

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RELOCATIONS OF RUDOLF MAISTER

ABOUT THE POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY OF LOWER STYRIA

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The article deals with the historical circumstances of the life and work of General Rudolf Maister and the social perception of his actions through the 20th century when he transformed himself from the controversial and peripheral personalities of Slovenian society into one of the greatest political and military heroes of the Slovenian state.

Keywords: *The First World War, politics, nationalism, Styria, ritual, social memory, political mythology, political anthropology, historical anthropology*

Članek obravnava zgodovinske okoliščine življenja in delovanja generala Rudolfa Maistra in družbeno percepcijo njegovih dejanj skozi 20. stoletje, ko se je iz sporne in obrobne osebnosti slovenske družbe preoblikoval v enega največjih političnih in vojaških junakov slovenske države.

Ključne besede: vojna, politika, geografija, nacionalizem, Štajerska, ritual, družbeni spomin, politična mitologija, politična antropologija, historična antropologija

INTRODUCTION

Rudolf Maister was the first to be declared a general in Slovenian history and was important in the establishment of the Slovenian state in its current territorial scope. Many books and articles have been devoted to his life and work, mostly in Slovenian and written by intellectuals from Maribor (Švajncer 1988; Hartman 1998; *Review for History and Ethnography* 2011; etc.). These authors have mainly been concerned with his personal and local characteristics. Historians from Ljubljana have mostly been indifferent toward events in eastern Slovenia before and after the First World War (cf. Mal 1928; Čepič 1991; Pleterski 1998; Fisher 2005; Jezernik 2008).

One cannot fully explain the mythology of Rudolf Maister simply by looking at his current iconography in commemorations in Maribor or Ljubljana. I would like to place Maister in a broader social, political, and economic context. First, I examine him in the ideological and geopolitical sense by bringing into the discussion perspectives on (eastern and central) Europe from Slovenian, Austrian, British, and American researchers. Second, Maister has undergone various social positioning during the twentieth century. I portray him as a nineteenth-century and First World War agent, traveling through the twentieth century and beyond. I mostly use secondary sources and critically reorganize them.

The perception of Maister has always corresponded to the political and economic framework of evaluation. Even though twentieth-century Slovenian historiography was marked by nation building and state building, this actually corresponded to four different multiethnic states or federal structures: the Habsburg Monarchy and Austria-Hungary

(from the Middle Ages to 1918), Yugoslavia (twice: from 1918 to 1941, and again from 1945 to 1991), and finally the European Union (see Case 2013). During the Second World War, Lower Styria was annexed by Germany. Dominant ideologies also changed during this time, spanning from monarchism to communism and liberalism.

A persistent triple bipolarity—the perspective from Ljubljana vs. Maribor, ethnicity vs. multinationalism, and class division—has had a decisive influence on the perception of Rudolf Maister as a public and historical figure. He was of course not the only subject of twentieth-century symbolic adjustments in Slovenia (Jezernik 2013).

This article addresses several questions: What were the historical and social pre-conditions that made Maister's military operations meaningful? What did he actually do in the chaotic (liminal) period of 1918 and 1919? Why did he succeed? Why and how did Slovenians celebrate or reject his persona during the twentieth century?

STYRIA: THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SETTING

The province of Styria was part of the Habsburg Monarchy from the end of the Middle Ages onward. Frederick III—the duke of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, who resided in various location, including Graz—was the first Holy Roman Emperor from the House of Habsburg and the last one crowned in Rome (1452). One of his distant heirs, Charles II, established Graz as an administrative, religious, educational, and economic center, and it was only in 1619 that Vienna became the capital of the Habsburg Empire (Karner 2005: 23). This is important for the mythological roots of regional self-awareness and hereditary rights in Styria. Regardless of some major historical ideological and economic struggles (Ottoman incursions, Protestantism, the Counter-Reformation, Absolutism, etc.), which certainly changed the political landscape of the duchy, its borders were not seriously questioned until the middle of the nineteenth century, when liberalism, democracy, and nationalism started to erode European imperial traditions. Styria, along with Carniola and Carinthia, had been a Habsburg hereditary land since the sixteenth century and was established to protect imperial (feudal and religious) interests, not primarily the interests of its peoples (Taylor 1948: 9). “The poverty of central Europe was due to the great estates, which survived under Habsburg protection, and to the concentration of industry in German hands. Both these could be undone after the liberation from Habsburg rule” (Taylor 1948: 256–257).

With regard to hereditary feudal lands and economic relations, the Attems family was not just among the important owners of Styrian lands, but was also crucial in Styrian politics. For example, Count Edmund Attems served as the provincial governor from 1897 to 1918 in Graz. He was also a member of the Styrian Historical Provincial Commission (Karner 2005: 40).

From 1870 to 1890, the peasants in this agricultural empire suffered from the effects of downy mildew and a fall in the price of wheat by half (Baš 1988: 36). They had to

migrate to towns or abroad (the United States, Argentina, Australia, France, etc.). Even after the economic recovery in 1900, the problem was still extensive in Carniola, with the statistically greatest depression and emigration (Pleterski 1998: 67). The 1910 census registered almost one million ethnic Germans in Upper Styria, and more than 400,000 Slovenians in Lower Styria, where they were a decisive rural majority. Maribor (German: *Marburg*) was a German (administrative) town surrounded by ethnic Slovenians (Ude 1988; Hartman 1998: 36; Karner 2005; Moll 2007: 210). The same census showed around 3,500 Slovenians and 22,000 Germans living in the town of Maribor (Baš 1988: 31; Hartman 1998: 37). Germans in Lower Styria, approximately ten percent of the population, possessed around eighty to ninety percent of all wealth (Moll 2007: 210), which meant that cultural and linguistic differences could be translated into socioeconomic or class affiliations in Styrian society.

