

The CRCE Newsletter

No 42 Autumn 2011

57 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3QL Tel/fax: +44 (0) 20 7233 1050

Email: crce@trident-net.co.uk website: www.crce.org.uk

Autumn Colloquium in Slovenia

Two Decades of Post-Communist Change in Europe and the CIS: What has been achieved & what still to be done? Those taking part voted it one of the best CRCE Conferences.



Ljubo Sirc's family house in Kranj

We welcomed several new friends to the meeting at the hospitable Pension Zaplata near Kranj. We visited Ljubo Sirc's family house and are grateful to his cousin Darja Okorn for showing us around.

Demographics and Migration in Europe, East & West - New Web Book

With: Bernard Brscic, Jan Fidrmuc, Philip Hanson, John H. Moore, Tomasz Mickiewicz, Steve Pejovich, Robert R. Reilly, Joel Anand Samy, Natasha Srdoc, Oana Suciuc, Krassen Stanchev, Galina Yemelianova & Alexey Zhuravskiy <http://www.crce.org.uk/publications/>

Post-Communist Economies

The September issue has articles on Russia, Serbia, Czech Republic, Hungary, FDI in central Europe, Wage Inequality and Labour market flexibility & Immigration from the South Caucasus. For a sample copy contact CRCE or: www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Remembering the birth of Slovenia

Dan Damon's reported for BBC World Service on the 20th Anniversary in June, when he interviewed our friend, "Janez Fajfar, now mayor of the tourist town of Bled and in 1991 in charge of turning one of Tito's villas into a luxury hotel, watched the machine breaking down.

"By then, all the young men who could avoid conscription had done so. They got their parents to say they were students. The only ones left in the army round here were poor Albanian kids from the south."

He saw a group of about 100 conscripts, looking bewildered, herded by their Serbian officer, marching towards the gates of the villa, which was still on the JNA's map as a strategic installation.

"After a while, they all ran away. They'd been told they were defending Socialism but it didn't take them long to realise that was nonsense!"

Soon after, CRCE held its first annual conference in the Hotel Vila Bled – Manager: Janez Fajfar!

Tito Street –the saga continues

Further to our story in the Summer Newsletter: The constitutional court has now ruled the name "Tito Street" unconstitutional, maintaining that it violates the principle of human dignity, it at odds with Slovenia as a democratic state, and represents the former totalitarian regime.

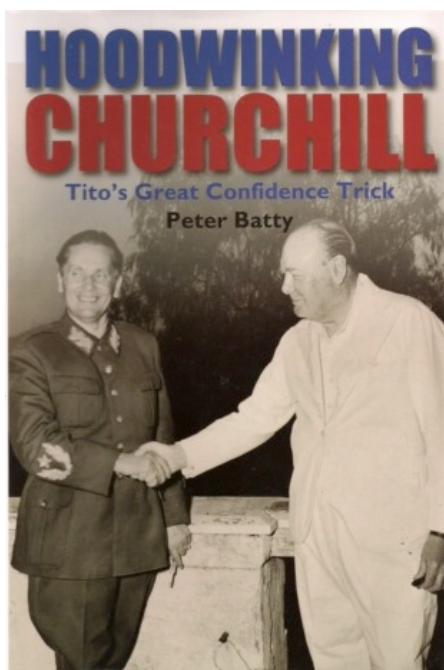
Hoodwinking Churchill - a Book Review

As the introduction to this new book by Peter Batty says, much new information has come to light since Tito's death in 1980. This book brings this all together, and although the author did not have access to the recent book in the Slovene language 'Tito's secret years in Moscow' by Silvan Eiletz everything that he writes fits in with Tito being a Stalinist NKVD officer, as shown in the Eiletz book.

It also supports Churchill's final admission that Tito was his biggest mistake of the Second World War, and shows how Churchill was duped into dropping Mihailovic and arming the Partisans. Churchill's admission of his mistake was correct although even he did not know of the deep penetration of the UK security services by the Soviets.

The great merit of this book is that it tries and largely succeeds in bring many different strands of history and policy together. Some of these

strands have been matters of speculation and opinion, such as Tito's womanising and his self-aggrandisement, others are drawn together conclusively as in the case of the communist NKVD mole Klugmann in the Cairo office of the



British Special Operations Executive who manipulated intelligence to support Tito, and tension between Britain and the USA over how to deal with Tito.

Peter Batty deals convincingly with the negative propaganda that was directed against General Mihailovic, the Serbian leader of the Royalist guerrillas, and shows that he was very badly treated by the British. The man who became a hero of sorts in the UK, Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean on the other hand comes off badly and is shown to be a very ambitious and a well-connected political operator. The BBC also comes out very badly not only because of its behaviour during WWII but in the treatment Peter Batty's first TV programme on Tito received. The author protested about editing that changed the thrust of the programme and this resulted in protests by others.

The book explains convincingly the Stalinist methods of Tito and his henchmen and why through a moment of fate he managed to become a Cold War benefit to the West even though he remained a communist and socialist enemy of free countries until the end.

The research and referencing for the book is impressive and for any student of the period it will provide a valuable bibliography.

The book answers many questions such as Tito's collaboration with the Germans particularly to thwart an Allied attack across the Adriatic, and his reign of terror and murder after WWII to eliminate all possible enemies. It also conclusively shows that the Partisans hardly harassed the German Army on its retreat in 1944, and did not liberate the country but spent most of their efforts fighting a Civil War to eliminate the forces of Mihailovic. Liberation was by the Red Army in Belgrade and the German evacuation. International figures who come out well are Anthony Eden, President Truman, and Milovan Djilas and the British Liaison Officers with the Royalist guerrillas stand out as trying to put the record straight despite overwhelming difficulties.

As more and more information comes available the myth of Tito the Liberator and National Hero gets eroded. The opening of hundreds of graves with thousands of bodies of liquidated enemies in Slovenia is part of this process. The author touches on matters that need further research such as Tito in the Spanish Civil War. Was he an NKVD liquidation squad leader in Spain? Did he and the NKVD spy Klugmann meet and cooperate when they both helped recruit for the International Brigades in Spain?

The more the myth of Tito the national hero is destroyed by revelations the more one wishes to hear about the speculations that seemed extreme at one time but now seem all too possible. Was he really a Russian substitute and should we open the grave and check the DNA? Did the Americans secretly finance the Non Aligned Movement to stop some key countries joining the Eastern Block?

We know winners and certainly Tito did so without much of a challenge because of Cold War imperatives. Peter Batty has made a great contribution in putting perspective and balance and truth back into the history books.

There are quotes from Ljubo Sirc's autobiography, *Between Hitler and Tito*. Should be read by students of WWII and the Cold War.

Review by Keith Miles, British Slovene Society & CRCE Advisory Council.

Hoodwinking Churchill - Tito's Great Confidence Trick by Peter Batty, Shephard-Walwyn, London, 2011, pp.374 £25

The CRCE Newsletter

© Centre for Research into Post-Communist Economies
2011