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# **THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE ROLE OF HISTORY IN SLOVENIA IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

## **THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE FIRST YUGOSLAVIA**

The education system did not change much from Austrian times in the first two decades of the first Yugoslavia. The authorities in the Slovene part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had much to do at the outset with the Slovenization of the education system and with aligning the functioning and internal structures of the several types of schools with the education systems in the other parts of the country, and therefore did not undertake the task of altering the already existing system comprised of four years of elementary school, followed by the next four years of either higher primary school, lower gymnasium or lower secondary school, (which, in the meantime, had also become a four-year school), and in which it was far easier than before to change from one

school to another. After the emergence of the new state, equal rights to education for both sexes were ensured and the percentage of women enrolling in schools at the secondary and university level began to increase. Another important factor was the founding of the University of Ljubljana in 1919, enabling numerous secondary school graduates to continue their studies at the university level. This effected an increase in the number of secondary school pupils and university students, although the majority of Slovenes still ended their educations upon completion of the compulsory eight years of primary school.

The Slovene nation was on a considerably higher level of cultural development than the rest of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes when it entered the new state, as a result of which the meeting with their new countrymen was not without culture shock. While only a tenth of the population were still illiterate in the Slovene part of the state, almost two fifths of the population in what had been the Hungarian parts of the Monarchy (Croatia and Vojvodina) were illiterate, while only one tenth of the population in the Moslem parts of the state (Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia) was literate. In other words, the same country spanned regions of 90% literacy where the majority of the population had completed eight years of primary school, and regions where just as great a part of the population (90%) was, on the other hand, illiterate.<sup>1</sup>

Between the two wars, approximately 90% of all the youth in Slovenia completed the entire compulsory eight years of school. The missing percentage was caused by the remote hilly and mountainous regions and the poorly developed regions on the fringe of the Pannonian Plain. In these regions, the number of pupils who dropped out of the four-year public schools (*ljudska šola*) was also the greatest: sometimes even over a half the generation, while in 1939/40 - the last full school year before the Second World War, approximately 22% of the pupils did not complete the first four classes of primary school. Although the number of drop-outs decreased in the later stages of education, it was still noticeably high. In the same school year, for example, 13% of the pupils did not complete the four higher grades of primary school, while 15% of the girls and boys attending the 51 four-year lower secondary schools did not pass the final exams and in the 14 gymnasiums operating at the time, 12% of the pupils failed at the end of the year.<sup>2</sup>

The progress made in raising the level of education since the reform of the old Austrian system was evident at the second four-year level (pupils from the age of

1 Ervin Dolenc, *Kulturni boj. Slovenska kulturna politika v Kraljevini SHS 1918-1929*. [Ervin Dolenc: The Cultural Battle. Slovenian Cultural Policy in the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes 1918-1929]. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba, 1996, p. 361.

2 Data for the last year of the first Yugoslavia taken and calculated according to: *Statistični pregled šolstva in prosvete v Dravski banovini za šolsko leto 1939/40* [Statistical Overview of the Educational System in the Drava province for the School Year of 1939/40]. Ljubljana: Banovinska zaloga šolskih knjig in učil, 1941.

11 to 15) in the rapid development of the lower secondary schools (*meščanska šola*) in the major towns and larger townships. These schools had three different programs: agriculture, trade and industry, and commerce. The secondary professional schools (*strokovna šola*), however, still failed to fill the needs of the country's rapid economic development, as the various schools of this type, e.g. for agriculture, home science, health-care, commerce and so forth, in most cases still offered only one or two-year courses and did not provide adequate secondary school education. Of the total amount of secondary professional schools, only three offered a full four-year course. (Two of these were academies of trade and one was a technical secondary school).

Between the two wars, the majority of the population still went no further than the eight compulsory years of primary school. However, the number of young people successfully completing secondary school continued to increase. Only one tenth of the pupils who completed the four-year primary schools went on to study at the schools offering complete courses of secondary school education such as the gymnasiums, teachers' training colleges and a number of the professional schools, and even these did not all get to the end of the schools that they had chosen as the starting points for their future professional lives. The number of pupils attending the Slovene gymnasiums almost trebled, increasing from less than 5,000 in the school year of 1918/19, to over 13,000 just before the Second World War. A similar increase was also recorded in the number of secondary school graduates.

In addition to the more equal position of the sexes ensured by the law, the increase in the number of female secondary school pupils can also be attributed to the Catholic institutions which opened a number of private girls' teachers' training colleges (*učiteljišče*) and lower secondary schools (*meščanska šola*). In 1940, almost one third of all the pupils in the grammar schools were female, while female pupils made up over one half of the generation that year in the lower secondary schools and 60% of all pupils in the teachers' training colleges.

The founding of the University of Ljubljana made it possible for secondary school graduates to continue their educations in their own country. We do not know how many Slovenes set out to study at the universities of Slovenia's neighboring countries before WWI, yet there is no doubt that the number of students increased markedly with the founding of the first Slovene university. Until this date, many of the pre-war graduates and holders of higher academic degrees had remained abroad and only a few of them had come home to the regions where there were not enough job vacancies for such highly skilled experts. The founding of the university and the growth of new national cultural institutions, however, attracted many Slovene and foreign experts. Thus, numerous Slovenes

figured amongst the first professors of the university. Until 1918, these experts had lectured at other European universities.

In the first academic year of the University of Ljubljana (1919/20), a little under 1,000 students enrolled in its five faculties and before the Second World War, this number had increased to over 2,000. The number of professors lecturing at the university had also more than doubled during this time. The percentage of female students, which was hardly noticeable during the first few years after the university opened, began increasing more rapidly towards the end of the 1920s, when the first generations of women had completed their grammar school educations - which they were now able to do, owing to the law on equal rights to education. Before the Second World War, every fifth student matriculating at the university was female.<sup>3</sup>

## THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE SECOND YUGOSLAVIA

The Communist rule following the Second World War brought in new views on education. The new government promised changes in the education system which would make it easier to change from one type of school to another and to make at least secondary school education more accessible to the young from working-class and farming backgrounds by opening new secondary schools. Yet it was not until the 1950s that a more thorough educational reform took place.

