceremony at the end of the work on the regulation of the flow of the Paka River, where his name was written in stones on the river bank. Velenje was



also a place where Leskošek–Luka celebrated his birthdays, accompanied by a formal festive meal and presents from the Velenje Coal Mine Company. The Company management and town residents praised their patron—at least in the area of their living and working habitats—aware of who had assisted in providing superior working and living conditions, and by comparing them with those of other miners in Yugoslavia.



Fig. 4.29. Ceremony at the end of the work on the regulation of the flow of the Paka River. On the river bank *Long Live Comrade Luka* (*Živel Tov. Luka*) is written in stones.



Fig. 4.30. Present from the Velenje Coal Mine Company to Franc Leskošek-Luka on his 60th Birthday. The inscription reads: *To comrade Luka, communist and fighter for the better lives of the working people*. His photo is placed between the year of his birth '1897' and '1957', below two miners and the plan for a new town, 1957.





Fig. 4.31. Celebration for Franc Leskošek–Luka’s 61<sup>st</sup> Birthday in Velenje, 1958.



Fig. 4.32. Speech by Franc Leskošek–Luka, facing Nestl Žgank.



Fig. 4.33. Gathering of local and Party authorities, most probably on the site where the cottage for Franc Leskošek–Luka— known as *Luka's Villa*—was built.

At the end of the voluntary work initiative, and just before the grand opening of the town center, a big celebration took place on the main town square. People dressed in their best suits paraded across the square, where there was a banner bearing the inscription: "*Our successes – our pride*", on the still unfinished façade of the House of Culture. In addition, there were photos of President Tito and Leskošek–Luka.

Chapter 1 discusses the fact that it was only after the *Cominform* resolution that Tito's name began to be mentioned more often in the reports of the Velenje Local Committee. Tito visited Velenje for the first time in 1958 and then three more times in the 1960s. Besides the constant photos and articles about the Velenje Coal Mine Director and Leskošek-Luka in the local newspaper, Tito's photo always appeared before the celebration of the National Day in November and before the Day of the Youth in May.



His photos were also always displayed at national events, such as the elections, or his bust was placed in the session room of the Headquarters of the Velenje Coal Mine Company and later in the Velenje Town Hall.

In his memoirs published in 1999, Žgank only has good words to describe Tito. This is in tune with Fikfak's research on numerous Slovenian directors of the socialist period, in which he finds their good memories of Tito fascinating, represented by them as the all-knowing leader who restored socialism.<sup>653</sup> It was in the late 70s when Tito's large statue was placed (where it stands to this day) on the main town square. Today the square is still named after him and, in the 80s, Velenje was renamed as Titovo Velenje (*Tito's Velenje*) in the few years between 1981 and 1990.



Fig. 4.34. Preparations for the main ceremony at the end of the voluntary work, 1959. People in their best suits parading on the main square. The building, without any façade as yet, is decorated with photos of Tito and Franc Leskošek–Luka. Above them, the inscription reads: *Our successes – our pride*. In the background is the table of volunteer hours.

<sup>653</sup> Jurij Fikfak: Direktorji med socializmom in kapitalizmom. In: Fikfak and Prinčič (eds.): *Biti direktor v času socializma*.



Fig. 4.35. Elections in Velenje, 1963. Yugoslavian flag, Tito's photo and floral decoration on the wall.





Fig. 4.36. Josip Broz Tito in Velenje for the first time. Beside him is Franc Leskošek-Luka, August 1958.

Fig. 4.37. Josip Broz Tito and Jovanka Broz in Hotel Paka in Velenje looking at the House of Culture on the main Tito Square, 1963.



Fig. 4.38. Pioneers bearing a sign with a photo of Pioneers under the inscription: *For Our Country – Forwards with Tito!* (*Za domovino – s Titom naprej!*)



Fig. 4.39. Sitting of the Assembly of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. On the left is Tito's bust, beside a big potted plant. Director Nestl Žgank is sitting on the extreme left.



After the opening of the new town center in 1959, when entering Velenje from the direction of Šoštanj, Celje or Carinthia, the only skyscraper at that time, situated near Šaleška and Rudarska (Miners') Streets, was easily observed. On the top of the building, a big mining symbol – two crossed hammers – was situated, bearing the greeting below: *Srečno!* (Good luck!). Velenje was a miners' town and its mining identity could also be observed at traditional miners' festivities, such as the *Skok čez kožo* ('Jump over the skin') on July 3<sup>rd</sup>, which originated in 1934 in memory of a miners' strike in the Zasavsko region. On that day, young students were accepted as professional miners. Throughout the 1960s, the celebration was held on the main Tito Square in the new town center. Later, the festivities were relocated to the main stadium at Velenje Lake.

At parades, for example on 3<sup>rd</sup> July or 1<sup>st</sup> May, the miners' brass band led the festivities. Miners were present at all celebrations and delegation visits of the town. In Velenje, the miners' and local identities walked hand in hand. The name of the Coal Mine company was Velenje. In 1953, the first statue in the town, representing a miner, was erected at the new cinema built on the right bank of the river during a voluntary initiative in Novo Velenje. Later, in 1967, this same statue was moved to the new center on Tito Square.

In 1957, Velenje achieved another success that probably caused jealousy among miners and mine managers of other Slovenian mines. Namely, in November that year, representatives of the Slovenian coal mines issued Constitutional Charter for the Coal

Mining Museum of Slovenia to be located at Velenje Castle. For this purpose, the Castle had to be thoroughly renovated, mostly at the expense of the Velenje Coal Mine Company.<sup>654</sup> Together with the renovation of the Castle, there was also the gathering of museum exhibits. In 1965, the first exhibition was held in two rooms and, a year later, the Castle housed 13 exhibition rooms and 500m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space.<sup>655</sup> The first and only Museum in town was therefore dedicated to mining and was placed in the prestigious location of a medieval castle, a visual landmark of the Šaleška Valley.



Fig. 4.40. A parade on Mining Day, July 1960.

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<sup>654</sup> Seher, 563.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.





Fig. 4.41. The main celebration for Mining Day in front the House of Culture, 1960. Inscription on the roof reads: *Long Live Our Mining Profession* (*Naj živi nam rudarski stan*)



Fig. 4.42. Statue of a miner in front of the *Svoboda* (Freedom) Cinema in Novo Velenje, the first public statue in the town, 1953. In 1967, the statue was relocated to Tito Square in the new town center.

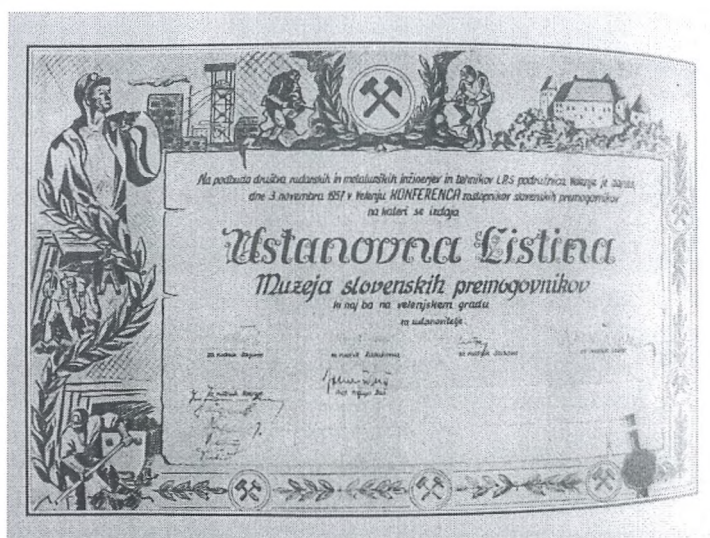


Fig. 4.43. Founding document of the Coal Mining Museum of Slovenia to be established in Velenje Castle.



### *Our Paradise – Our Responsibility*

The new Velenje rapidly grew before the eyes of its residents and with their substantial help. Volunteers were rewarded for their efforts by public announcements of the best volunteers, as well as with material goods, such as better apartments. Promoting volunteerism and creating the impression that all residents were an important part of the community, which was seeking to create a better life, was an ever-present strategy. For example, each issue of the local newspaper, *Rudar*, (Miner) had in its introduction a drawing representing volunteers and the new town center in the background, followed by an inscription: *We are building a new world and new spring (Mi gradimo nov svet in novo pomlad)*. One of the crucial elements for mobilizing people to take part in voluntary work was the intensification of the consciousness that it is the people's own responsibility and competence when and how a town is to be built and what living conditions they will have.

Just before the 1963 summer holiday, pupils wrote their school essays entitled: *"Our town – our mirror"*. Almost all the essays contained sentences such as: *"Our town is the most modern town in our country and in Europe; a lot of tourists from our own and foreign countries visit our town; we need to take care of the order and cleanliness of the town; we are not allowed to run on the green grass; we need to have flowers on the balconies."*<sup>656</sup> There were many suggestions to the people living in Velenje of how to enhance the town image: with floral decorations on the balconies, greenery around houses, etc. Authorities even went so far as to prohibit the drying of laundry on balconies

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<sup>656</sup> Rudar, 22. June 1963, 1–6.

because it was not aesthetic<sup>657</sup>. Children were prevented by guards from playing on the green areas around the apartment buildings.

Initiatives from the Socialist Union were announced to organize voluntary work for tidying green areas, parks, paths and playgrounds. The goal was to engage all the residents of Velenje and all the political and social organizations in voluntary work.<sup>658</sup> Propaganda in the local newspaper even went so far as to state that residents were now accusing themselves of being the cause of dissatisfaction: *"We succeeded in mobilizing people day after day to voluntarily dig, level, and plant, but now we are not able to preserve and take care of what we have done. We are the cause of why we are not satisfied with the appearance of our Velenje!"*<sup>659</sup>

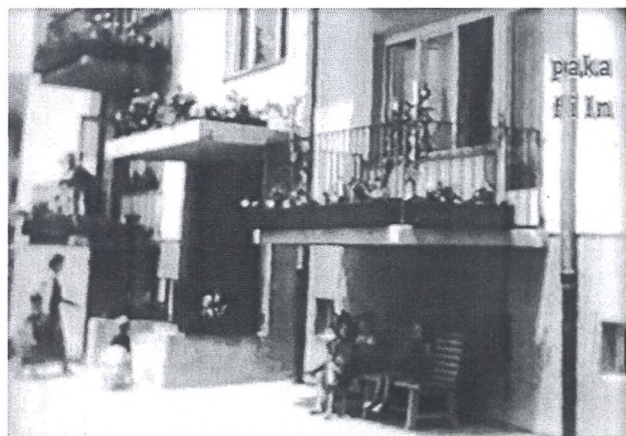


Fig. 4.44. Balconies filled with flowers, 1958.

<sup>657</sup> An unsuccessful campaign against the drying of laundry between the balconies and windows of apartment blocks (with drying rooms) was launched by the Municipality of Dimitrovgrad in Bulgaria. Brunnbauer, 160.

<sup>658</sup> Rudar, 29. April 1961, 7.

<sup>659</sup> Rudar, 17. April 1965.





Fig. 4.45. "A tropical island". Arrangement in front of the apartment building in Velenje, approx. 1958.

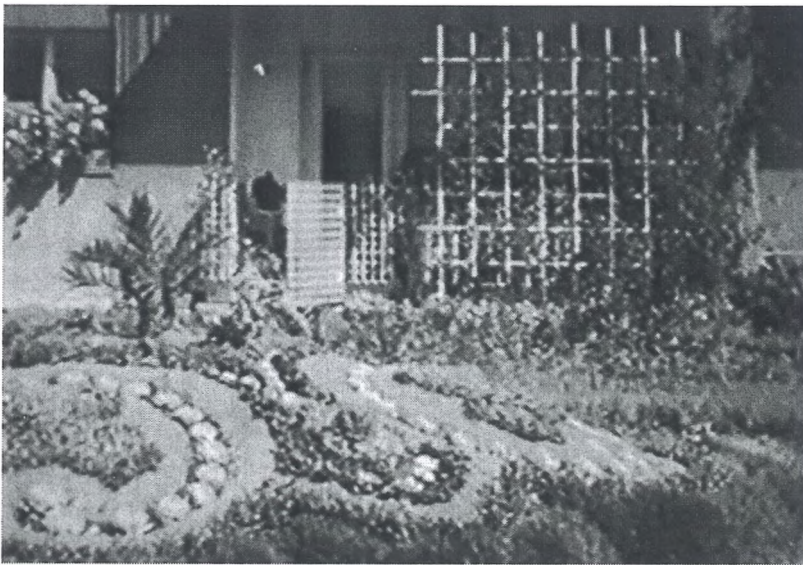


Fig. 4.46. A floral arrangement in front of an apartment block in Novo Velenje, 1955.



Fig. 4.47. Young people in national costumes in a theatrical production in the House of Culture, Velenje. The sign reads: *Our Town Should Look Like a Flower Bed (Gredi podobno naj bo naše mesto)*, late 1960s/early 1970s.

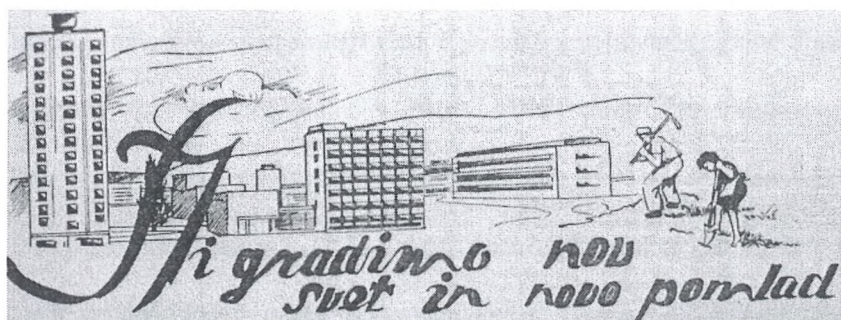


Fig. 4.48. Foreword to each local *Rudar* (Miner) periodical: *We are building a new world and new spring (Mi gradimo nov svet in novo pomlad)*, showing the new town center and the volunteers, 1960.



## The Three Blocs

### *Proving the East*

After the *Cominform* Resolution, Yugoslavia still hoped to limit the conflict only on the ideological debate between the parties, while retaining other relations among the countries unaffected. This calculation soon proved wrong, since the relations with the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania soon rapidly worsened. After the Resolution, the only East Bloc country with which Yugoslavia did not come into open conflict on a governmental level was Poland.<sup>660</sup> After Stalin's death, the economic, cultural and sporting connections between Yugoslavia and the East Bloc countries began to be formed again.<sup>661</sup> The first steps were taken towards a declarative reconciliation of relations between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. The most important step was the signing of the Belgrade Declaration in 1955 between the Governments of the Soviet Union and FLRJ, which acknowledged the right of different paths to socialism and condemned interference in internal affairs. This was also welcomed by other East Bloc countries.<sup>662</sup>

The Moscow Declaration on relations between the ZKJ and CC of the Soviet Union, which was signed in June 1956, however, tolerated diversity of socialist development, but did not mention the general principle of equality between the Communist Parties. In other words, the Soviet leaders imagined the inter-party cooperation in a way that was more

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<sup>660</sup> Jože Pirjevec: *Tito, Stalin in zahod*. Zbirka družboslovje, 1987, 158.

<sup>661</sup> Čedomir Štrbac: *Jugoslavija i odnosi između socialističkih zemalja, sukob KPJ i Inforbira*.

<sup>662</sup> Leo Mates: *Međunarodni odnosi socijalističke Jugoslavije*. Istorija NolitBIGZ, Beograd, 1976, 181.

akin to the former *Cominform*.<sup>663</sup> The first tests followed a few days after the signing of the Moscow Declaration in relation to the riots in Poznan and the so-called Polish Spring and the Hungarian Revolution. Prior to signing the Moscow Declaration, the Soviet leadership had advised the Yugoslavian leadership to recognize the German Democratic Republic (GDR).<sup>664</sup> The Yugoslav side deliberately and skillfully manipulated between the two German states, primarily due to the economic benefits from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). With recognition of the GDR in October 1957, Yugoslavia "bought" the improvement with the Soviet Union. But, in accordance with the so-called Hallstein doctrine, diplomatic contacts with FRG immediately broke down, while economic cooperation was compromised. The Yugoslav attitude towards the GDR was also later cold and always pragmatic and suspicious. In addition, relations with other East Bloc countries were subordinated to the Yugoslav-Soviet ones.<sup>665</sup>

In the early 1960s, Velenje underwent four high-rank delegation visits from the Soviet Union. In 1961, Leonid Brezhnev, who was at that time the President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, visited Velenje. Photo material available from that visit shows Brezhnev driving through the town in a Mercedes Cabriolet. The main venue was Tito Square, in front of the House of Culture. A red carpet adorned the Square between the House of Culture and the Headquarters of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. It could be assumed that the first meeting was held at the Headquarters and then the delegation walked along the red carpet to the House of Culture for the main ceremony. During all the delegation visits, the Square was always filled with people, standing not just on the Square, but also watching from the balconies and roofs of surrounding apartment blocks.

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<sup>663</sup> Režek, 160.

<sup>664</sup> Dučan Nečak: Hallstenova doktrina in Jugoslavija. ZIFF, Ljubljana 2002.

<sup>665</sup> Carl Gustaf Stroh: Ohne Tito. Kann Jugoslawien uberleben? Verlag Styria Graz, Wien, Koln 1976.



During the 1961 Brezhnev visit, banners could be seen in the crowd, stating: *Friendship between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union contributes to peace and international cooperation* and *For active and peaceful co-existence*. According to the photos, the ceremony in 1961 was the best-attended. Men wearing the national costumes of Slovenia and the Soviet Union, holding their national flags in their hands, stand and embrace each other in front of the façade of the House of Culture. In the right background, there are men dressed in white and boys and girls waving colorful flags. There is also an orchestra and a choir. The speakers' microphone is situated in the middle of the stage in front of the House of Culture. Velenje miners stand behind the speakers (in the photos, only Brezhnev has been recorded). The main ceremony also included greetings from young Velenje Pioneers, who presented flowers to Brezhnev.

In subsequent years, there was an increasing number of journalists, photographers and cameramen present at such events. What is not obvious from the photos is what type of organization there was regarding security and protection. In 1961, Brezhnev, as well as other high-ranking visitors from abroad, seemed to move freely around the Square and interact with the public. Brezhnev also visited Velenje in 1962. This time, together with his wife, their daughter and the daughter of the President of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev. As the local newspaper reported, they viewed some apartments in the center of Velenje and were very positively surprised.<sup>666</sup>

After 1956, the Soviet Union also began to adopt a more moderate policy toward the West and an orientation toward consumerism, also in regard to more comfortable housing. In August 1963, Presidents Tito and Khrushchev, with their wives, Jovanka and Nina, visited Velenje. At that time, organizers of the event dressed Khrushchev in a

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<sup>666</sup> Rudar, 27. October 1962, 2.

mining uniform and at the so-called "jump over the skin" Khrushchev was symbolically accepted among the miners.<sup>667</sup> Khrushchev's wife, Nina, had a special visiting program. She viewed some new miners' apartments, which she found very nice. She was convinced that she was not really seeing miners' apartments, but the apartments of engineers and leading employees of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. The Director proposed that she choose any apartment at all that she wished to view. After an hour, the First Lady of the Soviet Union concluded: *"Comrades, now I believe that miners and their families in Velenje live in really beautiful and modern apartments."*<sup>668</sup>

The visit from the Soviet Union that my interviewees from Velenje remember the best was the visit of the Soviet cosmonaut, Gherman Titov, who visited Velenje after he became the fourth man in space after Yuri Gagarin and Americans, Alan Shepard and Gus Grissom.



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<sup>667</sup> Žgank, 241.

<sup>668</sup> Ibid.



Fig. 4.49. Josip Broz Tito, Jovanka Broz, Nikita and Nina Khrushchev at the Velenje roller skating stadium, August 1963. Young roller-skaters wearing Slovenian national costume.



Fig. 4.50. From Left to Right, among the miners: Nestl Žgank, Nikita Khrushchev and Josip Broz Tito on Tito Square in Velenje, 1963.

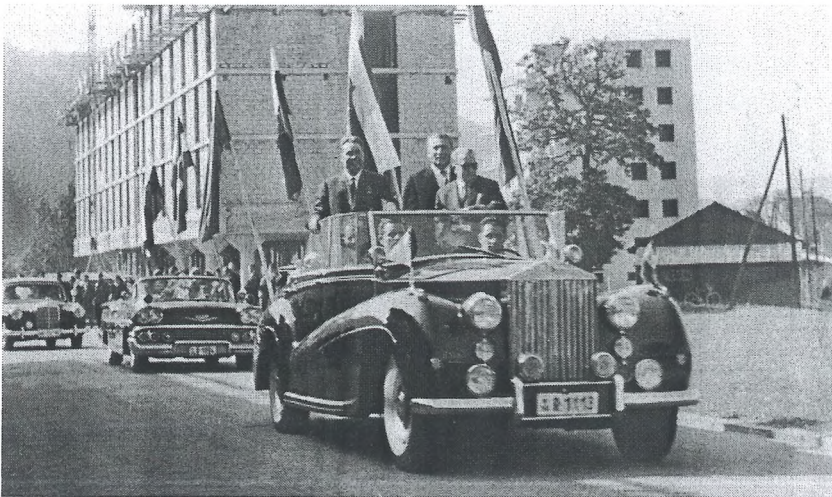


Fig. 4.51. Leonid Brezhnev in Velenje, 1961.



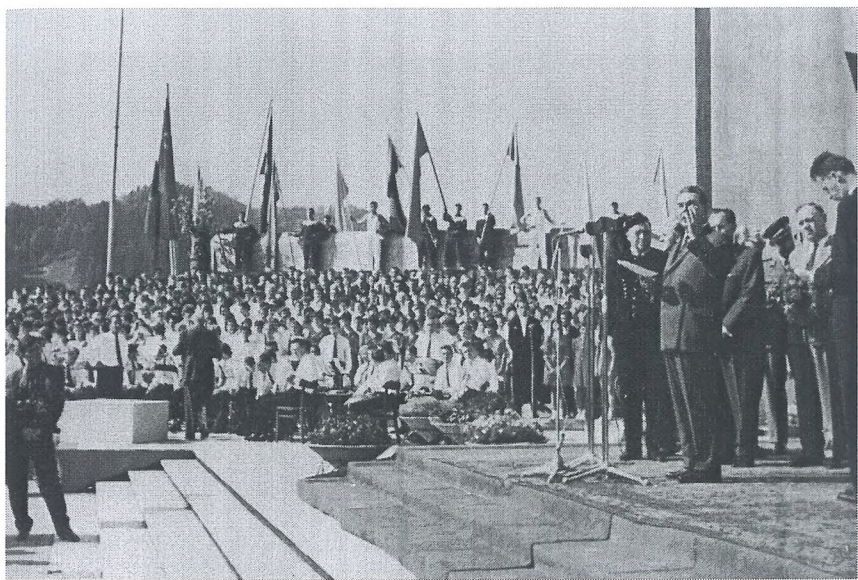


Fig. 4.52. Leonid Brezhnev in Velenje, October 1962.

