
Reviews and Reports

Twenty-five Years of the Republic of Slovenia – Challenges, Dilemmas and Expectations. Ljubljana, 15 and 16 June 2016

The Institute of Contemporary History organised a symposium detailing (the first) 25 years of Slovenia as a state, thus commemorating the 25th anniversary of the independent Republic of Slovenia. Even though 25 years is a relatively short period from the historical perspective, it poses a special challenge to researchers of contemporary history, since many events took place in the young country from 1991 to 2016 and there are many things that require a systematic analysis.

Two and a half decades after Slovenia became independent, some of the well-established researchers detected and defined issues related to the study of the independent Slovenia. The issues regarding archival and other documentary materials were usually at the forefront; these were followed by methodological issues relating to time distance, the issue of various sources and those concerning the options for presenting this period, and the need to attract reviews and studies from other fields that dealt with contemporariness.

A diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and historian, Dr Janez Šumrada, was the first author to treat the subject of Slovenian independence; he wrote a paper called *Foreign Policy – International Recognition, UN, EU, NATO, and OECD (Zunanja politika – mednarodno priznanje, OZN, EU, NATO in OECD)*. In this work, he summarised and to a certain extent questioned some issues related to the politics of the most important countries with regard to the recognition of the independent Republic of Slovenia. In light of the infrastructure of the Social Science Data Archives, Chairman of the Social Science Data Archives, Dr Janez Štebe, dealt with the legitimacy of the international recognition of Slovenia, having written a paper titled *Legitimacy of the International Recognition of the Republic of Slovenia: the Use of the Social Science Data Archives (Legitimnost mednarodnega pridruženja države Slovenije: primer izkoriščanja Arhiva družboslovnih podatkov)*. In the paper, he introduced a few possibilities for the use of data available in the Social Science Data Archives and at providers, which are associated with the Archives, for the purpose of analysing the issue of Slovenia's international recognition. Dr Jure Gašparič from the Institute



of Contemporary History dealt with the issue of how to tackle the research and records from recent history by writing the paper *The Writing of the Political History of the Republic of Slovenia (Pisati politično zgodovino RS)*. He discovered that people mistrusted politicians and parties from the very beginning, and asked the questions of how the political institutions acted, how they developed, and how they adapted themselves to the world and the times that changed considerably over the twenty years. Dr Simona Kustec Lipicer from the Faculty of Social Sciences, who is currently a Member of Slovenian Parliament, evaluated modern party-based and parliamentary democracies in her paper titled *Evaluation of Modern Party-based and Parliamentary Democracy: a Prediction Based on Past Experience (Vrednotenje strankarske in parlamentarne demokracije današnjega časa: pogled naprej skozi pretekle izkušnje)*. This work chronologically shows and evaluates the political situation in parliamentary democracy since the first parliamentary elections in the independent Slovenia in 1992.

Afterwards, Dr Zdenko Čepič from the Institute of Contemporary History showed how Slovenian statehood had been formed even prior to gaining independence in his paper titled *Before That – the Formation of Slovenian Statehood in the Period before its Independence (Pred tem – nastajanje slovenske državnosti pred samostojno državo)*. In the form of an essay, he discussed the issue of the formation of Slovenia in the “brief” 20th century as the predecessor of the independent Republic of Slovenia. Dr Aleksander Lorenčič, the Director of the Ptuj-Ormož Regional Museum, stressed the key issues of researching Slovenia’s economic transition in his paper *Studying Economic Transition – Challenges, Dilemmas and Results (Proučevanje gospodarske tranzicije – izzivi, zagate in rezultati)*, which showed the challenges, dilemmas, and findings that he faced when researching and studying Slovenia’s economic transition. On the other hand, Dr Damijan Guštin wrote about the security aspect of the young Slovenia in a paper titled *Security and Defence of the Republic of Slovenia – Dilemmas and Solutions (Varnost in obramba Republike Slovenije – dileme in rešitve)*. The defence system of the young state was established in 1991 and was formed under the influence of war and the instability of regional security. Slovenia developed its national security system, it developed its Territorial Defence into a regular army in 2004, and abolished the selective service system and restructured its army into a professional army while in the process of joining NATO between the years 2000 and 2004. Dr Tomaž Pavlin from the Faculty of Sport presented Slovenian sports in light of the transition in a paper titled *“Sports Story Woven by Thousands” (The Independence and Sport & Transition and Dilemmas) (“Športna zgodba, stkana iz dejavnosti tisočev” (Osamosvojitvev in šport, tranzicija in dileme))*, revealing key moments that came before independence and the first preparations for sports independence. The first day of the conference was concluded by Dr Jurij Perovšek from the Institute of Contemporary History with his paper *What to Say? (Kaj reči?)* and his thoughts on the “Slovenian” 20th century and independent Slovenia. In his paper, the author pointed out the negative aspects of the

