

The CRCE Newsletter

No. 30 Autumn 2007

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Colloquium in Slovenia



This year's colloquium took place near Kranj. Everyone was made extremely welcome at the family-owned Pension Zaplata. The topic was "The Future of Capitalism after Communism", which was suggested by Krassen Stanchev for Bulgaria and Joseph Porkett of London whose article (*The Future of Market Capitalism*, Economic Affairs, March 2007) provided a conference reading. Very sadly, Joseph died shortly before the meeting and we dedicated the first session, *From Capitalism v. Communism to Varieties of Capitalism*, to his memory. CRCE trustees Philip Hanson and Tomasz Mickiewicz led the session.

A feature this year was discussion on China with Genia Kostka of St. Antony's and Roger Sandilands of Strathclyde. Jan Winiecki headed the final session on *Capitalist Communists: functioning of private enterprise acquired by communists in post-communist countries*.

The conference ended with a guided walk of Kranj's old town, museum, church and a tour of the splendid Presbytery. The highlight was a visit to the Monga at the Pirc family house. Darja Okorn, Ljubo's cousin welcomed us all and with Sue Sirc gave us a brief history. Leaflets are available from CRCE or visit the CRCE website for more information. Earlier this year the Monga gained museum status and Darja received the country's most prestigious cultural award.

The Legend of Zaplata

On the mountain near the hotel, there is a curious patch (Zaplata) of forest surrounded by grass, and this is why:

Two farmers were angrily disputing the ownership of a nearby forest. Unable to decide the issue, they called on the Devil. The Devil appeared and put the forest on his shoulder and ran over the mountains. At noon, he was on the grassy slope of Cjanovca, and the bell of St. Jakob church rang nearby. The Devil lost his power, and fled. To this day, it is the Devil's Forest (Hudicev borst) on the mountain named Zaplata.

CRCE Meetings

In July the CRCE were hosts at a reception to launch the publication of the memoirs of Ladislav Bevc, which have been edited by his son Vlado who had travelled from America for the occasion. Ljubo Sirc contributed the Introduction. Among the guests were several members of the British- Slovene Society. The book is called *Liberal Forces in Twentieth Century Yugoslavia: Memoirs of Ladislav Bevc*, published by Peter Lang. New York.

Elena Zhuravskaya was in London during October and gave a talk on *The Economic Situation in Russia before the Parliamentary Elections*. This talk is now available as a CRCE Briefing Paper.

Publications

The Problems for Post-Communist Countries in the Context of the European Union

Contributors include: Tim Congdon and Victoria Curzon-Price
Price £11.95, September 2007

The book is based on discussions and papers given at the 2006 colloquium.

Post-Communist Economies

September issue has articles on: Bulgarian Agriculture and EU Accession; Economic Transition and Industrial Restructuring in China; Rural Livelihoods in Three Mountainous Regions in Tajikistan

For information on subscriptions, contact the CRCE or: www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Interview with Ljubo Sirc

Karl Peter-Schwarz of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* interviewed CRCE's President in July. We are grateful to the author and *FAZ* for permission to translate and print the interview. The entire article can be read on the CRCE website.

Kranj, July 2007: "Yugoslav communism," says Ljubo Sirc, "was no less communist than Soviet communism or any other communism for that matter." In 1947, Sirc, now 87, was sentenced to death at a show trial in Ljubljana.

According to Left-wing myths Tito's partisans "liberated" Yugoslavia from the German occupation, but in reality one dictatorship was replaced with another. Today, Tito's socialism is still considered as being benign and moderate although the reign of terror in Yugoslavia, relative to its population, hardly differs from Stalin's Great Terror: according to various assessments, between 200,000 and 300,000 Yugoslavs were murdered in 1945/46. Ljubo Sirc calculated that at least one million people were caught up in the wheels of the communist judiciary and the secret police between 1945 and 1950, every tenth inhabitant of Yugoslavia.

The West rewarded Tito's break with Stalin at the beginning of the Cold War by overlooking his crimes. While Ljubo Sirc was in prison in Slovenia in the 1950s, Eleanor Roosevelt, in her regular newspaper column 'My Day', praised "the dictatorship of the proletariat interwoven with humanism", saying communism was Yugoslavia's only hope and explained Tito's successes by him "telling the people the truth from the beginning". When the Yugoslav "workers self-management" ended in economic chaos, the Western governments knew no way out but continued supporting Tito regardless, and pumped enormous sums of money into Yugoslavia.

Ljubo Sirc managed to escape and became established as lecturer in economics at Glasgow University. It was there, at the end of the 1960s, he was told after an exchange with leftist intellectuals that he deserved the death sentence as he clearly did not believe in communism.

Today, Sirc's native Slovenia is considered a fledgling democracy in post-communist Europe. In that small country in the European Union, little more than 20,000 square kilometres with some 2 million inhabitants, 512 mass graves have been discovered with the remains of thousands of victims of communist terror. Time and again skeletons are unearthed during construction work, or simply when the land is ploughed. Not a single person has ever been held accountable for these murders.

The Slovene communists, renamed Liberal Democrats and Social Democrats, have remained in power since the separation from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991 and until the electoral victory of the conservative parties, in 2004. Accordingly, the communists are still particularly strong in economic and financial affairs, in the media, universities and, above all, in the judiciary. All nine judges in Slovenia's Constitutional Court were appointed by the former President, Milan Kucan, who had also been leader of the Communist Party of Slovenia. Of the nine, eight are known communists, including Ciril Ribicic whose first name is his father's partisan name.

In 2006 a court in Ljubljana blocked the State prosecutor's request for criminal proceedings against Mitja Ribicic that had been requested. After the war, Ribicic was acting chief of Section 2 of the communist secret service OZNA, responsible for persecution of the "internal enemy" and which directed summary executions of actual and potential enemies of the regime.

The CRCE newsletter is published by the Centre for Research into Post-communist Economies.

57 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3QL, UK

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