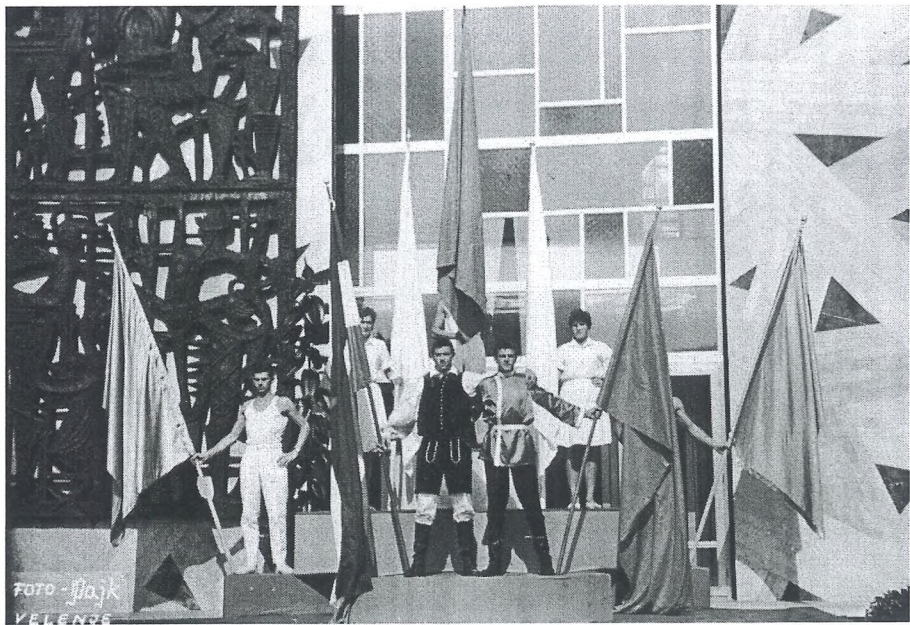


Fig. 4.53. The main ceremony during the Brezhnev visit to Velenje, 1961





Fig. 4.54. Crowd on Tito Square during Brezhnev's visit, 1961. The banner reads: *Friendship between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union contributes to peace and international cooperation.*

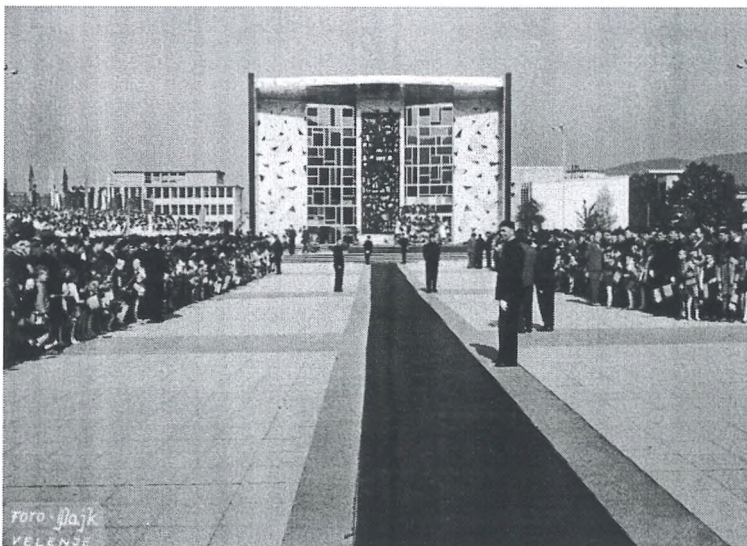


Fig. 4.55. A red carpet on Tito Square between the Headquarters of the Velenje Coal Mine Company and the House of Culture during Brezhnev's visit, 1961.



Fig. 4.56. Cosmonaut Gherman Titov in Velenje, 1963.



Fig. 4.57. Dinner at the *Hotel Paka* in Velenje, 1963, in honor of Titov's visit.





Fig. 4.58. Visit of the Polish President, Edward Gierk, and his wife to Velenje.

In the 1970s, Velenje experienced two high-ranking delegation visits from the East Bloc countries. One was the well-documented visit of the Polish leader, Edward Gierk. Photos of this visit show a similar crowd and ceremonial gathering on Tito Square. However, there are no people watching the ceremony from the balconies or roofs. There are many journalists and cameramen, as well as more policemen and security officers to be noticed around Gierk. As during the previous visits, miners also played a major role in the ceremony. Slovenian national elements were always evident. The ceremonies from the 1970s seem to be even more nationally colored. In the photos of Gierk's visit, couples wearing Slovenian national costume interact with the leader on the main square, offering him and Žgank alcoholic beverages.

One of the very poorly documented visits, but well remembered by my interviewees from Velenje, was the visit of Romanian leader, Nicolai Ceaușescu. After he became General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, Romania started to orientate its internal

foreign policy towards the West. However, Ceaușescu started to build his personality cult and to cultivate national communism. Ms. Šafar, who worked at the Hotel Paka and was part of the catering team during Ceaușescu's visit to Velenje, describes the very suspicious nature of his personality: "*We had prepared many delicacies, but Ceaușescu did not touch anything. Well, good for us! We could take all the food home.*"<sup>669</sup>

### *Comparison with the West*

After 1948, the new Yugoslavian political orientation was to be more open to the world and to move towards consumerism. As Božo Repe shows, the changes were not sudden. In the early 50s, when a discernible relaxation in the lifestyle and culture took place, the influence of western culture was becoming stronger in Slovenia, brought in by the radio, cinema, and western literature. At the end of the 50s, this was by the television as well. The changes in the 50s mostly affected the lives of the minority of the small upper class of the population, while, for the rest of the population, life remained extremely modest. Automobiles were perks enjoyed by the socialist authorities and business managers. Very few families could afford to take a trip to the seaside or anywhere else during the 50s. However, the trend of moving towards a western lifestyle continued and grew stronger especially from the 60s onwards. The supply of products improved, although remaining much more limited than that which was available in neighboring western countries. Fashion lagged behind the West by many years. Slovenians who were better off supplemented local supplies with purchases made in Italy and Austria. Life in the 60s

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<sup>669</sup> Interview with Sonja Šafar, 2009.



became more relaxed. The Slovenian standard of living slowly improved – more slowly than in the West, but nevertheless following an upward trend.<sup>670</sup>

Despite being a mining town and therefore conceived as not being attractive enough to be a tourist destination, Velenje was actually a reflection of tourist development and one of the country's top destinations. On the federal level, the development of mass tourism was planned and welcomed as a source of hard currency, especially from the 1960s onwards, when foreign tourism started to increase much faster than domestic tourism. In 1953, when only Novo Velenje on the right bank of the river was under construction and there was not a sketch yet made for the new center on the left bank, the local newspaper published an article entitled: *"Velenje has become a tourist town"*.<sup>671</sup> The fact that there was no real town as yet had not stopped the volunteers in Velenje from landscaping the area around the lake and building a hotel, restaurant, holiday cottage village, open-air summer cinema, paths around the lake and a lakeside stadium. The local newspaper reported: *"It is up to us how and when this beautiful place will be ready for our vacations"*.<sup>672</sup>

The lake welcomed miners and their families from Velenje, as well as other mines to enjoy themselves and to experience the same pleasures in Velenje as those of spa towns, only at discount prices.<sup>673</sup> As the conditions for tourist development improved, the lake became quite a popular tourist destination for local and foreign visitors. Tourism also started to increase hand in hand with the town construction on the left bank of the Paka

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<sup>670</sup> Božo Repe: Changes in Lifestyle and Social and National Structures in Slovenia after World War Two. In: Zdenko Čepič (ed.): 1945 – Prelom med starim in novim / 1945 – A Break-up Between the Old and the New. Ljubljana 2008.

<sup>671</sup> Velenjski rudar, 10 June 1953, 1.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 5. May 1953, 3.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid.

River. Two years after the opening of the new town center, the new *Paka Hotel* was opened in 1961, named after town's river, with 67 beds, 350 seats, a restaurant and bar. Since there was a shortage of competent staff, a new 30-year-old Director, Mitja Lap, from Kočevje (a town 140 km south of Velenje), and a new accountant from Nova Gorica (a newly built town on the Italian border, 200 km west of Velenje) were appointed.<sup>674</sup>

The Hotel was a company hotel of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, but the Constitutional Act also had to be confirmed by the Šoštanj People's Committee. After the Constitution was signed, the Board of *Hotel Paka Velenje* comprised 15 members from the Workers' Council (*delavski svet*) and 5 members from the Management Committee (*upravni odbor*).<sup>675</sup>

Only a few months after the *Hotel Paka Velenje* company was established, it merged with the *Jezero Velenje* company to form the *Paka Velenje Catering Company*.<sup>676</sup> The tasks of the new Company were to lease rooms to tourists and travelers; to sell all kinds of hot and cold meals and delicacies, and to sell all kinds of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. As well as *Hotel Paka*, the new Company operated the *Express Buffet Paka* in the center in Cankarjeva Street, *Restaurant Jezero* and two taverns: *Rudar (The Miner)* and *Pod klancem (Under the Slope)*.<sup>677</sup>

The Hotel became the center and most elegant part of the town's social life. Ivanka Lap, the wife of the Hotel Director, who was also employed in the Hotel as a waitress in the bar, told me that the Hotel bar was popular for coffee during the day among teachers

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<sup>674</sup> Interview with Mitja Lap, the first Director of *Hotel Paka*. Velenje, September 2006.

<sup>675</sup> ZAC, ObLO Šoštanj, Velenje 180, 39, 362, 04-HOE, 25, 1961.

<sup>676</sup> Ibid, Velenje 04/9-HOE-43/1-61.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid.



from the local schools, as well as among men in the evenings, since they had a striptease program. Strippers were hired from agencies in Zagreb and Varaždin in Croatia.<sup>678</sup>

In 1963, New Year's celebrations were organized in all five venues of the *Paka Velenje* Catering Company. The gala celebration was held in the Hotel. Reservations were necessary, with the menu and music costing 1700 dinars. Additionally, the Company advertised balls in the local newspaper featuring the live music of a well-known quintet every Friday and Saturday at the *Hotel Paka* and every Sunday at the *Restaurant Jezero*.<sup>679</sup> But even though there were balls held five times a week at the *Hotel Paka* and three times at the *Restaurant Jezero* during summer and autumn, some youngsters still considered it a bad life for the youth in Velenje, because there was no dance organized for them.<sup>680</sup>

However, in April 1962 the Student Society of the Šaleška Valley organized their first *Academic Ball (Akademski ples)* in Šoštanj, which was still considered the "capital town" of the Šaleška Valley.<sup>681</sup> Music and dancing were taken very seriously. In the *Hotel Paka*, the price list was divided into two parts: for the times with and without music. Therefore, Turkish coffee cost 40 dinars and, when accompanied by music, the price was 60 dinars.<sup>682</sup> What was new to dancing was that the Velenje residents could participate in an international dance tournament that later became a traditional festival organized by the Velenje Tourist Association.<sup>683</sup> However, they did not just watch the new dances: The *Svoboda* Workers' Educational Union organized a number of dance lessons, from

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<sup>678</sup> Interview with Ivanka Lap, 2008.

<sup>679</sup> Rudar, 16. December 1963, 8.

<sup>680</sup> Ibid., 18. January 1962.

<sup>681</sup> ZAC, ObLO Šoštanj, Velenje 180, 39, 332-6, 1962-4.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 04-HOE-31/1/1961.

<sup>683</sup> Rudar, 13. March 1965, 7 and Archive of the *Hotel Paka Velenje*. *Hotel Paka Velenje* Guest Book.

Standard to Latin-American. And with the increasing interest in dancing, a new problem occurred: there was a lack of proper ballrooms in the town.<sup>684</sup> Together with the increasing social life in Velenje, there were some who thought that there was too much indecent socializing going on in Velenje. A doctor living in the "doctors' building", argued in the local newspaper that the *Express Buffet* which had recently opened in the same building was nothing but a den and was not only disturbing her, but also other doctors who were living in the building as well.<sup>685</sup>

After the merger of both companies, *Jezero Velenje* and *Paka Velenje*, tourism in Velenje began to blossom. I am not aware of Velenje being promoted in any guidebooks on Yugoslavia published by the end of the 1960s. Nevertheless, the local Tourist Association founded in 1962, became responsible for the promotion and development of tourism in the town. Hotel Director Lap became its President. The Association published many picturesque postcards and brochures in four languages (Slovene, Italian, English and German). In 1964, the Association distributed 30,000 copies of the brochure. In the brochures, Velenje was introduced as "*one of Yugoslavia's most beautiful towns*."<sup>686</sup> The Hotel Director remembers that local tourist representatives from Celje, Maribor, Ljubljana, Bled, the Kompas Travel Agency from Zagreb and other foreign travel agencies, mostly from Vienna, Klagenfurt, Salzburg, Burgenland and Trieste, came to see what Velenje had to offer. The Velenje Tourist Association gave them publicity material and, when they returned home, they made offers to their customers. From Vienna, for

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<sup>684</sup> Ibid., 1. March 1962, 5.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>686</sup> Velenje Museum, Map: Tourism in Velenje.



example, the *Österreichische Verkehrsbüro* took guests to the Adriatic Sea and stopped en route for a day or two in Velenje.<sup>687</sup>

More and more messages were written in the Hotel Guestbook. On 31st August 1963, Erwin Ronelt from the *Austrian Automobile, Motorcycle and Touring Club* and Editor of the *Auto-Touring Magazine*, left his best wishes for the development of Velenje, "*a beautiful town with a rich future*" (*zukunftsreichen Stadt*).<sup>688</sup> On 1st October 1963, he published the article: "*Autumn Cruise to Lower Styria*", in which he describes his journey to Yugoslavia. Besides the memories from his schooldays that Celje was once Cilli, and of the traditional k.u.k. atmosphere of Slovenian spas, he dedicated some words to Velenje: "*We travelled through Velenje, a town where you can find a big lignite coal mine, with a production of a million tons per year. No doubt the town is well worth seeing as an interesting example of modern architecture and a settlement in the shape of a garden city that has already been growing for industrial workers for about seven years, next to the old market at the foot of the hilltop Castle. Because the town is spread out, the best way to undertake a visit is as a pedestrian. Parking spaces and the main arterial road are harmoniously combined. The panorama offers remarkable views of the theatre and the comfortable hotel, where it is possible to stay overnight for only 770 dinars. At the little lake, there are possibilities for water sports, camping or to cast anchor at the bungalow village.*"<sup>689</sup>

Besides the notion of nostalgia and familiarity when visiting Slovenian spas in Lower Styria, it was the modern lay-out and facilities of the town that fascinated the Austrian

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<sup>687</sup> Interview with Mitja Lap, 2008.

<sup>688</sup> Archive of the *Hotel Paka Velenje*. Hotel Guest Book.

<sup>689</sup> Herbstfahrt im steirischen Unterland. in: *Auto-Touring*, 1. October 1963, 12.

visitor. In addition, the prices of accommodation in Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1960s were already favorable for Austrian tourists.



Fig. 4.59. Hotel Paka.

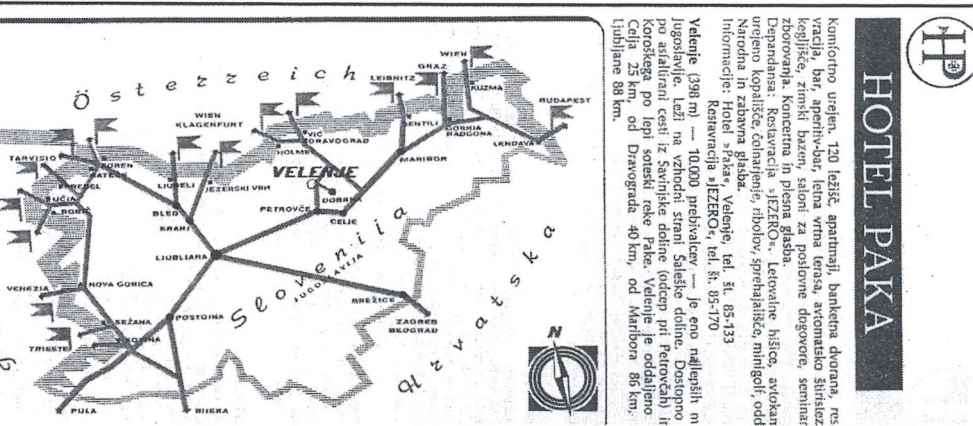






Fig. 4.60. – 4.61. Tourist material published by *Hotel Paka* and the Velenje Tourist Association in 1964.



Fig. 4.62. New Year's Eve Ball at the *Hotel Paka Velenje* with popular folk band (narodno-zabavni ansambel).



Fig. 4.63. *Hotel Paka* bar with comfortable armchairs, drinking straws on the tables, crystal lights, coffee machine, also *Ballantines* and *Remy Martin* among the many bottles.

The way in which the Velenje Tourist Association represented the town was far removed from the (Slovenian) reality at the time, but rather an attempt to imitate the western standards and way of life. For example, a postcard from 1963, advertising holidays in a weekend cottage at Velenje Lake, depicts two couples. The men are wearing suits, relaxing in front of a weekend cottage. During those times, when owning a personal car was still an exception, the main subject in the photo, taking up almost half the space, is a white Mercedes car.



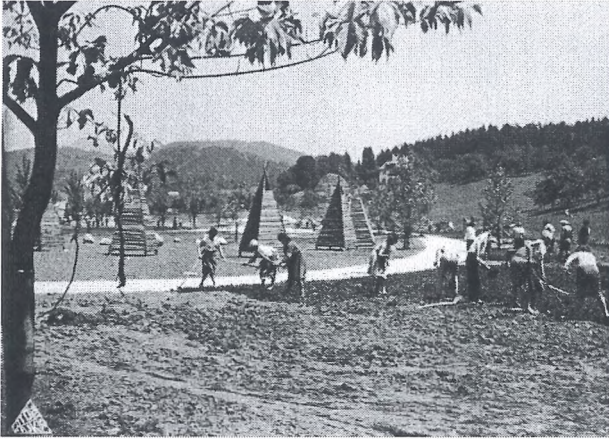


Fig. 4.64. Indian tents in the children's playground in Velenje.

Fig. 4.65. Indian costume at the carnival

### *Leading the Third World*

Especially after the Sino-Soviet split in 1961, the Soviet Union put more efforts into expanding its influence in the Third World, also to counter the Maoist influence. On the other hand, in 1961 Tito hosted the first conference of the newly formed Non-Alignment Movement in Belgrade, an organization which formalized the principles of the Bandung Conference of 1955.<sup>690</sup> The constant uncertainty of the Yugoslavian leaders orientation between centralism and decentralization, the search for a balance between East and West, resulted in passivity, indiscipline and indifference among Party members, especially on the local level.

<sup>690</sup> Vijay Prashad: *The Darker Nations. A People's History of the Third World*. The New Press NY, 2007.

In 1958, the 7th Congress of the LCY took place, where the 3rd Program of the LCY was to be confirmed. At the Congress, Tito delivered a marathon speech primarily on Yugoslavian foreign policy. He criticized Stalin and the foreign policy of the West and emphasized that Yugoslavia was not a part of the Soviet Bloc. He paid a lot of attention to the new states in Africa and Asia, admiring their policy of peaceful co-existence. Attention was shifted away from Yugoslavian domestic problems to Yugoslavian foreign policy. In addition, Tito endeavored to enforce his position as one of the world's leading statesmen. After his attempts to become a leader in the Balkans, the Balkan Federation failed, but he also had to be careful about dispute and discontent at home (as seen in Chapter 3, mining areas were especially important, where, in that same year, a huge strike at the biggest Slovenian coal mine basin occurred).

As previously mentioned, it was immediately after the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Yugoslavian League of Communists in April 1958 that Tito visited Velenje for the first time. From the mid-1950s, Yugoslavia started to increase its contact with the new states in Africa and Asia. In 1954, Haile Selassie, the King of Ethiopia, visited Yugoslavia and, in the same year, Tito undertook a voyage on his boat to Burma and India. In 1956, Tito, Nehru and Nasser met in Yugoslavia and later Tito went on other long journeys to Africa and Asia. In 1961, the Non-Alignment Movement was founded.<sup>691</sup>

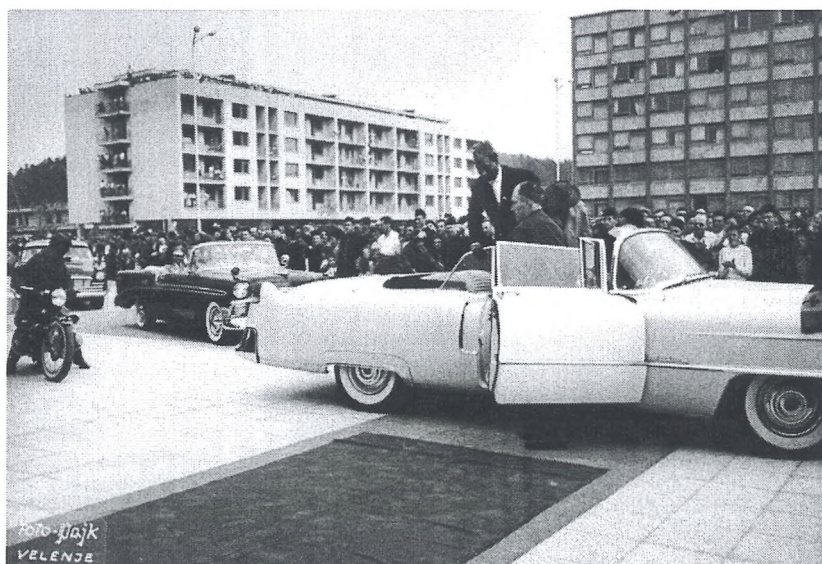
And how was Velenje—a small, provincial, not yet even properly constructed town at the beginning of the 1960s—involved in all this? Spectacular events took place in Velenje, which my interviewees are still very fond of recalling. The first one happened even before the Conference in Belgrade. In June 1961, Modibo Keita, the President of Mali,

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<sup>691</sup> Alvin Rubinstein: *Yugoslavia and the Non-aligned World*. Princeton University Press, 1970. Tvrtko Jakovina: *Treća strana hladnog rata. Fraktura*, Croatia, 2011.



arrived in his white Mercedes Cabriolet in the center of Tito Square, which was crowded with people that day.<sup>692</sup> During the Belgrade Conference, journalists from all over the world visited Velenje and a special column dedicated to foreigners visiting Velenje was established in the local newspaper. If we concentrate on African and Asian countries, in 1961 alone Velenje hosted the youth and football delegation from Guinea, secretaries from Ghana and Rhodesia and Cambodian President Sihanuka.<sup>693</sup> After the initial enthusiasm of the Third World leaders coming to Velenje, where they were interested especially in the policy of self-management, it was only in the late 1970s until the early 1980s, when the Velenje Mining School hosted a group of students from Namibia, that the racial prejudice of the teachers and town residents was exposed.<sup>694</sup>



<sup>692</sup> Photo Collection "The Construction", Velenje Museum.

