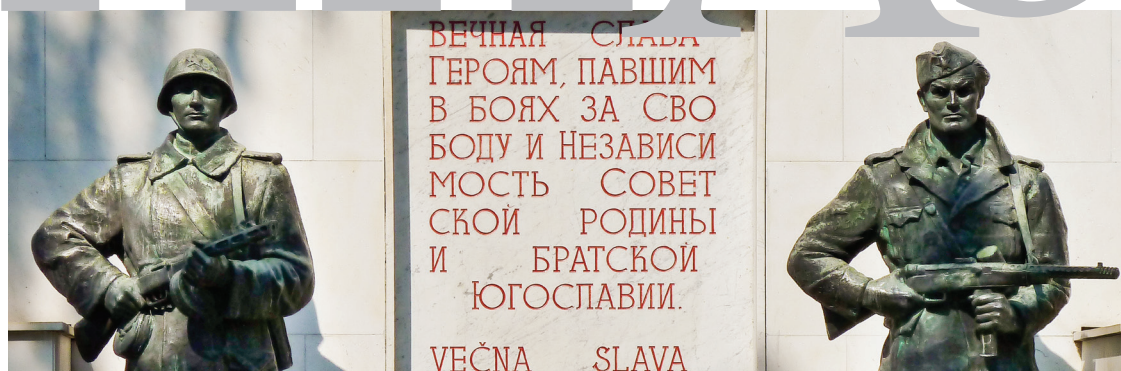


ALIAS



ACTA HISTORIAE ARTIS SLOVENICA

Visualizing Memory and Making History

Public Monuments in Former Yugoslav Space
in the Twentieth Century

Umetnostnozgodovinski inštitut Franceta Steleta ZRC SAZU
France Stele Institute of Art History ZRC SAZU

ACTA HISTORIAE ARTIS SLOVENICA

18|2·2013

Visualizing Memory and Making History
Public Monuments in Former Yugoslav Space
in the Twentieth Century

LJUBLJANA 2013

Acta historiae artis Slovenica

ISSN 1408-0419

Znanstvena revija za umetnostno zgodovino / Scholarly Journal for Art History

Visualizing Memory and Making History

Public Monuments in Former Yugoslav Space in the Twentieth Century

Izdaja / Published by

Umetnostnozgodovinski inštitut Franceta Steleta ZRC SAZU /

France Stele Institute of Art History ZRC SAZU

Glavna urednica / Editor-in-chief

Barbara Murovec

Vabljeni sourednik / Invited Co-editor

Nenad Makuljević

Uredniški odbor / Editorial board

Tina Košak, Ana Lavrič, Barbara Murovec, Mija Oter Gorenčič, Blaž Resman, Helena Seražin

Mednarodni svetovalni odbor / International advisory board

Günter Brucher (Salzburg), Jaromir Homolka (Praha), Iris Lauterbach (München),

Hellmut Lorenz (Wien), Milan Pelc (Zagreb), Paola Rossi (Venezia), Sergio Tavano (Gorizia-Trieste)

Lektoriranje / Language editing

Jesse Gardiner, Kirsten Hempkin, Mija Oter Gorenčič, Anke Schlecht

Prevodi povzetkov in izvlečkov / Translations of summaries and abstracts

Renata Komić Marn (srbskih in angleških v slovenski jezik), Tina Košak (slovenskih v angleški jezik)

Oblikovna zasnova in prelom / Design and layout by

Andrej Furlan

Naslov uredništva / Editorial office address

Acta historiae artis Slovenica

Novi trg 2, p.p. 306, SI-1001 Ljubljana, Slovenija

E-pošta / E-mail: uifs@zrc-sazu.si

Spletna stran / Web site: <http://uifs1.zrc-sazu.si>

Revija je indeksirana v / Journal is indexed in

BHA, FRANCIS, IBZ, ERIH, EBSCO Publishing, Scopus

Letna naročnina / Annual subscription: 35 €

Posamezna enojna številka / Single issue: 25 €

Letna naročnina za študente in dijake: 25 €

Letna naročnina za tujino in ustanove / Annual Subscription outside Slovenia, institutions: 48 €

Naročila sprejema / Orders should be sent to

Založba ZRC / ZRC Publishing

Novi trg 2, p. p. 306, SI-1001, Slovenija

E-pošta / E-mail: zalozba@zrc-sazu.si

AHAS izhaja s podporo Agencije za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije.

AHAS is published with the support of the Slovenian Research Agency.