The Slovenian People's Party (SLS, founded in 1892) had a mixture of a Catholic and ethnic agenda (represented by Karel Klun, Fran Povše, Ivan Šušteršič, Janez Evangelist Krek, Franc Kovačič, Anton Korošec, Karel Verstovšek, and others). The party was politically and economically dependent on rural communities (the ruling German minority was predominantly Lutheran). The SLS represented the Slovenian side of the political struggle in Carniola and Styria from the 1890s to 1918 (and after the First World War). Some of them were members of the provincial diet in Graz or the central parliament in Vienna. Moll (2007a: 210–211) saw the Slovenian political takeover in Carniola in the 1880s as a “significant move of the German-Slavic front to the north.” The religious and linguistic program of Bishop Anton Martin Slomšek from 1859 contributed greatly to the Slovenian quest in Styria. His theology school in Maribor educated several prominent Slovenian politicians, including Anton Korošec (Bister 1991; Hauc 1991).

The Social Democrats had a small but growing voting pool in Maribor: industrial workers. They were in tune with the German Social Democratic Party (SDP, founded in 1875), regionally coordinated through its office in Graz (Baš 1988: 29). The party focused on class instead of nation; the question of language was secondary (see Scott 2008: 38, 43; Filipič 1991). After the appearance of Bismarck's Germany and after the Berlin Congress (1878), the SLS was therefore in charge of Slovenian nineteenth- and twentieth-century emancipation from ethnicity to nationality (see Gellner 1983). The leadership of the SLS was small in Carniola, even smaller in Styria, and almost absent in Carinthia.

Before and during the First World War, their search for national recognition did not question the dominance of the Habsburg dynasty (Hartman 1998: 29, 31; Ude 1988: 85–90; Moll 2007, cited in Wörtsdörfer 2007). However, at the outbreak of the First World War with military absolutism and arrests (Pleterski 1988: 297; Ude 1988: 85–86; Pančur 2005: 124), and certainly after the Austro-Hungarian military defeats on the Italian front (Hartman 1998: 37), the national SLS increasingly started looking for partners among the other South Slavs in the monarchy. They were encouraged by Pan-Slavism and Serbian imperialism (Taylor 1948: 209, 228, 247; Stavrianos 2000: 461–466; Moll 2007: 212).

This shift from Slovenian northern to southern political alliances accelerated in 1917–1918 with various political arrangements and declarations, such as the May Declaration (in May 1917), the Corfu Declaration (in July 1917), Wilson’s Fourteen Points (in January 1918), and the Geneva Declaration (in October 1918). Finally, in the same line of thought, the State of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was created on October 29th, 1918, and a month later was transformed into the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (on December 1st, 1918). For Vienna, such an attitude among the Slovenian elites and their supporters (Stavbar 2006) was “unpatriotic” from the start (Moll 2007: 212), an additional burden on top of other nationalisms (Italian, Serbian, etc.), and annoying in relation to the strategically important Austrian Southern Railway running from Vienna to Trieste via Maribor and Ljubljana, completed in the middle of the nineteenth century (Taylor 1948: 203; Šnuderl 1988).

The cultural arenas of the two Styrian “imagined communities” (Anderson 1998) were schools, newspapers, rituals/theatre, and the army (Hartman 2001; cf. Wallerstein 2006), but also the economy (property, taxes, trade, finances, and governance; Baš 1988; Lešnik 1988; Šnuderl 1988; Hartman 1998; Pleterski 1998; Filipič 1991; Rozman 1991; Stavbar 2006). Various aspects of nationalisms were present: cultural, economic, legal, religious, kinship, and so on (cf. Eriksen 2010: 117–146). Two major civic associations were in favor of a German future for Lower Styria: the School League with its headquarters in Berlin (present in Austria since 1880) and the Southern March (*Südmark*) alliance for economic strength and colonization of the German population (present in Graz since 1889; Baš 1988: 23, 25, 28; Moll 2007: 210). The Slovenian side competed with its own infrastructure: cultural centers, newspapers, libraries, public gatherings, obstructions in the provincial diet and national parliament, opening Slovenian schools, farmers’ cooperatives, and cooperative banking—for example, the Maribor Savings Bank. This bank was a decisive contributor to Maister’s armed operations.

Rudolf Maister was born into an emerging ethnically conscious environment in Kamnik in 1874. In the year that the SLS was founded, Maister was eighteen years old. He decided to quit high school in Ljubljana and instead enroll in the military academy in Vienna, which offered free schooling and employment. He later made a career in the militia (German: *Landsturm*), also nicknamed the “black army,” the fourth branch of the Austrian military, which played a backup role. By 1914, he had achieved the rank of major, with considerable training in military topography and logistics in Carniola, Carinthia, and Styria. He started serving in military warehouses in Maribor in 1914. In 1916, he became the temporary militia commander of the Maribor district (Hartman 1998: 22).

Involvement in art and language accompanied his military posts, earning him the epithets “soldier-poet” (Hartman 1998) and “soldier-painter” (Ciglencečki 2011). He supported and attended literary clubs, hosted respected intellectuals, published poems and books, and collected an extensive personal library (today a separate department of the University of Maribor library). The commanders in the Austrian military reassigned him

a few times—for example, to Galicia in 1908 or to Graz in 1917—because of his convictions (Hartman 1998: 21–22, 26). Maister's military and literary work earned him trust among the Slovenian intellectuals and politicians in Maribor. He eventually became a close collaborator of Anton Korošec (sentenced himself in 1901 for ethnic incitement; Bister 1991: 17–18), at that time the leader of Styrian SLS, and from 1917 also the president of the national SLS. Korošec was at the same time the head of Yugoslav Club in the Viennese Parliament. Korošec and Maister were both proponents of the late Janez Evangelist Krek (1865–1917), a promotor of Christian socialism and a pro-Slavic orientation in the SLS (see Pleterski 1998: 39–42, 63–64).