<sup>693</sup> *Rudar*, 6. October 1961, 8.

<sup>694</sup> Interview with Tina Koželj, born in 1981 in Velenje to Slovenian mother and Namibian father, 2007.



Fig. 4.66. – 4.67. Modibo Keita, the President of Mali visiting Velenje, June 1961.



Fig. 4.68. – 4.69. Norodom Sihanouk, the ruler of Cambodia, visiting Velenje.





Fig. 4.70. Preparation for a banquet at the *Hotel Paka Velenje* for a delegation from the United Arab Republic. 1961.

## 5. A PLEASING HOME IN THE MAKING

Communism attempted to establish new norms, values and patterns of behavior, but the transformation was generated by various parallels and corresponding processes from pre-communist traditions. As Mark Pittaway discovered in the example of working class housing in Hungary, the assumptions that many policy makers had about the private sphere were often quite conservative<sup>695</sup> and the family remained the basic unit. Furniture design, apartment furnishings and decor in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were all greatly influenced by the political and social realities of the 1950s. One of the central discussions was how to provide the best system for quick, cheap and quality housing and furnishing.

Typification and standardization of housing equipment proved the preferable and most successful method. This chapter shows how Czechoslovakian architects and designers followed deep-rooted ideas of socialist and scientific understanding in their professions. State authorities, however, in order to legitimate their rule after the first dissatisfaction by workers began in the early 1950s, were orientated towards consumerism. By the end of the decade, they paid more attention to consumer needs and became closely involved with architects and designers in order to provide acceptable furniture for new apartments.

In Yugoslavia, after 1948 decentralization and greater autonomy in the decision-making of individual self-managed enterprises and offices, made it possible for Slovenian

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<sup>695</sup> Mark Pittaway: *Stalinism, Working-Class Housing and Individual Autonomy: The Encouragement of Private House Building in Hungary's Mining Areas, 1950-4*. In: *Style and Socialism. Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*. Edited by Susan E. Reid and David Crowley. Berg, 2000.



architects to search for new types of furniture, to some degree without any direct State interference. Another important aim of Slovenian architects was the education and popularization of modern, functional, light and cheap furniture, directed on the one hand towards the furniture industry and on the other towards the inhabitants.

This chapter investigates the actual styles of furnishing and decor of apartments and traces the interaction between daily life and the challenges of the Communist authorities to fulfill people's desires and demands on a daily basis and at the local level. In order to do so, two very different types of objects are taken into consideration: one was at the time the latest technological invention spreading into family homes all over the world, and the second, a semi-infantile, quasi-religious doll. Differences in the apartment decor of people moving into newly-built apartments tell of the enormous social changes that were taking place in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia (Slovenia). There was a discrepancy between solid, traditional furniture and decor, and more modern furniture, suited to the new apartments' design, which depended on residents' social, professional, religious and gender backgrounds and realities.

Tendencies in the progressive Czech (North Moravian, Silesian) society resonated with the Communist authorities' attempts towards a more utilitarian and egalitarian society. In the mid-1950s, the traditionally more conservative Slovenian society began to face a greater stratification of its society. As this chapter shows, local authorities soon managed to develop a petty bourgeois lifestyle, nevertheless, they claimed their adherence to Communism and the sophisticated ideological ideas were not internalized.

From the point of view of the long-term development of the GDR, Thomas Lindenberger identifies and designates several issues of tacit consensus, which were suited to consensual interpretations of reality between the regime and a large part of the population, without having to be negotiated in principle.<sup>696</sup> Among them is also family life, which, according to Lindenberger, was "*fully accepted by the regime that, apart from the workplace as the central site of sociability, the small, two-generation family around a heterosexual partnership provided the legitimate area of individual satisfaction and its projection into the future.*"<sup>697</sup> When architects and designers sought to convince and teach people the principles of functionality in the modern home, its furniture and equipment, the State or local authorities found a way to assert their power, whilst at the same time satisfying workers. They emphasized elements that male and female workers were familiar with or which they desired, infusing them with notions of modern achievements and lifestyle. An increase in personal consumption and a re-orientation towards private life proved to be a successful formula.<sup>698</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> Thomas Lindenberger: Tacit minimal consensus: the always precarious East German dictatorship. In: Paul Corner (ed.): Popular opinion in totalitarian regimes: fascism, nazism, communism. Oxford University Press, 2009, 212.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>698</sup> For the period of normalization, Paulina Bren in her study of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's "love affair with television" shows that the trend toward consumption over production offered the "quiet life" which the regime connected to new notions about socialist "self-realization" and what she calls "private citizenship". Paulina Bren: *The Greengrocer and His TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring*. Cornell 2010.



## 5.1 FURNITURE FOR MODERN CONSUMERS

### *Nationwide Directions*

In 1932, Karel Teige published a book entitled *The Minimum Dwelling* (*Nejmenší byt*), which was an extended version of his paper *New Architecture and the Housing Problem in Czechoslovakia*, which he contributed at the International Congress of Modern Architecture (*Congrès internationaux d'architecture modern*, CIAM) in Brussels in 1930. In *The Minimum Dwelling*, Teige envisioned a new way of living and called for a radical rethinking of domestic space and of the role of modern architecture in the planning, design, and construction of new types of dwellings for workers.<sup>699</sup> Sixteen years later, in 1948, *Architektura ČSR* published an article by O. Treichlinger entitled *Family Housing*. First of all, the author reviewed a book, *Houses for Family*, written by Frederick Guthein and published by the Woman's Foundation Inc. in New York City. According to Treichlinger, the author of the book claims that living and human functions can be accurately determined by scientific methods, but thus far modern architecture had failed to draw the correct conclusions. Therefore he suggests that, first of all, consumers' interests have to be realized.<sup>700</sup> Treichlinger continues that in Czechoslovakia those issues were mostly addressed by the architects, Štursa and Janů, as was noted in Chapter Two, young followers of Teige and interwar members of the Left Front. Later in the article, drawings and photos of apartment design are presented, many of them by Štursa and his wife, Vlasta Štursová.

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<sup>699</sup> Karel Teige: *Nejmenší byt*. Edice soudobé mezinárodní architektury, Václav Petr Praha, 1932.

<sup>700</sup> *Architektura ČSR*, 1948, VIII, 255.

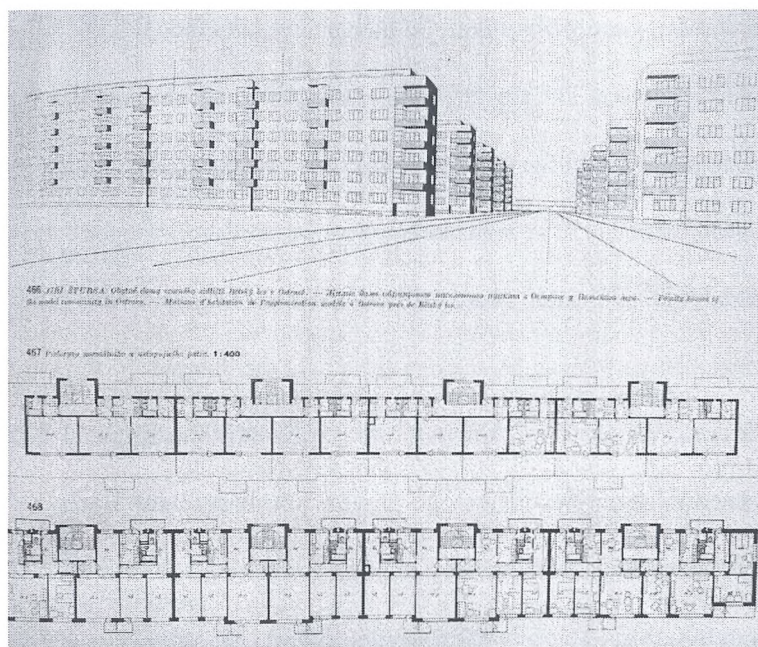


Fig. 5.1. Jiří Štursa, Vlasta Štursová: Dwellings in Prague VIII, 1948.

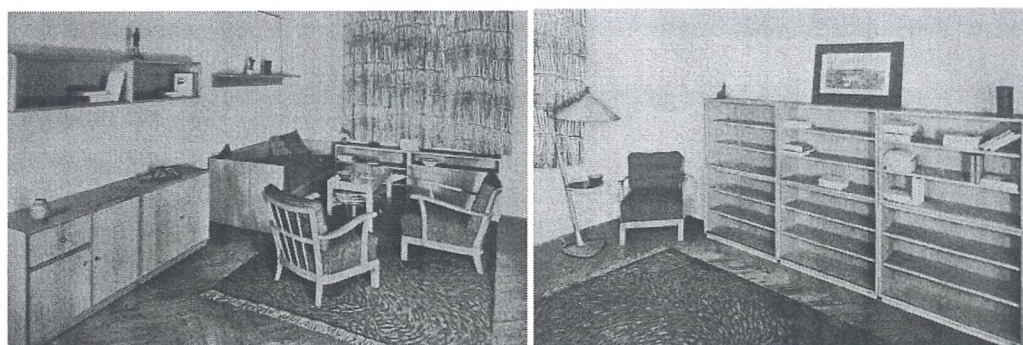


Fig. 5.2.-5.3. Jiří Štursa, Vlasta Štursová: Arrangement of a living room during the Two-Year Plan, 1948.

The T-series apartments from the late 1940s and early 1950s were drawn from the Scandinavian models. Type T1 to T5 apartments had an entrance hall, a living room,



bedrooms for the parents and the children, a pantry and numerous closets. The basic unit of each type was adapted for various family sizes with built-in and convertible furniture.<sup>701</sup> According to Elman Zarecor, although the apartments were of international standards, the expected density of people in the Czechoslovak units exceeded those in Northern and Western European countries. The apartments were modest with box-like rooms, but bright and comfortable.<sup>702</sup> The later, more utilitarian T-series types were significantly smaller apartments. Nevertheless, all the apartments in the T-series buildings had their own bathroom, WC, kitchen, hot water, local or central heating and windows on two façades to encourage air circulation and provide ample sunlight. Each building had storage space in the basement and laundry rooms for washing and drying clothes.<sup>703</sup>

Compared to the Two-Year-Plan units, the T-series had built-in furniture to economize on space. The imposition of Socialist Realism in the early 1950s briefly threatened this utilitarian approach, but, in hindsight, it appears to have had no lasting effect on architectural practice. The first vision of socialist design in Czechoslovakia remained at the heart of architectural practice and the building sector until the end of the Communist era.<sup>704</sup> The first generation of the G-buildings were of a similar size and layout as the Two-Year-Plan apartments and the T-series. Standardized furnishings, including couches that doubled as beds, were designed in one of the research institutes for use in the T-

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<sup>701</sup> Elman Zarecor, 103, 104.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

series and the G-buildings.<sup>705</sup> The second generation of G-buildings already had simplified layouts, where the need for many different panels was reduced. For example, the bathroom had no window or separate WC.<sup>706</sup> In the early 1950s, the cost of the equipment and manufacture of G-buildings was much higher than less industrialized technologies. For this reason, the *panelák* was not immediately adopted on a nationwide scale. This happened in the late 1950s and 1960s, after the infrastructure, including a network of panel factories, had been created to balance the cost of manufacture and transportation. Then the *paneláks* started to proliferate rapidly.<sup>707</sup>

In March 1959, at the 11th Congress of the ÚV KSČ, the solution of how to solve the housing problem was found in the construction of 1,200,000 new apartments, which meant an increase in the existing housing supply by almost one third. In October 1960, the Central Committee (ÚV) KSČ announced nationwide discussions on housing in the ČSSR. In order to improve the level of housing, the ÚV KSČ prepared questions for residents, with the intention that their answers, comments and suggestions would help to fulfill the tasks of housing construction.

The questions were as follows: *Where would you like to live and why? Do you have a preference for living in a family house or in an apartment block, and why? In what type of apartment are you living at the moment?*<sup>708</sup> The Ministry also published a booklet entitled *Za dobré bydlení* (*For Good Housing*). The foreword was written by Deputy

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 282.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>708</sup> Archives of the Ostrava Karviná Mines (OKD Archives), 1/66. Anketa o celostátní diskusi o bydlení.



Minister Jaromír Janovský. According to him, the interior design and furnishings of an apartment had the greatest influence on creating a favorable living environment. In recent years, according to Janovský, cooperation between furniture and apartment designers had improved. Janovský concluded that one of the goals of the nationwide discussion was to address the interior layout and furnishing of apartments in order to improve them.<sup>709</sup>

The group of architects and designers who contributed to the publication of *Za dobré bydlení* also included Emanuela Kittrichová, an architect, furniture designer and publicist. She noted that there was a discrepancy between the spatial solution of apartments and the furniture being sold. The composition of traditional suites of furniture did not suit the new construction or dimensions of the new apartments. This caused dissatisfaction and complaints among consumers. In 1957, the forerunner of the ÚBOK (*Ústav bytové a oděvní kultury, Institute for Housing and Clothing Culture*) organized a contest for furnishings for the Type T-OB apartment. The task was solved with prefabricated, fitted (*montovany*) furniture. The studies of ÚBOK were submitted to the *Study and Typification Institute (Studijný a typisací ústav)*. The developments in the furniture industry were presented in fall 1959 at the *Furniture and Apartment (Nbytek a byt)* exhibition.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> Jaromír Janovský: Úvod. In: *Za dobré bydlení*, Ministerstvo spotřebního průmyslu, Praha 1960, 5.

<sup>710</sup> E. Kittrichová: Spolupráce při řešení stavby a jejího vnitřního zařízení. In: *Za dobré bydlení*, 7-9.

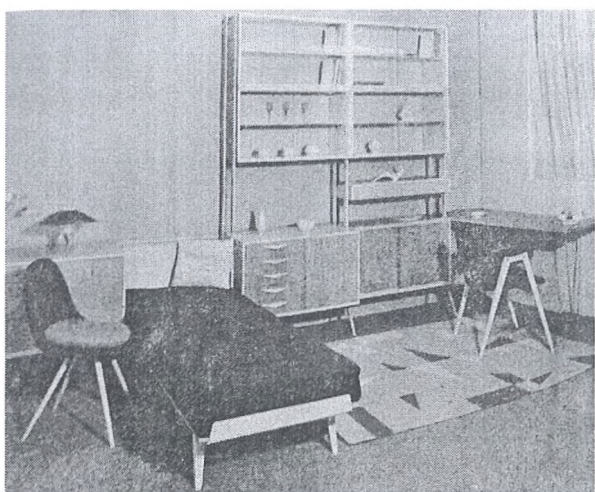


Fig. 5.4. Assemblable furniture (*montovatelní nábytek*), manufactured by Západnoslovenské drevárské závody (West Slovakian Saw Mills).

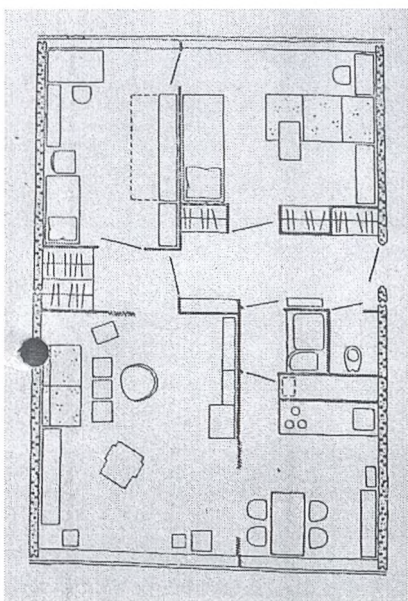


Fig. 5.5. Experimental construction in Prague. Category IV apartment for a family with two children of different sexes. Storage space is provided by the built-in closets in the parents' bedroom and in the entrance hall. The kitchen is only separated from the living area by curtains. The living area combines social and meal functions. The parents' bedroom is designed only for sleeping in. The children's bedrooms with folding single beds also provide a working space, 1960.



### *Regional Responses*

The North Moravian Region was also preparing for the nationwide discussion on housing. One of the first invitations to discussions to be held at the end of October 1960, came from the KSČ in Ostrava. The most active, however, was the Association of the Ostrava Karviná Mines, who sent out invitations to discussions to be held in November and December 1960. The Association informed all its national enterprises as well, to ensure the participation of their employees in the discussions.<sup>711</sup> The Regional National Committee (*Krajský národní výbor*, KNV) in Ostrava also prepared for the nationwide discussions on housing by publishing a brochure, *Diskutujeme o pokusných projektech nových typů bytů* (*We Discuss the Experimental Projects for New Types of Apartments*).

In the brochure, five different types of apartments for three or four people were introduced. For example, the type of apartment for four people consisted of a kitchen, a living room and two bedrooms. The living room had a door only on one side and was suitable for one person to sleep in. In the kitchen, which was lit only through the dining corner, it was only possible to cook. The advantage of this apartment, according to the brochure, was the accessibility of most of the rooms from the hallway and the open-plan dining area-cum-living room.<sup>712</sup>

Although the types of the apartments presented in the brochure were two- or three-room apartments, the operator of the apartments in the North Moravian Region, *OKR sprava*

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<sup>711</sup> OKD Archives, 1, 1/66.

<sup>712</sup> *Diskutujeme o pokusných projektech nových typů bytů*, Krajský národní výbor, Ostrava 1960.

*sídlisť n.p.*, reacted to the nationwide discussions on housing with some concern. As noted in a report addressed in December 1960, the OKR *sprava sídlisť* was managing 26,000 apartments in Havířov, Poruba, Ostrava, Karviná, Opava, Hlučín, Bohumín, Albrechtov, Č. Těšín, Třinec and Frýdek-Místek, which were occupied by employees of the Ostrava-Karviná Mines. According to the report, the facilities in those apartments were the best in the whole region. However, in 1960, the number of apartments of size 1+2 was, so the report stated, "*abnormal*", which would cause problems in the future when the families which at present were satisfied with those smaller apartments, would grow in size and try to move into bigger ones.<sup>713</sup>

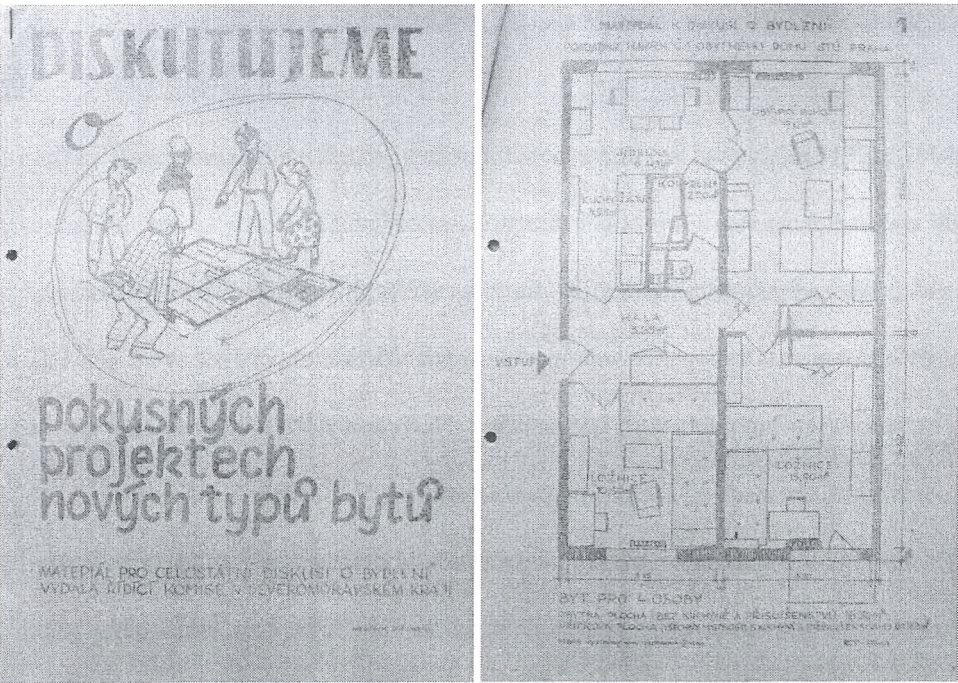


Fig. 5.6. Material for nationwide discussion on housing, published by the Regional National Committee (KNV) Ostrava, 1960.

Fig. 5.7. Plan of apartment for a family with two children, 1960.

<sup>713</sup> OKD Archives, I, 1/66, OKR *sprava sídlisť n.p.*, Ostrava.



### *Local Views*

In 2007, Jana Jílková from the University of Ostrava conducted a research on the everyday life of Havířov residents during the twenty-year post-war period. She interviewed 17 old settlers of villages which were later incorporated into the new town, as well as newcomers who had made Havířov their new home. They all shared the changes they underwent regarding housing and the furnishing of their houses and apartments. All the interviewed old settlers used to live in multigenerational family houses, some of them built even at the turn of the century. The construction of a new town meant the end of a peaceful village life, but at the same time increased their living comfort, for example, with a new sewage system, water supply, etc.

Between 1947 and 1955, two of the interviewed families moved to the apartments in the town which was at the time still under construction. According to Jílková, they did not complain about life in the new environment. On the contrary, they liked the availability of services and the more comfortable housing. They regarded the apartment as their home.<sup>714</sup> The apartment interiors were very modest, "*only when the husbands saved some money, did the family manage to make the apartment cozier*".<sup>715</sup> After 1955, all the interviewees moved into apartments in the prefabricated buildings, *paneláks*, with the exception of one family, who moved to a brick building, built with conventional technology.

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<sup>714</sup> Jílková (2007).

<sup>715</sup> Jana Jílková, an extended version of the interviews with the residents of Havířov. Unpublished.

In 1956, the Havířov chronicler wrote: *"According to a survey of 24 families, 12 families bought new modern bedroom furniture and 11 bought furniture for living rooms"*.<sup>716</sup>

Regarding the new apartments in prefabricated units, the chronicler also noted that *"most apartments have conveniently fitted kitchens with built-in furniture, sunny rooms, bathrooms, central heating, gas, i.e. everything that reflects a modern, practical lifestyle. The apartments are equipped with electric washing machines, clothes dryers, drying rooms - each apartment is ensured a regular supply of hot water. However, furniture designers should pay more attention to the efficient spatial breakdown to utilize the interior equipment."*<sup>717</sup>

Some interviewees bought new furniture, like Ms. Chylíková, a Polish resident from Životice. She and her husband bought a bedroom suite, shown in Figures 5.9 and 5.10. Ms. Chylíková remembers that, in 1953, when she and her husband were newlyweds, they applied for a loan: *"Just before the currency reform, we received the loan. There was a furniture exhibition in Suchá, where we ordered furniture for our bedroom. But in the meantime, before the furniture was made, due to the currency reform, our loan was changed from 1:5 to 1:50. We needed a long time to repay that loan."*<sup>718</sup>

Common general trends focused on practical, simple furniture and decorations. They tended to move away from all sorts of lace, pillows and heavy carpets. In 1959, a women's magazine, *Vlasta*, suggested that *"an employed woman should try to adjust her household in such a way that it is convenient and quick, not to cause any unnecessary*

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<sup>716</sup> SOkA Karviná, Kronika Havířov, 1956, 35.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid., 1959, 27.