© 2013, ZRC SAZU, Ljubljana

Tisk / Printed by

Cicero d. o. o., Begunje

Naklada / Print run: 400

The Statue of the Communist Revolutionary Boris Kidrič (1912–1953)

Art, Ideology and Ethics in the Public Space

Barbara Murovec

In the last four decades, numerous studies on public monuments have been published that discuss communist memorials and their erection, removal or demolition after the fall of the communist regime in various Eastern Bloc countries. While this is an exceptionally interdisciplinary research field, an important contribution has been made by art historians. These authors have related their research to the broader research context of *Bildersturm*, political iconography, the function of monuments in the public space, the relationship between artist and commissioner, ideology and artistic form, the relationship between figural and abstract style, heritage protection and the reception of public monuments, etc.¹

Until 1918 Slovenia was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1991, it gained independence from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and became an independent country for the first time in its history. The monuments that have survived in the public space do not represent Slovenia's historical affiliation to the states to which it belonged, such as the Austrian Empire, The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes or Yugoslavia;² these monuments were removed or demolished at various turning points in the course of the 20th century. The public monuments erected after 1945 make up a special group, which 'inscribes' itself into the national memory in a specific and distinct manner. Among these, the public monument to Boris Kidrič in Ljubljana is especially significant. From the point of view of the relationship between the visual arts and the politics of the communist regime, the circumstances of the commission and the relationship between the proposed project and the final monument are especially telling; the fate and reception of the monument following Slovenia's independence, which brought about the fall of the one-party regime, are of special significance from the perspective of *media & memoria*. The fact that the fall of the communist dictatorship was not the cause of social change, but first and foremost an inevitable consequence of it, might prove crucial for the further evolution of the new state and its attitude towards the public monuments to communism.

The main national monuments which have been erected in the main squares of Ljubljana since the end of the 19th century and still stand today were dedicated to poets and other figures of national cultural

¹ Cf. e. g. *Bildersturm in Osteuropa. Die Denkmäler der kommunistischen Ära im Umbruch*, München 1994 (Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees / ICOMOS, Internationaler Rat für Denkmäler und Schutzgebiete, 13); Sergiusz MICHALSKI, *Public Monuments. Art in Political Bondage 1870–1997*, London 1998; *Figuration / Abstraction. Strategies for Public Sculpture in Europe 1945–1968* (ed. Charlotte Benton), Aldershot-Burlington 2004; Deborah SCHULTZ, Alina SERBAN, *Public Memory and National Identity under Construction. The Trajectory of Monuments in Romania in the Communist and Post-Communist Periods*, *Centropa*, 10, 2010, pp. 56–66.

² See also Božidar JEZERNIK, *Moč spomina, premoč pozabe. Zgodovina ljubljanskih 'nacionalnih spomenikov', Zgodovina za vse*, 1, 2004, p. 17.

history.³ The first public memorial monument of this sort was a monument to Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819), the poet and linguist of the Enlightenment, which was placed in front of a lyceum in 1889. The building was removed after the major earthquake in 1895, but the monument still stands on the same spot, now the central marketplace of Ljubljana. The second important square in the town was occupied by the monument to France Prešeren (1800–1849) erected in 1905 in front of the Franciscan church next to the Ljubljanica River. Presently, the square is known by the poet's name – Prešeren Square – and occupies a spot right next to Plečnik's famous Triple Bridge, built in 1931. The third of the most important monuments in Ljubljana is the one dedicated to polymath Johann Weichard Valvasor (1641–1693), erected in 1910 in front of the then Carniolan Land Museum (the present-day National Museum of Slovenia), in an area which later became the cultural and political centre of Ljubljana.

After 1945, a number of public monuments and memorials to partisans and the national resistant movement against the occupying forces were erected, while some were raised in celebration of the new communist authorities. These are mostly monuments to the National Liberation War (NOB), which were intended to preserve the memory of this struggle as symbols of the independent victory against the external aggressor (without the help of the Soviet Union). In the public sphere, the questions that remain crucial today, not just in politics but also to historians (the relations between the Communist and other Slovenians, especially their relationship to the Christian Socialists and members of the Sokol club in the organized Liberation Front during the Second World War; the role of *Domobranci* – members of the Home Guard – post-war executions) did not become subjects of public visual art. With the liberation from the fascist and Nazi occupation, Slovenia – as a part of the new Yugoslavia – became a one-party communist state, in which people with different ideas became victims of a new totalitarian regime. The state was systematically covered with thousands of monuments and memorial plates, which had then and still have today an extraordinary important impact on generating memory of the history of the 20th century.

Due to the conflict with the Soviet Union there were no monuments or portraits of Lenin and Stalin in the visual propaganda of the Yugoslavian communist regime after 1948. The Victory Monument, raised in Murska Sobota in August 1945 in honour of the soldiers of Red Army, is the only such monument in Slovenia, as the Prekmurje region in the north-eastern part of the Republic was the only territory liberated by the Soviet army. When the monument was erected, it included a medal with the profile image of Stalin on the 'obelisk'. After 1948, it was replaced with Lenin's image, which has remained on the monument until today.