In 1906, Ariel Popovici from Transylvanian made a proposal for possible joint future of the Austro-Hungarian nations: the United States of Greater Austria (Popovici 1906; Case 2013). Emperor Franz Joseph I adopted the plan in 1910 in one of his last attempts to save the empire. Constitutive parties rejected the federation. The dual monarchy was inefficient and unbalanced for too many: in Styria, the increase in taxes had been permanent since the nineteenth century due to the development of administration, infrastructure, schools and science, social policies, imperial investments in the Balkans, and so on. In 1913, just before the war, taxes on households, business, and transportation increased by another fifty percent (Karner 2005: 41–42). Tributary financing was not new to the empire and its defense system (Pichler 1986; Pfeisinger 1996: 545; Kaser 2011: 52–56), but at the dawn of the First World War it became unsustainable among its (Slavic) subjects. The threat of the Ottoman Empire to Carniola and Styria had disappeared in the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, and this strengthened anti-imperial ties among the Slavic population (Pleterski 1975; Stavrianos 2000: 413–424, 448–466). Moreover, political demographics in Styria were still undergoing losses in the Slovenian population due to emigration to the United States and Germany (Moll 2007, cited in Wörtsdörfer 2007).

Even though Popovici's map was blocked in the parliament, it still presented administrative evidence of the ethnic boundaries in southeastern Europe (cf. Barth 1969; Gupta & Ferguson 1992). The study proved to be useful in demarcations after the First World War. Almost the precise shape and size of today's Slovenia, labeled Carniola, appeared among the United States of Greater Austria. Maribor was located in Slovenian Lower Styria. A small red corridor led from the city twenty kilometers to the north, thereby connecting German Maribor with German Austria (cf. Popovici 1906; Ude 1988).

The Styrian prospects for Slovenians before the First World War were quite different from the later outcomes. Captain Viktor Andrejka made an unofficial visit to Ljubljana in July and August 1915 to meet with some Slovenian politicians. He wished to learn about arguments useful to army headquarters that would motivate Slovenians to take part in military conflicts with Italy (from spring 1915). In his conclusions, the Slovenian politicians he interviewed were interested in political autonomy inside the Austrian half of a dualistic state; they wished full autonomy for Carniola, cultural autonomy for Carinthia, and cultural and economic autonomy for Styria and Friuli. The political map consisted of

Carniola, Istria, and Gorizia, whereas Trieste and Pula would remain autonomous subjects of German Austria: “some kind of a Greater Carniola, extending to the south, without Styria and Carinthia” (Pleterski 1998: 339). They were unaware of promises already made by the Entente to Italy in the secret Treaty of London (April 1915), and obviously predicted that Austria would somehow determine the postwar future in this part of Europe. Maister’s mission three years later therefore faced the imperial and Carniolan perception of Styria and Maribor.

WHAT DID MAISTER DO IN 1918 AND 1919?

Much historical research has been devoted to this question (e.g., Švajncer et al. 1988; Hartman 1998). A brief overview of the facts is followed by commentary on the context and echoes of Maister’s achievement.

Some basic milestones of Maister’s activity from November 1918 to February 1919 are as follows. Maister’s involvement “on the ground” started with a Slovenian address to soldiers in the barracks, a day after the State of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had been declared in Zagreb (on October 29th, 1918; Hartman 1998: 38; Taylor 1948: 249). Maister assumed military command in Maribor (on November 1st; Hartman 1998: 41; Potočnik 2011; etc.), issued a broad military mobilization in Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola (on November 8th; Hartman 1998: 53–56), and disarmed the German town guard (on November 23rd; Hartman 1998: 59; Jenuš 2013: 226). At the end of November 1918, Maister’s troops advanced to the north, beyond today’s borders. In December, he made further advances into (Upper) Carinthia with support of the new army of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. On January 2nd, 1919, he chose to hold twenty-one German hostages accountable for the “conformity” of their ethnic community in Maribor. On January 27th, 1919, his guards killed ten to fifteen people participating in a strike in front of Maribor’s city hall. From December 1918 to January 1919, Maister’s troops installed Slovenian staff in public institutions in Lower Styria (Slavič 1928; Hartman 1998; Jenuš 2013).

WHY DID HE SUCCEED?

I certainly do not wish to devalue Maister’s personal capabilities, but a specific set of spatial, temporal, and human constraints also contributed to positive outcomes of his operations and orders from November 1918 to February 1919. His success or positive outcome (the personal and later also mythological perspective) can be fully understood only in regard to various settings and interpretations of his venture.

The first condition for Maister’s moves was ideological: the national struggle in Austro-Hungarian Empire that had taken place since the nineteenth century. The superiority of

German culture had been rejected by the Slavs (Moll 2007: 207). The Slovenian idea had become a fact at the end of the First World War. It would otherwise be impossible to expect a serious response to Maister's mobilization of Slovenian patriots. The physical struggle of Maister's troops was justified by the ideology of ethnic emancipation. When he took command of the Austrian army in Maribor (on November 1st, 1918; two days after the declaration of the State of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in Zagreb and two days before the Austrian army was officially disbanded; Taylor 1948: 251; Hartman 1998: 33), he had no real manpower or legal right to do so. He believed in a righteous idea and anticipated a power struggle in the military barracks. However, the majority of (German) officers in the Austrian army had little or no interest in ethnic issues (Stergar 2004: 237). Maister not only took over military command in Maribor, but he refused to listen to orders from Ljubljana, which made him a role model for emerging local Styrian patriotism in a united Slovenia.

Because of complaints about his nationalist behavior, on March 8th, 1917, Maister was sent from the military barracks in Maribor to the prison in Graz. However, after the first reopening assembly of the parliament (on May 30th, 2017), when the Yugoslav Club had been introduced among possible state successors, its president Anton Korošec was strong enough to convince the emperor to return Maister to a command post in Maribor (June–July 2017). Meanwhile Maister achieved the rank of major (Hartman 1998: 22, 30).

At the end of the First World War, the new border in Styria was a result of the imperial power balance in Europe. Slovenians, Czechs, Croats, and Romanians were caught in demarcation lines between Russian-Serbian, German-Austrian, American-British, and French interests. In St. Germain in August 1919, France and Britain opposed a referendum in Lower Styria, but supported the one in Carinthia. They thought there had been no Austrian military resistance in Lower Styria in the previous nine months (Karner 2005: 130–131). The government in Vienna had asked Archibald Cary Coolidge, a history professor and the head of the Special American Study Group (analyzing central Europe and the Balkans for the benefit of the US participants at the Paris Peace Conference), to send troops to Lower Styria, but he replied that the United States could not be a world policeman (Rahten 2011: 12, 14). American President Wilson might have been "pathetic," "ill informed," and "slow and unadaptable" in the eyes of economist Maynard Keynes (*The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, 1919, cited in Siracusa 2010: 38), but for Slovenians Wilson was a liberator: "Ave Wilson!" In this part of the world, the American century started with the decision to support Maister. The liberation of the Slavic peoples was also on the Russian agenda (Engels 1979; Jezernik 1998; Simonič 2009). In short, the Austrian position was bad at the end of the First World War. The American military adviser, Colonel Sherman Miles, did not react to the protest and shooting in Maribor while visiting Maister on January 27th, 1919 (Rahten 2011: 13–14).