The first steps that could be made at all in a country partly destroyed by war were made very soon after the war ended. In 1945, all the lower secondary schools (*meščanska šola*) were abolished and partly reconfigured into lower gymnasium (*nižja gimnazija*), greatly increasing the number of students who could continue their educations at the higher grammar schools and then later at the university level. During the first school year after the war, in 1945/46, 22 full-course gymnasiums and 43 lower gymnasiums opened their doors. True, some of the grammar schools didn't have all eight grades right from the start, but the missing higher grades were opened within the next few years. Yet in the year 1945 alone, in addition to the re-shaping of the lower secondary schools into lower grammar schools, Slovenia had gained 7 more full-course and 12 lower gymnasiums.<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the first Yugoslavia did not succeed in smoothing out the differences between the various regions of the state is evident from a population

3 The data on university studies are taken from the statistical appendices at the end of this study: *Petdeset let slovenske univerze v Ljubljani 1919-1969* [Fifty Years of the Slovenian University in Ljubljana from 1919 to 1969]. Ljubljana: Univerza v Ljubljani, 1969.

4 "O delu Ministrstva za prosveto Narodne vlade Slovenije od osvoboditve" ["On the Work of the Ministry of Education of the National Government of Slovenia Upon Liberation"], in: *Naša prosveta in kultura* [Our Education System and Culture]. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za prosveto NVS, 1945, pp. 9-11.

census made in 1948. At the time, 25% of the population in Yugoslavia was still illiterate (15% of these being male and an entire 34% of these female - a discrepancy due to a great extent to the Moslem regions). Of the Serbian population, 28% were illiterate, while figures ranged from 24% amongst the Montenegrins, 18% amongst the Croats, 54% of the Muslims, to an entire 74% of the Albanians, while in Slovenia, illiteracy had dwindled down to 2% of the entire population.<sup>5</sup> Slovenia was well ahead of the other republics also according to other statistical indicators, such as the percentage of students amongst the entire population, the percentage of the budget that went towards education and culture, and the educational structure of the population.<sup>6</sup>

Every attempt by the Yugoslav government to unify the education system and the culture of the country's several republics brought stagnation to the cultural development of Slovenia alongside any advantage it may have brought for the other republics. This triggered off severe criticism against Yugoslav centralism in the most developed and westernmost republic of Yugoslavia.

Even before the introduction of the educational reform, the Slovene government had begun to open the doors to further education to a greater number of young people by prescribing that the curricula of the second level of the four-year schools (for children aged from 11 to 15), should correspond with those of the lower levels, as well as by introducing new regulations which made it easier to enroll from one school to the other, regardless of type. During the first post-war years, attendance in primary schools skyrocketed to 95% of the youngest generation, which meant that, with the exception of physically or mentally challenged children, the severely ill, and those living in the remotest of regions, almost all the children aged seven and over were now included in the education process. The number of children who, upon conclusion of the four-year primary school, continued studying according to the program of the lower gymnasiums, tripled during the first decade after the war. This program was offered not only by the grammar schools, but also by the so-called "osemletke" i.e. eight-year primary schools, which had separate classes for each grade and no combined lessons.

The effect of reducing the differences in the school programs at the higher four-year level of the eight compulsory years of education could be felt also in the secondary schools, as the network of schools began to expand with the addition of the new full-course gymnasiums and four-year secondary professional schools. Of the latter, for example, there were only three in 1939, while in the school year of

5 *Statistički godišnjak FNRJ 1954 [Statistical Year Book of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia for 1954]*. Beograd: Savezni zavod za statistiku i evidenciju, p. 60.

6 Data published in: *Školstvo u FNR Jugoslaviji od školske 1945-45 do 1950-51 godine [Education in the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia from the School Year of 1945-45 to 1950-51]*. Beograd: Savet za nauku i kulturu Vlade FNRJ, 1952.

1946/47, there were already 14 and by 1950/51, a total of 28. This was a significant increase, even though these schools began decreasing in number as the demand decreased, or as they began to unite with other secondary schools in the same towns to form larger centers for vocational training.<sup>7</sup> Similar developments can also be observed at the university level, as the five faculties of the university and the single academy existing before the war were joined by new institutes for tertiary education which offered both two and four-year courses. However, as these united and separated several times during the following years, and only achieved a stable configuration after 1960, the data on their numbers do not give an accurate picture of their development. This also greatly increased the number of students who had access to the highest levels of education. After the war, 2,629 students matriculated at the various institutes of tertiary education. Five years later, in 1950, this number had grown to 6,342, and by 1957, the total was 8,063.

The percentage of secondary school students in the generation aged from 15 to 19 and the percentage of students in the generation four years older than the former began to increase already in the beginning of the 1950s. The real turning point, however, was reached after the education reform, which laid the foundations for the new education system, did away with the discrepancies at the second four-year stage of education and by means of increased investment in the construction of schools, did away with the discriminatory differences inherent in the old education system already at the compulsory primary school level.

In the mid-1950s, the authorities in charge of education began making preparations for a thorough reform of the education system. The Committee for the Reform of the Education System which was founded within the Federal Government published a proposal for the new Yugoslav education system in 1957, which included school curricula permeated with the ideology of the ruling Communist party, and which advocated a unified system of education at the eight-year primary school level throughout Yugoslavia, less rigid regulations limiting the opportunities of students from certain schools to enroll in university studies, and which stressed the need to place greater emphasis on increasing the professionalism of the school system in general.<sup>8</sup>

The General Law on Education which brought about fundamental changes in the education system was passed on July 25, 1958 and was modeled on the basic points of the proposals submitted by the Committee for the Reform of the Education System. The new school system introduced great changes on

7 Milojka Virant-Zajšek, "Statistični pregled razvoja šolstva v LR Sloveniji v šolskih letih 1945/46 do 1956/57" ["A Statistical Overview of the Development of the Education System in the People's Republic of Slovenia in the School Years from 1945/46 to 1956/57"], *Prikazi in študije*, III, 1957, No. 7.