1. Zdenko Kalin: Boris Kidrič, 1960, Ljubljana

³ Špelca ČOPIČ, Damjan PRELOVŠEK, Sonja ŽITKO, *Outdoor Sculpture in Ljubljana*, Ljubljana 1991; Špelca ČOPIČ, *Javni spomeniki v slovenskem kiparstvu prve polovice 20. stoletja*, Ljubljana 2000.

After parting with the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia introduced a new system of socialist self-management; the foundation for its establishment was supposed to be a return to the sources of Marxism and communism.⁴ Although several streets were named after Marx and Engels, the theoretical basis for the differences between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was not supported in visual propaganda. Statues of Marx and Engels were not commissioned for public spaces; however, in the visual media, the unity of system and state was formed through the cult of a single living figure – Marshal Tito.

The lifelong president Josip Broz Tito (Kumrovec, Austria-Hungary, 7th May 1892–4th May 1980, Ljubljana, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), a figure similarly powerful to Stalin,⁵ embodied the socialist power and unity of Yugoslavia. He was the only person to have public monuments erected in his name within his lifetime. After Slovenia gained independence, his portraits – mostly large-size photographs and sculptures – were largely removed from view. Yet, the political and legal debates that still rage today testify to the fact that on a symbolic level Tito had to be removed from the Slovenian public space mostly because of his personification of the concept of Yugoslav brotherhood and unity and not because he was a communist leader and dictator. As late as 2011, the debate on the preservation and revival of his memory was brought before the Slovenian constitutional court, the central legislative body of the state. According to an act issued by the Ljubljana city authorities, a newly built street was to be named after Tito. Among other, the explanation of the legal rejection stated that “the name Tito does not symbolize only the liberation of the territories of present-day Slovenia from the fascist occupation in the Second World War, /.../ but also the post-war totalitarian communist regime, which was marked by extensive and brutal crimes against the human rights and fundamental freedom, especially in the decade after the war.”⁶

Among the Slovenian politicians of the post-war Yugoslav period, Edvard Kardelj (1910–1979) and Boris Kidrič (1912–1953) were those most often used within visual and monumental propaganda. Both of them (also with Milovan Đilas and Vladimir Bakarić) belonged to the closest circle of Tito’s ideologists, who established the ideological grounds of the non-ideological split with the Soviet union and the new path Yugoslavia was to take after 1948.⁷ Nevertheless, public memorials in their name were not erected until after their death. Because of Kidrič’s early death, his name and image were systematically instrumentalised, spreading mainly in Slovenia and also to other Yugoslav republics. After 1991, however, the names of schools, prizes and other memorials were changed. On the other hand, numerous public monuments, streets and even a town, Kidričevo, still bear the name of Boris Kidrič. The few existing art historical works dealing with public monuments categorise the sculpture of Kidrič, the communist revolutionary and Yugoslav politician, as one of the National Liberation War Memorials.⁸

⁴ Cf. Peter VODOPIVEC, *Od Pohlinove slovnice do samostojne države. Slovenska zgodovina od konca 18. do konca 20. stoletja*, Ljubljana 2007, p. 340.

⁵ On their relationship see, for example, Božo REPE, Goli otok, *Slovenska kronika XX. stoletja*, 2, 1941–1995, Ljubljana 1997, p. 176.

⁶ For the decision of the constitutional court see <http://odlocitve.us-rs.si/usrs/us-odl.nsf/o/AB6C747BE8DF7A-F3C125791F00404CF9> (accessed on 21. 9. 2012).

⁷ VODOPIVEC 2007 (n. 4), p. 339.

⁸ See especially Gojko ZUPAN, *Spomeniki NOB v Ljubljani. Topografija in predstavitev razvoja*, Ljubljana 1984, cat. no. 87, pp. 108–109 (unpublished diploma thesis).



2. Drago Tršar:
the model for the statue
of Boris Kidrič, 1957

This was one of the strategies with which the communist party legitimised its power and exclusive succession of the victors over the occupiers of Slovenian territory – by means of visual identification of the National Liberation War and the Communist party leadership of the new Yugoslavia.

Political judgement concerning acceptable visual art and artists, and the control exerted over the commissioned works was, after the Second World War, more or less absolute. The way in which they were exerted, however, changed with time, also becoming increasingly disguised.⁹ The texts of Josip Vidmar testify as to how systematic supervision of artists and art was disguised also on the theoretical level. In 1928, Josip Vidmar (1895–1992) – an important cultural figure of the pre-war period, one of the key cultural and political protagonists after the war, and long-serving president of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts – published an article titled *Umetnost in svetovni nazor* (Art and the World View). In this essay he argued that our world view is not a domain of artistic judgment and, therefore, art works cannot be interpreted through their ideological, political, national and religious aspects. The only valid aspect is the aesthetic one, which is structured in all-human universality.¹⁰

Also later, in the 1950s (*From my Diary*), he defended the same idea of the spiritual and aesthetic autonomy of art.¹¹ This theoretical notion is in contrast to his personal ideology and the general control of cultural space, especially of theatre. In his book *Obrazi* (Faces), Vidmar refers to the major Slovenian art historian of his time France Stele: “In a lively debate on a painter, he (Stele) once freely said, that he does not know much about the aesthetic value of paintings, what he does know a great deal about, however, is their style, and their historic significance and value.”¹² This remark is not insignificant in the broader context of the evaluation of one of the fields

⁹ Cf. VODOPIVEC 2007 (n. 4), p. 434.