I now turn from geopolitical to military features. Taylor wrote that the Habsburg Monarchy was the least militarized state in Europe. "In the thirty years after the Congress of Berlin, German expenditure on armaments increased fivefold; British, Russian and

French threefold; even Italian increased two and a half times. Austro-Hungarian expenditure was not doubled” (Taylor 1948: 229). Maybe he was not aware of these statistics, but Maister knew the structure and power of the Austrian army very well. He had served in various locations in Carniola, Styria, and Carinthia during his military career, and he had participated in various military exercises. The disintegration of fronts and the army by the end of the war made it impossible for Austria to efficiently defend its old imperial borders (Karner 2007: 130; Moll 2007; Šnuderl 1988: 81).

The Slovenian National Council for Styria (established on September 26th, 1918 by Korošec and others) authorized Rudolf Maister, Franc Kovačič, and Matija Slavič in October 1918 to prepare a detailed map of ethnic boundaries in Styria and Carinthia (in the Mežica Valley and Völkermarkt). Plans for Maister’s later military claims were ready in a few weeks (Hartman 1998: 38, 60). On November 2nd, 1918, the National Council for Styria increased the payments for Maister’s volunteers to make them more appealing and equivalent to the payments of Maribor’s German town guard. The debt was repaid in 1921 (Hartman 1998: 52).

Karel Verstovšek, president of the National Council, also signed Maister’s request to promote him to the rank of general in the first days of November 1918. In Maister’s opinion, this was necessary for the forthcoming military negotiations with higher-ranking officers from the other side (Šnuderl 1988: 75; Hartman 1998: 51). The alternative regional Slovenian “government” was therefore in favor of Maister’s Slovenian guards, a regiment (established on November 20th, 1918), territorial requests, and diplomatic efforts. He could have not succeeded without the council’s support.

On November 3rd and 4th, 1918, Maister convinced some Slovenian, Serbian, and other soldiers passing through Maribor from the eastern and western fronts to join his forces (Hartman 1998: 52–53). Some of them stayed with him until demobilization (on February 15th, 1919; Hartman 1998: 45), three weeks after the Paris peace conference. Only soldiers that had joined Maister up to this date were later accepted in Maister’s veterans’ organization (Penič 2011: 103).

The next set of conditions for Maister’s success had nothing to do with ideology or manpower, but stomachs. The Austrian remnant of the former empire had lost its supply chains. Austrian diplomacy was careful not to jeopardize food deliveries from the Entente (Karner 2005: 130–131), and in Upper Styria the regional government also decided to avoid military conflicts. “The main argument for doing so was that otherwise the Yugoslavs would have cut off Styria from heavily needed food supplies coming from the South” (Moll 2007: 213). In the first half of 1919, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes had delivered twenty-five to seventy-five percent of various food supplies to Austria as compensation for a favorable demarcation line (hunger was Austria’s “negotiation weakness”; Karner 2005: 131).

Food appeared to be the most important currency in the chaotic (liminal) months from summer 1918 to summer 1919. Maister had been holding back stocks in military warehouses and wagons already from June 1918, after several Austrian defeats to the Italians on the

Piave River in the spring. Guarding a warehouse was not a prestigious position in the army hierarchy, but the supply network of the Austrian militia proved strategically important to Maister's maneuvers in the fall (see Hartman 1998: 31, 38; Karner 2005: 130).

Between 400,000 and 700,000 decommissioned soldiers (50,000 horsemen) from various fronts passed through Carniola and Styria in November and December 1918. Duchies and town councils feared plundering and clashes (Hartman 1998: 37–38, 48). Military bakeries in Maribor were in permanent operation for three weeks: the municipality hired 130 women for large-scale food distribution (Hartman 1998: 48–49).

With the food supplies, Maister was also able to calm crowds in two strikes by railway workers and the Social Democratic Party: on November 8th and December 11th, 1918 (Hartman 1998: 49).

Maister was of course successful thanks to his personal talent and will. The Slovenian National Council for Styria had been looking for a person that would coordinate and control the military barracks and units in the city. The national guards were intended to secure order in the town, not for military defensive or even offensive purposes (Guštin 2011: 21). Maister was officially recruited to National Council for Styria on September 28th, 1918 (Hartman 1998: 35, 38).

Hartman (1998) pictured Maister as a physically, mentally, and verbally strong person. He was one of the council's most active members. He was capable of imposing their and his will with radical measures, if needed. In Habsburg military documents, he was characterized as "tall, robust, very rugged, with a strong character, kind, and calm" (Ciglencečki 2011: 160). After Colonel Sherman Miles visited Maister in Maribor at the end of January 1919, he wrote in his notes: "A perfect example of a military adventurer—strong, determined, lively, smart" (Rahten 2011: 13–14).

PERCEPTIONS OF MAISTER AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The turn in Slovenian mainstream politics from Austrian to South Slavic alliances in 1917 changed the entire context. Thus, in the summer of 1917 it was not contradictory for Anton Korošec, the president of national SLS and the Yugoslav Club in Vienna, to request a return of Maister from punishment in Graz back to a post in Maribor. Korošec and Verstovšek later supported Maister as a military adviser in the regional National Council (see Hartman 1998: 22, 30, 37).