8 See more in: Aleš Gabrič, *Šolska reforma 1953-1963* [*The Educational Reform 1953-1962*]. Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2006.

all three levels of education. On the primary level, instead of the previous two four-year periods, the new school system offered only one option for fulfilling the requirement of eight years of mandatory education: the unified eight-year primary school (*osnovna šola*). The reorganization of the school network began already in the school year of 1957/58, even though the new eight-year primary school in Slovenia was legally in effect only after October 1, 1959. The effect the authorities were aiming at in reshaping the school network was to discourage combined lessons as much as possible and to enable as many children as possible in the higher grades of primary school to attend lessons in the various subjects in separate classes. Subsequently, the number of primary schools began to decrease, as the smallest schools were shut down and their pupils given extra lessons in order to qualify them for the more highly developed primary schools situated in the near vicinity. In the school year of 1962/63, soon after the shaping of the new school network, already 91% of all the pupils in grades 5 to 8 of primary school were able to attend separate classes for each subject. Combined classes are still taught today only in some of the remotest mountainous regions and in areas where the population is dwindling at an alarming rate, i.e. in areas where the authorities maintain schools which, under other circumstances, would long since have been closed. In addition to this, soon after the Second World War, attendance at school was almost 100%.

For the higher levels of education, where certain subjects were optional, the educational authorities attempted to shape a system which would be accessible and open to as great a percentage of the country's youth as possible. In addition to the greater compatibility amongst the schools, they sought to achieve this by opening new schools and with them, as many possibilities for enrolment as possible. For girls and boys of poorer social backgrounds, the government made an increasing number of scholarships available. This policy resulted in a rapid increase in the number of students enrolled in the secondary schools and universities - in particular in the technical courses.

On the secondary level, the gymnasium, which the communist ideologists labeled as the schools of the bourgeois elite, at which there was no room for the working-class and farming youth, lost the dominant role they had played until then. Within the new system, the grammar schools became four-year secondary schools, as the lower gymnasiums were abolished, or re-shaped and united with the primary schools. The secondary professional schools enjoyed far more government support, as the new regulations now enabled pupils from these schools to qualify for university studies. In order to achieve formal equality between the gymnasiums and the professional schools, the degree of difficulty of the final examination was lowered considerably, as it was the high degree

of difficulty of the final examinations in the grammar schools which had until then distinguished them from the other secondary level schools. In this way, the gymnasiums and the professional schools were formally placed on an equal level, but in practice, the gymnasiums continued to hold their position in the fore, by means of maintaining better teaching staffs and a more difficult program. The advantages of attending gymnasium soon became evident during the first years of university study, as statistical analyses have shown that students from the grammar schools achieved better results at university than those from the professional schools.

The institutions of tertiary education also saw great changes - partially through the fact that their doors were now open wide to those who had completed professional schools. The old programs, which for the majority of courses were unified four-year programs, were replaced by new ones, which introduced in many areas a two-level course of studies (i.e. with the choice between two years of lower tertiary education or a four-year higher course).

If we were to draw a comparison between the two school systems: the old system, which was partially shaped already in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the new, which was formed at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, we would find that there are noticeable differences between the two. The first offered a broad scope of education only on the level of the eight years of compulsory education and already here created a distinction between the pupils of the higher public schools, the lower secondary schools and the lower grammar schools. The new school system deferred the time of differentiation - i.e. the time at which the pupils had to decide what direction their further education would take - until the age of 15, and by founding new secondary schools, gave the majority of the nation's youth the opportunity of achieving at least a secondary school education. Another of the characteristics of the old system was the high degree of incompatibility amongst the various types of schools, which also reduced their accessibility (depending on the initial course of education decided upon), while the new regulations made it easier for students of most of the secondary schools to enroll in university courses. Yet, in addition to the greater accessibility, this also brought with it a number of difficulties. The university professors, in the first ranks of those who voiced their disapproval, objected strongly to the fact that students who had received poor marks or virtually insufficient background knowledge at their secondary schools in a number of the more demanding subjects taught in university courses, could nonetheless become regular students. As a result of this, they argued, the criteria for tertiary education had been lowered.

Following the reform of primary school education in 1958, the majority of children received a similar basis for their further education. Due to increased



investment in the education system and the construction of new and larger school buildings, the number of schools decreased, while the number of departments and teachers increased. With the decrease in natality amongst the Slovenes and the subsequent decrease in the number of primary school pupils (in 1960/61, for example, these numbered 238,828, while in 1980/81, the number had dropped to 218,310), the number of pupils per class also grew smaller (the school year of 1960/61 recorded an average of 30, while in 1980/81, there were only 25 pupils per class). The higher grades, with only a few exceptions, all had separate classes for the separate subjects taught. In contrast with the previous periods, the majority of children from the 1950s onwards continued their educations and enrolled in secondary schools, leading to a rapid increase in the number of university students, as indicated in the following tables.

The secondary school level saw the greatest increase in the percentage of young people attending the full-course technical and professional schools, while the amount of students registered at the vocational schools, which did not provide a full secondary school education, decreased. In the mid-1950s, over 80% of the pupils who had finished primary school enrolled in secondary school. Over half of these opted for vocational schools, which did not offer a complete secondary school education. Twenty years later, already over 90% of the same statistical group of pupils enrolled in secondary schools, whereby the percentage of enrolments in schools offering complete secondary school educations (such as gymnasiums, or four-year technical and professional secondary schools) was already predominant.

The number of students increased strongly and suddenly at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s with the founding of more institutes of tertiary education offering two-year courses. This rapid increase, however, was an ongoing phenomenon which had already begun immediately after the Second World War. This was made possible by the number of new university level institutions and the greater number of enrolments at the old schools, as well as by the realization that without education, one cannot progress in the modern world.

## NATIONAL HISTORY IN THE YUGOSLAV PERIOD CURRICULA

Just like in the Austrian schools, the teaching of history in the first Yugoslavia began in the second year of gymnasiums and other secondary schools. The role of history in the school system did not change. History had been (and remained) the most important social science subject, and the methodological guidelines also remained the same. The educational principle – the strengthening of patriotic or statehood sentiments – was also left unaltered. However, the topical sections,

especially in the field of national history, were thoroughly overhauled. The reason for this is clear. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of the “national” in the Slovenian schools saw many radical turning points in accordance with the changes of state contexts and authorities. After World War I, the Austrian patriotism had to give way to the new Yugoslav patriotism. In accordance with the ideology of the new Yugoslav authorities, this involved the theory of a single Yugoslav nation, which supposedly consisted of three tribes: the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenians.