<sup>718</sup> Jílková (unpublished).



stress."<sup>719</sup> Furniture was made from assembled (*smontovatelných*) parts, which were easy to put together and take apart again, as well as made in any required combinations. Chipboard was used in its manufacture, supplemented with new materials such as PVC (polyvinyl chloride), lamellae (pressed veneer), nylon, "vynaplast" (damage-resistant to hot cigarette ash). The floor was mostly covered in parquet or linoleum, which was ranked the same as a simple carpet. Residents of Havířov could buy furniture in furniture stores in Ostrava and, after 1963, also in Havířov.<sup>720</sup>

However, there was constant dissatisfaction among residents, not about a lack of money, but about the poor selection of furniture in the stores. As Antonín Zápotocký during his time as the Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia (1948-1953) noted, it was not a problem to pay workers higher wages – but the question was what could one buy with more money?<sup>721</sup> According to the Havířov chronicle, in 1960 the lack of furniture was "absolute".<sup>722</sup> A year earlier, the chronicler also noted that people use their savings to buy goods for personal consumption and not for security in their old age or illness, as had been the earlier custom. *"There is no doubt that the residents of the town live well. For example, every second family has a good refrigerator and every twelfth family has already bought a car."*<sup>723</sup>

Besides the change in furniture type, the interior décor also changed. Furniture could be unicolored or with small patterns. Stripes in various colors were especially popular. A

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<sup>719</sup> Vlasta, XIII, 1959, 1. Quotation taken from Jílková, 2007.

<sup>720</sup> Jílková (2007).

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>722</sup> SOKA Karviná, Kronika Havířov, 1960, 53.

<sup>723</sup> Ibid., 1959, 29.

small glass display cabinet with bookshelf, for the storage of glass dishes, china and other serving sets was a typical decoration in living rooms. People often placed holiday postcards or photos of relatives there. Flowers in flower stands became a favorite decoration. They substituted for the lack of greenery tenants had been used to be surrounded with in the villages they came from. The most common were different kinds of ficus plants or other flowers which were ideal for flower stands.<sup>724</sup>

Despite advice and good intentions, the Havířov chronicler was disappointed with the tasteless choices made in the apartment decor of Havířov residents. As he explained: "*The taste of a certain number of people lags behind their financial possibilities. Much more educational work should still be provided in order to raise the awareness among residents about modern interior design.*"<sup>725</sup> His suggestion certainly fell on fertile ground in 1960 when a lecture on *Tasteful Housing* was scheduled in the lecture series of that year.<sup>726</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> Jílková (2007).

<sup>725</sup> SOkA Karviná, *Kronika Havířov*, 1956, 35.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, 1960, 68.





Fig. 5.8. Worker's home in Gottwaldov, late 1940s.

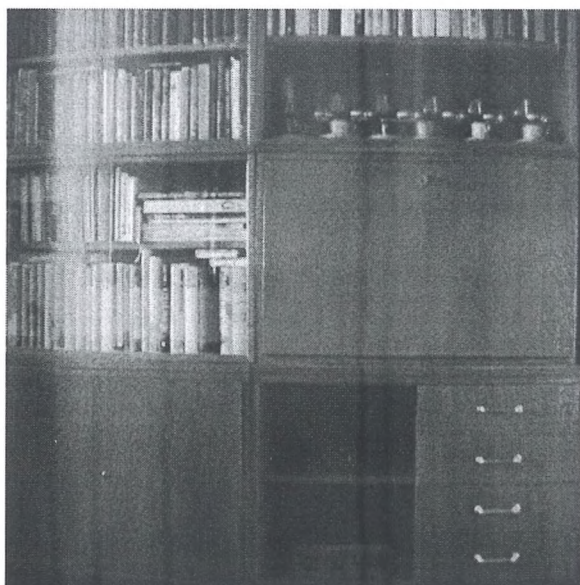


Fig. 5.9.-5.10. Living room cabinet and closet, Havířov late-1950s.



Fig. 5.11. Image from the Havířov Chronicle with the heading: *Quality of service, sales professionalism, for increasing living standards*, 1966.

### *Compromising Piece of Furniture*

The social crisis between 1951 and 1953 resulted in workers' dissatisfaction and strikes. The main goal of the workers was to keep their social rights and the ruling representatives became aware of the risk in underestimating the interests and needs of workers. Mine wages, especially for manual laborers, were already high, but in October 1951, on the basis of a Party Resolution for increased production in the Ostrava-Karviná Coal Mines (OKD), the wages in this mining district were doubled.<sup>727</sup> Nevertheless, there was an economic imbalance: a quick growth of investments, a slower growth of national income and a stagnation of personal consumption. It was necessary to stop the stagnation

<sup>727</sup> Kalinová, 163.



of the standard of living and to rapidly increase personal consumption. This situation had to be resolved through the 1953 currency reform and price reductions.

The main goal of the seven price reductions between 1954 and 1960, particularly in 1956, was political appeasement and the regeneration of confidence. The consequence was an increase in personal consumption and standard of living, which contributed to easing tensions in society.<sup>728</sup> Indeed, personal consumption in the Ostrava region, as well as in Havířov, increased. The newspaper of the Ostrava Karviná Mines reported, that "in Havířov the brigadiers spend their extra money on Octavias [cars] or TV sets."<sup>729</sup> An increasing number of people owned personal cars and television sets and eventually the Secretary of the Ostrava Party's District Committee became skeptical that the way in which the stabilization of the workforce was treated (i.e. by means of increased consumption), did not correspond to socialism (i.e. prioritizing production above consumption).<sup>730</sup> To slow down consumer appetite and to re-invest it into the State building program, it was suggested that people should make a decision to save money in terms of "construction savings" (*stavebne spořeni*). The Town National Committee gave priority to building a family house to those who had confirmation of their savings in the National Savings Bank.<sup>731</sup>

At the end of the 1950s, articles began to appear in the local newspaper that rejected having a car and prioritizing television, introducing it as a necessity for a cultured life. In

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<sup>728</sup> Ibid, 205, 206.

<sup>729</sup> Dukla, 9. 2. 1962.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid., 21. 7. 1962.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid., 10. 4. 1959.

1953, the year when Czechoslovak State Television first broadcast, in the village of Dolní Suchá (later to be incorporated into Havířov) with a population of 9,400, there were 1,961 radios, many more than television sets. However, the village chronicler did not forget to add that "this innovation is spreading very quickly, nevertheless it is very expensive".<sup>732</sup> He was correct as, at the beginning of 1956, there were 110 TV sets in the village, and this number already reached 150 by the end of that year. Pupils of the Czech National School in Životice were also delighted when Father Frost gave them a television set as a present.<sup>733</sup>

In 1960, Havířov was already a town with a population of 60,000, owning 10,117 television sets, with 6,796 of those being registered.<sup>734</sup> At the National Party Conference on the 3rd Five-Year Plan, it was predicted that by 1965 there would be 1 television set in every 1,8 households. This was far from an utopian prediction as, by 1972, 80% of Czechoslovakian families owned a TV set.<sup>735</sup> Aerials started to mushroom on the roofs in Havířov and, in 1967, certain Havířovians could enjoy the international channels from Ostrava and Polish Katowice TV.<sup>736</sup>

Right at the end of the 1950s, at a time when local authorities were struggling with stabilization, a lack of jobs for women etc., Havířov acquired a new characteristic: "sitting at home" (*domosedství*). There were two different kinds: familial (in front of the

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<sup>732</sup> SOkA Karviná, Kronika obce Dolní Suchá, 1956, 35.

<sup>733</sup> Ibid.

<sup>734</sup> Hlasy Havířova, October 1961, 5, 1.

<sup>735</sup> Bren, 112, fn. 3. Numbers are based on an article in Tribuna, 17.1.1973.

<sup>736</sup> Hlasy Havířova, August 1960, 4, 4, 2.



television) and inter-familial (in front of the neighbors' television).<sup>737</sup> Even complaints about apartment maintenance now had competition, since the typical Havířovian sitting in front of the TV also "*complains about the program, the actors and the television. All this prevents him from reading and learning, but in the case of him not having a television, he would still not be reading, but would be complaining anyway.*"<sup>738</sup>

In the 1950s, television was changing old patterns and creating new ones all over the world, not only in Havířov. In his research on Britain, Rob Turnock explores the complex interrelationship between the expansion of television and the social and cultural changes during the 1950s. In Britain, television as a brand new technological invention, cultural form and practice had existed since the 1930s. But it was only from the mid-1950s, following a boom in the economy (with full employment, a housing building program, new technologies and the advent of a new consumer culture) when the number of television licenses began to increase.<sup>739</sup> It was revolutionary and, in a quickly changing modern world, gave hope for the restoration of fragile family ties. It was Pope Pius XII who, in his radio message in 1954, highly recommended the use of television: "*Movies, sport and the bare necessities of daily work lead to alienating family members from home and disturbing the natural course of domestic life. Why should we not be pleased that the television helps to restore this balance, by giving the family the opportunity to devote themselves to a communal harmless diversion, away from the dangers that pose a threat*

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<sup>737</sup> Ibid., December 1959, 9, 3, 4.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

<sup>739</sup> Rob Turnock: Television and Consumer Culture. Britain and the Transformation of Modernity. I.B. Tauris London, New York 2007.

*or from unhealthy places?*"<sup>740</sup> The Pope, the strong authority and guardian of tradition, therefore highly recommended television for a healthier family life, which was a similar "reaction and strategy" as that coming from the Czechoslovakian Communist authorities.

To overcome social tensions, the Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia increased personal consumption. Miners started to buy consumer goods, such as furniture, television sets, etc. However, temporary workers, mostly earning above-average salaries, were buying cars.<sup>741</sup> To encourage people to save in order to build themselves family homes, the authorities started to advertise television as a cultural benefit or as a necessity. Owning a car also meant being more flexible, which was not appreciated in the struggle against fluctuation, as well as in the prevention of too many trips abroad. In this respect, it has to be mentioned that, in 1965, Czechoslovakian citizens were legally permitted to apply for and to obtain passports for travel outside the Soviet Bloc.<sup>742</sup> This re-orientation towards television had a much better effect, at least from the point of view of the authorities' goals: it kept miners away from the pubs and therefore resulted in better work productivity; it kept them at home and therefore resulted in fewer fluctuation problems. Having learned from the advantages of the radio, e.g. collective radio broadcasts of speeches by the President and Party members,<sup>743</sup> television made it possible to keep the public at home.

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<sup>740</sup> Translation from Italian. Cecilia Dau Novelli: *Politica e nuove identità nell'Italia del 'Miracolo'*, Rom 1999, 42.

<sup>741</sup> SOKA Karviná, *Kronika obce Dolní Sucha*, 1955, 23.

<sup>742</sup> In 1967, we can read in the local newspaper how 3,360 inhabitants traveled in their own cars on holidays, mostly to Yugoslavia, but also to France, England and Italy. *Hlasý Havířova*, October 1967, 3. In the 1970s, there were stricter restrictions on crossing the borders.

<sup>743</sup> SOKA Karviná, *Kronika Havířov*.



## 5.2 SLUGGISH OVERCOMING OF OLD PATTERNS

### *The Necessity of Standardization*

The ideal furnishing in Slovenia until the beginning of the First World War was primarily an abundance of historical, carved and turned Altdeutsche, new Renaissance furniture. In addition, elegant and useful, but cheap and light furniture of carved wood and plaited willow and reeds was also popular.<sup>744</sup> After the First World War, when it was possible to study Architecture in Ljubljana with Professors Plečnik and Vurnik, a critical mass of professional interior designers were soon available, which led to a huge leap in living standards. In the interwar period, increasing emphasis was placed on ventilation, lighting, hygiene, modern plumbing, electrical wiring and central heating. Influences from Vienna, as well as Italy and the Scandinavian countries dominated among Slovenian designers.<sup>745</sup> There was an attempt to establish a link between the elements of applied folk art and modern usage, because many citizens, despite their acceptance of modernism, still wanted to have a rural corner (*kmečki kot*) in their home as a sign of their peasant Slovenian identity.

Functionalists Ivo Spinčič and Jože Mesar worked on high quality functionalist furniture, such as that propagated in Germany. In 1931, they released the program book called

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<sup>744</sup> Maja Lozar Štamcar: Development of the Housing Culture in Slovenia in the European context of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Presentation at the Conference of Historians in Rogaška Slatina, 16.-18.10. 2008. The pages are not numbered.

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

*Stanovanje (Flat)* and published the *Arhitektura (Architecture)* magazine.<sup>746</sup> Visitors to the annual Ljubljana Fair had the opportunity of monitoring the progress of local designers and furniture manufacturers. In a large brochure, *Kako opremiti stanovanje (How to furnish a Flat)*, Dušana Šantel recommended popular art products, decorative ceramics, paintings and sculptures for apartment decor. Even some house plants were regarded as fashionable. The rooms presented in the brochure radiated optimism and were filled with light and color.<sup>747</sup>

In the post-Second World War necessity to rebuild the destroyed country, architect Danilo Fürst created a semi-prefabricated system, *Hitrogradnja* (rapid building), which was used to erect some 96 double-story apartment buildings across Slovenia.<sup>748</sup> Fürst was then commissioned to design a fully prefabricated structure and the result was a modest double-story, four-apartment building that was assembled in only eight days. The materials and space of the building were greatly rationalized, which also applied to the furniture. A former resident of an apartment in one of Fürst's semi-prefabricated buildings remembers that "*rooms were separated only with cabinets and there was no sink in the bathroom. Each year the residents had to hunt for rats and on the ground floor someone was feeding a pig. Those living on the ground floor could hear every sound coming from those living on the first floor.*"<sup>749</sup>

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<sup>746</sup> Ibid.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> Kulić, 31-42. Kulić, Mrduljaš, Thaler (eds.), 175.

<sup>749</sup> Janez Presa, published on: <http://www.evidenca.org/?object=4>; 23.12.2010.



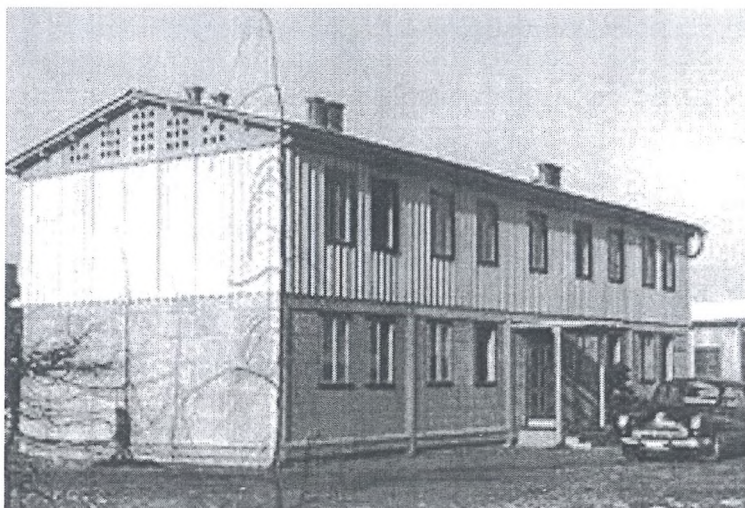


Fig. 5.12. Danilo Fürst: Semi-prefabricated system *Hitrogradnja*.

Throughout the 1950s, the construction of housing was slow, mostly reduced to filling in the gaps within the existing urban fabric, and executed by using conventional in situ methods.<sup>750</sup> It was only in 1951, in the already "self-managed" Yugoslavia, that the first post-war graduate students of young professors Ravnikar and Mihevc at the School of Architecture in Ljubljana, started to publish a professional magazine called *Arhitekt* (*The Architect*), dedicated to architecture, urban planning and the applied arts. In its first decade, the magazine was published every two months, serving as a forum for debate, the introduction of new trends and the review of contemporary architectural projects. Many articles were dedicated to housing and apartment furnishing. An article comparing two Slovenian furniture exhibitions of 1952 and 1955 is especially informative.<sup>751</sup> The author, Ilija Arnautović, determines that the furniture shown at both exhibitions was similar to

<sup>750</sup> Kulić, Mrduljaš, Thaler (eds.), 175.

<sup>751</sup> Ilija Arnautović: Dvoje letnic, dve razstavi pohištva. *Arhitekt*, 1955/17, 24.

the furniture of the pre-war period, since the exhibitors were not aware that they should be offering functional, useful, simple, esthetic, light furniture, available to everybody. In this way, one could have the option of furnishing a living room or bedroom from the same elements. Instead, the furniture industry was still offering heavy, dysfunctional, old-fashioned and expensive furniture. Only kitchen projects had shown some improvement in those three years, with a variety of different combinations to design any kind of kitchen floor plan.<sup>752</sup> As early as the 1952 exhibition, the need was felt for a general standardization of requirements and measurements for architects to design practical, flexible furniture.<sup>17</sup>

It took until the second half of 1958 for a special commission for standardization at the Federal Construction Chamber in Belgrade to be formed. One part of the commission was responsible for kitchens and the other for all the other furnishings. The aim of the commission was to investigate people's needs, habits and lifestyles and, according to these findings, to suggest the equipment and its dimensions for better apartment design.<sup>18</sup> The new residential area of Prule in Ljubljana, designed by Stanko Kristl (he later designed the awarded "post-modern" block in Velenje), was constructed in this way. This complex was dedicated to the employees of the University of Ljubljana, who were mostly people with higher education, young families, and with no traditional furniture.<sup>19</sup> The apartments had built-in standard and functional furniture. That type of apartment block, consisting of 29 apartments with a telephone, fully equipped kitchen, bathroom, toilet, built-in furniture in the bedroom and hallway, as well as central heating, was the cheapest type of apartment building to have been constructed in recent years. In 1959, it was

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<sup>752</sup> Ibid.



heralded by the Association of Federal Architects of Yugoslavia as "the best realization of an apartment building in Yugoslavia".<sup>20</sup>

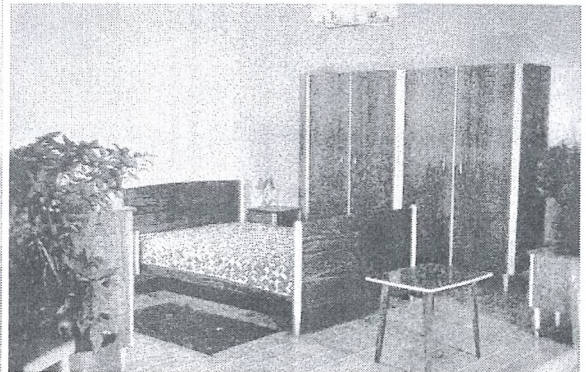
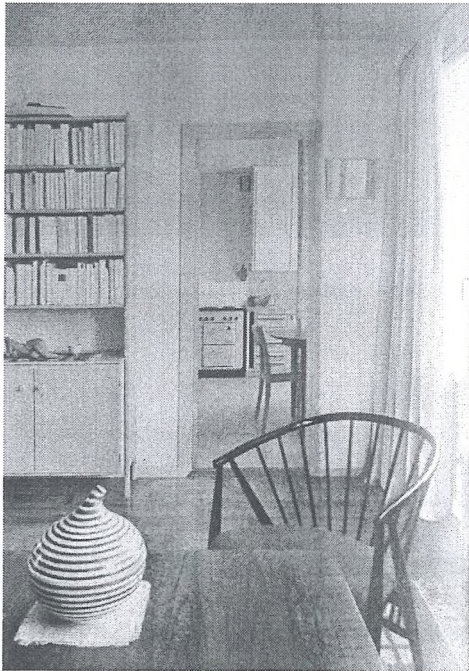


Fig. 5.13. Edo Mihevc: Living-room furniture, 1952.

Fig. 5.14. Ilija Arnautović: Dvoje letnic, dve razstavi pohištva (Two Years, Two Furniture Exhibitions), 1955. Photo caption from the *Arhitekt* magazine reads: *Some enterprises tried to simplify construction and offer the consumer a more appropriate type of furniture.*

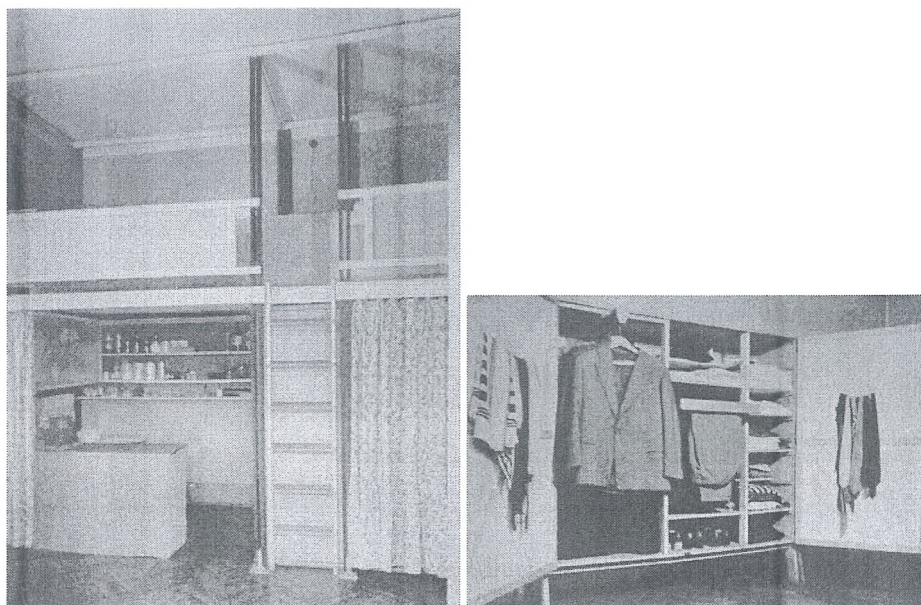


Fig. 5.15.-5.16. Edvard Ravnikar: Ceneno pohištvo (Cheap Furniture), 1955.  
Photo caption in the *Arhitekt* magazine reads: *The adaptation of a large, high-ceilinged room for a bachelor flat.*

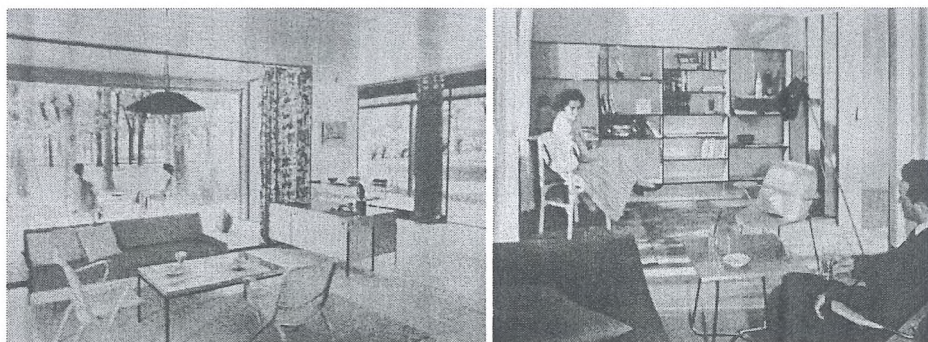


Fig. 5.17. – 5.18. Naše sodobno pohištvo (Our Contemporary Furniture), 1958.  
Photo caption reads: *Equipment in the 1st-prize "Trata" terrace house at the "Dwellings for Our Conditions" exhibition in Ljubljana, 1956. The furniture is a product of the "Stol" factory, Duplica (Niko Kralj).*



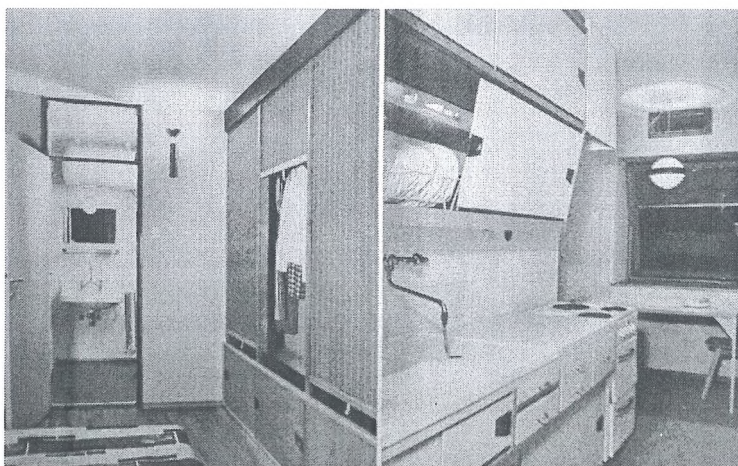


Fig. 5.19. Interior of apartment in Prule residential area, 1960.