The double game of facts and diplomacy between Ljubljana, Vienna, Graz, and Maribor continued up to 1919 and beyond. It is interesting how both sides—Germans from Upper Styria and Maribor, and Slovenians from Lower Styria and Maribor—thought that their central governments (Vienna on one side and Ljubljana on the other) were not doing enough to support their policies in those "decisive moments" (Karner 2005: 128–132; Moll 2007: 210–211; Šnuderl 1988: 78–79, 81). Both national parties similarly searched for support

outside their homeland: Germans in Germany, and Slovenians in Yugoslavism and Serbia (Moll 2007, cited in Wörsdörfer 2007).

Responses escalated dramatically in last two months of 1918, after Maister took over military command in Maribor (on November 1st, 1918), demanded mobilization (on November 8th), and disarmed the Maribor town guard (on November 23rd). The German Austrian government protested to the National Government in Ljubljana that Maister's mobilization had touched on legally undecided territory (on November 15th, 1918; Hartman 1998: 53; Jenuš 2013: 226). The Maribor (German) City Council protested to the government in Ljubljana with a similar argument; it was following its own resolution of October 30th, 1918, based on Wilson's principle of self-determination, by which Maribor, "an old German town," should join German Austria (Hartman 1998: 36). The National Government in Ljubljana also objected to the military "solo campaigns" of Rudolf Maister. It was in negotiations with Vienna on economic and political issues between Slovenia and Styria (signed on November 7th, 1918, but not ratified). Lovro Pogačnik, the commander for defense in the National Government, dismissed Maister's operations as "operettas" (Hartman 1998: 53–56; Jenuš 2013: 226). For some Lower Styrian historians, such responses from the government in Ljubljana were signs of its "incompetence, ignorance, stupidity, even criminal levity and negligence." The Geneva Conference (November 6th–9th, 1918; attended by President Korošec with Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pašić) gave the Slovenian government hope for a peaceful resolution or military assistance from the Serbs (Šnuderl 1988: 78–79). None of this stopped Maister from defying the German administrators, mobilizing troops, ordering further advances to the north, or selecting twenty-one hostages (see Jenuš 2013: 227).

In addition to dissonance between the Slovenian leaders from Carniola and Styria, class division also influenced Maister's work. The Social Democrats were campaigning to remain in German Austria. Together with railway workers from Maribor, they organized three strikes (on November 8th, November 12th, and January 27th; see Baš 1988: 40; Šnuderl 1988: 75–79; Hartman 1998: 49; Jenuš 2013: 229–331). January 27th, 1919, when Slovenian police killed about ten protesters, was commemorated among some Germans during the interwar period as "Bloody Monday" and Maister was held responsible (Švajncer 1988: 10; Promitzer 2012: 72; Jenuš 2013: 230).

In some border areas between German Austria and the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, interference by the kingdom's troops lasted until 1920. "A feeling of safety only returned to Upper Styria in 1921" (Karner 2005: 136). The new border was "dead," quite contrary to its several previous centuries. The immediate consequences of the standstill were loss of investments, foreclosures, and emigration on both sides of the new border. Ethnic Germans in Lower Styria and Maribor had a different status in the Slavic state in comparison to the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the statistics in 1921 and 1931 recorded a rapid fall in their numbers (Karner 2005: 135; Kosi & Cvirn 2012a, 2012b). Slovenian became the official language in Lower Styria in the winter of 1918–1919.

Another distinctive episode of reflections on Maister took place during the interwar period. Already in March 1919, the Maribor Regiment Brass Band performed the overture *Yugoslavia*, “dedicated to first Slovenian general, Rudolf Maister.” In November 1919, Bismarck Street (*Bismarck Strasse*) was renamed Maister Street (*Maistrova ulica*) in Maribor. Maister himself also lived there (Hartman 1998: 124). A new Slovenian cult had replaced the old German-Austrian one (Moll 2007, cited in Wörsdörfer 2007).

Maister’s status among fellow soldiers and local politicians (Kocutar 2011; Penič 2011) did not stop the new central government in Belgrade from retiring Maister already in 1921 (Kocutar 2011: 112). In Hartman’s opinion (1998), this was due to the Serbian leadership, which did not trust former Austro-Hungarian personnel. At the same time, he received a reward for his contributions to the new state. Interestingly, Korošec was acceptable to Serbian unitarists, and he continued his career in Yugoslav senior politics until his death in 1940 (Čepič 1991; Filipič 1991; Pleterski 1998). The military recognition of Maister in Styria appears to have been more problematic than his previous oath to another monarchy.

In 1928, Maister was elected president of the new Committee for National Defense. Its goal was to overcome economic stagnation and to coordinate Slovenia’s fragmented politics (Hartman 1998: 114). Franjo Baš, a distinguished Slovenian ethnologist, had helped the committee in discussions on German-Slovenian relations in Styria and in the State of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes (Maister & Šnuderl 1928; Baš 1928, cited in Hartman 1998: 114). The book *Slovenci v desetletju 1918–1928* (Slovenians in the Decade 1918–1928; Mal 1928), presented Maister as the key person in the “political turnabout” ten years earlier (Slavič 1928).

Maister soon became the honorary president of the newly established Veterans’ Organization of Maister’s Combatants (Hartman 1998: 114). From 1933 to 1998, this organization was the central promotor of Maister, veterans, and patriotism, mostly in Styria and only occasionally in Carniola (Penič 2011).

In June 1934, Maister died in Unec. He was buried with honors in Maribor and 25,000 people attended the ceremony (Hartman 1998: 118). His followers hoped for more, but in the end they were allowed to place Maister’s bust in the lobby of the town hall (Rakovec 2015: 183–184).

Another group of Maister’s soldiers founded a separate veterans’ organization called the Legion of Carinthian Combatants. In 1939, they made plans to produce a memorial volume about Maister’s soldiers, but they destroyed all the materials on Slovenian patriots in 1941 in expectation of German occupation (Švajncer 1988: 10).

During the Second World War, no military unit or event was connected to the name of Rudolf Maister. Many of Maister’s veterans joined the Partisan resistance movement, but not all of them were in favor of postwar socialism.