The curricula in the field of social sciences and humanities were supposed to be based on emphasizing the concord between these “tribes” in the past, and the unified Yugoslav state had to be presented as the crown achievement of these efforts.<sup>9</sup> The unitarian principle of a single Yugoslav nation was integrated into numerous demands of the curricula. In terms of the quantity of teaching hours, history was in fourth place (behind the native language, mathematics and first foreign language). The main focus of the teaching contents was political history, and a significant amount of time was allocated to the history of the Southern Slavic lands and countries. The teaching topics were dictated by the glorification of these lands and the stress on the subordination to foreign rulers in the past. Among the ideological emphases, the goal that history should contribute to the strengthening of the Yugoslav ideology and unity of the Yugoslav nation was the most important by far. Ultimately, the national history was supposed to underline the importance of the Yugoslav unification after World War I, which had to be evaluated as the greatest achievement of the development of the Southern Slavs. In the methodological guidelines, the architects of the programs stressed that the national education should not be chauvinistic, stating that “the national education of our schoolchildren should be Yugoslav”, and special attention should be paid to the “moments that strengthen our national and state unity”.<sup>10</sup> The importance of the state’s stability was also reflected in the demand that in the course of history education the students should “reach the conclusion that the interests of individuals and groups are inseparable from the interests of the whole, that the state is superior to individuals and family, as well as to any groups and strata”.<sup>11</sup>

Thus history retained the role of steering the nation’s patriotic feelings, only that these feelings were now oriented towards the value system of the new state and new forms of state patriotism. Topically, the scope of the Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) state was replaced by the Yugoslav state, but both – formerly the Austrian and now the Yugoslav – had to be presented in the most unified (centralist) manner possible.

9 *Programi i metodska uputstva za rad u srednji školama* [Programmes and Methodological Guidelines for Secondary School Work]. Beograd: Državna štamparija Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1936.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

Just as the role of history in the school process had not changed significantly after the political turning point at the end of World War I, it also remained more or less the same after the communist takeover of power after World War II - it was simply adapted to the new political circumstances. History kept its role as the central social science subject, which even strengthened as far as the syllabus was concerned, since it was allocated a few teaching hours already in the first year of the gymnasiums. The new essential role of school history was already obvious from the first provisional post-war history curriculum of 1945. All students had to familiarize themselves with the history of the first Yugoslavia, its dissolution, then with the partisan movement; and this introductory part was supposed to conclude with the topics of the “accomplishments of the liberation struggle” and the “establishment of the people’s authority and the organization of the state”.<sup>12</sup> Only then would the first-year students proceed with the introduction to history, Prehistory and Antiquity.

Thus the vital importance of the liberation struggle for the prosperity of the Yugoslav nations as well as the implied incompetence of the politicians in the first Yugoslavia and unsuitability of their policy responsible for the defeat and capitulation in 1941, were already emphasized in the first post-war curriculum. This approach remained characteristic of the history curricula throughout the period of the communist authorities. The emphasis on the most recent history, described in accordance with the ideology of the communist authorities, was also obvious in the final exams at the gymnasiums. At the so-called Matura Examination, history remained, just like before the war, an obligatory subject in the oral part of the exam. It was compulsory that one of the three questions to be answered by the candidates would involve the period of the national liberation struggle.<sup>13</sup>

A more detailed outline of the contents that remained in use for a considerable length of time was prescribed by the curriculum drawn up in 1948.<sup>14</sup> Through the educational course in history, the students were meant to develop a “conscious and active love of everything progressive and humane, as well as hatred towards everything reactionary and inhumane”. The students were supposed to become the defenders of the new homeland and get to know the “correct understanding of the legitimacy of the historical path leading our country to the victory of

12 *Začasni učni načrt na gimnazijah in klasičnih gimnazijah Slovenije za šolsko leto 1945-46* [Provisional Curriculum at Slovenian Gymnasiums and Classical Gymnasiums for the School Year 1945-46]. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1945, pp. 10-11.

13 *Objave Ministrstva za prosveto Ljudske republike Slovenije* [Gazette of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia], II, No. 2, 14 March 1947, pp. 24-26.

14 *Učni načrt za gimnazije, nižje gimnazije in višje razrede sedemletk* [Curriculum for Gymnasiums, Lower Gymnasiums and the Senior Years of the Seven-Year Schools]. Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za prosveto LR Slovenije, 1948.

socialism, as well as the legitimacy of the historical path leading humanity to its final goal – communism, a society of infinite progress and humaneness.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, for the first time, the encouragement of hatred towards those who thought differently was set out side by side in the curriculum with the promotion of patriotic feelings, respect and love. The traditional division into Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Modern Times started giving way to the terminology and topics based on the ideology of the communist authorities. In the context of Antiquity, greater emphasis was placed on topics concerning the slave society; the Middle Ages increasingly became the period of feudalism, inequality of the social strata and peasant uprisings; while in the time after the industrial revolution, the organization of the working class and the International Workers’ Organization became more and more important. World War I became a kind of a prelude to the October Socialist Revolution. An increasing number of hours was to be dedicated to the history of the Soviet Union, and the teaching of history was to conclude with a massive corpus of hours dealing with the national liberation struggle of the Yugoslav nations, culminating in the post-war establishment of the new authority in the form of the “people’s democracy”.<sup>16</sup> After the dispute between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and in the time when Yugoslavia opened towards the West, the narrowest ideological demands may have disappeared from the curricula, but the basic tendencies and the essential ideological postulates did not change.

In the new school system – after the school reform of 1958 – the teaching of history began in the sixth grade of primary school. This meant that the old arrangement was reinstated, since this was the same age group as the former second year of gymnasium. Thus the role of history in compulsory education did not change, while its importance in secondary education was to be altered more significantly. In the materials for the composition of the syllabus and curriculum – which gymnasiums were expected to take into account in the planning of their schoolwork – history was placed in the (unusually) important second place, immediately after the Slovenian language. However, according to the initial proposal, it was to be taught for three years only, and in the fourth grade sociology was supposed to replace it completely. Yet, according to this arrangement, history would be allocated more hours in the first three years (4 per week, which makes 12 altogether), which kept it in fourth place among all the subjects taught (behind the Slovenian language, mathematics and the first foreign language).<sup>17</sup> Besides the usual tasks of school history, the teaching of the history of other South Slavic nations was also underlined, while the modeling of the

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15 Ibid., p. 70.