¹⁰ Josip VIDMAR, *Umetnost in svetovni nazor*, *Ljubljanski zvon*, 48/2, 1928, pp. 92–103; Jože POGAČNIK, »Sanja in vednost o človeku« (Poglavitna izhodišča Vidmarjeve umetnostno-kritične prakse), *Sodobnost*, 33, 1985, pp. 929–943; Andrej INKRET, Vidmar, Josip, *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, 14, Ljubljana 2000, pp. 230–231.

¹¹ Josip VIDMAR, *Iz dnevnika*, *Naša sodobnost*, 4, 1956, pp. 289–298.

¹² Josip VIDMAR, *Obrazi*, Ljubljana 1979, p. 145.



3. Zdenko Kalin: the model for the statue of Boris Kidrič, 1957

of the humanities and, last but not least, in relation to the elimination of research and teaching of modern art from the curriculum at the Department of Art History at the University of Ljubljana. According to Vidmar, art historical methodology serves only for documentation purposes, formal analysis and inclusion of art works into the artistic heritage and does not entail aesthetic evaluation, which Vidmar considered to be the only relevant standard. Consequently, art history would probably have to lack methods oriented towards reflection on political iconography and the relation between ideology and artistic form. After the Second World War especially, when, based on Lenin and influenced by the systematic erection of public memorials to the heroes of the revolution in Communist Europe, Slovenia experienced its own monumental propaganda. It was Vidmar who in 1950 translated the text *Lenin o monumentalni propagandi* (Lenin on Monumental propaganda) by Anatolij Vasiljevič Lunačarski into Slovenian and provided the theoretical basis to his artistically uneducated colleagues: how the artists, especially sculptors, should

be used for the purpose of educational propaganda “of our large ideas”.¹³

The cult of a living personality was thus reserved for Tito, whereas the monuments dedicated to the memory of others were erected posthumously. Boris Kidrič died in 1953 at the age of 41. Four years later, four sculptors were invited to participate in a competition to create a statue of him for a public space in Ljubljana. Proposals were made by three professors of the Ljubljana Academy of Fine Arts, Boris Kalin (1905–1975), Karel Putrih (1910–1959) and Zdenko Kalin (1911–1990), and a sculptor of the younger generation Drago Tršar (born in 1927), who was already an internationally established artist by the mid-1950s; he became assistant at the Department of Sculpture of the Academy in 1960.¹⁴

Photographs of the competition proposals by the last two candidates still exist today. Tršar’s model resembles his groups of figures and at the same time emphasizes Kidrič as the central and largest figure in the group.

In Tršar’s oeuvre, the year 1957 (i.e. the year of the competition) represents the beginning of his “massive group sculptures”, which were first presented to an international public at the Venice biennale a year later.¹⁵ Tršar’s model supplemented a large full-figure statue of Kidrič with portrait features and six monumental anonymous figures, three on each side, that grow from Kidrič’s back. The proposal was modern and innovative even in the context of Tršar’s opus, but it failed to convince the commissioners. Although Tršar was commissioned to use his “sculptural ensembles” to make several public monuments to the National Liberation War, he was not able to realize his ideas

¹³ Anatolij V. LUNAČARSKI, *Lenin o monumentalni propagandi*, *Lenin o kulturi in umetnosti*, Ljubljana 1950, p. 112.

¹⁴ For the competition see e. g. ZUPAN 1984 (n. 8), pp. 108–109; for Drago Tršar see e. g. *Drago Tršar*, Ljubljana 1975, s. p.

¹⁵ Marijan TRŠAR, *Življenjski podatki*, *Drago Tršar* 1975 (n. 14), s. p.

for a monument to a politician as a leader of the masses (workers, members of self-management) until 1981, when he finished his monument to Edvard Kardelj.

Zdenko Kalin's competition entry was a plaster portrait of Kidrič's head on a spiral base. He won the commission, but was obliged to accept the commissioners' instructions and requirements. Neither of these documented models was in accordance with the aesthetic principles of socialist realism, which the party's authorities required for a monument to such an important communist leader. In this period figural art was entirely supervised, while abstract art was also tolerated, which created an impression of apparent artistic freedom and of orientation towards the West.¹⁶ There has been no real research on personal control over artists, and the only information that we have about this practice was provided by means of oral sources. The same can be said of the regular visits the authorities paid to the studios of those artists who were working on public commissions.