After the Second World War, the border between Slovenia and Austria (Lower and Upper Styria) was part of the Iron Curtain. A decade after the Tito–Stalin split in 1948, politically neutral Austria and non-aligned Yugoslavia promoted peaceful and open

common borders. The movement of labor to the north, tourists to the south, and regional initiatives such as Alps-Adria were more frequent, and these expanded substantially in the 1960s and 1970s due to the Yugoslav economic crisis, and also by Austrian attempts to overcome Upper Styria's isolation in the "southeastern corner of 'free Europe'" (Nećak 2001: 509–551; Moll 2007: 216).

Makso Šnuderl (1988) and Bruno Hartman (1998) were convinced that in socialist times Rudolf Maister's reputation was confined to Styria and Slovenia because of his "bourgeois provenience." The change of power in 1918 was not a revolution in the Marxist sense because only the ethnicity of the leadership changed, leaving the basic social and legal conditions almost intact: a constitutional monarchy remained (passing from Habsburg to Karađorđević; Šnuderl 1988: 83). Janez Švajncer wrote that the socialists in Maribor inherited the prewar social democratic stance toward Korošec and the SLS, and therefore simply banned Maister as one of representatives of their politics (Švajncer 1988: 10; cf. Filipič 1991). The only year without commemorations of Maister was 1948.

Another reason to avoid Maister after the Second World War was allegedly his "cult of personality": such individual heroism was in contrast to the collectivistic mythology and vision of the socialist state. Celebrations and statues were instead dedicated to groups of Partisans (operations, brigades, or battalions) or to important revolutionary leaders (Švajncer 1988: 10–11; Ciglencečki 2015). Maister's veterans were also not welcome to join the Partisan Veterans' Organization from the Second World War (*Zveza borcev Narodnoosvobodilne borbe*; Penič 2011: 104–105).

In 1958, the Veterans' Organization of Maister's Combatants managed to convince the town to erect a monument to the Combatants for the Northern Border in the center of Maribor. On the monument, Maister was unfortunately just a figure listed among his fellows (Hartman 1998: 47; Penič 2011: 102; Rakovec 2015: 192). An extensive memorial volume had also been announced for 1958, but "someone from above" intervened at Obzorja publishers and prevented it from being printed (Švajncer 1988: 10–11; Penič 2011: 102–103). Some materials were printed only ten or thirty years later (Švajncer et al. 1988).

In 1971, a statue of Maister was unveiled in Kamnik, where he was born (Hartman 1998: 40). To mark the sixtieth anniversary of Maister's campaign, Lojze Ude's book (*Boj za Maribor in Štajersko Podravje (The Struggle for Maribor and Styria's Drava Valley, 1977)*) appeared. A volume of Maister's memoirs titled *Spominski zbornik* was published in 1979.

At the end of the 1980s, socialist and South Slavic solidarity was shaken by the Yugoslav economic and political crisis, and nationalisms. Celebrations, books, and monuments connected with Rudolf Maister had corresponding patriotic connotations in Lower Styria, especially in Maribor. A permanent achievement of this period was the first full statue of Rudolf Maister (1987) on Lenin Square (*Leninov trg*) in Maribor. This was "the first monument erected by the will of people, not the government or municipality." The Veterans' Organization of Maister's Combatants carried out an extensive fundraising campaign (Rakovec 2015: 192–196). Vlasta Zorko's statue of Maister faced south, probably so

as not to provoke further disputes with Austria during the Carinthia crisis at that time. The seventieth anniversary of Maister's operations was also marked by Švajncer's 1988 edited volume *Boj za Maribor 1918–1919* (The Struggle for Maribor 1918–1919).

Twenty years after Slovenia's declaration and war of independence, the Slovenian military historian Tomaž Kladnik made an interesting remark on Maister's military heritage. In his opinion, the Slovenian Territorial Defense forces that fought in 1991 against the Yugoslav Army were actually a "second-class reserve army," similar to the Austrian militia. In both cases, Slovenian (reserve or mobilized) armed forces were successful with the support of the population (Kladnik 2011: 67).

Slovenia's declaration of independence in 1991 codified a new set of Slovenian political coordinates: from socialism and Yugoslavism (back) to capitalism and Europeanism (Velikonja 2005). Slovenian and Austria—including both Upper and Lower Styria—were eventually (again) members of the same supranational organization, this time the European Union. The borders of the Schengen area drew its limits south of Slovenia. The border between the two Styrias was (again) open for trade, travel, and cross-border cooperation.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Lenin Square in Maribor was renamed General Maister Square (*Trg generala Maistra*). A linden tree commemorating independence was planted close to the Maister statue in 1991. Yearly commemorations of Statehood Day have been held there ever since, supported by the municipality, the local university, and the local Catholic church (Simonič 2009: 105–170).

The General Rudolf Maister Association was founded in Ljubljana in 1996 to accelerate the installation of a statue to him somewhere in Ljubljana in the following year. A large monument of Maister on horseback appeared opposite the Ljubljana train station on Statehood Day in 1999 (Žolnir & Piano 1999). Maister faces southeast. A second sculpture of Maister on horseback in front of the Ministry of Defense erected in 2000 received even less public attention. These are the only two equestrian monuments in Slovenia (Komić Marn 2013).

A comprehensive study by Bruno Hartman—*Rudolf Maister, general in poet* (Rudolf Maister, General and Poet, 1998)—served as the most extensive biographical source for this article. The volume marked the eightieth anniversary of Maister's campaign.

The old Veterans' Organization of Maister's Combatants had gradually lost all of its members by then, and it shut down in 1998 (Penič 2011). The Maribor General Rudolf Maister Patriotic Society (*Domoljubno društvo generala Rudolfa Maistra*) was registered in March 2005.

The composition *Koračnica generala Maistra* (General Maister March, 2004) by Slavko Avsenik Jr. was presented with a brass band at the Statehood Day celebration in Ljubljana. In 2005, the Slovenian government used Maister to commemorate Styria as a constitutive part of Slovenia. Northern Italian nationalists and their politics of holidays presumably influenced the executive decision. Three new holidays were introduced: Day the Prekmurje Slovenians' Incorporation into Slovenia (*Dan združitve prekmurskih Slovencev z matičnim*

narodom, August 17th), Day of Restoration of the Littoral to the Motherland (*Praznik vrnitve Primorske matični domovini*, September 15th), and finally Rudolf Maister Day (*Dan Rudolfa Maistra*, November 23rd; Taškar 2005: 2). The first national celebration of General Maister was held in Maribor and broadcast by Slovenian national television. The symbolic production under the center-right government (headed by the Slovenian Democratic Party, SDS) was quite prominent regarding regional identities and borders.

