

A FESTIVE BRICOLAGE: THE HOLIDAY CALENDAR IN SLOVENIA OVER THE LAST CENTURY¹

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Abstract: Over the last century, and especially after the Second World War, the festive landscape in Slovenia changed radically due to political upheavals and restructuring of the economy and society, and in recent decades due to increasing global integration. This article shows how changes in the public calendar before and after the socialist period are manifest in holidays, reflecting changes under four political systems. These changes have affected not only the official holiday calendar, which usually marks the events that the national community identifies itself with. The post-socialist decades have featured a festive bricolage of reinstated religious holidays, new state holidays, popular cultural celebrations, revived folk or traditional holidays, and traces of socialist holidays.

Keywords: calendar, holidays and politics, post-socialism, Slovenia, socialism, Yugoslavia

HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

The meaning and relevance of holidays for individuals, groups, and communities is multilayered. The most emphasised and outstanding function of holiday and ritual efficacy² is social and symbolic cohesion that crisscrosses religious, political, territorial, generational, self-delimiting, and other dimensions of social life.

Social cohesion is the outcome of the transformation of chaos into order, if one agrees that social life proceeds somewhere between the imaginary extremes of absolute order and absolute chaotic conflict and anarchic improvisation. There is an endless tension between the two, and also a remarkable synchrony. This idea is implicit in Victor Turner's phrase "structure and anti-structure". He sees the two as existing in a perpetual dialectic relationship over time (Turner 1969: 112, 203). As Moore and Myerhoff have argued, "with such a view of culture and social life in mind, collective ritual can be seen as an especially dramatic attempt to bring some particular part of life firmly and definitely into orderly control. It belongs to the structuring side of the cultural/historical process" (Moore & Myerhoff 1977: 3).

Imposing cohesion simultaneously has its converse side because festivities and their celebrations are not only polysemous phenomena, but also heteroglossic and contested.

Personal celebrations as milestones in one's life mark relevant passages and events in individual trajectories, whereas the trajectories of societies are referred to in official national calendars that redirect attention from individuals' everyday lives to collective issues. Calendars institute and control religious and economic life, and they codify the passages and ruptures of larger groups and communities by inscribing crucial events and historical figures in calendars. The long history of calendars voices not only concerns, but also the interest, will, and power to regulate society's life: they impose regulations of when and how people should work, when they can rest, whom they can worship, or what they can celebrate (Jezernik 2013a; cf. Makarovič 1995).

Calendars are subject to a selection process by which the authorities or dominant ideology determines what is important in society and what is not, and which personalities, events, and actions are constitutive for various groups and communities (e.g. nation, country, and religious congregation). An important effect of calendars is defining and controlling the rhythms of time (Rihtman-Auguštin 2001) and the momentary stopping of time through remembering 'holy' days (Velikonja 2013). By so doing, they more or less explicitly appropriate power over the past, present, and future, and over collective memory and oblivion.

In this regard, calendars have a regulatory and integrative, and simultaneously also a stratifying or segregating function. The integrative function is oriented toward the collective horizon of the community and toward connecting people by emphasising their similarity, shared heritage, and especially values through holiday rituals³, and striving to reduce differences between people so that they think, feel, and act as in tune as possible, and to strengthen social and ethical norms. The stratifying or segregating effect is the opposite: social cohesion, which ought to be created and strengthened by the calendrical and ritual ordering of time, is never absolute. During holidays and holiday practices certain individuals and groups are excluded or marginalised because they cannot or do not wish to identify with them. In practice, it means that holidays carry a built-in conflict.

Both functions of the calendar reflect power relationships, and in this sense the calendar is an instrument of power that governs people's lives in various ways in a top-down manner. On the other hand, calendrical signposts established through red-letter days (i.e., days off), and usually also more or less entrenched scenarios of celebration, largely leave people at least partially spend them in their 'own way', as, for instance, Sundays. In this respect, the

enactments of calendars reflect a constant negotiation between hegemonic acts of instituting calendar holidays as special days, and a multitude of alternative ways of how people/citizens celebrate them or not. Holidays are or create venues for socialising, enabling individuals and groups in these venues to (not) identify with others in order to maintain old bonds and create new ones during them. In Geertz's terms, their ritual forms and contents are a metasocial commentary.

From this perspective, a festive calendar is some sort of social seismograph. When I refer to the calendar as a social seismograph, I am thinking of patterns of distribution of holidays or festive days through the calendar year, of the phenomena that festive days stand for (i.e., as signifiers), and of social agents. Speaking of social agents means bringing into discussion the articulation of power that takes different forms and reaches different levels of society. By social agents, I refer to those that use specific political, ideological, or ethical intentions to institute red-letter days and canonise the 'right' version of communities' pasts, presents, and futures, and those that are meant to celebrate them, irrespective of whether they do so or not.