social, political and economic development in the Republic of Slovenia following its attainment of independence.

On the second day of the conference, Vesna Gotovina from the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia discussed the issue of archival materials of state authorities from the period of fighting for independence in the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia in her paper titled *National Authorities' Archival Materials on the Process of the Slovenian Independence (Arhivsko gradivo državnih organov o procesih osamosvajanja Slovenije)*, and she came to the conclusion that the majority of archival materials about the democratisation process and the process of gaining independence of the Republic of Slovenia is still held by those who created or own the archival materials. Dr Kaja Širok, the Director of the National Museum of Contemporary History, emphasised the collection management policies at the museum after 1991 and the materials of the National Museum of Contemporary History in her paper titled *The Object and the Memory: A Perspective on Museums' Collection Management Policy and Acquisition of Historical Materials in the Past 25 Years (Predmet in spomin: Pregled na muzejske zbiralne politike in pridobivanje historičnega gradiva zadnjega četrta stoletja)*. She mainly discussed the restatement of the mission and collection management policies of museums after 1991. Dr Andrej Pančur and Dr Mojca Šorn from the Institute of Contemporary History presented the use of National Assembly materials in digital humanities in a paper titled *Digital Approach to Parliamentary History: the use of the Slovenian National Assembly Materials in Digital Humanities (Digitalni pristop k parlamentarni zgodovini: uporaba gradiva Državnega zbora v digitalni humanistiki)* and warned about the issue of comprehensive amounts of digital historical sources, which will be encountered by those researching the history of the Republic of Slovenia. Dr Bojan Godeša from the Institute of Contemporary History discussed the issue of the significance of World War II in the independent state of Slovenia in his paper titled *Instead of Reconciliation, a Cultural War—Significance of World War II in Slovenian Society in the Independent State (Namesto sprave kulturni boj – mesto druge svetovne vojne v slovenski družbi po osamosvojitvi)*. His paper also discussed the issue of reconciliation, the presence of which has been growing in Slovenian society since the mid-1980s. Dr Jurij Hadalin from the Institute of Contemporary History studied the historiographic discourse about the second Yugoslavia after 1991 in a paper titled *Unwanted Heritage? Historiographic Discourse about (the Second) Yugoslavia (Nežahelena dediščina? Historiografski diskurz o (drugi) Jugoslaviji)*. In his paper, he tried to show the understanding of the second Yugoslav state in Slovenian historiography and in society, as Yugoslav history had remained an entirely political and not so much a professional topic in Slovenia. As the final paper at the conference, Dr Janez Markeš, a reporter for the Delo newspaper, presented his paper *The 25 years of Slovenian Statehood: does History Repeat itself as a Farce? (Četrta stoletja slovenske države: se zgodovina ponavlja kot farsa?)*, in which he discussed the repetition of history from mid-18th century until now.

The authors attempted to show the issues of the first 25 years of Slovenian statehood, each from their own perspective. The papers, when suitably extended and adapted scientifically, were recently published in a book with the same title as the symposium – *Twenty-five Years of the Republic of Slovenia – Challenges, Dilemmas and Expectations*.

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