16 Ibid., p. 114.

17 *Gimnazija : gradivo za sestavo predmetnika in učnega načrta [Gymnasium: Materials for the Composition of the Syllabus and Curriculum]*. Ljubljana: Zavod za napredek šolstva, 1962, p. 30.

subject on the ideological patterns of the ruling authorities was obvious from the demands that “students should develop the realization of the historical urgency and justification of revolutionary phenomena at certain levels of the development of society” and that “students should be molded into conscious fighters and architects of socialism, and they should develop the will for the decisive defense of the working people’s rights as well as the rights of their socialist homeland”.<sup>18</sup>

The terminology of the curricula and guidelines in the period of communist rule specified what should be described with positive and negative connotations far more precisely than before. Many topics in the socialist schools of the Yugoslav type involved revolutions and revolutionary movements, with a positive emphasis, of course, while the reactions to such phenomena were rejected in advance and depicted negatively. In the teaching of 20<sup>th</sup> century history the October Revolution gained a position of vital importance. Lenin was a good leader, while Stalin was stigmatized due to his purges. The main emphasis was to be placed on World War II and the national liberation struggle of the Yugoslav nations. With the transition and development of socialist relations in Yugoslavia, history practically ended. The last recorded chapter was on “The Crisis of Capitalism and Struggle for Socialism after World War II”<sup>19</sup>, which, in accordance with the guideline of stressing the necessity of revolution being the methodological approach to teaching, was also meant to strengthen the conviction about the future victory of socialism in the world.

Through the educational course in sociology, the students would familiarize themselves in greater detail with the contemporary world or the world after World War II, and after the more theoretical introductory chapters, they should finally explore “socialism as a global process” and the “social system and Yugoslav system of government”.<sup>20</sup>

After the final renewal of the gymnasiums in the middle of the 1960s, history was then taught in all four years of the gymnasium, but with fewer hours per week. However, in the syllabus it still retained its role as the central social science and humanist subject. Initially it lost its importance for the final exam – the Matura Examination. However, the new rules on the Matura Examination for gymnasiums cast history (albeit for a short time) in such an important role as it would never have before or after at this final stage of secondary school education. The oral exam in the “contemporary history of the Yugoslav nations (the National Liberation War and the post-war development in the socio-political system of the Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia” became one of the three obligatory

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18 Ibid., p. 49.

19 Ibid., p. 70.

20 Ibid., pp. 78-80.

subjects at the Matura Exam. Here the professors asked questions about the subjects of history and sociology, but as is already obvious from the title, history was limited to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> In accordance with the principles established immediately after World War II, the emphasis was on presenting a dark image of the first Yugoslavia, the glory of the national liberation struggle and a bright outlook on the second Yugoslavia. The students could not find out anything about the dark sides of the communist takeover of power, and these topics became taboo. The economically prosperous capitalist Western countries of the 1950s and 1960s were “officially” in a crisis.

With the example of a 1967 textbook for the fourth grade history in gymnasiums we can demonstrate how the teaching of history was supposed to glorify the communist authorities.<sup>22</sup> Its “protagonist” and most important character was the Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito. He was already mentioned in the period between both world wars, but, despite the actual importance of the workers’ parties, the greatest attention was paid to the Communist Party. The return of Josip Broz Tito to his homeland and his appointment as Secretary-General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in July 1937 was especially underlined. In general, communists are focused on far more than necessary in the material covering the interwar period. Everything suggests that the new Communist Party leadership, with Tito at its helm, had been ready to undertake the national liberation struggle. The communists and Tito, of course, then ensured the ultimate victory in this struggle. In the time after 1945, Tito is almost cast into a fatherly role, since the state is understood as ‘our achievement’ – ‘what we have all fought for together’. The author narrates in the first person plural, so that, for example, the textbook does not state that the Monarchy was abolished; instead it states that “we have abolished the Monarchy”.<sup>23</sup> Tito personalized the state completely, and this was due to the will of the people, which is already indicated in the description of his election: “We elected Tito as the President of the Republic.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, Tito is presented as an illustrious leader, chosen by the people; a man who led Yugoslavia to astounding successes. The agrarian reform, nationalizations, the constitution, the abolishment of the monarchy – everything had undoubtedly positive and “revolutionary” implications for the people of Yugoslavia.

The role of Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia as well as its successor, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, is then only magnified in the following decades, reaching the highest level of adoration felt for the great leader

21 *Uradni list Socialistične republike Slovenije* [Official Gazette of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia], XXVI, No. 43, 29 December 1969, pp. 583-587.

22 Metod Mikuž, *Zgodovina za četrti razred gimnazij* [History for the Fourth Year of Gymnasium]. Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1967.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 169.

in the decade following Tito's death. In the textbook by the authors Branko Božič, Tomaž Weber and Janko Prunk, initially published in 1978 and reprinted several times,<sup>25</sup> Tito is already mentioned as early as in the interwar period. While the most important Yugoslav politicians of that time are only referred to a few times and the activities of the most important political parties are not described in any detail, Tito's life is explored thoroughly, and the activities of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia are described in dedicated chapters. The events taking place in Yugoslavia during World War II are characterized by the linear and visionary nature of the policy pursued by Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The takeover of power after the war becomes self-evident, supported by the claim that Tito "has become one of the most visible politicians of the modern world, a symbol of the independent socialist Yugoslavia and all the progressive forces around the world fighting for the equality of all nations, peoples and states, peace, the end of the arms race between the major powers, as well as for the continued existence and development of mankind".<sup>26</sup>

The takeover of power is depicted from the viewpoint of the "Party historiography", without any references to the post-war executions, breaches of the Tito – Šubašić Agreement, and so on. Also for the time after the war, the terminology used in the textbook is evidently under the influence of the terminology used by the ruling communists, struggling against the "anti-socialist forces and forces opposing self-management", with this section referring to congresses and sessions of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, and concluding panegyrically by commenting on the 1974 Constitution as follows: "The new system of delegates presents great possibilities for the further growth and strengthening of the socialist democracy as well as the strengthening of independence and self-management."<sup>27</sup>

Many generations were educated in accordance with such a one-sided treatment of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the pupils and students heard a lot about the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but did not understand it very well and acquired an exceedingly distorted image of it. The 1995 survey carried out by the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana also contained a question on which of the Slovenian political parties was the strongest and most influential in the interwar period. As much as 35.5 % of the respondents believed this was the Communist Party, 27.7 % chose the Catholic Slovenian People's Party, 8.6 % opted for the Liberal Party, while 4.7 % of the respondents claimed it was the Socialist Party.<sup>28</sup> Based on these results we can conclude that the Communist Party, which was in fact insignificant before World

25 Branko Božič, Tomaž Weber, Janko Prunk, *Zgodovina 2 [History 2]*. Ljubljana : Državna založba Slovenije, 1978.

26 Ibid., p. 121.

27 Ibid., p. 132.

28 Niko Toš (et al.), *Razumevanje preteklosti: podatkovna knjiga: 1. del [Understanding the Past: Information Book: Part 1]*. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede, p. 45.