Kalin had to closely follow a photograph, which was revealed as a direct visual source for the statue as late as 1996 in an introduction to an unsigned propaganda brochure *Boris Kidrič – človek za izjemne čase* (Boris Kidrič – A Man of Great Times).¹⁷ The brochure was published by the Commission for Information, Propaganda, and Promotion of the League of Combatants of the National Liberation War. The photographic source for the statue of Kidrič, who became the first president of the Slovenian national government on 5th May 1945, bears a special historic and symbolical meaning. It was taken during the first congress of the Liberation Front on 16th July 1945 in Tivoli Park in Ljubljana. It was at this congress that Kidrič "supplemented the national liberation program of the fundamental points of the Liberation Front with an economic and social program for establishing a new, socialist society."¹⁸

The 1960 unveiling of the statue, for which space was made by pulling down a building, was an important political event. As far as we know, Kalin's notes on his work on the statue of Kidrič have not survived. His colleague Drago Tršar, who also participated in the competition, and is the author of the above mentioned monument to Edvard Kardelj in Ljubljana, described his memories of the supervision over the artist in a 2012 interview: "Kalin had to follow the directives, I know for certain that Ivan Maček visited him regularly and dictated to him how to work".¹⁹



4. Boris Kidrič, 16th July 1945, Ljubljana

¹⁶ For this topic see also Jure MIKUŽ, *Slovensko moderno slikarstvo in zahodna umetnost. Od preloma s socialističnim realizmom do konceptualizma*, Ljubljana 1995, pp. 12 ss.

¹⁷ *Boris Kidrič – človek za izjemne čase* (Glavni odbor ZZB NOB Slovenije, Komisija za informacijsko, propagandno in promocijsko dejavnost), Ljubljana 1996, p. 3.

¹⁸ Janko PRUNK, Kidrič, Boris – Peter, *Enciklopedija Slovenije*, 5, Ljubljana 1991, p. 63.

¹⁹ Vesna KRMELJ, »Na neki način je vsa umetnost erotična«. Pogovor s kiparjem akademikom Dragom Tršarjem, *Umetnostna kronika*, 34, 2012, p. 30.



5. Zdenko Kalin:
Boris Kidrič, 1960, Ljubljana
(photograph, 2012)

The unusual posture of the protagonist, who stands with his upper body leaning forward slightly with his hands placed on his hips and his mouth open, does not represent Kidrič shouting at the passing public, nor his typical posture due to lower back pain, as explained in the interpretations of the composition of this gigantic statue. Instead, the statue represents a passionate speaker behind an invisible podium. Maček, the supervisor of the project, lacked artistic education and was not able to predict the spatial effect required for this important political moment to be “frozen” and transformed into a monumental symbol. Although in an artistic sense Kalin’s statue of Kidrič is a failure,²⁰ its function as a propaganda tool and its occupation of public space and memory have been achieved.²¹

²⁰ Cf. also ZUPAN 1984 (n. 8), p. 109: “Despite imperfections, the sculpture is the most modern free-standing full-figure human statue in Ljubljana, which portrays a specific person.”

²¹ See also description in the monograph on Kalin: Špelca ČOPIČ, Sculptor Zdenko Kalin (on his work), *Kipar Zdenko Kalin / Sculptor Zdenko Kalin*, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana 1985, p. 45.

Although, as already mentioned, the statue of Boris Kidrič is a portrait of a post-war politician, in literature it has been, as a rule, discussed within the section of monuments of the National Liberation War. The statue is the only example of this kind in Slovenia (406 cm high) and can be compared to the colossal monuments of the revolutionaries in Eastern Europe.²² In contrast to the practice in other countries of Eastern and Central Europe, it has become the central point of the conflict between opposing political camps. In daily newspapers, the art historian Gojko Zupan has tried to provide a 'professional' argumentation for retaining the cult of Kidrič by praising Slovenia as the only country which does not demolish or remove monuments.²³

In 1995, the Ljubljana city council began proceedings to remove the monument. In the same and then the following year, a highly emotional and ideological debate raged around the statue's removal and we can assume that this is why the 1996 brochure was published. On the last page of the brochure, there are two poll questions or surveys on the perception of the past.²⁴ One of the surveys required the reader to evaluate their identification with the statement: "If in 1941 Slovenes under the communist regime and Liberation Front had not resisted the aggressor, they would have disintegrated as a nation". Bearing in mind the purpose of the brochure, we can assume that the percentage of readers (42.5%) who identified with this statement also agreed with the post-war dictatorship. The second survey comprised a question on the public opinion regarding the monuments of Boris Kidrič and Edvard Kardelj in Ljubljana. Almost 70 percent of the population are said to have answered that the statues should remain *in situ*, while only 20 percent declared they should be moved to a museum. An art historian who wrote a graduation thesis on the National Liberation War monuments joined this populist propaganda for retaining the monument. In his defence for keeping the monument of Boris Kidrič on the most symbolical political site in Ljubljana, he argued that "in front of the university building in Chicago, Moore's abstract monument stands in honour of the invention and inventors of the nuclear bomb".²⁵ On the other hand, in a 2012 interview, sculptor Drago Tršar spoke in favour of the removal of Kalin's monument of Kidrič and his own monument of Kardelj.²⁶