### *Bambola in the Capital*

The aim of the architects writing for the *Arhitekt* was to appeal to the furniture industry, to promote modern furniture and to educate people about it. Ordinary buyers only wanted the solid pre-war furniture which they were accustomed to, while modern furniture was only to be found in artistic circles. Campaigns had been launched in the women's magazine, *Naša Žena* (*Our Lady*), through exhibitions, and by popularizing new furniture stores.<sup>753</sup> Architect France Ivanšek was one of the most active promoters of modern furniture and a researcher of people's habits and needs. In 1951, Ivanšek, at the time still Ravnikar's student at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, became Editor-in-Chief of the *Arhitekt* and, after his graduation in 1954, spent six years in Sweden. Together with

<sup>753</sup> In 1964 the journal *Sinteza* was published and three years later for an ordinary buyer all-Yugoslav magazine *Naš dom* (*Our home*), with the most interesting furniture and other equipment being designed on Yugoslavian drawing boards and constructed in factories.

his wife Marta, also an architect, he systematically researched the current living conditions and furnishings in Slovenian apartments and the opinions of users. The basis of their surveys was Swedish, which they developed into planning, education and raising people's awareness of their own living environment.<sup>754</sup> The survey undertaken in the early 1960s is one of Ivanšek's early attempts to investigate the actual conditions in Slovenian apartments.<sup>755</sup>

Ivanšek undertook a survey of almost 200 apartments in the complex known as the *Sava Residential Area (Savsko naselje)* in Ljubljana, newly constructed in the late 1950s /early 1960s. The aim of the survey was twofold: on the one hand, to demonstrate to the professional public what people's habits, problems and wishes were, and, on the other hand, to instruct the residents what they could do for themselves in order to make their apartments more comfortable. The survey was first presented in 1961 to Swedish experts and later positively welcomed by the Slovenian construction and furniture industries. Therefore, it came as a surprise that Ivanšek's survey was not able to be published before 1988. Findings such as the fact that 70% of households would have liked to have their own washing machine in the apartment, were seriously misunderstood by the Republican authorities, who tried to decrease the development of communal laundry facilities, which only 20% of the interviewees had marked as being in favor of. The report, when released, met with political criticism, which made it impossible to find a Yugoslavian editor to publish it in book form. However, when the 1986 Ikea Prize was awarded in Copenhagen to architect Ivanšek and his wife for their outstanding innovations in the areas of

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<sup>754</sup> Martina Malešič: Architects France and Marta Ivanšek. Diplomsko delo, Ljubljana 2008 and At home. Architects Marta and France Ivanšek. Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, 25th March – 16th May 2010.

<sup>755</sup> France Ivanšek: Družina, stanovanje in naselje. Ambient, Ljubljana 1988.



architecture and interior design, the Award Committee also mentioned the work carried out in 1961. As a consequence, Ivanšek decided to self-publish the first edition of his original research carried out in Yugoslavia 27 years earlier.

The Sava Residential Area was a large apartment complex, built in order to accommodate the Ljubljana newcomers. It was planned by architects Arnautović and Mihelič, who also designed the first skyscraper in Velenje. In 1961, the settlement had about 7,300 residents in 1,566 family apartments and about 300 single apartments.<sup>756</sup> The architect's intention was to improve living conditions by arranging for an adequate supply of furniture and household appliances which were most suited to the lifestyle of the residents living there. In order to achieve this, he needed to know who the people were who had moved into the apartment buildings and what kind of lifestyles they were leading. Ivanšek interviewed the occupants of 195 households in order to find answers to his many questions.

What he found was that the residents were mostly employees of the Yugoslavian Army, housewives, directors, doctors and professors. In the survey it was discovered that 41.1% of the families included in the study would have liked to move out of their present housing into another dwelling. The author analyzed their reasons and found that moving out was desired more by the "younger" generation under 35 years of age than by the "older" residents and that this desire was strengthened along with a higher level of education. Nearly 52% of those who wished to move out, wanted to move into a single-family house.<sup>757</sup>

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<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> Ibid., 365.

One of the chapters in the book deals with the time and manner of purchasing furniture, the equipment of the dwellings and the wishes of the family members concerning desirable items of furniture. The type of furniture and its frequency of use were related to the different levels of education of the families. Special emphasis was placed on the dining-room table, with consideration of the size of the family, the size and shape of the table and its setting within the room. Other items of research were the lounge suite in the living room, the placement of lights throughout the dwelling, and the location of bulky, large items within the dwelling.<sup>758</sup> Besides a plan of each apartment, photos were taken. Those 351 original photos taken in the apartments are an excellent source of information on the exterior and interior of newly constructed apartments. For this reason, the research is also a significant cultural and historical document on the average Slovenian dwelling culture in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Concentrating on the photos of the apartments, we can, broadly speaking, divide them into two models. Some represent apartments with designed, modern, light furniture, exhibited at fairs, in magazines and in stores.<sup>759</sup> Those were the apartments mostly occupied by doctors, intellectuals and managers. However, in most cases, in the apartments occupied by officials, officers and housewives, we can see the interiors of rather crowded, dark, cozy apartments with solid furniture, lots of decorative blankets, curtains and floral decorations etc.

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<sup>758</sup> Ibid.

<sup>759</sup> For example a book from Branka Tancig: *Small Apartments – But Comfortable* (the Arhitekt collection), Ljubljana 1954. An exhibition: *Housing for Our Conditions*, Ljubljana 1956, here is needed to be mentioned production of the Kamnik factory *Stol* and its designer Niko Kralj. France Ivanšek, with his wife Marta, opened a permanent exhibition space and interior design shop *Interier* in 1965 in Ljubljana, which was followed by another shop, *Ambient* in Maribor.





Fig. 5.20.-5.21 Ilija Arnautović, Milan Mihelič, Sava Residential Area (Savsko naselje) (1958-62)

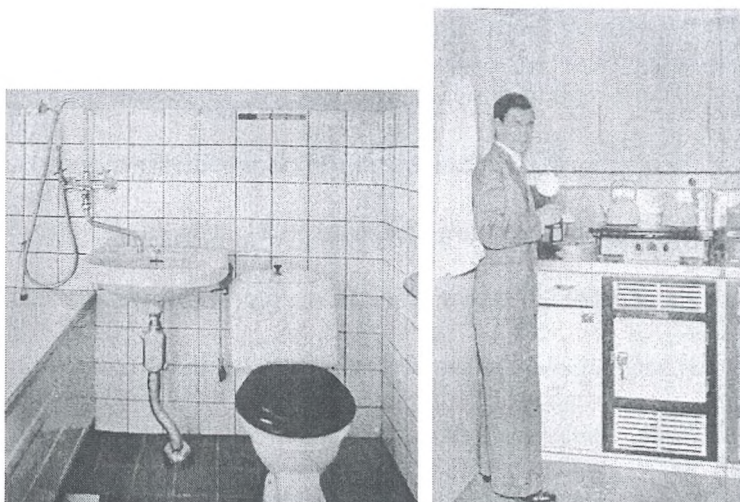


Fig. 5.22. – 5.23. France Ivanšek: Swedish housing standards, 1955.

The photos which architect Ivanšek took do not always present all the rooms. For example, the bedroom is presented about 30 times, in 8 of which a little doll, the Bambola, is shown in the middle of the matrimonial bed.<sup>760</sup> Let us concentrate on this little doll, the Bambola, as she has an interesting story to tell. In Florence in the Quattrocento a *bambino*, a child doll, generally richly dressed, was given to young brides or to girls entering a convent. It is the custom to this day to place a richly dressed doll on the conjugal bed, which is probably meant to ensure the fertility of the couple and the material success of their children.<sup>761</sup> In Federico Fellini's film, *Amarcord*, presenting life in an Italian village in the 1930s, a mother places a large Bambola in the middle of a matrimonial bed, just beneath a picture of the Virgin Mary.<sup>762</sup> In the interwar period, almost one-third of the Slovenian territory, which was incorporated into Yugoslavia after the Second World War, belonged to Italy. In socialist Yugoslavia, baby dolls, clad in colorful dresses and usually placed on matrimonial beds for decoration, started to become the most popular items that people from Slovenia (Yugoslavia) were buying in Italy. In literature, they are mostly represented as goods purchased in Italian shops and smuggled across the border.<sup>763</sup> However, according to Slovenian Museum Curator, Inga Miklavčič-Brezigar, Bambolas did not represent a desire for the West to Slovenian women, but were

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<sup>760</sup> Two times there are other toys instead of Bambolas on the bed: one time teddy-bear and one time a little rabbit.

<sup>761</sup> Christiane Klapisch – Zuber: *Women, family and ritual in Renaissance Italy*, The university of Chicago Press, Chicago 1985, 311, 317.

<sup>762</sup> Federico Fellini (director): *Amarcord*, 1973.

<sup>763</sup> Božo Repe: The influence of shopping tourism on cultural changes and the way of life in Slovenia after World War II. Conference *Culture with frontiers: shopping tourism and travelling objects in post-war Central Europe*. CEU Budapest 1998, Breda Luthar: *Remembering Socialism. On Desire, Consumption, and Surveillance*. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 6 (2), 2006, 229-259.



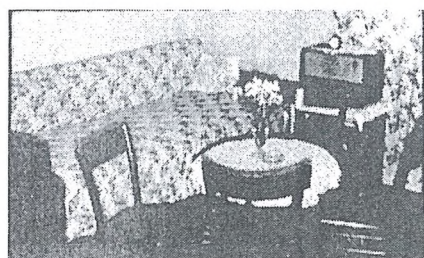
symbols of a good housewife and a tidy (workers') home, "*they were beautiful, attainable items, although they were kitsch*".<sup>764</sup>

The example of an accountant from Littoral, Mrs. Gulin, born in 1937, describes how important these dolls were to Slovenian women. She bought her Bambola in 1958 in Gorizia (Gorica) in Italy at a fair, despite her mother advising her to buy something more useful. Mrs. Gulin was prepared to sacrifice two out of her four permitted border crossings per month for her Bambola. The doll was also very expensive; for that price, she could have bought a better purse or a pair of good shoes. But she bought the doll, because she wanted to have it in her bedroom after she got married. In 1962, after her wedding, she kept the doll in a box until she moved into a new house with her husband, where she furnished and decorated their bedroom. She had the doll on the bed until 1995 and, during that time, a relative made her another dress.<sup>765</sup>

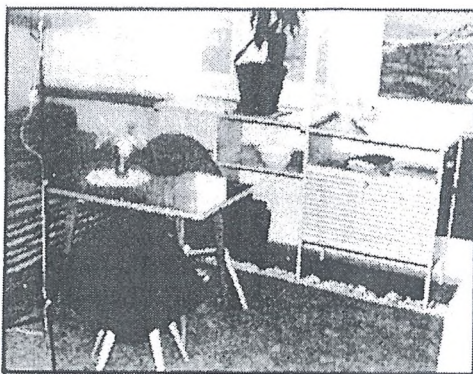
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<sup>764</sup> Inga Miklavčič Brezigar, *Spomini naše mladosti*, Goriški museum 1998, 2.

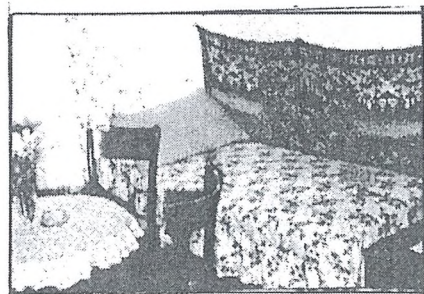
<sup>765</sup> Ibid.



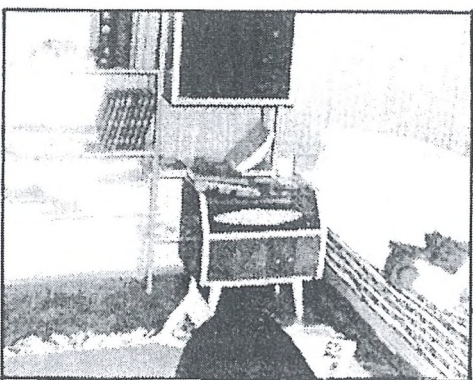
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Fig. 5.24. – 5.25. Cozy and modern apartment furniture in Savsko residential area, 1961.

The apartments in the Savsko Residential Area, in which a Bambola was placed in the bedroom, were mostly inhabited by husbands who were employees of the Yugoslavian Army, and their wives who were housewives. Those apartments were furnished with solid furniture, with lots of decorative doilies, etc. Employees of the Yugoslavian Army had to show strong loyalty to the regime. They used the Party as an express elevator for social mobility, although their way of life was still very traditional. The case of the Bambolas also emphasizes the gender perspective, since it was the housewife who covered the bed with a bedspread every morning, placing a doll in the middle of it. It is



also interesting to note the location, the matrimonial bed, since the bedroom was not a room in which to spend time during the day or for guests to see, but rather an intimate room for a couple, giving the Bambola a more secret significance.

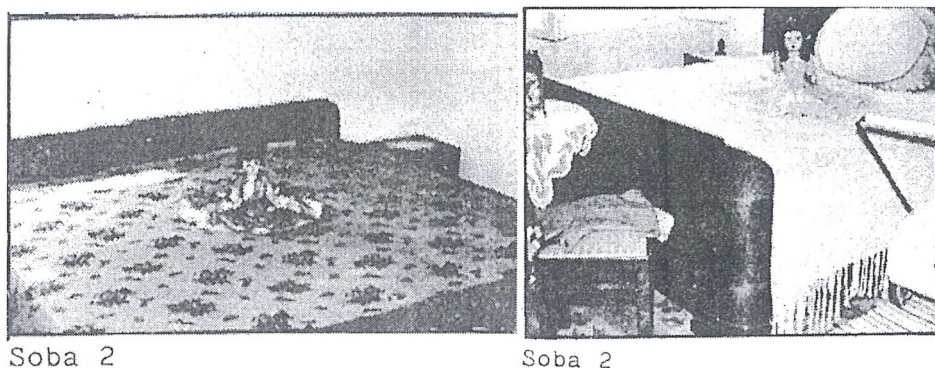


Fig. 5.26. – 5.27. Bambolas in the bedrooms in the Sava residential area, 1961.

### *Bambola in the Province*

It was in December 1950 when the new Director, Nestl Žgank, occupied the Director's chair of the Velenje Coal Mine Company. His three housing types over a 10-year period will be presented, tracing the changes in his lifestyle and social advancement.

Upon their arrival in Velenje, Žgank and his wife, a housewife, obtained an apartment on the first floor of what was called the *Mining Villa*. The couple already had furniture which they had brought on a truck, but they ordered "rustic-style" furniture for the living room from a joiner. In 1955, after the Director's first son was born, they moved to the *Jezero* settlement of family houses, which was built by the Velenje Coal Mine Company.



Fig. 5.28. Wife of the Director of the Coal Mine Company breeding pigs and hens in the early 1950s in Velenje.

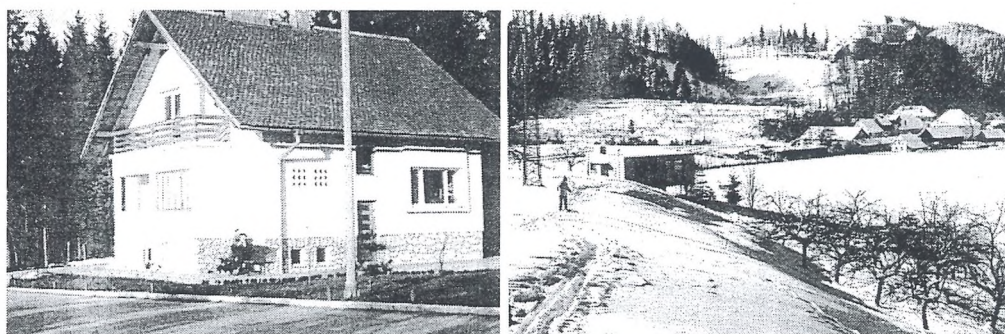


Fig. 5.29.-5.30. Family house of the Coal Mine Company Director in the *Jezero* settlement in Novo Velenje, around 1955 and his family house in the early 1960s.

The Director was in constant disagreement with the town architects, reproaching them for not being ambitious and progressive enough. In 1960 he built himself a house, in accordance with what he deemed to be modern socialist architecture. The house was white and square-shaped, situated at the foot of a hill in a solitary position above the main road, with a beautiful view of the newly-erected town. The priest of Velenje remembers



that people used to call it a petrol station.<sup>766</sup> The photo, taken in the mid-1970s, shows a petty bourgeois atmosphere: the director listening to his daughter playing the piano. On the piano is a doily and on the doily, a figure of a couple in Upper Carniolan folklore costumes.<sup>767</sup> These kinds of figures were also popular in the 1980s, representing not only costumes from different Slovenian regions, but also from other Yugoslavian republics.



Fig. 5.31. Nestl Žgank, Director of the Velenje Coal Mine Company, and his daughter, early 1970s.

As the propaganda films from 1955 and 1958 were sponsored by the Velenje Coal Mine Company, it was most probable that Žgank had ordered them. In 1955, a film, *Life of Velenje Miners*, was produced.<sup>768</sup> This short, thirteen-minute film, concentrates mostly on

<sup>766</sup> Interview with N.D., Velenje 2008.

<sup>767</sup> Nestl Žgank: Spomini "rdečega kralja". Karantanija, 1999.

<sup>768</sup> The film was released by Metod Badjura and Milka Badjura at Triglav Film Ljubljana. Most probably the film was ordered and financed by the Velenje Coal Mine Company. In the first part of the film, we can

work in the mine and all the achievements of the company, i.e. the modernization of coal excavation, the ambulance service, security system, etc. In addition, there are scenes showing the new houses in Novo Velenje on the right bank of the river and the sports and leisure facilities built during the preceding years. With waltz music playing in the background, viewers can enjoy the floral decorations on the balconies and in front of the houses. There is also a short sequence in a kitchen, depicting an older woman preparing a meal and checking on her husband, an ex-miner, who is reading a newspaper on the balcony. He points out a neighboring building to viewers, where his son and family are living. The camera enters the son's apartment at the moment when he is bidding farewell to his wife and two children before leaving for work.



Fig. 5.32. Interior of one of the barracks in the provisories in Novo Velenje, mid-1980s.

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see the Company Director with his work comrades. The film was re-produced in the 1990s in the studios of Paka Film Velenje. Film archive of the Velenje Coalmine.





Fig. 5.33. Miner's family in Velenje, 1954.



Fig. 5.34. Four-apartment house in Novo Velenje, 1955.

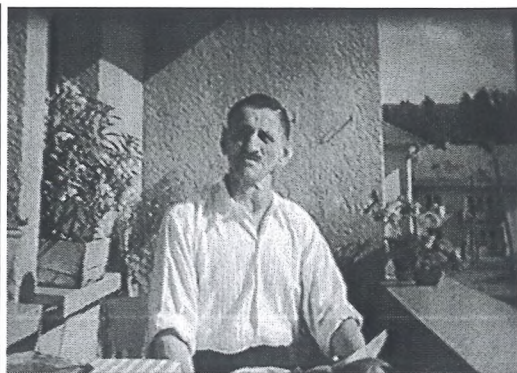


Fig. 5.35 – 5.36. Interior of apartment of a retired couple in a four-apartment house, woman in the kitchen, retired miner on the balcony, Novo Velenje, 1955.



Fig. 5.37. Interior of family apartment of the son, who lives with his family in the neighboring building, Novo Velenje, 1955.

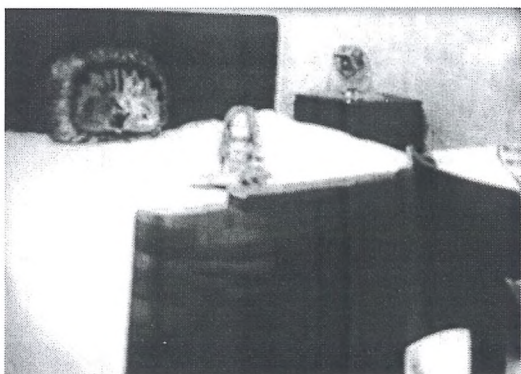


Fig. 5.38. – 5.40. Interior of miner's house in Novo Velenje, 1958.



Three years later, in 1958, another film was produced, entitled *A town above the lignite*.<sup>769</sup> This time, only one-quarter of the film is dedicated to work in the mine. Immediately after the "obligatory" images of the older part of the town beneath the Castle, the second sequence begins with a car driving down the road. Then follows a good minute of "window shopping": on the ground floor of the apartment blocks are stores filled with goods - bicycles, radios, toys, crystal, etc. People are looking, making choices, questioning the saleslady, buying. The last part of the film is dedicated to the presentation of the miners' homes, their little oases, containing all sorts of desirable, modern goods. We can see a mother who is sewing or crocheting, sitting on a sofa. The cover of the sofa is very decorative, with a hand-made cushion on it. Behind it is a hand-made decorative wall-hanging, depicting a scene from Nature. A father is playing a board game with his son. Behind them is a chest-of-drawers, and on it are a clock and a ceramic doll. On the other side of the room, there is another, lower chest with a radio on it. On top of the radio is a vase of flowers; under the radio there is a lace doily. Next to the chest are many potted plants. The curtains are of a floral design, with white lace curtains underneath. In the kitchen, a woman is cooking on an electric stove. In the other room, there is a desk covered with a white, decorative tablecloth and a vase of flowers in the center. The curtains are white. There is a small, low cabinet, on which is a small figurine on a white doily. Behind the table is the large bed of the parents, with a hand-made decorative pillow and a baby doll, Bambola, in the center of the white linen bedspread.