War II, was believed to be the most important interwar-period political party by the majority of Slovenians. This conviction can definitely also be ascribed to the one-sided depictions of the recent past in the school textbooks.

In the time of the democratization of Slovenia at the turn of the 1980s, the de-ideologization of education, especially in the humanities and social science subjects, became one of the most essential demands of the intellectual opposition. The criticism of the subordination of education to the ideology of the ruling communists was summed up by a speaker at the congress of the Slovenian Democratic Union (which brought together respected intellectuals – all advocates of democracy), who stated that, for example, “In the textbooks for the final three grades of primary school, Tito and Marx appear as positive personalities as often as 180 times. Prešeren, on the other hand, is mentioned just 28 times. In the secondary school textbooks, the aforementioned personalities become even more popular, as we come across them approximately 700 times, while Trubar is merely mentioned occasionally.”<sup>29</sup>

## CHANGING INTERPRETATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL EVENTS IN SLOVENIAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, textbooks with a classic chronological overview of history prevailed in the wider European space. With regard to the contents, the contemporary history topics in the textbooks of various European countries were distributed in a similar way: World War I, including the political and economic developments leading up to it; the most important topics of the interwar period included the October Revolution and the development of the Soviet Union, the Versailles map of the world, the emergence of fascism (and Nazism) and their comparison to communism, the Great Depression; World War II often took up an extensive part of the textbooks and received much attention; while the topics of the post-war period focused on the Cold War, the relations between the superpowers and their blocs, decolonization, and economic development leading to the consumer society. Towards the end of the century, the integration of Europe in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gained increasing importance in the European textbooks. Cultural, social or more specific economic issues were less important and here the differences between the textbooks were greater than with regard to the “classic” chapters.

29 Alenka Potočnik-Lauko, “Nov čas – nova šola” [“New Times – New School”], in: *Slovenska demokratična zveza: Programski dokumenti; Statut* [Slovenian Democratic Union: Programme Documents; Statute]. Ljubljana: Slovenska demokratična zveza, 1991, p. 58.



However, we will not be as interested in the subject matter or *what* to teach, but how the outlook on the question of *how* to teach has changed. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, history was still taught by means of frontal teaching with the basic aim that during the history courses the students (pupils) should receive the widest possible overview of the past (especially political) events. The active role in the school setting was reserved for the teachers, while the students/pupils remained passive receivers of the communicated knowledge.

It is not a new realization that the accumulation of information does not ensure long-term results and that a significant percentage of events, names, processes and phenomena that the students (pupils) learn about are forgotten in mere weeks, while the majority of it all is forgotten in a few years. The debates about how to change the teaching of history in the classrooms and change the outlook on the importance of history education in schools gained momentum towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The standpoint that the classic frontal chronologically-based history teaching should be replaced by the combined chronological and substantive approach gradually asserted itself. In this approach, memorizing the information is not that important, since today data can be found quickly by means of the modern technologies. More attention is paid to the analysis of the historical sources and the realization that different historians may judge the same sources in different ways, and that various sources and testimonies of the same event exist, outlining the same thing (phenomenon, person, event) in very dissimilar ways. The analysis, comparison and synthesis of processes gained importance as pedagogical elements. Thus, in the envisioned pedagogical-methodological approach, the students are no longer simple recipients of information. They transform into active participants who can form opinions on the communicated materials. By using a larger number of sources they are “forced” to undertake the analysis of various viewpoints of the same event, process or phenomenon, compare where this variety of standpoints stems from, ask themselves which sources could be more objective and which involve a more subjective outlook of the author, and attempt to identify irrefutable facts in this variety of opinions while judging what has caused these deviations, differences or different interpretations.

Another important novelty is a more extensive integration of “non-political” history in education: paying more attention to the phenomena/processes that form over a lengthy period of time and do not have such strictly defined turning points as political history. These are especially the topics from the fields of economics and social and cultural history, facilitating a comprehension of the multidimensional nature of historical developments by the students/pupils and the realization that the processes take place simultaneously, encouraging,

hindering or merely superficially influencing each other. While, for example, in modern times in Europe the regimes, dynasties and revolutions replaced each other, the process of industrialization developed over a considerably longer period of time and the changes in the political systems (regardless of the obstacles and encouragement) could either stop it or hasten it significantly. For example, changing family roles are characteristic of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, notably the role of women in society, but this process can hardly be placed in the aforementioned context of the traditional chronological teaching of history.

The third important new feature in the teaching of history I would like to emphasize is the relationship between the past and the present. In the traditional frontal way of teaching and during the enumeration of irrefutable facts/events/phenomena the students/pupils had to learn history because of the past itself, because of the wish to expand knowledge. In a time when access to such information is already made possible by mobile phones with the ability to connect to more and more widely accessible databases, this task has lost a significant part of its importance and function. An increasing emphasis is placed on the pursuit of answers to the question of why the world today is as it is, what are the causes and processes that have created today's conflicts and led to various levels of the economic, social and cultural development in the various states/regions of the world, why certain initiatives or ideas can be adopted with enthusiasm in certain places, indifference in others, and meet with passionate rejection in another part of the world. Without a familiarity with the causes, different sources, standpoints and interpretations and their analyses and comparison, such goals can hardly be realized. However, the new methodical approaches can have longer-term results. By familiarizing them with the past, the young are encouraged to judge the past critically, and consequently also to compare it to the present and think critically about the world today.