Here it is important that (calendar) holidays and celebrations not only represent, symbolise, or express the structure of a social landscape, but they also help create it; they are not only a representation; they are also a form of practice, as emphasised, for example, by Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Catherine Bell (1992, 1997). An important characteristic of these practices is that they are embodied (Bell 2008), which is very much in the foreground in holiday rituals: namely, the performing of rituals is most closely connected with sensory experience; that is, embodied cognition and embodied practice (Sax & Quack & Weinhold 2010: 8). This fact is central in dealing with social actors because it is one of the mechanisms or parts of the equipment that explains how a feeling of affiliation is socialised, how a sense of belonging is expressed, and, last but not least, why traditions are tenacious.

Another important characteristic of the calendar is that it amalgamates two basic conceptions of time: the linear and the cyclical one. Very generally, the linear conception implies dynamics, innovations, and change, whereas the cyclical conception, grounded in repetition, points to various traditions.

With their regular annual repetition, calendar and festive calendar events are so much anticipated that they are submerged into everyday life. Still, such cultural constructs often directly determine our lives and form our worldviews. We accept calendar and festive calendar rhythms as something understandable in themselves, and only notice them when something about or within them changes. (Rihtman-Auguštin 2001: 1)

The next characteristic that significantly defines holidays both from the historical perspective and in images of the variegated contemporary holiday landscape is that they preserve a paradigmatic (universal) and syntagmatic (particular) nature:

[---] holidays are both paradigmatic and syntagmatic: that is, they are generally known and widely celebrated, but always under particular circumstances, at particular places, with a particular group. In one sense, all celebrations of a holiday are the "same," because the occasion and frequently the symbolic components are socially and historically derived. In another way, no two celebrations are ever the same. Holidays are always manifested as particular instances, particular events. (Santino 1996: xvi–xvii)

The fused perspective of a paradigmatic chain and syntagmatic polyphony also offers a tool for understanding the research focuses when dealing with holidays and holiday or ritual events; it emphasises the character of long-lasting phenomena and the simultaneous cultural transformations, and indirectly also facilitates the revelation of both transnational and inter-local flows of exchange and intertwining among central and marginal cultures, between global and local variants of individual holidays, and especially holiday practices, in particular also the relationship between politics and holidays.⁴

Political regimes are keen to mark their ideologies into calendars by eliminating older incongruous holidays and introducing more 'proper' ones. Sometimes the changes may be radical, as is demonstrated by the French Republican calendar. This has not been the case with the Slovenian festive calendar. However, changes of political systems have introduced new holidays that reinforce new political ideas and goals, institute new values, and, especially, evaluate the past differently.

The history of the Slovenian festive calendar over the last century falls into four state formations and the respective political regimes: until 1918 the Slovenian territory was part of the Habsburg or Austro-Hungarian monarchy, from 1918 to 1941 it was part of royal Yugoslavia⁵, and from 1945 to 1991 part of socialist Yugoslavia; since 1991 Slovenia has been an independent country (and since 2004 also a member of the European Union).

SLOVENIA IN THE HABSBERG MONARCHY

In pre-modern times, the social rhythm of work, rest, religious contemplation, and rituals was dictated by religious holy days of obligation and Sundays. The religious and agrarian calendars matched. In the rural environment, even in the 19th century, the general awareness of the calendar or experience of time was very rudimentary, much like in the Late Middle Ages: the calendar of work and holidays was socialised mainly orally and through church, by repeating the traditional holiday practices in the annual cycle.

Such is also the image provided by traditional ethnographic research on folk culture. With regard to the 19th century, ethnographic writing does not specify when the first national holiday or other memorial days were mentioned. It is true, however, that Slovenian society at the time was not very differentiated; secular holidays to mark important historical events and personalities were predominantly held in urban areas.

The first real national holiday in Slovenia was the birthday of Emperor Franz Joseph I, which was first celebrated in Ljubljana on August 18, 1849. It was presented in a markedly political manner: reflecting the unity of all the peoples within the Habsburg monarchy and their loyalty to their ruler. The great celebration took place in Ljubljana, the centre of all Slovenians, and for this occasion the city was decorated accordingly: houses were adorned, thousands of lights were burning, and a colourful Austrian eagle was sparkling from the castle, bearing the inscription *Vivat!* This was also the only national holiday until the Austro-Hungarian monarchy dissolved (Jezernik 2013a). However, until 1911, there were sixteen holy days of obligation aside from Sundays. Also important were saints' days conceived as turning points from farm work and chores, but their number had been shrinking noticeably in the spirit of the motto 'time is money', typical of the time of industrialisation (Makarovič 1995).⁶ Gradual secularisation of society was also hinted at through celebrations organised by various associations and celebrations of anniversaries with regard to worthy men, especially men of cultural importance, such as the poet France Prešeren. Today the day of his death (February 8, 1849) is a Slovenian cultural holiday.