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<sup>769</sup> *Mesto nad lignitom*, 1958. The script-writer of the film is unknown. In 1998, the film was released by Paka Film Velenje, where the music and dialogue were rearranged. Most probably the film was ordered and financed by the Velenje Coal Mine Company.

In the early 1960s, when the Gorenje Company moved from its native village to the mining town of Velenje in order to provide employment for the mine-workers' wives as presented in Chapter Three, federal Party member Leskošek-Luka declared with satisfaction: "*We do not need to build any more, from now on all we have to do is work!*"<sup>770</sup> What Leskovšek-Luka had forgotten to mention, but what was already in progress, was the fact that "we also want to spend, to consume, to buy, to enjoy." As we have seen, as early as in 1958, only three years after Yugoslavia and Italy had signed an agreement on local border traffic,<sup>771</sup> the director of the local coal mine company, about 180 km from the Italian border, historically tied with the German cultural area, had allowed the Bambola to be presented in a film and, in the meantime, at least since the 1970s, it had even been possible to buy Bambolas in local stores.<sup>772</sup>



Fig. 5.41. – 5.42. Window-shopping, selecting and shopping in Novo Velenje, 1958.

<sup>770</sup> Archives of the Company Gorenje, Velenje.

<sup>771</sup> The so called Videm (Udine) agreement. It was the first agreement of its kind to be signed by a capitalist and socialist state respectively during the period of the cold war.

<sup>772</sup> In Velenje in the shop *Moderna oprema* (Modern Furniture).



To sum up: Bambola was a semi-holy doll from the time of the Renaissance, which had survived through Fascist Italy. In socialist Yugoslavia, it represented an object of splendor to working women, who were mostly of rural origins, just starting to work in a factory, and an incentive to save money for it to be bought and smuggled across the border. Bambola, as a traditional, quasi-religious object, addressed the female population coming from peasant and Catholic backgrounds. During the first years of socialism, women were introduced as fellow comrades who, together with their male counterparts, were building the new Socialist society. But already by the late 1950s women had retrieved their traditional role within the private sphere. It was the Bambola doll that was recognized by the Yugoslav authorities as being desirable enough to be used to promote the progress of socialism and suitable enough to be distributed and offered in local stores.

## CONCLUSION

### **New Socialist Towns: Between National, Modernist and Socialist Projects**

If, in the years just before the beginning of the First World War, a tourist were to send one postcard from the northern and one from the southern part of the Austrian Empire, the addressee would have been surprised at how diverse and differently developed the Empire was. From the southern part, Lower Styria, the greetings might have been sent from Wöllan, depicting a romantic, idyllic valley, filled with fields and greenery, with a market town situated beneath the castle. On the other hand, if sent from the northern part, Austrian Silesia, the sender would have chosen a postcard representing the tourist highlights as being the churches, schools, train stations and brick kilns, with captions in German, Polish and Czech.

Only a few years later, after the First World War, when the map of Europe had changed, our visitor could have decided to repeat his former K.u.K. expedition, only this time it would have been to two newly formed states: to the Monarchy of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and to Czechoslovakia. It would have been difficult for our visitor to find the town of Wöllan on the map of the new Monarchy, as the town was now known by its Slovenian name of Velenje. But the image was not much changed: Velenje's export brand was to present the town as a peaceful oasis, where life continued in its traditional patterns. This image of the land, with fields, grasslands, vineyards, and churches on the hills, no big towns or industry, is the landscape that typified the Slovenian national



identity. This native, ancient agricultural landscape and the notion of Slovenia as an idyllic country, filled with natural beauty, was dominant not only in Slovenia,<sup>773</sup> but also during the interwar and post-war (overseas) Slovenian emigration.<sup>774</sup>

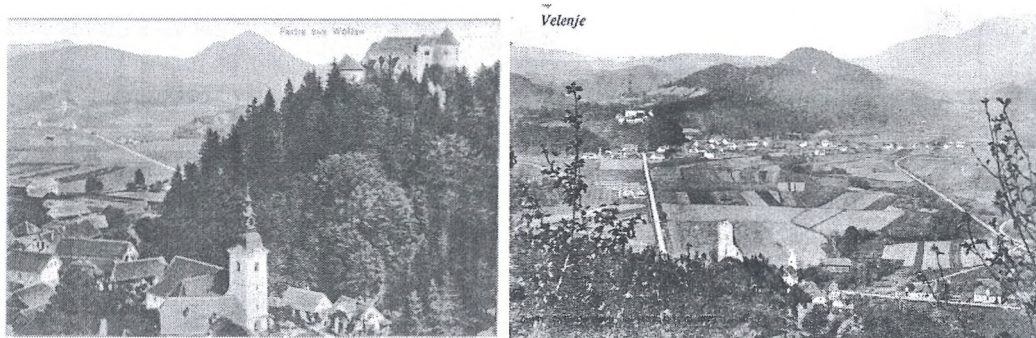


Fig. 6.1., 6.2 Partie aus Wöllan, 1917 and Velenje, 1925.

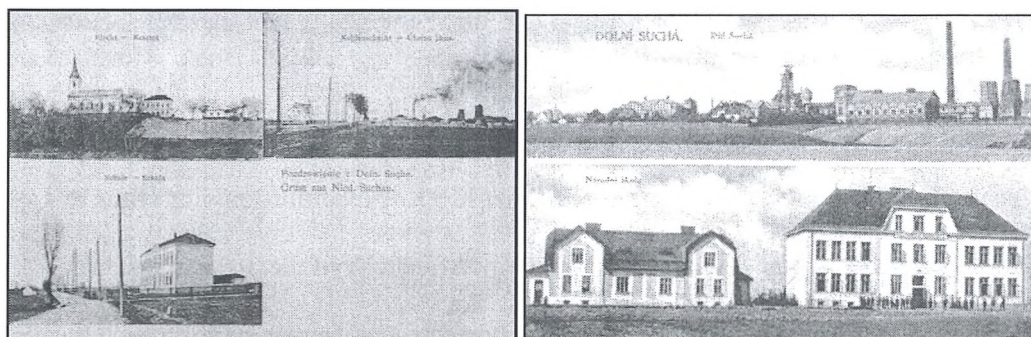


Fig. 6.3., 6.4. Pozdrówienie z Doln. Suche / Gruss aus Nied. Suchau, 1920 and Dolní Suchá, 1923.

<sup>773</sup> Ana Kučan: *Krajina kot nacionalni simbol*. Znanstveno in publicistično središče, Ljubljana 1998.

<sup>774</sup> Kristina Toplak: "Miti o domovini": Slovenija v likovnih upodobitvah Slovencev po svetu. In: Mitja Ferenc, Branka Petkovšek: *Mitsko in stereotipno v slovenskem pogledu na zgodovino*. Zbornik 33. Zborovanja Zveze zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, Ljubljana 2006.

Six hundred and fifty kilometers north-east of Velenje, postcards from the villages of what after 1918/20 became Czechoslovakian Silesia, or its eastern part, Tešíňsko, gradually lost their Silesian-German-Polish-Czech multinational image, as well as this region having lost its administrative autonomy since it was united with Moravia as the country of Moravia and Silesia. It was in the interest of the Prague "Castle Myth"<sup>775</sup> to present images of a modern, democratic Czechoslovakia by showing factories, industrial facilities, coal pits and national schools. The endeavors to consolidate the myth was particularly rejected or contested in the borderlands, where most of the national minorities lived.

During the Second World War, both regions, the Šaleška Valley in Slovenia and Tešíňsko in Czech Silesia, were exposed to the violent policies of Nazi Germany. After the war, the dramatic war experiences were misused by the governments (communist and non-communist) in both countries. As the first chapter shows, in the Šaleška Valley, the new communist authorities used the national question in order to impose the new regime, while in Tešíňsko, the non-communist government used it in order to realize the long quest for a national state.

As this dissertation demonstrates, the communist project was closely connected to the national one. Slovenian communists established their own, national communist party, as part of the Yugoslav one, within which they sought to resolve the Slovenian national

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<sup>775</sup> Andrea Orzoff: *Battle for the Castle. The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948*. Oxford University Press 2009, 57.



question. On the local level, as the example of Velenje shows, Slovenian representation of national symbols were omnipresent (flag, national costumes, street names).

In both regions, during the final years of the war, the resistance movement became strong. In Tešíňsko, this was particularly the Polish one. Tešíňsko was liberated by the Red Army and by the first Czechoslovakian (non-communist) government. The Soviet Union represented the arbitrator to decide which country, Czechoslovakia or Poland, would receive Tešíňsko. The Soviet liberation was later used by the Czechoslovak communists to legitimize the communist order in Czechoslovakia and to be a part within the Soviet sphere of dominance.

Subordination to the Soviet Union was by no means total. The national question played a major role in drawing the distinction between the national (Czech, Czechoslovak) and foreign (Soviet) lines. This was the case in architecture, when during the Stalinist period and imposition of Socialist Realism, Czechoslovakian architects, with the approval of the State authorities, launched a national variation of the Socialist Realist style. This style had especially great importance in the sensitive Czechoslovakian border area, such as Tešíňsko. Besides architecture, the migration of Czech and Slovak workers to the area and the promotion of Wallachian culture also succeeded in replacing the former Polish-Silesian identities in Tešíňsko by Czech (Slovakian) identities.

In Yugoslavia, especially after the break with *Cominform*, the communist authorities used autonomous national resistance and liberation to legitimize the new Yugoslav orientation. It was after the introduction of the system of workers' self-management and

decentralization of the decision-making processes, when the local Velenje Coal Mining Company was able to invest its profits into modernizing the company and town building and to propagate its plans among the town residents in order to secure them as voluntary workers. As for companies, the principles of self-management were applied to architectural offices. The previously centralized, highly hierarchical State-owned offices and institutes were gradually abolished and transformed into self-managing organizations, based on more democratic principles than before.

Architects found themselves in the position of being able to operate with considerable autonomy: on the one hand, the State was no longer interested in narrowly controlling their work, while on the other, it protected them from the pressures of a capitalist market.<sup>776</sup> The case of Velenje shows how (Functionalist orientated) architects in the late 1940s planned a modern housing settlement for miners. But a few years later, in the already "self-managed" Yugoslavia, those plans were criticized by the main local authoritarian figure – the Coal Mine Company Director, protected by one of the Federal Party leaders. The Director's inclination and demand to build a new modern town, to demonstrate the successes of the company and community, corresponded with the approval and promotion of modern architecture by the Federal authorities, trying to present Yugoslavia as an open and modern country. After the Velenje new center was built in 1959, the town, which not long before was considered as being *in the middle of nowhere*, became a town which the highest ranking delegations from all over the world visited, organized by the Federal or Republican authorities.

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<sup>776</sup> Kulić.



This dissertation attempts to investigate in what way and how far the planning, building and living experience in the new towns in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were part of the modern and/or socialist project. In Czechoslovakia, left-wing interwar architects were strongly committed to socialist principles. If the question of nationality did not play any role in Functionalism, then Socialist Realism, imposed in the first half of the 1950s, which in Czechoslovakia had a strong national tone, presented anti-modernity. But among Czechoslovak architects, the internalized Functionalist principles of architecture never died out. Therefore, as soon as the Socialist Realist period was over, they continued the (never really ended) quest for providing functional, cheap apartments for the masses. This was in tune with the post-Stalinist endeavors of the Czechoslovakian authorities to legitimize their power and their decision for an orientation towards consumerism. The expansion of the *paneláks* since the late 1950s was therefore a common feature of the architects and the authorities.

In 1948, Czechoslovakian communists seized power in a country where some of the projects of modernization had already been accomplished during the interwar era or even earlier, such as industrialization (without Slovakia) or women's voting rights. However, the reformation of Catholic religious domination in the Czech lands, which had already begun in the early 15th century,<sup>777</sup> later became one of the symbols of Czech national awareness and identity. Formation of a national state, however, still remained open.

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<sup>777</sup> With Jan Hus (c. 1369-1415), who is considered as the first Church reformer, and his followers, who fought against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church during the so called Hussite Wars.

On the other hand, Slovenian communists managed to organize themselves within the Yugoslav Communist Party as a national Party. When Yugoslav communists seized power in 1945, (united) Slovenia already had the status within the Federation as a republican unit, with the right to secession. This was later accompanied with the rights within the 1974 Constitution, the key component for Slovenian independence and the completion of the country's national project.

In 1945, however, Slovenia was still predominantly a rural country, with only about 28% of the population living in towns by 1953.<sup>778</sup> In his 1950 presentation, when architect, Edvard Ravnikar, predicted the future number of inhabitants in the main Slovenian towns, he counted among the towns 'his' Nova Gorica with 15,000 and Strnišče with 10,000 inhabitants, while Velenje was not on the list at all.<sup>779</sup> Yugoslavian (Slovenian) society was transformed from rural to industrial, whereas Czech (but not Slovakian) society had already passed through that phase before the Second World War. In the first decade after the Second World War, Slovenian society faced tremendous change. The leap of this traditional society, very influenced by the Catholic Church, from being an agricultural to an industrial society, a more secularized country, only occurred in the mid-1950s as part of the socialist modernization project.

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<sup>778</sup> Mercina, 12. In 1961 the number increased to almost 32% and in 1977 to more than 40%.

<sup>779</sup> France Ivanšek (ur.): Referati članov arhitektna sekcije Društva inženirjev in tehnikov LRS na 1. posvetovanju arhitektov FLRJ v Dubrovniku 23.-25.XI.1950. Arhitekturna sekcija inženirjev in tehnikov LR Slovenija, Ljubljana 1950, 14.



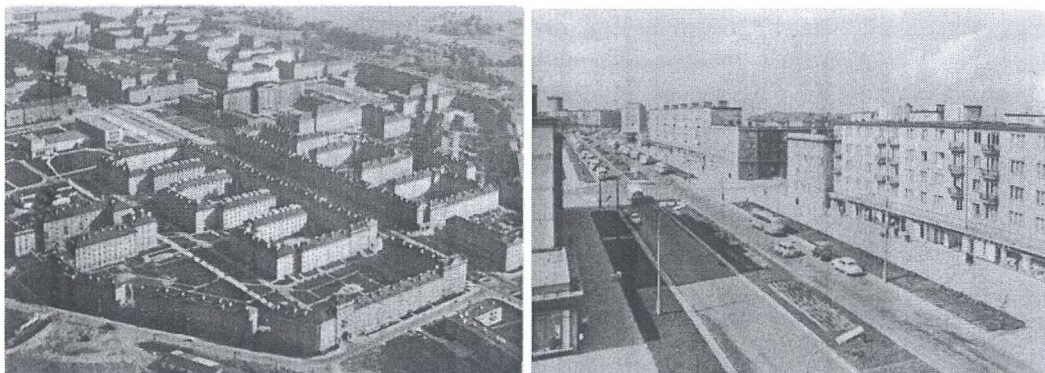


Fig. 6.5., 6.6. Gottwaldova Street (mid-1950s) and Zápotockeho Street (early 1970s) in Havířov.

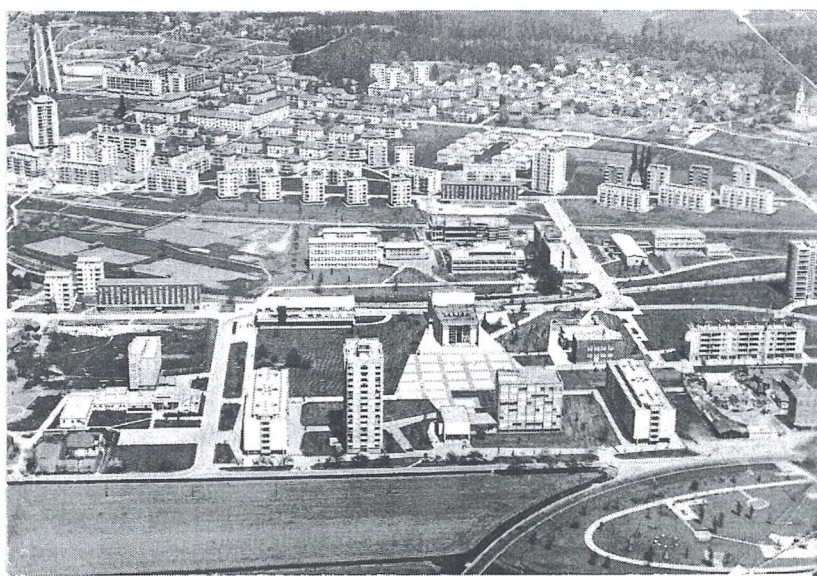


Fig. 6.7. Velenje. On the right bank of the river: Viljem Strmečki: Novo Velenje, 1948-1955. On the left bank: Ciril Pogačnik, Franc Šmid, Janez Trenz: Velenje, 1956-1959.

Increased industrialization, urbanization, and modernization brought an influx of (mostly young) people to the urban areas, bringing their old habits and lifestyles with them. In the case of Havířov, people from all over the country, of rural or urban origins, arrived to work in a new town, while in the case of Slovenian Velenje, the first settlers were mostly of rural origin, coming from the nearby villages.

The first plans of the late 1940s in the areas of both future towns predicted modernized versions of mining colonies. In the late 1950s, after the short Czechoslovakian period of Socialist Realism and Yugoslavian Reformation, both towns displayed a different image. In both, the architects and authorities endeavored to raise the quality of the living conditions for everyone. However, we can notice big differences between the two towns in the understanding of architecture as a tool to achieve a socialist society. In Havířov, orientation towards an egalitarian society is shown in the non-elitism of the new designs. In the case of Velenje, on the other hand, the differences of living spaces varied significantly: from temporary houses to the Director's villa.

The explanation for the adoption of such differences in the case of Slovenia are to be found in the strong awareness of belonging to the community, reinforced, for example, by "voluntary work", as well as the traditional nature of the first settlers, who found the new, modern homes less cozy and attractive than the familiar homes of their birth. Here modernism showed its forced and aggressive form. In a still very patriarchal society such as Slovenia was, it was almost taken for granted that the most important authorities in the community were visible and held privileged positions.



Competition played a big role in both towns. In the case of Velenje, it was the competition of the Coal Mine Company with other coal mines in the Republic, especially with the traditional mines in the Zasavje region, while in Havířov, competition in coal extraction was directed towards other socialist countries. However, competition and comparison were also directed towards the West. Austria, once part of a common Empire, was a country to be compared with. While, for Slovenes, the modernization within the first 20 years of socialism proved to be successful, the Czechs felt disappointed at the end of the 1950s.

Throughout the dissertation, we follow the examples of negotiation and the adaptation between the authorities and town residents during the first decades of socialism in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Issues of tacit minimal consensus, which were suited to consensual interpretations of reality between the regime and a large part of the population, without having to be negotiated in principle,<sup>780</sup> were peace, prosperity, work, security, family life, and women's employment. The new socialist towns were projects accomplished during socialism, but they were much more. They were a mix of different socialist, national and modern models, which all represented a world of meaning for their residents.

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<sup>780</sup> Lindenberger, 212.

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History Archives Celje  
Music School Fran Korun Koželjski Velenje  
Ostrava-Karviná Mines Archives  
State District Archives Karviná  
Regional Archives Opava  
Velenje Coal Mine Company Archives

### **Museums, Libraries**

Central Library Celje  
Tešínka Museum  
Velenje Museum

### **Periodicals**

Architektura ČSR  
Arhitekt  
Důl Dukla  
Mladina  
Slovenski poročevalec  
(Velenjski) Rudar

### **Interviews and Correspondence**

Viktor Kojc, Jana Jílková, Nande Korpnik, Ivanka Lap, Mitja Lap, Radimir Prokop, Zofka Seme, Sonja Šafar, Janez Trenz, R.P., N.D.

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## Daljši povzetek v slovenskem jeziku

### Uvod

Kmalu po padcu komunizma v srednji in jugovzhodni Evropi so nova socialistična mesta postala predmet obravnave sprva predvsem zgodovinarjem arhitekture, kmalu pa tudi zgodovinarjem, ki se ukvarjajo s socialno, kulturno in primerjalno zgodovino. V preteklem desetletju se je primerjalni pristop, v obliki zbornikov in mednarodnih projektov, ki se osredotočajo na izkušnje življenja v socializmu, dokaj razširil. V veliki večini te oblike zajemajo študije primera posameznih držav, pospremljene z uredniškim uvodom. Za lažje razumevanje in boljši odgovor na vprašanja kot na primer: edinstvenost (ali ne) jugoslovanske poti, interpretacija komunističnega obdobja kot totalitarnega in izkušnje življenja v socializmu, disertacija uporablja analitično primerjavo dveh študij primera: mesto Velenje v nekdanji Jugoslaviji (danes v Sloveniji) in Havířov, mesto v nekdanji Češkoslovaški (danes na Češkem). Politične razlike in posledično tudi razlike v ekonomski, socialni in kulturni sferi med Jugoslavijo in evropskimi komunističnimi državami so do neke mere že bile predmet raziskav. Razlike na jugoslovanski strani najpogosteje izhajajo iz avtonomnega partizanskega odpora med drugo svetovno vojno, razkola z Informbirojem leta 1948, kar je privedlo do decentralizacije in odpiranja države proti Zahodu, utrjevanju Titovega kulta osebnosti, uvedba samoupravljanja v notranji politiki in gibanja Neuvrščenih v zunanji. Kljub razlikam je ključen element v vseh komunističnih državah ostal enak: monopol v rokah ene, Komunistične partije. Primerjava študije primera iz območja sovjetskega bloka s podobno študijo primera iz



Jugoslavije, poskusa disertacija raziskati kako se jugoslovanski odkloni odražajo na primeru mesta Velenja.

Za raziskavo in primerjavo ideoloških posegov, reakcij in odobravanjem prebivalstva v njihovem mikro habitusu, se disertacija opira na metodologijo zgodovine vsakdanjega življenja (*Alltagsgeschichte*) v komunizmu. Čeprav je ta metodologija kritizirana kot socialna zgodovina, kjer je politika izpuščena, predstavlja "posebno obliko pristopa 'od spodaj-gor', ki pričinja v stvarnosti vsakodnevnega življenja in se nato usmerja navzgor v iskanju interakcije med dnevnimi aktivnostmi prebivalstva in njihovimi oblikami prilagoditve ali obrambe na eni strani in praksami, ki so jih izvajale oblasti." (Corner 2009 : 5), na drugi. Tovrstna metodologija omogoča identifikacijo 'mej diktature' in zaznava motivacije ljudi skozi analizo procesa graditve njihovega lastnega smisla ali konstrukcije avtonomnega pomena, skovanega v besedi *Eigen-Sinn*. (Apor 2008)

Disertacija obravnava poskuse socializma, kot sistema, pri vzpostavitvi novih norm, vrednot in vzorcev obnašanja. Obenem je bil socializem sposoben tudi reproducirati pred-socialistične kulturne tradicije in vzorce s prilagajanjem lokalnemu kontekstu. Disertacija ponuja primere pogajanj in adaptacij med oblastjo in prebivalci obeh mest v prvih dveh desetletjih socializma na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji.