The various societies named after Maister formed the General Rudolf Maister National Association in 2007. Today, there are twenty-five member organizations with about 2,600 members (Lorenčič 2011: 139). They aim to connect the descendants of Maister's soldiers and to promote patriotism among young people and soldiers.

Maister has become an integral part of Slovenian patriotism and European cultural and political heritage. He was listed among the twenty most important topics in patriotic education in Slovenian primary and secondary schools (Potočnik 2011). Some Slovenian right-wing groups also identify with the general (Kropej 2015).

During the one-year program *Maribor—European Capitol of Culture 2012*, the exhibition “Germans in Maribor from 1846 to 1946” was installed in the city's Grand Café (Ferlež 2012).

HUMANITIES AND SYMBOLIC ORDERS

It has been shown that Slovenians have been part of legal supranational entities through the entire twentieth century. External political forces were correspondingly very great during this period. In addition, the territory of the Slovenian political community is small and therefore very receptive to foreign influences. One would probably find similar characteristics in all of the small states that emerged after the First World War on the eastern and southern margins of the former Habsburg Empire.

Historiographic material for this article came from three main university centers: Ljubljana, Maribor, and Graz. Additional material was presented to evaluate the broader geopolitical conditions in Styria. Slovenian national/patriotic historiography from Ljubljana is mostly concerned with political events in Carniola: this history is a series of parliamentary discussions and struggle for ideological dominance among Slovenians since the 1880s. Politics is primarily a matter of culture. Styria was a foreign country to other Slovenians also from a historical perspective. Illustrative in this regard is the volume *Slovenska novejša zgodovina 1848–1992* (Encyclopedia of Slovenian Modern History, 1848–1992), published by the Modern History Institute (Fischer 2005). Not a single author felt obliged to mention Maister, Maribor, or Styria during the First World War.

The history of political emancipation from the Maribor side looks different. The struggle for the Slovenian future was even more “delayed” in the nineteenth century. Consequently, the means to achieve the nationalist goal were more difficult. In Maribor, political history

is a matter of forced breaks and is immanently different from that in Ljubljana. Maister's deeds are an example of the culture of risk or a security hazard in mainstream Slovenian political history on the one hand, and a case of unprecedented bravery on the other (Guštin 2011). The American envoy Miles greatly appreciated military adventurism and influenced Wilson's perception of central Europe. This impression was obviously important because at the dawn of the American century "Miles' commission knew as much about Slovenian ethnic issues as we knew about the Apaches" (PleTERSki 1998: 339).

Tone Partljič, a prominent Lower Styrian writer, proposed an interesting historical profile of Maribor with regard to politics and democracy. In his opinion, the "heroism" of the town started with Maister (1918), continued with an attack on two German vehicles in the town's Volkmer Passage (*Volkmerjev prehod*, 1941), workers' strikes (1988), clashes of Slovenian Territorial Defense forces with the Yugoslav army (1991), and a popular uprising in the fall of 2012. Rebellions in the twentieth century always started in Maribor (Partljič 2012: 7). Rebellion and freedom became distinctive brands in collective memory.

Maribor and Ljubljana express little doubt that the Slovenian path was righteous, sensible, and in the long term successful. For the Austrian historical school, on the other hand, Maister's division of Lower Styria was an act of betrayal, stimulated by war and Pan-Slavism. His "success" also presented an obstacle for the development of the province (Moll 2007). The long imperial affiliation of Styria serves as proof of the great divide imposed by Maister. Again, there is a difference in causality: whereas the Slovenian historians cited emphasized Slovenian nationalism as a reaction to the growing threat of Germanisation, Austrian historians explained Germanisation as a response to increased Pan-Slavic pressure from the south and east ("Slavization"). Whereas Slovenian historians have explained Slovenian emancipation in light of the ethnic majority of Slovenians in surrounding rural communities, Austrian authors emphasize the ethnic German character of towns and high culture. This is a good example of two different sorts of European nationalisms (see Niedermüller 1994) and their potentials to mix ethnic boundaries with class divisions.

The respected Slovenian ethnologist Franjo Baš, the first director of the Maribor Regional Museum, assisted Maister in discussions on Slovenian-German relations in 1928. His name also appears later: in 1945, he wrote the report *Slovenski Nemci v obdobju 1918–1945* (Slovenian Germans in the Period 1918–1945; Potočnik 1999). Historiography, geography, ethnography, and statistics were engaged in drawing real and cultural boundaries on the Austrian side as well (Moll 2007: 213).

The best framework for continued commemorations and other sorts of homage to Maister have been celebrations held every decade. Major achievements in "Maister studies" happened around 1928, 1958, 1988, and 1998. Since the First World War, Maister has never really vanished. Whenever the Slovenian or Styrian emancipatory or democratic process has experienced breaks and adaptations to a new international political configuration, Maister was particularly important: both in the decade before the Second World War and during Yugoslavia's disintegration at the end of the 1980s.

Maribor and Styria do not celebrate Maister because he was born there, but because of what he represented. The image and narrative of Maister has adapted to several geopolitical frameworks in the last hundred years. Slovenian independence allowed his followers to make him a national hero. Statues in Ljubljana (1999, 2000) and Rudolf Maister Day (2005) represent steps in the process of his national recognition and positioning.

This review does not present the full variety of Maister's presence in contemporary Slovenian society because it concentrated on the evolution of his political and symbolic value. As a sign of this broad presence, today Maister's image or name can be found on beer and in the shape of chocolate souvenirs ("Maister's moustaches"), three Styrian schools are named after the troops he led, and parks and the highest military orders bear his name.