A greater emphasis on the topical approach in the teaching of history also calls for a different approach to the preparation and writing of textbooks. These textbooks no longer simply communicate the irrefutable facts and the only correct interpretations of past events. The sources - which do not merely supplement the topics and shed more light on them - thus represent an integral part of the topics, and by placing the students in a more active role, are increasingly significant in these textbooks. They should illustrate topics from a variety of viewpoints. Thus an individual event should enable the students to familiarize themselves with a variety of causes and consequences of events/phenomena/processes. The case study, in this way, allows for changes in the methodology of the teaching of historiography (increased activity on the part of the students), comparison with similar developments in other temporal or spatial contexts, and comparison of

the specific (case study) and the general (the integration of the study into a wider context).

This methodology of history teaching, which has been gaining increasing importance in the European schools, is also reflected in the history textbooks in Slovenia over the last two decades. I intend to demonstrate this through the representations of two traumatic events from 20<sup>th</sup> century history. The first example is taken from Slovenian national history. In Slovenia, the second example falls under the category of history of the world, while in Japan it is seen as national history. The first – Slovenian – topic is the post-war killing of the occupiers' collaborators and civilians, carried out by the new communist authorities, while the Japanese topic is the use of nuclear weapons to end the war.

Both events had long-term consequences for the awareness of both nations, the difference being, of course, that Hiroshima influenced the whole world. Both events were a kind of a taboo. In Slovenia it was forbidden to write and discuss the executions of the Home Guard members and civilians after the end of the war almost until the end of the communist regime. Only after the transition into democracy was it possible to undertake the first more extensive research into this crime. In the countries victorious in World War II, among them also Yugoslavia, it was not very desirable to question the sense of the use of nuclear weapons, either. The information that the use of A-bombs put an end to the war and forced Japan to surrender supposedly sufficed. Other dilemmas had to give way to this indisputable truth.

The introduction of the new methodological approaches in Western Europe began towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was gradual. However, in Slovenia a clear and sharp turning point is discernible, caused also in school historiography by the democratization of Slovenia after the fall of the communist regime. Admittedly, the ideas of the modernization of the curricula are somewhat older, but during the rule of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia/Slovenia these changes were not yet visible in the official school regulations and textbooks, confirmed by the state authorities.

As a starting point and in order to carry out a comparison later, let us look at how the aforementioned topics were dealt with in the textbooks for the final year of the general secondary schools (gymnasiums) in the communist regime. Following the extensive school reform, the first more widely conceived history textbook for the fourth year of gymnasiums in Slovenia was issued in 1967.<sup>30</sup> It was designed in the style of the prevailing methodology of history teaching, meaning that the chapters were ordered chronologically, and the interpretation used originated in the standpoints of the post-war Yugoslav authorities, not

30 Mikuž, *Zgodovina za četrti razred gimnazij*.

allowing for different interpretations of the events and processes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The chapters did not even conclude with questions, which was otherwise the usual practice in the textbooks for all other years of gymnasiums in use at the same time. The purpose of such questions was simply to check what the students had learned, but they did not encourage the students' critical reflection on the material covered. Naturally, in the history textbook for the fourth year of gymnasiums of 1967, the traumatic Slovenian topic is omitted, since it was not supposed to be mentioned. The Japanese topic is only referred to with a (not very well-chosen) photo and a caption "Consequences of the Hiroshima bombing"<sup>31</sup>, while the event is not mentioned, let alone focused on in the text.

The same approach is also evident from the history textbook in use in the final decade of the communist rule in Slovenia. The post-war executions in Slovenia were still ignored, while the use of the A-bomb was noted in a paragraph in the conclusion of the outline of World War II. The authors implied that nuclear weapons were used because "in the Far East, Japanese fanaticism still endangered the lives of thousands of Allied soldiers". In the otherwise short note, more is said about the characteristics of the bomb, but its consequences are outlined in a short sentence: "In mere moments, 150,000 people were killed."<sup>32</sup> The onset of the Atomic Age is once again not focused on, and the feeling that such a text communicated to the students was that this was simply a war in which the aggressors stopped at nothing and they had to be forced to capitulate by any means necessary.

Thus for the textbooks until 1990, it holds that the students/pupils were placed in a passive role as the recipients of the unquestionably valid information that was communicated. The interpretations followed the ideological outlines of the ruling League of Communists, which was obvious from the avoidance of all the taboos, in the concrete example: the omission of the retaliation of the then new authorities against those they deemed their opponents. The methodological approach still remained traditional as well, since it did not encourage critical thought in the students and their familiarization with the multitude of possible interpretations, which was evident from the meager information provided on the onset of the Atomic Age.

As a starting point for the comparison and to establish the goal of what kind of textbooks and manner of presenting history in schools we should strive for, let us take a look at one of the British series of textbooks focusing on World War II.<sup>33</sup> As an example, let us examine the chapter focusing on the end of the war in the Far East and the reasons for the use of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima. Apart

31 Ibid., p. 153.

32 Božič, Weber, Prunk, *Zgodovina 2*, p. 97.

33 Christopher Cukpin and Paul Szusckiewicz, *The Era of the Second World War*. London: Collins Educational, 1993.

from the basic text, five other sources are published: two pictures, two tables and one written source. Another suggestion of how to activate the students during class and motivate them to familiarize themselves with the potentially different outlooks on the same topic is also provided by the “activity”, which offers various answers to the question of whether it was necessary to use nuclear weapons against Japan or not.<sup>34</sup>

The first, and in its own way the decisive textbook in Slovenia from the period after the fall of communism, was first published in 1993 and reprinted several times in the next few years due to its topicality and lack of competition. It was written by Janko Prunk and Branimir Nešović.<sup>35</sup> The distinctive characteristic of this textbook in comparison with the preceding and subsequent ones was that with as many as 260 pages it was very extensive. It was intended to be used in primary schools, but was decisively too demanding for such an age group, so it was also used in the gymnasiums and at the universities. In comparison with the previous textbooks, significant substantive differences were apparent, since much room in this textbook was dedicated – also due to its exaggerated volume – to topics that had previously been omitted. The chapter about the end of the war in the Pacific battleground was far more extensive than ever before. The battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa were mentioned, and the decision to use nuclear weapons was also explored.