## **1. Gradnja nove skupnosti**

Gradnja socializma na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji ter legitimacija moči v rokah Komunistične partije obeh držav je predstavljal proces, ki je bil odvisen od notranjih in zunanjih okoliščin ter sestavljen iz podobnih in različnih metod.

Prvo poglavje najprej na kratko oriše zgodovino in identiteto dveh področij bivše Avstro-Ogrske monarhije. Prvo področje je vzhodna Šlezija ali Tešinsko, eno izmed najbolj industrializiranih področij razpadle monarhije in prve Češkoslovaške republike, z lastnimi tendencami v smeri avtonomije, močno delavsko identiteto in češko-poljskimi trenji, ki so se posebej neposredno po koncu prve in druge svetovne vojne stopnjevala v nasilje. Drugo področje, Šaleška dolina na Spodnjem Štajerskem, je bilo, kot del monarhije ali Kraljestva Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev (kasneje Jugoslavije), pretežno agrarno in katoliško. Med drugo svetovno vojno sta bili obe področji izpostavljeni nasilnim in krutim ukrepom nacistične politike. V vzhodni Šleziji so najmočnejšo odporniško gibanje tvorili Poljaki v upanju, da bo po koncu vojne to področje pripadalo Poljski. Vendar s pomočjo Sovjetske zveze, katere Rdeča armada je ozemlje osvobodila, je vzhodna Šlezija (Tešinsko) ostala del Češkoslovaške. V nasprotju pa prebivalci Šaleške doline niso imeli direktne izkušnje z Rdečo armado, saj je ozemlje osvobodilo slovensko (partizansko) odporniško gibanje. Ob koncu vojne je Komunistična partija Slovenije (KPS) predstavljala edino organizirano politično skupino, čeprav se je odporniško in komunistično gibanje v Šaleški dolini okrepilo šele v zadnjem letu in pol pred koncem vojne.

Ker je v Sloveniji med vojno sprejem v Partijo potekal na širših osnovah, so kmetje postali prevladujoča socialna skupina v Partiji. Na Tešinskem pa so večino komunistov predstavljali Poljaki, ki so pozdravljali zmago Komunistične partije Češkoslovaške (KSČ) na Češkoslovaškem februarja 1948. KSČ je bila edina politična stranka, ki v povojni radikalni atmosferi naproti nacionalnim manjšinam na Češkoslovaškem, ni bila



sovražno nastrojena proti poljski manjšini. Ko se je med čistkami na začetku petdesetih let nekdanja tolerantna politika KSČ nasproti poljski manjšini na Tešinskem spreobrnila in postala veliko bolj represivna, so se oznake in obtožbe komunistov ujemale z že znanimi oblikami.

Pomanjkljivo in neustrezno usposabljanje komunistov v Šaleški dolini je bilo očitno v prvih povojnih letih, kot tudi po sporu z Informbirojem leta 1948. KPS je vlagala veliko naporov v krepitev svojih pozicij v Šaleški dolini, kot tudi v legitimacijo nove jugoslovanske usmeritve. Vendar pri vzpostavljanju novega sistema, kot to poglavje pokazuje, teror in strah nista igrala osrednje vloge. Oblast je bila soočena s odporom prebivalstva in njihovimi zahtevami in potrebami po pogajanjih. Brez uporabe odkrite represije, se je oblast posluževala, kar slovenska filozofinja Renata Salecl definira kot *mehanizmi identifikacije*, kjer ljudje pričnejo ubogati oblast, ne da bi se tega zavedali in to dojemajo kot svojo svobodno odločitev.<sup>781</sup> Prvo poglavje se osredotoča na vprašanja, ki so bili predmet pogajanj, kot tudi na *fantazme* (Salecl 1993), preko katerih so se ljudje identificirali na Tešinskem in v Šaleški dolini po drugi svetovni vojni.

## 2. Načrtovanje socialističnega mesta

V komunističnem političnem besednjaku je imela arhitektura pomembno mesto, saj je bil uspeh novega sistema pogosto merjen s številom novih stanovanj in industrijskim napredkom. Arhitektura ima tudi močan simbolni pomen, saj predstavlja kulturno in

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<sup>781</sup> Renata Salecl: Zakaj ubogamo oblast? Nadzorovanje, ideologija in ideološke fantazme. Državna založba Slovenije, Ljubljana 1993, 9.

nacionalno identiteto države. Povojna potreba in navdušenje za gradnjo med vojno porušene domovine je sovpadalo z nastajanjem nove, socialistične družbe.

Arhitekturni razvoj skozi petdeseta leta odraža niz sprememb prevladujočih vzorcev v arhitekturi tako na Češkoslovaškem kot v Jugoslaviji. Sprejetje vzorcev iz Sovjetske zveze in spodbujanje težke industrije, potem ko so češkoslovaški in jugoslovanski komunisti prevzeli oblast, je pospešilo urbanizacijo in načrtovanje novih naselij in mest v obeh državah. Zaradi Češkoslovaške močne arhitekturne in industrijske tradicije, kot tudi vplivne medvojne avantgarde, predane socialističnim in funkcionalističnim konceptom v arhitekturi, se je funkcionalistična gradnja nadaljevala do začetka petdesetih let 20. stoletja.

V Sloveniji so v času med obema vojnama privrženci funkcionalizma niso bili politično nikoli cenjeni, po drugi svetovni vojni pa so bili v večini odstranjeni ali postavljeni ob stran arhitekturnega dogajanja v Sloveniji.

Kratka doba neizoblikovane retorike socialističnega realizma v arhitekturi v Sloveniji je povezovala poetiko in monumentalnost Jožeta Plečnika z emocionalnim funkcionalizmom Le Courbusiera. Se posebej po sporu med Jugoslavijo in Informbirojem, so tako Jugoslavija kot vzhodnoevropske komunistične države doživele spremembe v svoji arhitekturni produkciji in izrazu. Med 1950 in 1954, je v skladu s politiko sovjetizacije, Češkoslovaška sprejela stalinističen model v svoji arhitekturni obliki in praksi. Vendar uvedba stalinističnega modela v nobenem primeru ni bila popolna. Češkoslovaški arhitekti so razvili nacionalno formo socialističnega realizma,



imenovano *sorela*, ki je proslavljala narodno dediščino in slikala prizore iz vsakodnevnega življenja.

Jugoslavija, na drugi strani, pa se je po razkolu usmerila na pot večje decentralizacije v gospodarstvu, ter socialni in kulturni politiki, ki je bila v praksi sicer blokirana vedno, kadar je bila centralna partijska oblast ogrožena. Od sredine petdesetih let 20. stoletja, je vpeljava samoupravljanja, komunalnega sistema in odpiranje države proti zahodu, bistveno vplivalo na načrtovanje mest. Nove okoliščine so slovenskim arhitektom omogočale večjo izrazno raznolikost in avtonomijo v odločanju. Jugoslovanska nova usmeritev je sicer zavrgla stalinističen model in odprla vrata modernizmu zahodnega tipa s čimer si je jugoslovansko komunistično vodstvo pridobilo legitimiteto o pravilnosti jugoslovanske nove poti. Vendar, kot to poglavje ugotavlja, so bile v »skoraj svobodni družbi«<sup>782</sup> jugoslovanske post-Infombirojevske »samo-sovjetizacijske strategije« (Rees 2008) v arhitekturni praksi pospremljene s paternalističnim odnosom federalnih, republiških in lokalnih partijskih aparatčikov v odnosu do gradnje in razvoja (novih) mest, kot tudi poseganje v profesionalne odločitve arhitektov.

Da bi legitimirala oblast in zagotovila socialen mir, sta se komunistična sistema v Jugoslaviji in na Češkoslovaškem usmerila proti potrošništvu. Po koncu obdobja socialističnega realizma na Češkoslovaškem, je začelo arhitekturno vodstvo v državi, ki je sicer ostalo predano modernističnim oblikam, širiti implementacijo standardizacije in industrializacije, v želji po rešitvi stanovanjskega problema. Metode, katerih so se arhitekti posluževali so bile nadaljevanje zapuščine obdobja med obema vojnama.

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<sup>782</sup> Vesna Drapac: *Constructing Yugoslavia. A Transnational History*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 195.

### 3. Med evforijo prihodnosti in izgubljenimi iluzijami

Delavci in delo so bili izjemnega pomena za legitimacijo komunističnega sistema. Kot pravi Mark Pittaway, je bila socialistična družba "družba, ki je temeljila na produktivnem delu".<sup>783</sup> To poglavje osvetljuje dva modela delovnih metod, od katerih vsaka izpostavlja kot prednostno nadurno delo. Češkoslovaški primer predstavlja rudarje – udarnike, ki so tekmovali s svojimi sodelavci v jami, kot tudi z rudarji v ostalih komunističnih državah. Jugoslovanski primer ilustrira »prostovoljno« delo, ki so ga opravljali rudarji in prebivalci mesta brez plačila, po svojih rednih delovnih obveznostih, da bi izboljšali svoje življenjsko okolje. Obe metodi sta najbolj prizadevnim udarnikom ali »prostovoljcem« omogočili konkretne privilegije, kot novo stanovanje – dobrino, kateri to poglavje namenja največ pozornosti.

Stanovanjska politika na Češkoslovaškem v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja je postala temelj pri pridobivanju nove delovne sile v ključne ekonomske sektorje. Problem ni bil le prepričati delavce, naj pridejo in delajo v težki industriji. Še pomembneje jih je bilo obdržati. Problem delovne fluktuacije se je najbolj občutno kazal v rudarski industriji, kjer je le 17% novincev obdržalo rudarsko službo.<sup>784</sup> Državna stanovanja so tako postala idealno orodje pri »prepričevanju« delavcev, naj obdržijo svojo zaposlitev.

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<sup>783</sup> Pittaway (2004).

<sup>784</sup> Johan Jeroen De Deken: Social Policy in Postwar Czechoslovakia. The Development of Old-Age Pensions and Housing Policies During the Period 1945-1989. European University Institute, Florence 1994, 106.



Jugoslovanski primer kaže, kako je »prostovoljno udarniško delo« omogočalo delavcem, da so sami zase prispevali pri gradnji novega mesta in stanovanj. Poleg ekonomske učinkovitosti, je tovrstno delo prispevalo k večji povezanosti v skupnosti.

V obeh primerih so bili med najbolj prizadevnimi mladoporočeni moški udarniki, ki so si s svojim delom in družinskim stanom pridobili pravico do novega stanovanja. Na primeru distribucije stanovanj, to poglavje ilustrira, kako je bila, sicer formalno obstoječa enakopravnost med moškimi in ženskami, večkrat kršena.

Razvoj v okviru planske ekonomije je večkrat padel v neskladje, na eni strani med načrtovalci in izvajalci, na drugi strani pa povzročil nevšečnosti med uporabniki. To poglavje obravnava spreminjajočo se naravo obljub in pričakovanj. Za razliko od planske ekonomije, je politika samoupravljanja omogočila lokalnim oblastem visoko stopnjo, ne pa popolno, avtonomijo v odločanju.

#### **4. Želene in prisiljene identitete**

Če bi se leta 1962 želeli sprehoditi skozi novo češkoslovaško mesto Havířov, bi lahko sprehod začeli pri *Kinu Veselje (Kino Radost)* na *Gottwaldovi ulici*, poimenovani po Klementu Gottwaldu, dolgoletnem voditelju KSČ in prvemu predsedniku komunistične Češkoslovaške. Stavba kina je nova, stara komaj sedem let, čeprav zgleda kot prenovljena renesančna stavba. *Gottwaldova ulica*, skupaj s paralelno ulico *Prve petletke*, je bila zgrajena v *sorela* arhitekturnem stilu, ki je med približno 1950-1955 predstavljala

češkoslovaško različico socialističnega realizma, katera je poudarjala elemente obdobja renesanse in črpala iz tradicije moravskih renesančnih mest, kot tudi elemente iz slovaškega podeželskega življenja. Na koncu Gottwaldove ulice prispemo do trga *Zmagovitega februarja (Náměstí Vítězného února)*, poimenovanega po komunističnem prevzemu oblasti na Češkoslovaškem februarja 1948. Na trgu se je nedavno odprla nova trgovina – delikatesa *Labužník*, funkcionalistična stavba, ki se je zgledovala po svetovni razstavi Expo 58, ki je potekala leta 1958 v Bruslju. Na trgu bo čez nekaj let, točneje leta 1970, postavljen spomenik Leninu. Iz trga lahko zavijemo levo in se spočijemo v ljubkem parku za kinom Veselje ali pa nadaljujemo pot do ulice *Zapotockeho*, poimenovane po drugem češkoslovaškem komunističnem predsedniku Antoninu Zápotockemu (predsednik je ostal do svoje smrti leta 1957). Ta ulica je bila dograjena v poznih petdesetih letih v zelo skromnem stilu socialistične moderne. Ko se sprehodimo mimo najvišje stavbe v centru mesta, težko spregledamo napis na vrhu stavbe: *Vse za mir in socializem*. Napis je viden tudi na samem začetku 2,5 km dolge ulice *Zapotockeho*, ki je postala glavna vpadnica v mesto. Na tej ulici se bo leta 1973 odprla največja prodajalna v mestu, imenovana *Prihodnost (Bodoucnost)*. Preden dosežemo našo zadnjo destinacijo, ulico *Na obrezju (Na nábreží)*, pri reki *Lučina*, kjer se lahko oddahnemo v restavraciji *Asterix*, moramo se mimo osnovne sole *Rosa Luxemburgove* na ulici *Patrik Lumumba*, poimenovane po Patriku Lumumby, premieru Republike Kongo.

Sprehod po mestu Velenje v Sloveniji pričnemo po odprtju novega centra leta 1959. Izhodiščna točka je *Kidričeva ulica*, ki povezuje Novo Velenje na desnem bregu reke Paka z novim centrom na levem bregu. Ta ulica je poimenovana po Borisu Kidriču,



vodilnem slovenskem komunistu, partizanu, članu zveznega Politbiroja in ministru za industrijo, ki je umrl leta 1953. S *Kidričeve ulice* zavijemo na Cankarjevo ulico v novem centru, namenjena samo pešcem. Ta ulica je poimenovana po Ivanu Cankarju, ki ga stroka šteje za pionirja moderne v slovenski literaturi in velja za največjega pisatelja v slovenskem jeziku. Ko se po *Cankarjevi ulici* približujemo osrednjemu trgu, gremo mimo frizerskega salona in bara *Express Buffet*, ki sta nameščena v pritličju štiri-nadstropne stanovanjske stolpnice, v kateri v večini stanujejo zdravniki in srednješolski profesorji. Gremo tudi mimo *Ljudske univerze*, katere fasada je prepleskana z rdečo barvo in katere v sklopu sta tudi restavracija in bar imenovana *Delavski klub*. *Ljudska univerza* je nameščena na začetku osrednjega Titovega trga, imenovanega po jugoslovanskem predsedniku Josipu Brozu – Titu. Na levi strani trga najdemo belo, moderno stavbo kvadratne oblike, ki je sedež največjega podjetja v Šaleški dolini: Rudnika lignita Velenje. Pred stavbo vidimo vrtno dekoracijo v obliki črke L, v čast Francu Leskošku – Luki, slovenskemu komunistu in članu Politbiroja in podporniku gradnje novega mesta Velenje. Na desni strani trga vidimo postmoderno stavbo Doma kulture. Dalje na desni strani se nahaja pravokotna, steklena, na stebrih viseča stavba mestne hiše. Nas sprehod po trgu končamo pred trgovino *Velenjski magazin*, nato pa prečkamo Šaleško cesto, imenovano po dolini, kjer se mesto nahaja. Že smo pri Hotelu Paka, imenovanem po reki Paki, ki teče skozi mesto. Ko sedimo na terasi hotela in uživamo ob skodelici turske kave, gledamo proti edini stolpnici v mestu, ki se nahaja na robu Titovega trga, in katera na strehi nosi rudarski napis: *Srečno*. Če pa se ozremo, lahko na hribu za nami občudujemo velenjski grad, ki je tudi novo ustanovljen nacionalni *Muzej premogovništva*.

To poglavje obravnava uporabo javnega prostora. V uvodu to poglavje navaja zgoraj opisana primera kot izhodišče za diskurz o različnih identifikacijah obeh mest (lokalni, regionalni, nacionalni, socialistični, profesionalni, mednarodni), kot so se pojavljale in bile predstavljene v petdesetih in šestdesetih letih 20. stoletja. Poglavje poskusa opredeliti identifikacije, ki so bile pomembne za ponotranjenje prevladujoče ideologije. Javen prostor proučuje kot svet, kjer lokalni, nacionalni in utopistični elementi, kode in simboli tvorijo »socialistični svet«, katere so ljudje, po besedah češkega semiologa Vladimírja Macure, obvladovali mehanično in brez premišljanja.<sup>785</sup> Poglavje poskusa prepoznati, katere identitete in elementi so v javnem prostoru pojavili na novo, kateri so favorizirani in kateri transformirani.

Slovensko mesto je v svojem javnem prostoru uporabljalo predvsem lokalna imena (za imenovanje reke, doline, mesta) ali imena nacionalnega (slovenskega) pomena (poimenovanje po slovenskih umetnikih, partizanih, komunistih), močno pa je bila poudarjena tudi rudarska identiteta mesta. Najbolj pomemben (in skoraj tudi edini) element, ki je poudarjal jugoslovansko in socialistično identiteto je bilo poimenovanje osrednjega trga v novem centru, poimenovanega po jugoslovanskem predsedniku Titu in rdeča stavba Delavske univerze. Češkoslovaški primer pa nam daje podobo močne lokalne, nacionalne, federalne, internacionalne, kot tudi komunistične (utopistične) identitete.

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<sup>785</sup> Vladimír Macura: Šťastný věk (a jiné studie o socialistické kultuře), Academia, Praha 2008, 10.



## 5. Udoben dom v nastajanju

Komunizem je poskušal vzpostaviti nove norme, vrednote in vzorce obnašanja, vendar so to transformacijo določale številne vzporednice in z njimi povezani procesi iz obdobja in tradicij pred komunizmom. Mark Pittaway je na primeru stanovanjske kulture delavskega razreda v času komunizma na Madžarskem odkril, da so bile mnoge predpostavke snovalcev privatne sfere velikokrat dosti konservativne.<sup>786</sup> Družina je ostala osnovna enota.

Na oblikovanje pohištva in oprema stanovanj na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji so v veliki meri vplivale politične in socialne razmere v obeh državah v petdesetih letih 20. stoletja. Eno glavnih vprašanj je bilo, kako omogočiti najboljši možen sistem za hitro, poceni in kvalitetno opremo stanovanja. Tipizacija in standardizacija stanovanjske opreme se je izkazala za najbolj priporočljivo in uspešno metodo.

To poglavje pokaze, kako so Češkoslovaški arhitekti in oblikovalci sledili globoko zakoreninjenim idejam socialističnega in znanstvenega razumevanja svojega poklica. Po prvih odkritih pojavih nezadovoljstva med delavci v začetku petdesetih let, so državne oblasti, v želji legitimirati svojo oblast, usmerile svojo politiko v smer potrošništva. Ob koncu desetletja so namenile več pozornosti potrebam potrošnikov in se bolj tesno povezale z arhitekti in oblikovalci, da bi zagotovili sprejemljivo pohištvo za nova stanovanja.

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<sup>786</sup> Mark Pittaway: Stalinism, Working-Class Housing and Individual Autonomy: The Encouragement of Private House Building in Hungary's Mining Areas, 1950-4. In: *Style and Socialism. Modernity and Material Culture in Post-War Eastern Europe*. Edited by Susan E. Reid and David Crowley. Berg, 2000.

V Jugoslaviji je po letu 1948 decentralizacija in večja avtonomija samoupravnih podjetij pri procesih odločanja omogočila slovenskim arhitektom, da so iskali možnosti za nove oblike pohištva do določene mere brez direktnega vmešavanja državnih oblasti. Dodatno pomembno prizadevanje slovenskih arhitektov je bilo izobraževanje in popularizacija modernega, funkcionalnega, lahkega in poceni pohištva usmerjena tako pohištveni industriji kot tudi potrošnikom.

To poglavje raziskuje aktualne stile opreme stanovanj in sledi povezavi med vsakodnevnim življenjem in prizadevanja komunističnih oblasti v želji, da bi izpolnila želje in zahteve svojih prebivalcev. V ta namen sta uporabljena dva zelo različna objekta: prvi je najnovejši tehnološki izum, ki se siri v družinske domove po celem svetu, drugi pa na pol otročja, kvazi verska lutka.

Razlike v opremi stanovanj ljudi, ki so se preselili v novo zgrajena stanovanja, kažejo na ogromne socialne spremembe, ki so potekale na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji (Sloveniji). Očitno je postalo razhajanje med stanovanji, ki so bila opremljena z masivnim, tradicionalnim pohištvom in med tistimi, ki so bila opremljena z novejšim, bolj modernim. Ta razhajanja so bila med drugim odvisna od socialnega, poklicnega, verskega ozadja prebivalcev.

Tendence v bolj progresivni Češki (severni Moravski, Šlezijski) družbi se v precejšnji meri skladale s poskusi komunističnih oblasti v smeri ustvarjanja bolj utilitaristične in enakopravne družbe.



Sredi petdesetih let 20. stoletja se je tradicionalno bolj konservativna slovenska družba začela soočati z vedno večjim razslojevanjem. To poglavje pokaže, kako so lokalne oblasti razvile malomeščanski življenjski slog, ne glede na to, da so se opirale na svojo zavezanost komunističnim idealom, ki pa v praksi niso bili ponotranjeni.

Na primeru dolgoročnega razvoja Nemške demokratične republike je Thomas Lindenberger identificiral in določil predmete tihega soglasja, ki so bili primerni za sporazumno interpretacijo realnosti med oblastjo in večjim delom prebivalstva.<sup>787</sup> Med njimi je tudi družinsko življenje, ki je bilo glede na Lindenbergerja »popolnoma v skladu z režimom. Poleg delovnega mesta, kot osrednjega mesta sociabilnosti, so male, dvo-generacijske družine okrog heteroseksualnega para, omogočale legitimno območje zadovoljstva posameznika in njegove projekcije v prihodnost.«<sup>788</sup>

Medtem ko so arhitekti in oblikovalci poskušali prepričati in učiti principe funkcionalnosti pohištva in opreme v modernem domu, so državne in lokalne oblasti odkrile pot, da uveljavijo svojo moč, hkrati pa zadovoljijo želje delavcev in delavk. Poudarjati so zaceli elemente, ki so jih delavcem in delavkam bili poznani ali pa so si jih želeli in jih predstavili skupaj z idejo dosežkov moderne dobe in življenjskega stila. Povečanje osebne potrošnje in orientacija v privatno življenje sta se izkazali kot uspešna formula.

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<sup>787</sup> Thomas Lindenberger: Tacit minimal consensus: the always precarious East German dictatorship. In: Paul Corner (ed.): Popular opinion in totalitarian regimes: fascism, nazism, communism. Oxford University Press, 2009, 212.

<sup>788</sup> Ibid., 214.