Alongside traditional folk holidays, the celebration of Labour Day on May 1 acquired special prominence towards the end of the 19th century, and it became traditional in urban and workers' areas. The first celebrations accompanied by social democratic demands were held in major cities as early as 1890. Typical celebratory iconography was present: a reveille by a workers' brass band, a parade of festive workers decked out in their best, speeches at gatherings, and

a feast with music, dance, food, and drinks. Elements of folk feasts made their way into the celebration: setting up maypoles, lighting bonfires, and decorating with greenery. It should be emphasised that the holiday was not exploited to stress ethnic or national conflicts (Slovenians vs. Germans or Italians) and confessional differences; the Catholics added their religious ceremonies to the celebrations of the day. The holiday was given publicity in newspapers of the time, although the Slovenian social democrats were not a strong political grouping. In the final years of the First World War, the celebrations acquired a marked peace and antiwar note (Rozman 1999).

BECOMING YUGOSLAVS

In the new state of three South Slavic nations (Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians), three national holidays were established: June 28 (Saint Vitus' Day (Srb. *Vidovdan*), a memorial day of those who have died for faith and fatherland), July 12 (Peter's Day, the birthday of King Peter I), and December 1, the day of the union of the 'three-named nation'. The first one was meant to ensure the continuity of celebrating the emperor's birthday, whereas the other two were new. To Slovenians, these were holidays established authoritatively by the hegemonic nation, the Serbs, and their reception was therefore quite dissonant. The disputable nature of these holidays is best demonstrated in Saint Vitus' Day, which was a Serbian religious (Orthodox) and national holiday to mark the resistance to the Ottomans. It was particularly stressed in 1889, when the Serbs observed the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, but it only became established as a red-letter day in the calendar of the Kingdom of Serbia in 1914. Among the South Slavs, it began to be popularised during the First World War, when, in 1916, the Yugoslav committee in London pronounced Saint Vitus' Day the national holiday of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians finally being liberated from the Ottomans, at the same time hoping for prompt liberation from Austro-Hungarian rule, for which they were seeking international support. Special emphasis was placed on the historical and mythicised role of the Serbs, which in this case particularly referred to their role in protecting Christian Europe from the Ottomans (Jezernik 2013b). However, in the new country the Croats and Slovenians, who had already formed their national and confessional (Catholic) identity earlier, opposed Serbian heroism, also by resisting this holiday. Rather than integrating them at a symbolic level, the holiday disintegrated the three nations, undermining them from within (based on their liberal or conservative standpoint), while also excluding minorities,

particularly the Muslims, all this despite having an additional emphasis after 1919 – to commemorate the soldiers fallen in the First World War. In Ljubljana, Orthodox worshippers also celebrated Saint Sava's Day on January 27. Religious holidays aside, national holidays in the three-nation state were an important instrument of Yugoslavisation that was orchestrated by the Serbian hegemony. Celebrations were held by decorating the towns, military band concerts, dances for officers, choral concerts, town council sessions, and also religious rites. This period also saw a growing number of celebrations of memorial days of worthy men, political anniversaries, and anniversaries of associations, organisations, and institutions (Melik 1999).

What was left from the times of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was religious and folk celebrations.

In the first Yugoslavia, the authorities were not in favour of celebrating May 1, which they saw as a manifestation of socialism: processions were forbidden, but people in major workers' towns still celebrated it by attending gatherings (Simonič 2000).

CELEBRATIONS IN EXTREME WAR CONDITIONS

During the Second World War, circumstances were specific: the Slovenian territory was divided by Italian, German, and Hungarian annexation, and the Axis forces imposed their own national holidays. An alternative to these were Partisan holidays; initially they bolstered the self-esteem of people at war and aimed to integrate the Yugoslav peoples, but towards the end of the war they also reinforced more specific class-related and ideological ends (Repe 1999). The most accentuated and widespread were celebrations of Prešeren's death and Labour Day on May 1. A holiday was formed based on an event during the war, celebrating the establishment of the Anti-Imperialist Front (later renamed the Liberation Front) on April 26, 1941, and it still continues to divide the Slovenian political scene, the media, and the public. However, the Partisans also celebrated Christmas, New Year, and other religious holidays. After 1943, the cult of Tito began to take root, and after the war Tito became a real symbol of Yugoslavia, and his fictitious⁷ birthday became Youth Day (May 25).