Even today fresh flowers and candles are placed at the foot of the statue, while every attempt to 'dis-symbolize' the figure or at least to bring about the symbolic disconnection of the statue's function has been prevented by intervention of the police. In the context of the over-interrogation of memory, one such intervention from the 1990s was commented on in the following way by the literary historian and publicist Ženja Leiler (Where does the memory stand?):

Where has the revolutionary Kidrič been standing for several decades? Four meters high, with an open mouth and his hands on his hips, he has been placed in front of the Slovenian cultural centre and right next to the palaces of the government and the president. This image of the comrade is aggressive. It manifests power, which, symbolically and on a more than just symbolic site, still lingers on its own terms. In 1997, when it became the victim of an amusing fashion show, the authorities hysterically undressed him in a couple of hours. Apparently, the

²² For the iconography of giant see Jean CLAIR, *Bilder der Riesen. Von Satan bis Stalin, Cassandra. Visionen des Unheils 1914 – 1945* (eds. Stefanie Heckmann, Hans Ottomeyer), Berlin 2008, pp. 113–123.

²³ Gojko ZUPAN, Šestero junakov v enem košu. Postavljanje novega spomenika neznanemu junaku v Ljubljani je zelo sporno, *Republika*, 5/40, 11. 2 1996, p. 13.

²⁴ *Boris Kidrič* 1996 (n. 17), p. 29.

²⁵ ZUPAN 1996 (n. 23), p. 13.

²⁶ KRMELJ 2012 (n. 19), p. 30.

lucid artistic action of Marija Mojca Pungerčar had not been officially approved. Without a doubt, this was an extraordinarily quick reaction by the then government.²⁷



The aesthetic and ideological criteria for the erection, preservation or removal of a public monument has, throughout the history of art, always been the domain of the (political) elite, which prescribes the financial, spatial and other specific and professional criteria for commissions and competitions. Such practice can be acceptable until it strikes against the core of the ethical principles of celebrating the protagonists or events of executions and other crimes against the civilian population. The removal of monuments that have been erected in the public space to praise the cult of a particular politician is part of historical reality. In Slovenia, monuments to the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph were removed after 1918. The monuments of the Yugoslav kings Peter I and Alexander I were eliminated in 1941. After 1991, however, the monuments to Boris Kidrič and Edvard Kardelj remained *in situ*. This, despite the fact that they were not merely representatives of a certain political system, as was the case with other removed monuments, but the protagonists of a totalitarian regime in which human rights were systematically violated and in which liquidations of the civilian population occurred.

In an international touring exhibition on the totalitarian regimes in Europe, the Slovenian exhibition panel included Josip Broz Tito, Mitja Ribičič - Ciril, Ivan Maček - Matija, Boris Kidrič and Edvard Kardelj.²⁸ Among them, Tito, Kardelj and Kidrič were the main protagonists, on whom the collective memory of the nation's past was formed through the cult of personality. Maček ensured that the architectural and fine art commissions were carried out without "mistakes" and that the visual propaganda served its purpose. The literature comprises very scant information on Maček (except the fact that he is a national hero). On the other hand, spoken and written sources reveal how crucial his role was in making decisions on art commissions and censorship. The attitude toward public monuments after the fall of the regime in 1991 can be seen in that no larger changes occurred.

Comparing Slovenia and its attitude towards the monuments of communist politicians has led us to the conclusion that this state is somewhat specific in the Eastern and Central European space. The (art) historical theme has developed into a topical political problem, an ongoing ideological fight. Slovenia is the European state that in the 1990s failed to resolve, even at a symbolic level, its attitude towards the past totalitarian regime. When the attempts to remove Kidrič's monument occurred in Ljubljana, a statement was made in defence of retaining it *in situ* next to the presidential palace, saying that monuments are removed only in totalitarian regimes, whereas retaining it was considered a cultural gesture.²⁹

In 2010 Igor Omerza published a book that reveals the inner workings of the regime against the poet and politician Edvard Kocbek (1904–1981). As a Christian socialist, Kocbek was long a part of the system. Among those choosing not to emigrate from Slovenia and those who did not take the victims' side, he was the first to publicly speak up about the executions:

²⁷ Ženja LEILER, Kje stoji spomin?, *Delo*, 46/236, 11. 10. 2004, p. 9.