This textbook was followed by others in the second half of the 1990s and in the beginning of this millennium. Two publishers at this time are most prominent in the field of history textbooks, the Modrijan publishing agency and the DZS publishing house.<sup>36</sup> In the last two decades, the Slovenian textbooks have changed significantly, following the changes in education in general. These changes are twofold: interpretative and methodological. The process, which has by no means concluded yet, could be divided into several stages.

We can refer to the textbooks from the communist regime as the starting point or the first stage. With regard to these, we have already mentioned that were written under the distinctive influence of the ruling party: the League of Communists. This resulted in the fact that the information contained in these

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 78-79.

<sup>35</sup> Janko Prunk, Branimir Nešović, *20. stoletje: zgodovina za 8. razred osnovne šole* [*The 20th Century: History for the 8th Year of Primary School*]. Ljubljana: DZS, 1994.

<sup>36</sup> Božo Repe, *Naša doba: oris zgodovine 20. stoletja: učbenik za 4. razred gimnazije* [*Our Age: An Outline of 20th Century History: Textbook for the 4th Grade of Gymnasium*]. Ljubljana: DZS, 1995; Ervin Dolenc, Aleš Gabrič, Marjan Rode, *Koraki v času: 20. stoletje* [*Steps Through Time: The 20th Century*]. Ljubljana: DZS, 1997; Ervin Dolenc, Aleš Gabrič, Marjan Rode, *20. stoletje: zgodovina za 8. razred osemletke in 9. razred devetletke* [*20th Century: History for the 8th Grade of the Eight-Year Primary School and the 9th Grade of the Nine-Year Primary School*]. Ljubljana: DZS, 2002; Ervin Dolenc, Aleš Gabrič, *Zgodovina 4: učbenik za 4. letnik gimnazije* [*History 4: Textbook for the 4th Year of Gymnasium*]. Ljubljana: DZS, 2002.

textbooks was seen as the one and only truth, and there was no room for different standpoints, viewpoints and interpretations. In the methodical sense, they were very traditional, since they only contained chronologically organized text. Maps and photographs only served to make the subject matter more interesting and did not represent the basis for new analyses or considerations. There was a severe lack of sources that could shed light on the events from different angles, timelines, tables, graphs or other materials integrated into the subject matter.

The changes introduced into the textbooks in the first half of the 1990s could be deemed as the second stage in finding the way to better textbooks and to more student and pupil friendly school history. However, at this time the step forward in the interpretative field was far more notable. Namely, the subject matter finally included what had previously been forbidden topics, involving a larger variety of sources, while the questions encouraged the students to look for answers in various directions. However, the textbooks (especially the aforementioned one from 1993) were filled with an excessive quantity of new teaching contents and were not also upgraded with more active ways of work. Even though their outward appearance was far more attractive than that of the previous textbooks, on the other hand, their unintelligibility and level of difficulty made them unappealing to schoolchildren. While preparing these textbooks, the publishing houses and authors did not take into account the teenagers who were going to use them. Obviously more attention was paid to the urgency of supplying the market with new textbooks as well as filling in what had until then been blanks in historiography and also in school history. Methodologically speaking, the new developments were insufficient, leaving much room for improvement.

The third stage took place when the publishers and authors of the textbooks became aware that these materials were primarily intended for the students and pupils who were to use them. Familiarity with the needs of the students had to be placed side by side with the wish for more extensive subject matter, if not exactly made the primary concern. Only then did the methodology of history gain an increasing role in the preparation of textbooks. This occurred at the turn of the millennium. During their school work, students now had a more active role in the formation of their own viewpoints. By familiarizing themselves with different opinions and interpretations of the same event/process they were encouraged to seek the reasons for the differences between these interpretations and identify what is common and what is different between the explanations. It must be noted that this change did not only take place with regard to history textbooks, but school history in general. Even the history exams at the end of primary school/ the nine-year primary school (the national examination of knowledge) and at the end of the gymnasium (the "matura" final exam) are now designed in such a way

as to include a larger number of sources. In the tasks where the candidates may gain more points, the easiest answers can usually be found in the attached source, while further points call for analysis and comparison. For the “matura” exam in history, the students must also write an independent work in the final year of the gymnasium, largely based on the topic and sources selected by their teachers. Naturally, all these novelties influenced the teaching of history in Slovene schools, where the traditional method of frontal teaching is giving way to more active forms of work carried out by the students/pupils.

The examples from the Slovenian textbooks show that especially the methodological renewal of history textbooks is far from complete. In the last two decades a large step forward has indeed been made, but we should by no means be content with what has already been achieved. The debates about school history in Slovenia still mostly focus on the subject matter, that is, on *what* to teach. It is interesting that certain critics attack school history from the ideological-political standpoints, arguing for their only truth, which is supposedly being overlooked in the schools. At the same time they fail to see that their arguments in favor of the only possible topical foundations and interpretations are, in the methodological sense, at the same level as the textbooks from the communist era, on which most people in principle agree that they should be left behind.

Of the two significant changes in the Slovenian textbooks in the last two decades we can be far more enthusiastic about the first one: the expansion of the subject matter to also include the former forbidden subjects. That does not mean that the disputable topics mentioned in the introduction are focused on equally by all the textbooks – certain authors focus on certain topics, while others pay more attention to the other subjects from the curriculum. In our search for an example which would allow for a more extensive analysis of the attitude of the victorious towards the defeated, the 20<sup>th</sup> century provides many opportunities for an in-depth analysis. However, the goal has certainly been achieved, since the unwanted or forbidden topics no longer exist.

As far as the second goal – the methodological renewal of textbooks – is concerned, we are much closer to it than a couple of years ago, but much has yet to be done. The current textbooks contain more sources, tables, maps and other materials than those published before 1990. However, these often function as additions rather than the starting point for a more substantial consideration and a means for encouraging greater student involvement. The questions in their various forms (crossroads of opinions; consider; think about it) also provide more encouragement for more detailed analyses and comparisons. However, the combination of a basic text, additional sources and work instructions (in the form of questions or activities) is still not the usual standard in Slovenian textbooks.

When this will finally be the case and it will become the standard way of teaching history, the satisfaction of everyone who has taken part in the Slovenian renewal of school history will be more complete.