From the perspective of what had to be and what actually was celebrated, the years of the Second World War seem to be the beginning of establishing the socialist calendar, which at the time was not yet simply stripped of traditional, particularly religious, holidays.

THE SOCIALIST FESTIVE LANDSCAPE

This process was realised gradually, beginning right after the Second World War with two main directions: by introducing new holidays and eliminating the old ones, particularly religious holidays, but also by blurring or displacing the content of some previously widespread holidays, both religious and secular. Following the separation of church and state, former religious holidays became working days.



Figure 1. May 1 posters from 1947 (<http://www.dlib.si/details/URN:NBN:SI:IMG-DI65QBP8>) and 1948 (<http://www.bhbrands.ba/shop/product/293/plakat-1.maj-1948>).

The function of new holidays was a thoroughly planned celebration and strengthening of the political and ideological system, the herald of which was the Communist Party. During the war, the party worked towards two objectives: national liberation and seizing power after the war. In the first years, it followed the Soviet example closely, but liberated itself from its influence in 1948, following the conflict between Tito and Stalin, thus winning the favour of Western countries. Afterwards, its position was specific, lying outside the Soviet Bloc, which is why the socialism of Yugoslavia is considered 'socialism with a human face'; even so, it permeated all the pores of the social life like a pyramid scheme.⁸



Figure 2. Posters for Youth Day from 1948 (<http://www.delo.si/druzba/panorama/titova-stafeta-in-dan-mladosti.html>) and 1987 (<http://www.mladina.si/109360/no-fear-no-f-hrer/>).

The new holidays celebrated the fight for freedom (such as Combatants' Day and days of uprising against the Axis powers in each republic at the beginning of the Second World War), the new country and communism as 'the best system in the world' (Republic Day), its army (Yugoslav People's Army Day), its leader (Youth Day, Tito's Birthday), and the brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav nations. The first three days were public holidays. There were two days off for Republic Day, New Year, and May 1. There was also a series of memorial days commemorating major victories, important personalities, and events, from the national level to the micro-local level. The celebratory scenarios were very similar: at the national level there were military parades with speeches by Tito and prominent politicians, formal events, and award ceremonies for major achievements in factories, companies, institutions, and schools. Everything was performed in the spirit of re-reading history and re-evaluating the past, and particularly emphasising the achievements of and new challenges to the socialist economy and society. Election days that reinforced the single-party system were also considered major holidays. This ensured that people attended all public celebrations in great numbers. Of course, all this was not specific to Yugoslavia but held true for socialist bloc countries, all of whom had to follow the Soviet model. The features discussed above represent its localised variations.

Date	Public holiday	Remarks
January 1–2	New Year	National holiday
February 8	Prešeren Day	Death anniversary of the Slovenian poet, established as the national cultural day in 1944
April 27	Liberation Front Day	In Slovenia
May 1–2	Labour Day	National holiday, work-free from 1949 onwards; renamed in 1947
May 9	Victory Day	Commemorating the end of the Second World War, established in 1945
May 25	Tito's Birthday / Youth Day	Established in 1945, renamed in 1957
July 4	Combatant Day	National holiday
July 22	Slovenian Uprising Day	Established in 1951
November 1	Deceased Day	National holiday
November 29–30	Republic Day	Established in 1944
December 22	Yugoslav People's Army Day	

Figure 3. Public holidays in Yugoslavian calendar in 1945–1991. The shaded holidays were celebrated only in Slovenia.

The unease and hesitation of people directing the holidays were noticeable in case of those that were widespread in the past: Christmas, for example, was still marked red in calendars for several years after the war and people could choose whether they wanted to celebrate it or go to work. After 1952 it disappeared from the calendar, which does not mean that people ceased to celebrate it; they only did so in their family circles. Newspapers reported absenteeism on the day and how people bought all the goods in stores before Christmas so that nothing was left for the New Year. New measures were introduced swiftly: Christmas trees were renamed 'New Year's trees', stores were only supplied with goods after December 25, and New Year celebrations began to be fostered systematically: the

ritual components of Christmas (decorations, greetings, gifts brought by Father Frost imported from the Soviet Union, who replaced Santa Claus and Saint Nicholas) were shifted to the last days of the year, and the two New Year days that symbolised the socialist optimism and progress. Special committees, formed like pyramid schemes from the Central Committee of the Communist Party to local celebration committees, were responsible for directing these as well as all other celebrations (Sklevicky 1988; Rihtman-Auguštin 1990; Repe 1999; Slavec Gradišnik 2013a).

The strategy of renaming holidays was more sophisticated and tried to conceal the authentic meanings of older holidays as in the case of March 8, May 1, and November 1.