²⁸ *Totalitarianism in Europe*, Gorenjski Museum, Kranj, 17th January–17th February 2013.

²⁹ ZUPAN 1996 (n. 23), p. 13.

Edvard Kocbek /.../ released the ghost of the post-war executions from a tightly closed bottle. My book provides arguments in favour of this sad privilege. The conspiracy of silence was irrevocably broken and, together with Hamlet, we could thus justifiably say ‘/.../ foul deeds will rise, / Though all the earth oerwhelm them, to men’s eyes.’ If we only imagine that the number of disarmed and executed *Domobranci* exceeded the number of victims in Srebrenica by thousands, we can imagine, when we see the sadness, indignation and protests of the Muslim wives, how excruciating the post-war agony must have been on the side of the *Domobranci*, and how successfully repressive our regime was, which prevented tens of thousands of Slovenians from speaking publicly about these events and mourning them, not to mention the disguised mass burial sites.³⁰

Also, the art-historical analysis of public monuments and their reception, or the media propaganda for retaining statues of the communist leaders *in situ*, demonstrate how successful Tito’s project of Yugoslavia with its repressive and propagandistic methods actually was. These comprised the construction of memory that contains all the characteristics of the collective memory. In Slovenia, which, unlike the other former republics of Yugoslavia, did not experience the tragedies of war after proclaiming its independence, the nostalgia for the brotherhood of the Balkans and keeping alive the memory of the totalitarian regime are still very strong. Soon after 1945, the Slovenian party leadership began to strive for greater independence. In particular, when measures were taken to boost the economy in other member republics, it openly expressed its dissatisfaction with the position of Slovenia within the federal state. After 1991, the Communist party remained its political authority also by keeping public monuments to the protagonists of the regime on crucial political locations in the capital Ljubljana as well as in other towns across the new state.

Exchanging *monument* with *art* or with ‘neutral’ *abstract art* is probably not an appropriate approach when planning a public space; there has to be a deeper relation between art and creativity, and the specific space, the memories it contains, and the commitment to act ethically and respect fundamental human rights.³¹

³⁰ Igor Omerza on the occasion of the publishing of his book *Edvard Kocbek. Osebni dosje št. 584*, Ljubljana 2010 (Igor OMERZA, *Edvard Kocbek. Personal File No. 584*); <http://www.cd-cc.si/default.cfm?Jezik=sl&Kat=030501&Predstava=1968> (accessed on 26. 9. 2012).

³¹ The research was conducted at the France Stele Institute of Art History at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts as part of the research programme *Slovenian Artistic Identity in European Context* (1 January 2009–31 December 2014), funded by the Slovenian Research Agency. I would like to thank Tina Košak for translating the text into English and Kirsten Hempkin for revising the English version. Many thanks to the principal investigator of the *Media & Memoria* project, Tanja Zimmermann, colleagues at the Institute, Andrej Furlan, Renata Komić Marn and Blaž Resman, and friends, especially Vesna Krmelj, who followed the research for their encouragement, inspiring conversations, and careful reading of the text. A special thanks also to Jana Intihar Ferjan from the documentation department of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.

Kip slovenskega komunističnega revolucionarja Borisa Kidriča (1912–1953)

Umetnost, ideologija in etika v javnem prostoru

Povzetek

Izjemno obsežno dediščino v Sloveniji predstavljajo javni spomeniki, nastali po letu 1945, ki se v nacionalni spomin »vpisujejo« na specifičen in diferenciran način. Med njimi gre zelo pomembno mesto ljubljanskemu javnemu kipu Borisa Kidriča. Z vidika odnosa med likovno umetnostjo in politiko komunističnega režima so povedne zlasti okoliščine naročila oziroma razmerje med osnutkom in realiziranim kipom, z vidika *media & memoria* pa tudi usoda in recepcija spomenika po osamosvojitvi Slovenije.

Politično odločanje o primerni likovni umetnosti in umetnikih ter kontrola nad naročenimi deli sta bila po drugi svetovni vojni tako rekoč popolna. Oblike njunega izvajanja pa so se v različnih obdobjih spreminjale tudi tako, da so postajale vse bolj prikrite. Kako se je sistematičen nadzor nad umetniki in umetnostjo prikrival tudi na teoretični ravni, za slovenski prostor dobro kažejo zapisi Josipa Vidmarja (1895–1992). Prav Vidmar je leta 1950 v slovenski jezik prevedel tekst Anatolija Vasiljeviča Lunačarskega *Lenin o monumentalni propagandi* in dal teoretsko oporo umetnostno pomanjkljivo izobraženim kolegom z jasnim navodilom, »kako se bo umetnike, zlasti kiparje, izkoristilo za tako ogromen smoter, kakršen je vzgojna propaganda naših velikih idej«.