## Zaključek

Če bi turist v letih pred začetkom prve svetovne vojne poslal razglednico iz severnega ali južnega dela Avstro-Ogrskega imperija oziroma njegove avstrijske polovice, bi bil naslovnik gotovo začuden nad tem, kako različno razvit je imperij. Iz južnega dela monarhije bi razglednica lahko bila poslana iz Wöllana, katera bi prikazovala romantično, idilično dolino, polno polj in travnikov in mestnim trgom, postavljenim pod vznožjem gradu. Lahko pa bi bila razglednica poslana iz severnega dela, avstrijske Šlezije, ki bi kot turistične znamenitosti prikazovala cerkve (katoliško ali luteransko), (nacionalne) sole, železniško postajo ali rudarko jamo, pospremljeno z napisi v nemščini, poljščini ali češčini.

Le nekaj let kasneje, po koncu prve svetovne vojne in velikim spremembam zemljevida Evrope, bi se turist lahko odločil da ponovi svojo nekdanjo K.u.K. ekspedicijo. A tokrat bi se podal v dve novo nastali državi: Kraljevino Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev in na Češkoslovaško. Mesto Wöllan bi bilo sedaj na zemljevidu nove kraljevine težko najti, saj je prevzelo svoje slovensko ime Velenje. A podoba mesta se ni mnogo spremenila: turistična izvozna znamka Velenja je bila podoba mirne oaze, kjer življenje poteka po svojih ustaljenih vzorcih. Ta podoba pokrajine, polne polj, travnikov, vinogradov in cerkva, posejanimi na nizkih hribčkih, je postala značilna za slovensko nacionalno identiteto. Ta izvirna, starodavna ruralna krajina in predstava Slovenije kot idilične dežele, polne naravnih bogastev, je postala prevladujoča ne le v Sloveniji,<sup>789</sup> ampak tudi

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<sup>789</sup> Ana Kučan: Krajina kot nacionalni simbol. Znanstveno in publicistično središče, Ljubljana 1998.



med slovenskimi emigranti v času med obema svetovnima vojnama in po drugi svetovni vojni.<sup>790</sup>

Razglednice vasi, ki so med leti 1918/20 postale del češkoslovaške Šlezije, oziroma njenega vzhodnega dela, imenovanega Tešinsko, so postopoma začele izgubljati svojo šlezijsko-nemsko-poljsko-češko večnacionalno podobo. Ta regija je tudi izgubila svojo administrativno avtonomijo, saj je bila priključena k Moravski pokrajini. V interesu praškega tim. »grajskega mita« (*Castle Myth*)<sup>791</sup> je bilo predstaviti podobo moderne, demokratične Češkoslovaške s prikazovanjem tovarn, industrijskih objektov, rudnikov in nacionalnih sol. Prizadevanja za utrditev mita so bila se posebej zavrnjena ali izpodbijana na objemnem območju, kjer je živelo največ prebivalcev nacionalne manjšine.

Po vojni so oblasti v obeh državah (tako komunistične kot tudi nekomunistične) izrabile dramatične vojne izkušnje. V Šaleški dolini v Jugoslaviji so komunistične oblasti zlorabile nacionalno vprašanje pri uvedbi novega režima, medtem ko je nekomunistična vlada na češkoslovaškem v primeru nekdanje vzhodne Šlezije izrabila nacionalno vprašanje, da bi izpolnila dolgoletna prizadevanja po nacionalni državi.

Disertacija prikazuje, kako sta bila komunistični in nacionalni projekt mnogokrat zelo povezana. Slovenski komunisti so ustanovili svojo nacionalno komunistično partijo (kot del jugoslovanske), kjer so si prizadevali za rešitev slovenskega nacionalnega vprašanja.

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<sup>790</sup> Kristina Toplak: "Miti o domovini": Slovenija v likovnih upodobitvah Slovencev po svetu. In: Mitja Ferenc, Branka Petkovšek: Mitsko in stereotipno v slovenskem pogledu na zgodovino. Zbornik 33. Zborovanja Zveze zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, Ljubljana 2006.

<sup>791</sup> Andrea Orzoff: Battle for the Castle. The Myth of zechoslovakia in Europe, 1914-1948. Oxford University Press 2009, 57.

Na lokalni ravni, kot kaže primer Velenja, je bilo zastopanje slovenskih nacionalnih simbolov vseprisotna (zastave, narodne noše, imena ulic itd.).

Kljub osvoboditvi Tešinskega s pomočjo sovjetske Rdeče armade in pridružitvi Češkoslovaške sovjetskemu bloku, to ni pomenilo popolne podrejenosti ozemlja Sovjetski zvezi. Nacionalno vprašanje je igralo pomembno vlogo pri razlikovanju nacionalne (Češke, Češkoslovaške) in tuje (sovjetske) linije. To nam nazorno prikazuje primer iz arhitekturne prakse, ko so med stalinističnim obdobjem in vpeljavo socialističnega realizma, češkoslovaški arhitekti, v soglasju z državnimi oblastmi, sprožili nacionalno, češkoslovaško različico socialističnega realizma. Ta arhitekturni stil je bil se posebej pomemben v obmejnem, nacionalno občutljivem področju, kot je bilo tudi Tešinsko. Poleg arhitekture je pri preobrazbi nekdanje poljsko-šlezijske identitete na Tešinskem v češko(slovaško), pripomogla migracija čeških in slovaških delavcev na to področje in promocija Valaške kulture.

V Jugoslaviji je, po uvedbi sistema delavskega samoupravljanja in decentralizacije procesov odločanja, lokalno podjetje, Rudnik lignita Velenje, bilo sposobno investirati svoj profit v modernizacijo podjetja in gradnjo novega mesta. Svoje načrte propagirala tudi med prebivalci mesta, da bi jih, pri gradnji mesta, pridobila kot prostovoljne delavce. Tako kot pri podjetjih, je bilo načelo samoupravljanja vpeljano tudi v arhitekturnih birojih. Nekdanje državne, centralizirane in hierarhično vodene institucije so bile postopoma odpravljene in preobražene v samoupravne organizacije, ki so temeljile na bolj demokratičnih principih kot prej. Arhitekti so sedaj lahko opravljali svoje delo s



precejšnjo mero avtonomije: na eni strani, država ni več restriktivno kontrolirala njihovega dela, na drugi strani pa jih je ščitila pred pritiski kapitalističnega trga.<sup>792</sup> Primer Velenja kaže, kako so (funkcionalistični) arhitekti konec štiridesetih let 20. stoletja načrtovali moderno stanovanjsko naselje za rudarje. Le nekaj let kasneje, v že samoupravni Jugoslaviji, so bili ti načrti kritizirani s strani glavne lokalne avtoritete – direktorja Rudnika lignita Velenje, katerega je sicer ščutil eden od zveznih partijskih vodij. Direktorjeva zahteva po gradnji novega, modernega mesta, ki bi demonstrirala uspehe podjetja in skupnosti, so ustrezale in sovpadale s promocijo moderne arhitekture s strani zvezne oblasti, ki je poskušala navzven predstaviti Jugoslavijo kot odprto in moderno državo. Po odprtju novega centra leta 1959, so Velenje, mesto, ki ga je zvezni partijski aparatčik še malo prej razglasil, da leži »sredi ničesar«, začele obiskovati, v organizaciji zveznih ali republiških oblasti, najvišje državniške delegacije iz celega sveta.

Disertacija skuša osvetliti v kakšni meri je bilo načrtovanje, gradnja in vsakodnevne izkušnje življenja v mestu v novih mestih v Jugoslaviji in na Češkoslovaškem del modernizacijskega in/ali socialističnega projekta.

Na Češkoslovaškem so bili arhitekt v času med obema svetovnima vojnama zelo privrženi socialističnim principom. Če vprašanje nacionalnosti v funkcionalizmu ni igralo nobene vloge, potem lahko smatramo vpeljavo socialističnega realizma v prvi polovici petdesetih let 20. stoletja, ki je imel na Češkoslovaškem v arhitekturnem izrazu močno nacionalno noto, kot anti-modernega.

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<sup>792</sup> Kulić.

Ampak med češkoslovaškimi arhitekti funkcionalistični principi nikoli niso izumrli. Torej takoj ko je bilo obdobja socialističnega realizma konec, so arhitekti na Češkoslovaškem nadaljevali z nikoli zares končanim prizadevanjem po zagotavljanju funkcionalnih in poceni stanovanj za množice. Njihova prizadevanja so bila v skladu s post-stalinističnimi prizadevanji češkoslovaške vlade, da bi s pomočjo orientacije proti potrošništvu legitimirala svojo oblast. Ekspanzija montažnih blokov, imenovanih *panelaki*, ki se je začela konec petdesetih let 20. Stoletja, je bila torej skupna poteza arhitektov in oblasti. Leta 1948, so češkoslovaški prišli na oblast v deželi, kjer so bili nekateri projekti modernizacije doseženi že v času med obema vojnoma ali pa celo še prej, na primer industrializacija (z izjemo Slovaške) ali pridobljena volilna pravica za ženske. Po drugi strani pa je reformacija dominacije katoliške cerkve v čeških deželah, ki se je začela že v 15. stoletju,<sup>793</sup> kasneje postala simbol češke nacionalne identitete. Oblikovanje nacionalne države pa je bilo še vedno v nastajanju.

Po drugi strani pa so se slovenski komunisti uspeli organizirati znotraj jugoslovanske komunistične partije kot nacionalna, slovenska, partija. Ko so leta 1945 jugoslovanski komunisti prišli na oblast, je imela (združena) Slovenija že status republike znotraj federacije, z pravico do odcepitve, kar je bilo kasneje (skupaj z razširjenimi pravicami, ki jih je nudila ustava iz leta 1974) ključnega pomena pri osamosvajanju Slovenije in dokončanjem nacionalnega projekta.

Leta 1945 je bila Slovenija še vedno pretežno ruralna dežela, kjer je do 1953 le približno 28% prebivalstva živel v mestih.<sup>794</sup> V svojem referatu leta 1950 je arhitekt Edvard

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<sup>793</sup> Jan Hus (c. 1369-1415) velja za prvega reformatorja katoliške cerkve. Njegovi privrženci so se, med tako imenovanimi husitskimi vojnami, borili proti avtoriteti Rimske katoliške cerkve.

<sup>794</sup> Mercina, 12. Do leta 1961 se je procent prebivalcev živečih v mestih povzdignil na skoraj 32% in leta 1977 na več kot 40%.



Ravnikar skušal predvideti kakšno bo število prebivalcev v slovenskih mestih v prihodnje. Med mesta je štel tudi novi mesti, »svojo« Novo Gorico s 15,000 in Strnišče s 10,000 prebivalci, medtem ko Velenja ni uvrstil na svoj seznam.<sup>795</sup>

V prvih dveh desetletjih po koncu druge svetovne vojne je slovenska družba doživela korenite spremembe. Preskok te tradicionalne družbe, močno pod vplivom katoliške cerkve, iz ruralne v industrijsko in bolj sekularizirano, se je zgodil šele sredi petdesetih let 20. Stoletja, kot del socialističnega projekta modernizacije.

Pospešena industrializacija, urbanizacija in modernizacija je sprožila migracijo (povečini mladih) ljudi v urbana področja, kamor so prinesli svoje stare navade in način življenja.

V primeru češkoslovaškega novega mesta Havířov, so prišli ljudje iz cele države, iz ruralnih in urbanih področij, medtem ko so prve prebivalce slovenskega novega mesta Velenja predstavljali prebivalci, ki so se v mesto preselili iz bližnjih vasi.

Prvi plani iz konca štiridesetih let 20. stoletja so na področju bodočih novih mest, Havířova in Velenja, sprva predvidevali modernizirano različico rudarske kolonije.

Konec petdesetih let, po koncu kratke dobe socialističnega realizma na Češkoslovaškem in po jugoslovanskih reformah, sta obe mesti pokazali novo podobo. V obeh mestih so tako arhitekti kot oblasti poskušali zvišati kvaliteto življenjskih pogojev. V obeh mestih opazimo razliko v razumevanju arhitekture kot sredstva za doseg socialistične družbe. V češkoslovaškem Havířovu se je usmerjenost v smeri egalitarne družbe kazala v ne-elitističnosti novih stanovanjskih oblik, medtem ko se je v slovenskem Velenju razlika stanovanjskih prostorov močno razlikovala: od provizorijev do direktorjeve vile. Razlago za odobravanje tolikšne razlike v slovenskem primeru gre iskati v močni zavesti o

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<sup>795</sup> France Ivanšek (ur.): Referati članov arhitektna sekcije Društva inženirjev in tehnikov LRS na 1. posvetovanju arhitektov FLRJ v Dubrovniku 23.-25.XI.1950. Arhitekturna sekcija inženirjev in tehnikov LR Slovenija, Ljubljana 1950, 14.

pripadnosti skupnosti, okrepljene na primer s prakso »prostovoljnega dela«, kot tudi v tradicionalni naravi prvih prebivalcev mesta, ki so smatrali nova, moderna stanovanja manj udobna in atraktivna kot njim poznane domače hiše iz okolij, od koder so prihajali. Tukaj se modernizem kaže v svoji prisiljeni in agresivni obliki. V še vedno pretežno patriarhalni in tradicionalni družbi, kot je bila Slovenija sredi petdesetih let 20. stoletja, je bilo skoraj samo po sebi umevno, da so imele najbolj pomembne in vidne osebnosti v skupnosti privilegirane položaje.

Tekmovanje je imelo v obeh novih mestih pomembno vlogo. V primeru Velenja je šlo za tekmovanje Premogovnika Velenje z drugimi rudniki v republiki, še posebej s tradicionalnimi rudniki v Zasavju. V primeru Havířova pa je šlo za tekmovanje v izkopu premoga z drugimi socialističnimi državami, predvsem Poljsko in Sovjetsko zvezo.

Tekmovanja in primerjave so bile usmerjene tudi proti Zahodu. Disertacija ponuja primer primerjave z Avstrijo, države, ki je nekdaj tvorila skupen imperij. Medtem ko je Slovenija prvih dvajset let socializma doživljala kot skokovit modernizacijski uspeh, na kar je bila pred svojimi severnimi sosedi ponosna, so bili Čehi ob koncu petdesetih let, kadar so se hoteli primerjati s svojimi južnimi sosedi, razočarani.

V zaključku disertacija ugotavlja, da so bila nova mesta v Jugoslaviji in na Češkoslovaškem projekti doseženi v času socializma, a vendar so predstavljala veliko več kot le socialistična nova mesta. Bila so skupek več projektov: socialističnega, nacionalnega in modernizacijskega, od katerih so vsi predstavljali pomenski svet njihovih prebivalcev.



## Povzetek

Kmalu po padcu komunizma v srednji in jugovzhodni Evropi so nova socialistična mesta postala predmet obravnave sprva predvsem zgodovinarjem arhitekture, kmalu pa tudi zgodovinarjem, ki se ukvarjajo s socialno, kulturno in primerjalno zgodovino. V preteklem desetletju se je primerjalni pristop, v obliki zbornikov in mednarodnih projektov, ki se osredotočajo na izkušnje življenja v socializmu, obsežno razširil. V veliki večini te oblike zajemajo študije primera posameznih držav, pospremljene z uredniškim uvodom. Za lažje razumevanje in boljši odgovor na vprašanja kot edinstvenost (ali ne) jugoslovanske poti, interpretacija komunističnega obdobja kot totalitarnega in izkušnje življenja v socializmu, disertacija uporablja enako, analitično primerjavo dveh študij primera: mesto Velenje v nekdanji Jugoslaviji (danes v Sloveniji) in Havířov, mesto v nekdanji Češkoslovaški (danes na Češkem). Politične razlike in posledično tudi razlike v ekonomski, socialni in kulturni sferi med Jugoslavijo in evropskimi komunističnimi državami so do neke mere ze bile predmet raziskav. Razlike na jugoslovanski strani najpogosteje izhajajo iz avtonomnega partizanskega odpora med drugo svetovno vojno, razkola z Informbirojem leta 1948, kar je privedlo do decentralizacije in odpiranja države proti Zahodu, utrjevanju Titovega kulta osebnosti, uvedba samoupravljanja v notranji politiki in gibanja Neuvrščenih v zunanji. Kljub razlikam je ključen element v vseh komunističnih državah ostal enak: monopol v rokah ene, Komunistične partije. Primerjava študije primera iz območja sovjetskega bloka s podobno studijo primera iz Jugoslavije, poskusa disertacija raziskati kako se jugoslovanski odkloni odražajo na primeru Velenja.

Za raziskavo in primerjavo ideoloških posegov, reakcij in odobravanjem prebivalstva v njihovem mikro habitusu, se disertacija opira na metodologijo zgodovine vsakdanjega življenja (*Alltagsgeschichte*) v komunizmu. Čeprav je ta metodologija kritizirana kot socialna zgodovina, kjer je politika izpuščena, predstavlja “posebno obliko pristopa 'od spodaj-gor', ki pričinja v stvarnosti vsakodnevnega življenja in se nato usmerja navzgor v iskanju interakcije med dnevnimi aktivnostmi prebivalstva in njihovimi oblikami prilagoditve ali obrambe na eni strani in praksami, ki so jih izvajale oblasti.” (Corner 2009 : 5) Tovrstna metodologija omogoča identifikacijo 'mej diktature' in zaznava motivacije ljudi skozi analizo procesa graditve njihovega lastnega smisla ali konstrukcije avtonomnega pomena, skovanega v besedi *Eigen-Sinn*. (Apor 2008)

Disertacija obravnava poskuse socializma vzpostaviti nove norme, vrednote in vzorce obnašanja. Obenem pa je bil socializem tudi sposoben reproducirati pred-socialistične kulturne tradicije in vzorce s prilagajanjem lokalnemu kontekstu. Disertacija ponuja primere pogajanj in adaptacij med oblastjo in prebivalci obeh mest v prvih dveh desetletjih socializma na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji.

Prvi del prvega poglavja predstavlja politične in socialne razmere obeh mest v času razpada Avstro-Ogrskega cesarstva, v času med obema vojnama in med drugo svetovno vojno. Drugi del prvega poglavja in drugo poglavje obravnavata asihrone metode graditve in konsolidiranja novega socialističnega sistema na Češkoslovaškem in v Jugoslaviji. V obeh državah je bil razvoj usmerjen od represivnega karakterja proti uvajanju domačih političnih okoliščin, ki so utrdile in v veliki meri tudi legitimizirale novi sistem. Tretje poglavje se osredotoča na pogoje, izkušnje, dožemanje in vrednotenje dela, bodisi pri vpeljevanju novih metod dela, v odnosih med spoloma ali poseganju pri



ekonomskem planiranju. Po prvih nekaj letih navdušenja, to poglavje obravnava prva razočaranja nad sistemom, kot tudi različna razumevanja odgovornosti na državni in lokalni ravni. Četrto poglavje obravnava stvarnosti javne sfere. Na eni strani raziskuje kako so bile lokalne in nacionalne identitete v obeh mestih prepletene s socialistično identiteto, na drugi strani pa kaze na podobe in ugled obeh mest v očeh njunih prebivalcev in obiskovalcev. Peto poglavje raziskuje preobrazbo privatne sfere. Skupaj z drugim poglavjem presoja koncept moderne v zvezi stanovanjem in opremo stanovanja. V zaključku disertacija ugotavlja, da nova socialistična mesta niso bila le projekti zgrajeni v casu socializma, ampak so bila mešanica različnih socialističnih, nacionalnih in modernih modelov, ki so njihovim prebivalcem predstavljali pomenski svet.

Ključne besede: Češkoslovaška, Jugoslavija, Slovenija, Češka, Havířov, Velenje, socialistična mesta, komunizem, socializem, zgodovina vsakodnevnega življenja

## Summary

Soon after the fall of communism in Central and Southeast Europe, new socialist towns have become the object of interest, not only for architects but also for historians, especially those working on social, cultural or comparative history. In the last more than decade, a comparative approach, in the form of articles' collections and international projects covering the experiences of life under socialism has been extensively expanded. This mostly covers separate case studies on individual countries, accompanied by an editor's introduction. In order to answer and better understand questions such as the uniqueness (or not) of the Yugoslavian way, interpretations of the socialist period as a totalitarian one, and experiences of living in socialism, this dissertation undertakes an equal, analytical comparison of two case study towns: Velenje in the former Yugoslavia (now in Slovenia) and Havířov in the former Czechoslovakia (now in the Czech Republic). Political differences and consequently also differences in the economic, social and cultural sphere between Yugoslavia and other European communist countries have already been researched to some extent. The differences mainly derive from the autonomous partisan resistance during the Second World War, fragmented by the *Cominform* in 1948 which led to the decentralization and opening of the country, Tito's cult, the introduction of Self-Management in internal policy and the Non-Alignment Movement in foreign policy. However, despite the differences, one key issue remained the same in all the communist countries: the monopoly of the power of one, Communist, party. The dissertation aims to investigate how Yugoslavian withdrawals were



demonstrated in the case of Velenje, by comparing it with a similar case study from another Eastern Bloc country, Czechoslovakia.

To research and compare ideological interventions, the reaction and adoption of the population in their micro habitus, the dissertation relies on the methodology of the History of Everyday Life (*Alltagsgeschichte*) under Communism. Although this methodology has been criticized as a social history with the politics left out, it represents “a particular form of the ‘bottom-up’ approach, which starts from the bottom-down, from the realities of everyday life and then moves up to find the interaction between people’s daily activities and their forms of adjustment or defense and the practices undertaken by the authorities”. (Corner 2009 : 5) This methodology enables the identification of ‘the limits of dictatorship’ and detects the motivations of people through the analysis of their own process of making sense or construction of autonomous meaning, coined by the word, *Eigen-Sinn*. (Apor 2008)

The dissertation traces how socialism attempted to establish new norms, values and patterns of behavior, but was also capable of reproducing pre-socialist cultural traditions and patterns by adjusting to the local context. It follows the examples of negotiation and adaptation between the authorities and towns’ residents during the first decades of socialism in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.

The first part of Chapter 1 is an introduction to the political and social conditions in both town communities during the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Interwar period and the Second World War. The second half of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 examine the asynchronous methods of building and consolidating socialism in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, both shifting from its repressive character to an accommodation of the

domestic political circumstances, which strengthened and, to a great extent, legitimized the system. Chapter 3 concentrates on the conditions, experiences, perceptions and evaluation of work, whether concerning the introduction of new methods, attitudes towards gender, or intervention in economic planning. This chapter shows how, after a few enthusiastic years, the first great disappointments of the system occurred, as well the responsibility on state and local levels. Chapter 4 examines the realities of the public sphere. On the one hand, it investigates how local and national identities of both towns were intertwined with the socialist identity and, on the other hand, it shows what image and reputation the towns had in the eyes of their residents and visitors. Chapter 5 examines the transformation of the private sphere. Together with Chapter 2, it assesses the conception of modernity regarding housing and household policies. The dissertation concludes, that new socialist towns were not just projects accomplished during socialism, but were also a mix of different socialist, national and modern models, which all represented a world of meaning for their residents.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Havířov, Velenje, socialist town, communism, socialism, history of everyday life