March 8, International Women's Day, was renamed Women's Day, and was later also interpreted as Mother's Day. Its celebrations took ambivalent forms and meanings: in official ceremonial gatherings, where "[s]peeches on [...] women's struggle for equality were read in combination with rhetoric associated with the directly-linked political campaign, choirs singing revolutionary songs. [...] [A]s time passed, there were fewer and fewer participants in these ceremonial observances. But that does not mean that people had not accepted Women's Day. It was celebrated wholeheartedly, but in an unexpected manner. [...] men as well as women increasingly accepted Women's Day as an opportunity to have a good time. [...] [M]en working at enterprises brought their female fellow-workers inexpensive bunches of flowers [...], and they were treated in return to sandwiches, cake and the obligatory drinks. [...] During the 1960s, the number of variants of the celebration still increased. Some companies gave their women a day off. In later, more prosperous years, companies organised March 8 excursions for their female employees [...] to some nearby spas or recreation centres, but in case the company was a richer one, it organised shopping trips to as far away as Trieste or Graz, and even to London. [...] well-dressed women enjoyed themselves, did a bit of drinking, and danced together. Men were, in any case, excluded, according to the old rituals of the *Weiberzechen*, the one-day mediaeval Carnival drinking sprees for women only. [...] Against the background of the 1970s' consumer society, towards which the former Yugoslavia was rushing head-on, [...] March 8 increasingly became



Figure 4. Poster of a fashion show on March 8, 1994 (with a special guest, a famous model) (<http://www.dlib.si/?URN=URN:NBN:SI:img-W8H867EW>).

a one-day carnivalesque inversion of the reality in which male dominance, in spite [sic] of the revolutionary dreams, did not disappear. It was a tradition, a step outside of everyday life and a release valve for women's frustrations, which was followed the next day by social relations and male/female relations restored to 'normality'. The strictly criticised 'celebration' of Women's Day thus helped in the functioning of the system, but, paradoxically, it helped even more to maintain – and I would even say, humanise – the bureaucratically dull and boring invented tradition concept. The 'celebration' of March 8 fitted in with the socialist modernisation of society, and even gave an inkling of the post-modern understanding of life" (Rihtman-Auguštin 2001: 4–5).

In 1947, by renaming International Workers' Day Labour Day, the communist regime appropriated and suppressed its social democratic tradition. All Saints' Day was renamed the Deceased Day. This is a typical example of de-Christianisation and secularisation of this public holiday, as is the case also with Christmas. However, All Saints' Day and Christmas also kept their 'folk', traditional, or popular forms of celebration in the private sphere. In the case of Prešeren Day, renamed Slovenian Culture Day, one may observe ideological preferences for common values versus individual creativity.

As the authorities were well aware of the importance of traditional folk culture, some of its elements decorated the scenery of official celebrations. For example, participants dressed in folk costumes, traditional dishes served at receptions, and staged folklore became an important embellishment of the developing tourism in urban and rural areas, sometimes also with the assistance of ethnographers.

THE FESTIVE BRICOLAGE IN CONTEMPORARY SLOVENIA

In the period between the plebiscite for independence (December 1990) and the declaration of independence (June 1991), Slovenia found itself in a 'holiday mess'. Officially, all Yugoslav and Slovenian national holidays were still in force, but mostly devoid of their ideological significance.

The new Public Holidays Act (as of November 21, 1991)⁹ eliminated all socialist holidays. This act confirmed the following former holidays: New Year (January 1–2), Prešeren Day (February 8), Liberation Front Day (April 27), Labour Day (May 1), Victory Day (May 9)¹⁰, and the Deceased Day (November 1). Some traditional religious holidays have acquired the status of work-free days: Easter Sunday and Monday, the Assumption, and Christmas mark the re-Christianisation of the public calendar. The new central national holidays are June 25 (Statehood Day) and December 26 (Independence and Unity Day);

also new is Reformation Day, celebrating the importance of Martin Luther and the Reformation of Slovenian culture (there are approximately twenty thousand Lutherans in Slovenia), and since 2005 there are three other holidays commemorating the major events in Slovenian history that are not work-free days: Day of Slovenians in Prekmurje Incorporated into the Mother Nation (August 17), Day of Restoration of the Littoral Region to the Motherland (September 15), and Rudolf Maister Day (November 23), commemorating his fight against Austria for Slovenia's northern border at the end of the First World War.