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DRUŽBENE IN KULTURNE PREMESTITVE RUDOLFA MAISTRA RAZPRAVA O POLITIČNI MITOLOGIJИ SPODNJE ŠTAJERSKE

Rudolf Maister je bil prvi general v slovenski zgodovini in izjemnega pomena za oblikovanje severnih meja slovenske države. Njegovemu življenju in delu so posvečene številne knjige in članki, njihovi avtorji pa so večinoma iz mariborskega intelektualnega kroga. Maister kot zgodovinska osebnost in simbol je prehodil dolgo dvajseto stoletje, da je postal sestavni del uradne nacionalne politične mitologije. V članku želi avtor odgovoriti na več vprašanj. Kakšne so bile zgodovinske in družbene razmere za njegove vojaške in diplomatske uspehe? Kaj je dejansko naredil v liminalnem času let 1918–1919? Zakaj se mu je posrečilo? Kako in zakaj so Slovenci v 20. stoletju sprejemali ali zavračali njegovo osebnost?

Ambivalentnosti njegovih političnih in kulturnih premestitev v 20. stoletju so bile posledica različnih gledišč oziroma t. i. trojne bipolarnosti: pogled iz Ljubljane nasproti pogledu iz Maribora, etničnost (Slovenije) nasproti multinacionalizmu (Avstro-Ogrske in obeh Jugoslavij) in različne interpretacije na temelju razredne pripadnosti.

Vojvodina Štajerska je bila sestavni del habsburškega imperija vse od srednjega veka in to dejstvo je bilo temeljno izhodišče uradne avstrijske politike pred in po 1. svetovni vojni. Štajerska in Kranjska sta bili tudi obrambni območji pred Osmani, ki so več stoletij napadali svojega severnega imperialnega in katoliškega sosedu. V času liberalizma in nacionalizma ter odpravljene osmanske grožnje v 19. stoletju se je slovanska in slovenska ideja uveljavila najprej na Kranjskem z ustanovitvijo Slovenske ljudske stranke leta 1892, desetletje pozneje pa je postala vse bolj živa tudi na območju Spodnje Štajerske. Tu se je velika večina vaškega prebivalstva izrekala za Slovence, medtem kot je bil Maribor izrazito nemško, administrativno in veleposestniško mesto. Njegovi prebivalci so nadzirali okrog 90 % vsega spodnještajerskega kapitala. Razlike med razredoma nemških lastnikov in slovenskih kmetov/delavcev so vse bolj pridobivale značaj spopada med jezikovno-etničnima skupinama. Medtem ko je nemška skupnost iskala zaledje v Nemčiji, je slovensko prebivalstvo mislilo na pomoč Srbije in Rusije.

Maister je večkrat javno zagovarjal slovensko idejo in je imel zaradi tega kot oficir avstrijske vojske precej težav, po drugi strani pa je užival veliko naklonjenost slovenskih politikov v Mariboru. Večina slovenskih politikov je pred 1. svetovno vojno zagovarjala slovensko avtonomijo v avstrijski polovici avstro-ogrške monarhije, šele porazi avstrijske vojske na italijanski fronti leta 1917 so v ospredje postavili politična zaveznitva z drugimi južnimi Slovani, kar je že leta 1918 pripeljalo do razglasitve države Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev in pozneje Kraljevine Jugoslavije.

Ker je Maister s svojimi vojaškimi odločitvami in akcijami nasprotoval uradni ljubljanski, pa tudi dunajski in beograjski politiki, je za vse vpletene strani predstavljal tveganje in motnjo v diplomatskih prizadevanjih. 1. novembra 1918, tik pred kapitulacijo avstrijske vojske, je prevzel vojaško komando v Mariboru, razglasil splošno in obvezno mobilizacijo slovenskih patriotov, teden dni pozneje je s svojimi enotami razorožil avstrijsko mestno stražo (Schutzwehr) in konec istega meseca nadaljeval vojaške operacije na današnjem avstrijskem Koroškem. Pri tem je imel vso podpora mariborskega Slovenskega nacionalnega sveta za Štajersko; ta mu je pomagal s študijami medetničnih mej na Štajerskem in Koroškem, z denarjem za najemniške vojake in s podelitvijo naslova generala.

Za najodločilnejši dejavnik Maistrovega uspeha med poletjem 1918 in poletjem 1919 pa se je – poleg političnih zavezništev, naklonjenosti ZDA, njegovega vojaškega avanturizma in hkratnega kaosa v avstrijskih političnih in vojaških strukturah – pokazal njegov nadzor nad zalogami hrane. S hrano je lahko pomiril lačne množice ob koncu 1. svetovne vojne in si s tem pridobil njihovo naklonjenost in lojalnost.

Nova jugoslovanska oblast je Maistra kmalu po 1. svetovni vojni je upokojila, ker je simboliziral nasilno slovansko politiko do germanskega (mariborskega) prebivalstva. Po drugi strani je raslo število njegovih privrženecv, ki so mu še naprej podeljevali pomembne nazive v različnih družbenih organizacijah. Že leta 1919 so Bismarckovo ulico v Mariboru preimenovali v Maistrovo ulico, kjer je junak tudi prebival. Leta 1933 je bil Maister pokopan v Mariboru ob navzočnosti 25.000 ljudi.

Po 2. svetovni vojni Maister najprej ni bil javno priznan in njegovi veterani so vlagali velike napore, da bi mu v mestu postavili spomenik. Po mnenju nekaterih zgodovinarjev sta bila razlog za to najprej njegova »buržoazna provenienca« in »kult osebnosti«, ki sta bili v nasprotju s socialistično ideologijo. Vendar je število knjig, slovesnosti in drugih znamenj ves čas raslo in ob okroglih obletnicah predvsem na slovenskem Štajerskem krepilo njegovo vlogo narodnega junaka.

Šele čas po slovenski osamosvojitvi leta 1991 je omogočil vsesplošno sprejetje in kanonizacijo Rudolfa Maistra v (etno-nacionalni) slovenski družbi, med drugim tudi postavitev kar dveh spomenikov z njegovo podobo na konju v Ljubljani leta 1999 in 2000, z razglasitvijo dneva Rudolfa Maistra (23. november) za državni praznik leta 2005, s številnimi umetniškimi upodobitvami, spominki, nagradami in knjižnimi deli, posvečeni njegovemu imenu.

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