Vizualizacija kulta živeče osebnosti je bila prihranjena za Tita, spomeniki drugim osebam pa so bili postavljeni po njihovi smrti. Boris Kidrič je umrl v letu 1953, star 41 let, štiri leta kasneje so povabili štiri kiparje, da sodelujejo v internem natečaju za postavitve njegovega kipa v Ljubljani. Idejne rešitve so pripravili trije takratni profesorji na ljubljanski Akademiji za likovno umetnost, Boris Kalin (1905–1975), Karel Putrih (1910–1959) in Zdenko Kalin (1911–1990), ter kipar mlajše generacije Drago Tršar (rojen 1927). Zdenko Kalin je za natečaj pripravil mavčni model s Kidričevo portretno glavo na spiralnem nosilcu. Dobil je naročilo, a ne za uresničitev svojega osnutka, temveč ker je bil pripravljen slediti naročnikovim navodilom in zahtevam. Nobeden od obeh dokumentiranih osnutkov ni bil v skladu z estetiko socialističnega realizma, ki jo je partijsko vodstvo pričakovalo pri spomeniku tako pomembnemu komunističnemu voditelju. V tem obdobju je bila v Sloveniji figuralika povsem nadzorovana, a hkrati je bila tolerirana abstrakcija, kar je dajalo vtis umetniške svobode in orientiranosti proti zahodu.

Kalin je moral Kidričev kip delati natančno po fotografiji s posebnim zgodovinskim in simbolnim pomenom, saj je bila posneta 16. julija 1945 na 1. kongresu Osvobodilne fronte v ljubljanskem parku Tivoli. Upodobil je zavzetega govorca, ki so mu odvzeli govorniški pult. Nadzornik Jože Maček brez umetnostne izobrazbe ni znal predvideti prostorskega učinka, ko je zahteval »zamrznitev« pomembnega političnega trenutka in njegovo preoblikovanje v monumentalni simbol. Čeprav gre v likovnem smislu za neuspelo delo, sta njegova propagandna funkcija ter zavzetje javnega prostora in spomina dosegla svoj namen. Kip Borisa Kidriča je v literaturi praviloma obravnavan med spomeniki NOB, čeprav gre za portret politične osebnosti povojnega časa.

Estetski in ideološki kriteriji za postavitve, ohranitev ali odstranitev nekega javnega spomenika so v celotni zgodovini umetnosti v domeni vsakokratne (politične) elite, ki naročilom in natečajem začrta tudi finančne, prostorske in pogosto celo ožje strokovne okvire. To je sprejemljivo vse dotlej, dokler ne trči ob temeljno etično postavko slavljenja protagonistov ali dogodkov, kot so poboji in drugi zločini nad civilnim prebivalstvom. Odstranjevanje spomenikov, ki so bili v javni prostor postavljeni z namenom, da povečujejo kult določene politične osebnosti, je del zgodovinske realnosti. Tako so bili v slovenskem prostoru odstranjeni spomeniki cesarja Franca Jožefa po letu 1918 ter spomeniki kraljev Petra I. in Aleksandra I. po letu 1941. Nasprotno pa niso bili odstranjeni spomeniki Borisu Kidriču in Edvardu Kardelju po letu 1991.

V komparativni obravnavi Slovenije in njenega odnosa do spomenikov komunističnim politikom pridemo do ugotovitev, ki to državo predstavljajo kot specifično v vzhodno- in srednjeevropskem prostoru. Ob poskusih odstranitve Kidričevega spomenika v Ljubljani je bila kot argument za njegovo ohranitev ob predsedniški palači uporabljena trditev, da spomenike odstranjujejo samo totalitarni režimi, njihova ohranitev pa naj bi bila znak kulturnosti. Tudi umetnostnozgodovinska analiza javnih spomenikov in recepcija oziroma medijska propaganda za ohranitev kipov komunističnim voditeljem na njihovem prvotnem mestu kaže, kako uspešen je bil s svojimi represivnimi in propagandnimi metodami Titov projekt Jugoslavije. Izpeljana je bila konstrukcija spomina, ki ima vse lastnosti kolektivnega spomina. V Sloveniji, ki ob svoji osamosvojitvi ni doživela vojne tragedije kot druge republike, sta nostalgija po balkanskem bratstvu in ohranjanje spomina na totalitarni režim še vedno zelo živa. Po letu 1991 pa je slovensko partijsko vodstvo ostalo na oblasti tudi z ohranjanjem javnih spomenikov nosilcem režima na ključnih političnih lokacijah v Ljubljani kot prestolnici in v drugih mestih nove države. Rešitev za oblikovanje javnega prostora ni zamenjava spomenika z »nevtralno« abstrakcijo, temveč globlja povezava umetnosti in ustvarjalnosti s konkretnim prostorom, spominom, ki ga ta v sebi nosi, ter spoštovanje temeljnih človekovih pravic.