Date	Public holiday	Remarks
January 1 (-2) (WF ¹¹)	New Year	National holiday; until 2013 two work-free days
February 8 (WF, 1991-)	Prešeren Day, Slovenian Cultural Holiday	National holiday; anniversary of the death of Slovenian poet France Prešeren, established as a Slovenian cultural day in 1944
March/April (WF, 1992-)	Easter Sunday and Monday	Dates vary
April 27 (WF)	Day of Uprising Against Occupation	National holiday; renamed (formerly Liberation Front Day)
May 1-2 (WF, 1949-)	Labour Day / May Day	National holiday
May/June	Whitsunday	
June 8 (not WF, 2010-)	Primož Trubar Day	National holiday
June 25 (WF, 1992-)	Statehood Day	National holiday, celebrates the independence of Slovenia in 1991
August 15 (WF, 1992-)	Assumption Day	
August 17 (not WF, 2006-)	Day of Slovenes in Prekmurje Incorporated into the Mother Nation	National holiday

September 15 (not WF, 2005–)	Day of Restoration of the Littoral Region to the Motherland	National holiday
October 31 (WF, 1992–)	Reformation Day	National holiday
November 1 (WF)	Day of Commemoration of the Dead (All Saints' Day)	National holiday; renamed (formerly the Deceased Day)
November 23 (not WF, 2005–)	Rudolf Maister Day	National holiday
December 25 (WF, 1992–)	Christmas	Abolished in 1953, reinstated in 1991
December 26 (WF, 1991–)	Independence and Unity Day	National holiday; celebrates the proclamation of the independence plebiscite results in 1990

Figure 5. Public holidays in post-socialist calendar. The shaded holidays were introduced in the newly independent Slovenia after 1991.¹²

When adopting old and new holidays, the government and the parliament were unable to avoid polarisation into the political left and right: religious holidays were disputed, some saying there were too many. However, the discussion about Liberation Front Day, that is, about its anti-imperialist or liberating nature, was particularly turbulent. It was defended by the Lefts and opposed by the Rights. The holiday was kept, but was renamed Day of Uprising against Occupation [*sic*], the argument being that the uprising against the Axis powers during the Second World War was the only event to commemorate in this crucial time in Slovenian history. Opponents have expressed their disagreement with the holiday by ignoring celebrations, which also occurs with some other public holidays. Another holiday that met opposition was the celebration of Victory Day on May 9¹³, because many people considered the end of the war to be the beginning of the totalitarian communist regime and massacres of the opponents of communism. The holiday was removed or deleted from the calendar in 1991 by the Act on Holidays and Days Off. However, this day has also been

the traditional holiday of the City of Ljubljana for decades. It is still celebrated today as a mix of the liberation holiday and city holiday. The same day has also been Europe Day since 1994, commemorating the Schuman Declaration of 1950, which initiated the concept of the European Union, and is celebrated today as a day of unity and peace in Europe.¹⁴

At this level, holidays have remained an arena of political conflict and struggle for interpretation, therefore often indirectly dividing rather than integrating the citizens of Slovenia, which is also due to the ideological commitment of the media, working in either direction. This is accompanied by re-readings and revaluations of history.

But how does it concern the citizens? Holidays dictate the annual rhythm and periods that people can spend in a way different from their everyday work. In a democratic country, they can decide whether and how they want to celebrate them.

Towards the end of the socialist period, people would often take off the entire period from April 27 to May 1 (by taking a holiday or substituting work days in advance); today to the majority of people an entire week off matters more than the political or social charge (particularly as school vacation falls on the same week).

The character and content of holidays and the expected intensity of celebration is connected with the position of the new holidays in the calendar. Under socialism, new holidays were placed on the calendar before or after important holidays (e.g. New Year, which was intended to cover and replace Christmas), and the new post-communist holidays have also been placed near them, which has the effect that attention to their content is diffused and is also considerably smaller. This is one of the difficulties in the discussions about how the new national holidays are (or are not) rooted, although the most frequent response is that their tradition is still not very strong. Thus, for example, the national holiday on June 25 is placed next to Midsummer Day, when schools close for the summer and many people go on holiday. Reformation Day on October 31 and the Deceased Day on November 1 remain mainly commemorative. However, in the last decade, for many younger people October 31 has become the date for Halloween parties, which has completely overshadowed the meaning of the last day of October and first day of November for part of the population. In December, Independence Day (December 26) follows Christmas, and December 26 is also Saint Stephen's Day, a folk holiday that has recently again been celebrated by quite a large number of people, both in church and at numerous local events. The period between Christmas and New Year offers opportunities for various celebrations within the family, at public venues, or even in faraway foreign countries.

In 2012, when it was clear that Slovenia was faced with a deep economic, political, and social crisis, the government announced the abolition of two days off work (January 2 and May 2). The argument was based on savings for the economy, as well as the comparison that nowhere else in Europe these two holidays are celebrated over two days, the exception being ‘some rigid Eastern European countries’. People’s responses published in digital media were interesting: the content of holidays was rarely questioned, the prevailing theme being the opposition to taking away from those that already had less than others or even nothing. Therefore a holiday, even if it is not a political one in the strict sense of the word, is not a neutral calendrical fact, but the arena of social opposition and competition, whether it involves religion (propositions to abolish religious holidays) or enlightenment, when speaking of ‘nearing’, ‘adapting’, or ‘unifying’ – in this case, towards ‘progressive’ Europe. In the case mentioned, the dimension is also explicitly social because the holidays are also taken from those that are in greater need of the day off.

Finally, national holidays have become an arena of expressing social discontent, with high unemployment, a threat of job loss, insecure existence, and lowest ever salaries. The following two double celebrations illustrate this point.

Independence and Unity Day on December 26, 2012, was marked by an official celebration. Meanwhile, the supporters of the ‘first Slovenian uprising’ gathered in the city streets and squares to express their political and social demands while carrying banners (such as “The authorities are parading, the people starving!”), and were labelled ‘zombies’ by the former prime minister.



Figure 6. ‘Zombies’ in Ljubljana in December 2012, during the ‘first Slovenian uprising’. Photograph from daily journal *Slovenske novice* (<http://www.slovenskenovice.si/novice/slovenija/na-kongresnem-trgu-so-se-zbrali-kulturni-zombiji>).



Figure 7. 'Zombies' in front of Prešeren monument in Ljubljana in 2013, during the 'third Slovenian uprising'. Photograph from weekly journal Mladina (http://www.mladina.si/media/www/slike/2013/03/_610/marcel-zombiji-prese.jpg).

Another double celebration occurred on Prešeren Day in 2013. The Committee for the Republic expressed its support for the prime minister, who labelled the ideology of those revolting as 'leftist fascism', while protesters wearing masks to conceal their 'zombie identity' gathered at the Prešeren Monument in Ljubljana.

Alternative practices of celebrating former communist holidays (in the sense of anti-holidays, organised bottom-up) have not been completely devoid of ideology in Slovenia. In this manner, smaller social and generational groups still celebrate holidays such as Youth Day and Republic Day. Interpretations vary: glorification of the symbols of the totalitarian regime, Yugo-nostalgia, being different, opposition to current nationalist and neoliberal discourses in which old symbolism takes the position of criticising the new, pure fun, a consumer niche market, and a pop-cultural phenomenon (cf. Velikonja 2013). Their arenas are not only public spaces, but also the cyberspace (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

TRANSCENDING NATIONAL POLITICS

However, the calendar with its unofficial, new, and traditional holidays also makes it possible to express different interests and identities, not only political ones. Global phenomena – mass and consumer culture, mass and especially digital media, and tourism and heritage industry, to name just a few – and,

on the other hand, the significance of local traditions vitally shape the festive landscape in Slovenia today (cf. Bogataj 2011; Slavec Gradišnik 2013b).

Today, a variety of overlapping, hybrid identities that are created at the levels of family and kinship, locality and regions, generations, interest and other groups, are often more important than the 'great' affiliation (to the country or nation).

Traditional cultural models serve as the reproduction of locality (urban and rural) and the desired representation of authenticity, and they help map self-representing, self-expressing, symbolic, promotional, and economic interests.¹⁵ Traditional holidays (carnival, local patron saints' feast days, and holidays in December) very often assimilate the grammar of popular and consumer culture. The 'imported' holidays – such as Valentine's Day or Halloween¹⁶ – fit into the model of popular culture and highlight public and scholarly discussions on local traditions and global phenomena, on holidays as market commodities (because holidays are not meant exclusively for the redistribution of values, but also money), and on the essence of holidays when it seems that the boundaries between local and global identities are being increasingly blurred.

Contemporary holidays and rituals defy typologies and definitions: many of them embody factual, imagined, and reinvented traditions, and because of their fluid, overlapping, heteroglossic, and contested meanings they remain a challenge for future research that can be related to processes of social inclusion and exclusion, remembering and forgetting, uses of cultural heritage, enculturation processes, rural-urban boundaries, global and local contexts, imposed and creative aspects, and, above all, holiday and ritual agents that are involved in the (re)production of social and cultural meaning and values.

NOTES

¹ This article is part of a research carried out through the project *Holidays and Constitution of National Community in Slovenia* (J6-4007, 2011–2014, project leader: Božidar Jezernik, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana; funded by the Slovenian Research Agency). The focus has been to "examine the complex and multifaceted relationships of mutual constitution of the holidays and identities of social groups [...] identifying and relating the factors that constitute the holidays, and answer the questions of how specific social groups are involved in the process of constituting the holidays, how they identify themselves with them, and what values make sense of the holidays" (Holidays 2010: 13).

² For a discussion on ritual efficacy, see Sax & Quack & Weinhold (2010).

- ³ I understand rituals as the main instrument that carries the content of holidays. Alongside difficulties in defining exactly what a ritual is (cf. Snoek 2008), I rely on the definition of a fuzzy set of phenomena based on social similarities or, following Wittgenstein's "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 1953: § 65–71; cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_resemblance) as proposed by Stanley Tambiah (1979: 119): a "patterned and ordered sequence of words and acts, often expressed in multiple media, whose content and arrangement are characterized in varying degree by formality (conventionality), stereotypy (rigidity), condensation (fusion), and redundancy (repetition)". These characteristics, 'obligatory' to different extents, are oriented toward interpreting the ritual as a form of practice. For more detailed elements of the ritual, see Snoek (2008: 11).
- ⁴ This topic is also part of the research project mentioned above (see note 1), through which the book *Politika praznovanja* (The Politics of Celebration; Jezernik 2013c) was published, and last year we held an international conference under the heading *State and National Holidays in the Former Yugoslavia Between the Nineteenth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Slavec Gradišnik & Jezernik & Strmčnik 2014).
- ⁵ Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians from 1918, Kingdom of Yugoslavia from 1929.
- ⁶ The most important religious and popular holidays were Epiphany, Candlemas, Shrove Tuesday, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Midsummer Night, the Nativity of Mary, the Assumption, All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, Martinmas, Saint Nicholas' Day, Christmas, Saint Stephen's Day, and New Year, and of course celebrating the feast days of the parish patron saint or local patron saints.
- ⁷ Josip Broz Tito was actually born on May 7. The explanations for why the celebration was held on May 25 are contradictory (e.g. the significance of being 'born again' on May 25, which Tito is said to have ascribed to the fact that he survived the raid at Drvar on that day, or Tito hiding his true identity in falsified documents in which his birth date was given as May 25). For more on this, see Škrbić Alempijević & Mathiesen Hjemdahl 2006.
- ⁸ The national system based entitlement on the moral capital of resistance to the Axis forces and connected it with a new social order organised following the ethics of socialism and equality. This especially took hold of a large part of the industrial and agrarian proletariat, who lived in great poverty before the war. The economically better and socially more secure position for the majority of the population offset the lack of democratic rights and freedoms (Makarovič 1995: 307).
- ⁹ The Act on Holidays and Days Off was amended in 2005 and 2010.
- ¹⁰ This holiday was not included in the official calendar, but was and still is celebrated.
- ¹¹ WF = work-free day.
- ¹² The official national calendar differentiates between two categories of holidays: public holidays in the Republic of Slovenia and work-free days. With some exceptions (June 8, August 17, September 15, and November 23), those under the first category are work-free days, which include Easter Sunday and Monday, Pentecost Sunday, the Assumption, Reformation Day, and Christmas (http://www.vlada.si/o_sloveniji/politichni_sistem/prazniki/, last accessed on January 21, 2015).

- ¹³ The Second World War actually ended on May 8, 1945 (May 9, Moscow time). In Yugoslavia the date of the celebration was shifted to May 9 (it was on that day when the victorious Partisans entered Ljubljana). After the split with the Stalinist Soviet Union, Victory Day was celebrated on May 15 from 1952 to 1965; namely, the German act of surrender in Yugoslavia was signed in Topolšica on May 15, 1945, and followed the last battle of the Second World War in Poljana near Prevalje (Batista 2013: 47).
- ¹⁴ Europe Day has not been without controversy regarding its status either. It was originally conceived by the Council of Europe and not the Council of the European Union. Namely, in 1964, the Council of Europe proposed May 5, the date of its founding in 1949, as the date of the holiday.
- ¹⁵ For a more complete picture of holidays and celebrations in Slovenia today, see Bogataj (2011).
- ¹⁶ With the aid of the mass media and popular culture iconography, Valentine's Day began to take root in Slovenia in the 1990s, with Halloween following soon thereafter. Both holidays express the universal dichotomy between life, love (Valentine's Day) and death (Halloween), which facilitates their linking to traditional roots (cf. Komel 2014). As far as contemporary holiday practices are concerned, Valentine's Day speaks to a broader spectrum of social actors, while Halloween appeals primarily to the younger generation. The ritual of gift-giving is in the centre of Valentine's Day celebrations, which is why its consumerist nature is so emphasised. Halloween foregrounds quasi-magical elements (witches, witchcraft), which is reflected in staged and costumed social events and parties.

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